

STUDY GUIDE

FIVE SESSIONS



WILL
GRAHAM

REDEEMED

HOW GOD SATISFIES
the LONGING SOUL

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STUDY GUIDE | FIVE SESSIONS

WILL GRAHAM
with Erik Ogren



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

Redeemed Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION



*M*y friend, there is no one out there quite like you. The way you look, the way you act, the way you believe, the things you say, your innermost thoughts . . . there are so many things that make you unique. As David says, you are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” knit together by God (Psalm 139:14). Before you were even born, your heavenly Father had a plan and a purpose just for you. You are special. You are His handiwork.

In other ways, however, I imagine that you are similar to most people on the planet.

I’ve had the opportunity to travel the globe, preaching across six of the seven continents. I’ve shared the hope of Jesus in massive stadiums in world-class cities, in small Australian outback towns, and in Himalayan villages. I’ve ministered in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro and north of the Arctic Circle. In doing so, I’ve met people from countless different cultures and walks of life.

Throughout my journeys, I have come to realize that—even though we are each very unique—we also share many of the same basic needs and desires. Of course, we need food, water, air, and shelter, but I’m talking about something less physical

and much deeper. I'm talking about a spiritual hunger that comes from the depths of our souls.

We all feel the need for love and acceptance. We all desire hope and peace. We all seek purpose, safety, and fulfillment.

Everywhere you look, including in your church today, people are trying to fill these needs in their own power. They seek to satisfy the hunger through relationships, family, work, or hobbies. They fill their garage with cars and their homes with possessions. They may invest everything they have in philanthropic endeavors or serving others. Sadly, some even seek fulfillment in destructive behaviors that not only fail to fill the void but also leave them far worse than when they started.

No matter what we try, however, it can't fill that hole. Nothing we do can bring true happiness or peace. None of our individual efforts result in lasting hope. We strive, we struggle, we plead, we fight—and yet the hunger remains.

When I began writing my book *Redeemed*, my pastor shared a message out of Psalm 107. That passage—especially verse 9—stuck with me. It caught me in a way that it had not before. I filed it away and pondered it for some time.

Months later, as we were wrapping up the manuscript, my assistant was leading devotions for our team at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, North Carolina, and she shared Psalm 107:9—the exact same verse that I had been contemplating. I quickly realized it was not a coincidence that the verse bookended my writing. God was speaking to me and wanting me to share this very simple message:

*For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills
the hungry soul with goodness.*

That short verse is so straightforward that many would be tempted to fly right past it, and yet it is entirely profound! Everything we search for—all those elements the world finds so elusive—are found in Christ and Him alone!

He is the One who satisfies the deep longing of our soul. He fills that empty void with His goodness. It's not more stuff. It's not more work. It's not harmful vices. It's Jesus!

My grandfather once said there's a God-shaped hole in each of us, and none of our vain efforts can fill it. Only Christ—as we call upon Him and are redeemed—can fill that deep longing in our soul.

As we begin this study together, I hope you will be inspired to let go of your past and embrace the new life that Christ has for you as a child of the King. I pray that you will begin to realize His purpose for you and that you will be challenged to share with others that same peace, hope, and love you have found in Him.

Most of all, in the coming weeks, I pray that your longing soul will be filled with the goodness of the Father.

How to Use THIS GUIDE

The *Redeemed Video Study* is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small group gathering. Each session begins with a brief welcome section and several opening questions to get you thinking about the topic. You will then watch a video with Will Graham and jump into some directed small-group discussion. You will close each session with a time of prayer and personal reflection.

To get the most out of your group experience, keep the following points in mind. First, the real growth in this study will happen during your small-group time. This is where you will process the content of the teaching for the week, ask questions, and learn from others as you hear what God is doing in their lives. For this reason, it is important for you to be fully committed to the group and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members. If you choose to only “go through the motions,” or if you refrain from participating, there is a lesser chance you will find what you’re looking for during this study.

Second, remember the goal of your small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God, and build

intimacy and friendship. For this reason, seek to make your group a “safe place.” This means being honest about your thoughts and feelings and listening carefully to everyone else’s opinion. (If you are a group leader, there are additional instructions and resources in the back of the book for leading a productive discussion group.)

