

HOSANNA WONG

How (not) to Save the World

THE TRUTH ABOUT
REVEALING GOD'S
LOVE TO THE PEOPLE
RIGHT NEXT TO

You



How (not) to Save the World

THE TRUTH ABOUT REVEALING
GOD'S LOVE TO THE PEOPLE
RIGHT NEXT TO *You*

STUDY GUIDE



FIVE SESSIONS

HOSANNA WONG



HarperChristian
Resources

How (Not) to Save the World Study Guide

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Welcome to This Study!

When it comes to talking about Jesus and sharing the hope found in Him with our loved ones, our family members, friends, classmates, coworkers . . . many of us aren't sure we know how to do it. We don't want to come off as awkward, pushy, or straight-up weird. We wonder if we have the right words or if we'll say the wrong thing. So sometimes, we give up on sharing about Jesus altogether.

Yet, we live in a world that desperately needs hope—especially the hope found in Christ!

I've spent far too many years of my life believing lies about sharing my faith. I thought I had to do something impressive in order to do something impactful. I thought I had to have all the answers before I talked about God. I convinced myself that *other* people are called to share about Jesus—but I'm not smart enough, skilled enough, or spiritual enough to seal the deal. I thought my story was too different for people to relate to, or not different enough to actually make a difference. Rather than make a massive, muddy mess by talking about God, I thought it would be better if I just said nothing at all.

Maybe you've believed some of those lies, too. It turns out, believing all those lies? That's the perfect plan for how *not* to save the world. It's the surefire way to *not* show the hope of Jesus to a world that so desperately needs it. The truth is better.

What I've been discovering is the freedom and joy that comes with simply loving the people right in front of us. What the Bible actually says

about sharing the love of God is far different than what I used to believe. It actually empowers us to become people who fight for others, who can naturally talk about Jesus through our real-life stories, and who can create meaningful relationships wherever we are.

In the upcoming sessions, we're going to crush the lies that have held us back from sharing the most important story in the world. We're going to dive deep into what God's Word actually says about revealing God's love in our day and age. And we're going to reignite our passion to reach those who don't know yet how much God loves them.

The truth? It is *more* than possible for you to naturally share God's love in your everyday life. There *is* a way for every person you know to realize how valuable he or she is to God. You've been created for it, equipped for it, and you're ready . . . let's go!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanna", is positioned on a light gray rectangular background.

How To Use This *Guide*

Overview

How (Not) to Save the World Bible study curriculum is divided into five sessions. Every session includes Opening Discussion, Video Notes, Group Discussion Questions, Call to Action, Closing Prayer, and Between Sessions Personal Study. As a group, you should plan to discuss the opening questions, watch the video, and then use the video notes and questions to engage with the topic. You have complete freedom to decide how best to use these elements to meet the needs of your members. The goal is developing genuine relationships and becoming better equipped to share the good news of God's love with others—not just covering all the material.

Group Size

This five-session video Bible study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, retreat, or other small-group or online gatherings. If your gathering is large, you may want to consider splitting everyone into smaller groups of five to eight people. This will ensure that everyone has enough time to participate in discussions.

Materials Needed

Everyone in your group will need a copy of this study guide, which includes streaming video access located on the inside front cover. Videos are also available on DVD and by individual session download.

You will find opening questions to discuss, notes for the video teachings, directions for activities and discussion questions, and personal studies between sessions.

Facilitation

Your group will need to appoint a person to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Facilitators may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting everyone in the group to respond and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Personal Studies

During the week, you can maximize the impact of this course with the personal studies provided. Treat each personal study like a devotional and use it in whatever way works best for your schedule. You could do a partial section each day or complete the personal study all in one sitting. These personal studies are not intended to be burdensome or time-consuming but to help you apply the lessons learned and discussed to your everyday, personal life for growth and connection.

Revealing God's Love through *Relationships*



The salvation of your family, your workplace, and your city is not all on you. Jesus is the One who saves lives, who heals marriages, who sets people free from addictions, and who makes the impossible possible . . . We are neither the climax of the story, nor the main point. Jesus is the subject, and we are the storytellers.

—Hosanna Wong

From Chapter 1 of *How (Not) to Save the World*

Opening Discussion

- 1 When you first encountered God, what circumstances and people were involved?
- 2 How would your life be different if no one had helped you encounter or grow in your relationship with God?
- 3 On a scale of one to ten, check the box that describes how easy it is for you to talk about God with others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

It's hard for me
to talk about God
with others.

It's easy for me
to talk about God
with others.

- 4 What are the biggest challenges or insecurities you face when sharing your faith?

Session 1 Video (18 minutes)

As you watch, take notes on anything that stands out to you.

NOTES:

- ▶ The first time you saw something broken that you wanted to fix

▶ We can talk about Jesus without fear of what the end results might be

▶ Lie: Only some people are called to share Jesus

▶ Jesus made friends first

▶ Our call is to be like Jesus, not to save, but to serve

▶ Mrs. Lee—make the invitation

Group Discussion Questions

Hosanna opens with a powerful story of feeling powerless to help someone. She confesses, “At an early age, I believed the lie that as a Jesus follower, it was my duty to save everyone.