Third, resist the temptation to “fix” a problem someone might be having or to correct his or her theology, as that’s not the purpose of your small-group time. Also, keep everything your group shares confidential. This will foster a rewarding sense of community in your group and create a place where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

Following your group time, reflect on the material you’ve covered by engaging in any or all of the between-sessions activities. For each session, you may wish to complete the personal study all in one sitting or spread it out over a few days (for example, working on it a half-hour a day on different days that week). Note that if you are unable to finish (or even start!) your between-sessions personal study, you should still attend the group study video session. You are still wanted and welcome at the group even if you don’t have your “homework” done.

Keep in mind the videos, discussion questions, and activities are simply meant to kick-start your imagination so you are not only open to what God wants you to hear but also how to apply it to your life. As Jesus promised, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” So ask, seek, and knock . . . and then listen to what the Lord is saying to you about being a *redeemed* child of God.

Note: *If you are a group leader, there are additional resources provided in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.*



SESSION

One

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S LOVE



YOUR SALVATION DEPENDS ON WHAT
[CHRIST] HAS DONE FOR YOU, NOT
ON WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR HIM.
IT ISN'T YOUR HOLD ON GOD THAT
SAVES YOU; IT'S HIS HOLD ON YOU.

BILLY GRAHAM



WELCOME

“Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so . . .”

From our earliest years, many of us have known of the love that God has for us. The words roll freely from our lips as we discuss our faith or consider our relationship with Him.

However, for a variety of reasons, some of us today may doubt that love.

For instance, a friend once told me that because he never knew his earthly father, it was hard for him to understand there could be a heavenly Father who loved him. Though he could understand it intellectually, he was unable to fully appreciate it emotionally and spiritually.

Perhaps you’re going through a difficult time in your family or your marriage. A loved one has repeatedly told you that you are worthless, and it’s getting harder and harder to believe there’s a God out there who loves you unconditionally.

Or maybe you may feel you’ve gone too far down the wrong road, and there’s no way that God could love you. You haven’t earned it, and you don’t deserve it. His unconditional love may be great for others, but it’s not so unconditional as to be reserved for you.

Or maybe you’ve been in the church for so long that discussing the love of God is like talking about dinner plans. It’s just something that’s a part of your daily routine. Similar to an inoculation, you’ve gotten a large enough dose that it simply doesn’t affect you anymore.

If you have watched any of my grandfather's old crusade sermons, you've likely heard him say, "If you take nothing else from tonight, know this: God loves you! God loves you! God . . . loves . . . you!"

Whatever your circumstances today, I'm here to tell you the same thing. *God loves you!* He loves you with an overarching, eternal love, and He's waiting to embrace you today.

SHARE

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to kick things off, discuss one of the following questions:

- How do people in your family (or circle of friends) show love to each other? What does love look like for you?

– or –

- Why did you choose to take part in this study? What are you hoping to get out of this time together?

READ

Invite someone to read aloud the following passage. Listen for fresh insights as you hear the verses being read, and then discuss the questions that follow.

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 15:9–13).



What do you think it means to abide in God's love?



How does the love of God help us to be filled with joy?



Have you ever considered that you should love others as Christ has loved you? Is that love reserved just for your friends and family, or for everybody you encounter?

WATCH

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

NOTES

I believe that the Creator of the universe knows my name. He knows my tears and pain. He knows my triumphs and struggles. Through it all, He loves me.

Like my grandfather's embrace, God loves me with an eternal, unconditional love. He loves me so much that He gave His Son to die for me.

When you consider the sacrifice of Christ from the perspective of a parent who longs to protect and love his or her child above all else, you can begin to understand the pain that was felt not only by Jesus at His crucifixion, but by God the Father as well.

God's all-encompassing love—as evidenced through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus—is for each of us. Regardless of who you are or what you've done. Christ took your sins to the cross and subsequently conquered the grave. Now we can have eternal hope in Him.

It doesn't matter how good you are. It doesn't matter who you are. A relationship with Christ—accepting the love that He offers—is what secures your eternity with Him in heaven, and brings a lifetime of joy, peace, and purpose in this world.

Once you've found and embraced the love of God, you must pass it on to others by serving them and sharing the hope that is within you.