But the truth is that it’s not any of our jobs to save. We are not created to carry the weight of everyone’s salvation on our shoulders. It’s actually amazing news that Jesus is the savior and we’re not.”

1 In which areas of your life do you struggle most with having a savior complex that reinforces the idea that everything relies on you? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Providing financial stability
- ☐ Maintaining peace in relationships
- ☐ Making everyone happy
- ☐ Raising remarkable kids
- ☐ Finding the right partner
- ☐ Always volunteering when there’s a need
- ☐ Making your business thrive
- ☐ Keeping the lawn or house perfect
- ☐ Caring for an aging parent
- ☐ Other: _____

2 Like Hosanna, can you identify a moment from your childhood that made you believe that everything depended on you? Share the circumstance or story with the group and discuss the effect it had on you.

3 All of us are susceptible to believing lies that hold us back from telling others about Jesus. Read through the list below and mark any of the following that have prevented you from sharing your faith.

- ☐ I need to be a perfect example of a Christian before I can share my faith.
- ☐ I need to have all the spiritual answers before I start the discussion.
- ☐ I'm afraid of being awkward, weird, or pushy.
- ☐ I've seen people share their faith using fear-based tactics and manipulation, and I don't want to be part of that.
- ☐ I don't have an impressive story of faith, so they won't listen to me.
- ☐ My story is too different, so they won't relate.
- ☐ My story is not different enough, so it won't make an impact.
- ☐ I've tried to share my faith in the past and it didn't work, so it won't work now.
- ☐ Other people are called to this, not me.
- ☐ Other people are gifted in this, not me.
- ☐ Other _____

- 4** Which of these holds you back most from sharing your faith?
Why?
- 5** What do you need to do to overcome your hesitation?
- 6** What is at risk if you don't overcome some of the fears or whatever holds you back?

Bible Study Connection

Group leader, read the following comments to the group and then read the associated Bible passage aloud, followed by further discussion questions.

In believing these kinds of lies or holding on to bad experiences from the past, we can miss all God wants to do in and through us here and now.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reached out to a tax collector. These people were the social pariahs, the snakes and snitches of their time, who took more money than they should from patrons. Some even over-taxed their own family members and betrayed friends to expand their financial gain. Yet, as we'll discover, Jesus was constantly making friends with people . . . even *before* they changed their behaviors.

Before they chose Jesus, Jesus chose them.

1 Read Matthew 9:9-13.

How does Jesus invite and interact with Matthew and others like Him? (hint: v. 9-10)

What surprises you most about Jesus' generosity toward those who don't know Him?

How do the Pharisees respond to Jesus' generosity? (hint: v. 11)

What surprises you most about Jesus' response to the Pharisees? (hint: v. 12-13)

How would our lives look differently if we understood that the call that comes from Jesus is not a call to make people more religious, but a call to have more relationships?

Matthew wasn't the only social scoundrel Jesus invited into relationship.

2 Read Luke 19:1-9.

What were the parallels in the way Jesus approached Zacchaeus and Matthew? (9:9-13)

What challenges you most about how Jesus reached out to others?
What comes most naturally to you? What's the most difficult to embrace from this passage?

What practical tips can you take from these passages to help you share your faith with others?

- 3 Hosanna tells the story of Mrs. Lee's interaction with a vacuum salesman. Despite the rough and tumble background of the man, Mrs. Lee responded without shock or shame. Instead of highlighting the ways their lives differed, she focused on what they had in common. Then she shared what Jesus had done for her. That man came to know Jesus. Years later, the former vacuum salesman introduced Hosanna, his daughter, to Jesus.**

In a nutshell, what has Jesus done in your life? If you were to paint the picture of your life before knowing Jesus and after knowing Jesus, how would you describe it?

- 4 Who are three people who are right in front of you—on your street, in your apartment building, at school pick up, in a nearby cubicle, in your family, on a walking path—whom you've overlooked and can begin building relationships with? Name them here. No need to share names with the group.**

- _____
- _____
- _____

Discuss practical ways that you can make invitations, have conversations, and share your stories without fear of the result.

Call to Action

Team up with someone in your group (or online if you are doing this study virtually) and reveal the three names that you wrote in question 4. Share a little about each person with your partner, and take a moment to pray for opportunities to deepen the connection and talk naturally about Jesus when the time comes.

Conclusion

Group leader, read aloud to the group to close your time together this week.

The people in our lives whom we encounter, know, and love, are looking for hope and peace, and they need to know where it can be found. Every day we can help others discover how deeply loved they are. And it all begins with an authentic relationship.

Jesus never called us to save the world. He's already got that. Jesus calls us to serve the world. We can faithfully show up for people, develop real relationships, and naturally talk about our faith.

Closing Prayer

Select a volunteer to read the closing prayer over the group.

Free us from the lie that only some people are called to share the good news of Jesus. Help us see ourselves as your chosen vessels for the gospel to be heard by every person, everywhere. Give us opportunities to engage spiritually with people we meet and those already in our lives. May Your Spirit spark conversations. Give us the grace to focus more on what we have in common than any differences. Stir our hearts with Your deep affection and holy expectation. Amen.