God's Word says that “faith comes by hearing” (Romans 10:17). It also promises that when the time comes, God will give you the words to say as you share that love with those around you (see Luke 12:12).

DISCUSS

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts together.

1. When I was a child, I had direct access to my grandfather because I was his grandson. I was part of his family, so I could go directly to him and fall into his embrace. Does this describe the way you feel about the access you have to God? Why or why not?
2. Some people struggle with the idea that God loves them, while others have heard it so often they take it for granted. Where do you fall on that spectrum? How can you begin to genuinely understand and appreciate the love that God freely gives?
3. Have you considered Christ's sacrifice on the cross through the lens of God as a Father who sent His child to die for the sake of others? If you are a parent, how does the love you have for your own children impact your understanding of God's love for you?

4. My father shared the love of Jesus with me on that day I tried to take part in communion at our church. He explained to me that I needed to invite Jesus into my life and forgive me of my sin. Who are the people in your world who need to hear that same message? What can you do to share the gospel with them?

5. Jesus' love for you was sacrificial. He was beaten, spat upon, mocked, and tortured because of the depth of His affection for you. While you don't need to go to that extreme, what are some ways you can sacrificially show love to those around you?

6. The Bible says the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say when you have opportunities to share the love of God with others. Have you found that to be true? If you've never shared the gospel with those around you, what's holding you back?

PRAY

Wrap up your time together by taking a few minutes to talk with God. Here are a few ideas of what you could pray about based on what you discussed in this session:

- Thank God for His sacrificial love for you—love undeserved but freely given.
- Ask God to soften your heart so you can begin to fully realize and understand the depth of His love for you.
- Renew your commitment to God as your loving Father.
- Ask God to wrap you in His embrace, allowing you to feel His presence and love in your life.
- Ask God to show you others who need to hear of this love and for boldness to share that message when given the opportunity.

RESPOND

This week, I invite you to take time to consider God's love for you. First, do a spiritual status check. Have you surrendered your past, present, and future into Jesus' hands as your Savior and Lord? If not, don't waste another minute! Perhaps, like the story of the prodigal son told in Luke 15:11–32, you've been wandering away from the Father. Come home! It's only when you've taken that step that you can truly experience the love that awaits you as a child of God. Once you have, the Holy Spirit will begin opening doors for you to take that love and pass it on to others who desperately need it. Be ready for those opportunities!

Between-Sessions

PERSONAL STUDY



A big part of growing in your knowledge and understanding of God's love is spending time daily with Him. Just like a person-to-person relationship requires time, commitment, and development, so your relationship with Jesus will grow deeper as you dwell in His presence. So, reflect on the material you've covered this week by engaging in any or all of the following between-sessions activities. Each day offers a short reading adapted from my book *Redeemed*, along with a few reflection questions to take you deeper into the theme of this week's study. I encourage you to journal or jot down your thoughts if you'd like. At the start of the next session, you will have a few minutes to share any insights you learned . . . but remember, the primary goal of these questions is for your own spiritual growth and private reflection.

— *Day One* —

A SOFT ANSWER TURNS
AWAY WRATH, BUT A HARSH
WORD STIRS UP ANGER.
PROVERBS 15:1


A few decades ago, my grandfather was invited to speak at the inauguration ceremony of a seminary president. This particular meeting promised to be controversial. The incoming president would be leading the seminary back to a more traditional, conservative theology, and this wasn't a particularly popular stance with some faculty.


When my grandfather arrived, he was amazed to find that faculty lined both sides of the walkway leading up to where the induction would be held. My grandfather was so moved by the display that he graciously shook hands and greeted every person along the way. He couldn't have envisioned a greater welcome and outpouring of love.


Later, my grandfather exclaimed to the incoming president, "I can't believe they all came out to greet me!"


"Billy," the president responded. "They weren't here to greet you! They were here to protest you!"

I love how God works. My grandfather was a sweet, thoughtful, loving person, who genuinely and deeply cared about others, even if they disagreed with him. In this case, God used my grandfather's naivety to break down walls of anger and hurt, opening the door for reconciliation and healing amid a potentially explosive situation.

 My grandfather graciously—if naively—greeted every person who was there to protest him. What kind of impact do you think that expression of love may have had on the people who were there for the purpose of being confrontational?

 How do you tend to respond in difficult or negative situations? What is the impact you have seen of showing grace and love in the midst of trying times?

 How can you show love today to people who may be confrontational or rude to you?

 In difficult (or even mundane) situations, have you ever prayed, “God, help me to love people like you love people”? How might that change your outlook regarding those around you?

— *Day Two* —

THROUGH THE LORD'S MERCIES WE ARE NOT
CONSUMED, BECAUSE HIS COMPASSIONS
FAIL NOT. THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING;
GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS.
LAMENTATIONS 3:22–23

Several years ago, a lady came up to me following a sermon. “You look just like your grandfather, Billy Graham,” she proclaimed.


“Oh,” I laughed. “You mean I have a big mouth, big nose and big ears.”


She earnestly agreed, “Yeah! You do!”


I’ll admit that I had a little fun with this sweet lady. But the fact of the matter is that it is an incredible honor whenever someone mentions he and I in the same sentence. It’s humbling when people witness some of his characteristics in me. Whether it’s the North Carolina accent, the way I move my hands as I speak, or certain turns of phrase that I’ve picked up over the years, as the grandson of Billy Graham, I model some of his traits. It’s inevitable.


You likely model some of the same looks and behaviors of your parents and grandparents as well. And just as people can see a glimpse of my grandfather in me, and perhaps yours in you, they should also be able to look at you and see that you exemplify the attributes of your heavenly Father.

In good times and bad, we should all be merciful, compassionate, and faithful. We would do well to exhibit holiness, love, grace, forgiveness, and righteousness.

 Do you exhibit any family traits that you've inherited from your parents or grandparents? If so, what are those traits?

 What characteristics of God do you feel most closely exemplify your walk with Him? Are there any you need to work on?

 Jeremiah wrote the words of Lamentations 3:22–23 during a disastrous, painful circumstance. Do you tend to draw closer to God when faced with a difficult situation? If so, why?

 What does it mean to conduct yourself in a way that is fitting for an heir of your heavenly Father? How could that impact your actions today as you share His love with others?

— *Day Three* —

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD;
I WILL BE EXALTED AMONG THE NATIONS,
I WILL BE EXALTED IN THE EARTH!

PSALM 46:10


During the last few years of his life, as I sat with my grandfather, there was very little talk on either side. For the most part, we spent our time simply being together. Words didn't need to be spoken. We could just rest in the presence of one another.

Similarly, I believe it's vital to rest in the presence of God. Life is so hectic—schedules that are full morning until evening, jobs to do, bills to pay, phones that never stop chiming, and relationships that require ongoing development and attention.


These aren't necessarily bad things, but it can be difficult to tap the brakes and slow down when we try to spend quiet time with God. We'll race through a short passage of Scripture and our list of prayer requests, keeping one eye on the phone to make sure we don't miss that text.

My friends, I encourage you to meditate on the words of Psalm 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God." As you do, you'll find the stress of the world diminishing in the hopeful peace of the One who saves. And you may discover that He uses that time to provide answers to the difficult questions in your life.

 Why is it so hard to simply rest in the presence of God?

 As a child of God, have you ever considered how much it must please Him for you to come into His presence? How do you tend to picture how God reacts when you come into His presence?

 How could resting in God's presence help you to carry His love with you and possibly even share it with others?

 What tangible things can you do to shut out the world for a time so you can focus solely on Jesus Christ and His love for you?

— Day Four —

HAVING RECEIVED THE PIECE OF
BREAD, [JUDAS] THEN WENT OUT
IMMEDIATELY. AND IT WAS NIGHT.

JOHN 13:30


One thing my life as a traveling evangelist has taught me is that loneliness is one of the most prevalent human conditions, regardless of country or culture. However, the loneliness I see most often is a *longing for God*. It's that empty spiritual cavern inside that will only be filled when the longing soul calls upon Him as Savior.


There's a powerful passage of Scripture found in the Gospel of John that I believe speaks directly to this matter of loneliness and being apart from the Lord. Jesus had just announced that Judas would betray Him, and Judas—now separated from fellowship—walked outside.


John then says the simple phrase, “And it was night.” Those four words are literal and figurative. Yes, it was nighttime, but that narrative also describes Judas' soul as he walked away from the Savior. Spiritually speaking, it was dark and it was lonely.

Perhaps that describes your world right now. You want to live in the light, but you know that you're far from God. In your faith journey, it is night. If that's the case, there's one remedy, and it's drawing close to God. He's right there with you, waiting for you to turn to Him.

 Do you struggle with loneliness? Why or why not?

 When are you loneliest? When you're all by yourself or when you're in a room filled with people? Explain.

 In the passage from John, we are told that it was night—a dark, cold, lonely place. Have you ever been in that place spiritually? Are you there now?

 As you contemplate God's sacrificial love for you, understand that He doesn't want you to stay in that dark place. He's waiting for you to draw near to Him. How will you begin to do that in the coming days? How will you step from the darkness into the light of Christ?

— *Day Five* —

THOSE WHO SOW IN TEARS

SHALL REAP IN JOY.

PSALM 126:5


More than 100 years ago, my great-grandparents arrived in China as medical missionaries. My great-grandparents loved the Chinese people. They sacrificed greatly to serve in the name of Jesus, even though the ministry wasn't always fruitful.


A few years ago, I had the great honor of visiting Huai'an in China to share the gospel. Planning to preach from John 3:16, I had discovered a decades-old video recording of my great-grandfather reading that passage in Huai'anese.


As my great-grandfather's recorded voice crackled forth, I heard a chorus of small gasps. The eyes of the 3,000 who had crammed into the church sparkled. I could see the love that they had for my family. In that moment, I was overcome by tears.

Many surrendered their lives to Jesus that day, and I felt I was harvesting a field that I did not sow. It was only because of the love and sacrifice of my great-grandparents a century ago that many were now claiming the hope of the Savior.

I'm sure my great-grandparents spent countless hours on their knees, crying out to God for the souls of the Huai'anese people. I would encourage you to do the same for those in your life who need Jesus. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy!

 When was the last time you cried out to God on behalf of someone? Did He answer your plea?

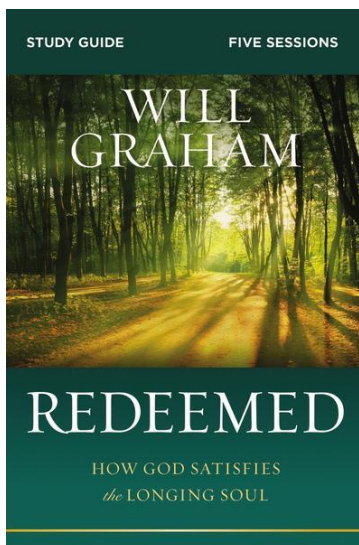
 My great-grandparents loved (and sacrificed for) the people of China because God first loved them. While we aren't all called to be international missionaries, how has God's love compelled you to love others?

 Are you passionate about the gospel to the point of shedding tears over the lost people around you? Why or why not?

The passage my great-grandfather read, John 3:16, speaks to the eternal love of Jesus. Take a few minutes to ponder that verse, inserting your name into it as you consider the sacrifice offered in order to show His love for you and redeem your soul.

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, that if _____ believes in Him, _____ should not perish but have everlasting life.

My friend, that is how much God loves you!

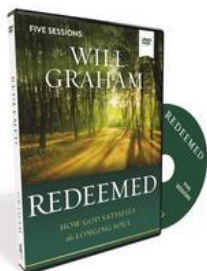


Redeemed Study Guide: How God Satisfies the Longing Soul

By Will Graham

Only God can satisfy the hungry soul.

In this five-session video Bible study, Will Graham, the grandson of renowned preacher Billy Graham, shares stories and teachings from his life about what it means to be redeemed in Christ. As Will has traveled the globe, he has observed that deep inside each of our souls, we are all hungering for something. Some of us try to satisfy that need by throwing ourselves into relationships, jobs, or hobbies. Some try to fill the hunger by engaging in destructive vices. Others pursue good deeds, social work, or donating money to worthy causes. But as the psalmist writes, only God “satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness” (Psalm 107:9 NKJV).



The *Redeemed Study Guide* includes video teaching notes, discussion questions, Bible exploration, and weekly personal study and reflection materials.

Designed for use with the *Redeemed Video Study* (9780310099796) sold separately. Digital and streaming video also available.

To purchase, [CLICK HERE](#).