Between Sessions

Personal Study

Check in with your group members during the upcoming week and continue the discussion you had with them at your last gathering. Grab coffee, dinner, or reach out by text and share what's going on in your life and heart. Use the following questions to help guide your conversation.

Sometimes to move forward, we need to identify what lies might be holding us back. Perhaps you've tried to talk about Jesus with a friend or family member and it didn't go well. Place a check mark by any of the following that you've experienced.

- ☐ I've tried to talk to others about Jesus, but I couldn't find the right words.
- ☐ I've tried to invite a friend to church or a small group, and they just won't come.
- ☐ I've tried to share about my faith, but it feels like their eyes just glaze over.

This week's group discussion is just the start, and the goal is to keep digging into how you can share God's love with the people right next to you. This section is created as a guide for your personal study time to further explore the topics you discussed with your group. If you're following along with the book for the fullest experience of this message, read or review chapters 1–3 in *How (Not) to Save the World*.

— I've prayed for my child who is so far from God, and nothing has changed.

___ Other disappointment

1 In the space below, write a prayer asking God to heal your disappointments and to reignite your passion for prayer and sharing His love.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Though we may want and ache for the very best for others, sometimes we feel the pressure of getting the results we desire on our timetable. We push faster and harder and find ourselves on a treadmill of trying to save, which often leaves us exhausted, frustrated, discouraged, and depleted.

We are not the first people who have noticed this world needs saving. The religious people of Jesus' day were also looking for a hero. They believed a king, a warrior, was coming to defeat the evil empires, fight off the tyrannical leaders, and forcefully turn over the corrupted governments of the day.

And Someone did come.

He had more power than they could ever comprehend, and yet He didn't come to take over with forceful power at all.

Instead, they were introduced to a Savior not participating in remarkable battles or lobbying for impressive titles to declare His status; no, He gave up His status. In a world where we naturally seek our own glory and applaud those whom we find glorious, we surprisingly find that the One who already had all the glory did not aim to be above us but came to be *with* us.

2 Read Philippians 2:5–8. Describe how Jesus showed His love according to this passage.

What does it look like for you to live out Philippians 2:5-8 in a practical way?

What situations tempt you to believe the lie that you must be the savior?

- 3** Think through the difference between these two circumstances: *having to be a savior or looking for opportunities to be a servant*. Which gives you more freedom? What do you get out of each experience? Which circumstance do you find yourself experiencing most frequently? Explain.

How would your life be different if you stopped seeing the call to share Jesus as a rigid mandate to convert and instead saw it as the freedom to continuously have real relationships with those right next to you?

4 Read Luke 7:36–39. How does the woman who lived a sinful life show her affection for Jesus? What does this say about the woman?

5 Read Luke 7:40–43. What does Jesus reveal about the source of the woman’s affection? What does Jesus’ response to her reveal about what He considers most important?

6 Read Luke 7:44-50. How do the actions of the woman and the Pharisee compare?

WOMAN'S RESPONSE TO JESUS	PHARISEE'S RESPONSE TO JESUS

Based on this story, how do you think Jesus felt about being known as a friend of sinners? (Matthew 9:11)

What if the call that comes from Jesus is not a call to make people more religious, but a call to have more relationships? How would we live our lives differently?

When you choose to serve the world, instead of trying to save it, that means you can throw a dinner party and invite anyone. That means you can host a Bible study and not worry about how many people show up. That means you can reach out to coworkers to go to lunch and if they pass, it doesn't spiral you into thoughts of defeat. You're free to risk. You're free to reach out. You're free to have fun in your friendships.

You're free to embrace those on the margins. You're free to discover and seek out whom God just might bring into your life.

How can we *reveal* God's love in our everyday lives?

- ▶ **Make invitations.**
- ▶ **Have conversations.**
- ▶ **Share our stories.**

In chapter 2 of *How (Not) to Save the World*, “Go Big or Get Out,” Hosanna writes the following reminder:

There is no training course we must graduate from in order to have lively relationships with those around us. There is no certificate we must have on our wall before we can serve those in need in our workplaces. We do not need to be biblical scholars in order to do real life with real people, ask honest questions, and give honest answers. As we give invitations and have conversations, cultivating commonality with those around us, we begin to know people—people God really loves. And people begin to know us. Like any ongoing friendship, as you are continuously honest and open, over time the most important things in your life naturally seep out in your conversations and through your actions. They will naturally discover who Jesus is to you, learning that He is a big deal in their friend's life, the reason their friend is joyful,

kind, purpose-filled, and resilient. When you don't know where to start, remember: Everybody loves good food. And everybody loves good friends.

7 How do Hosanna's assurances help you catch a fresh vision for how God might use you to spread His love and hope and provision to hurting people in a broken world?

8 What are a few ways you might be a "good friend" this week? Feel free to incorporate the "good food" part of the equation in your list too, you know, just to share.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

9 Before your next group meeting, read chapters 4–6 if you are reading along with the book.

Meet Hosanna Wong



Hosanna Wong is an international speaker, bestselling author, and spoken-word artist empowering this generation to know who they are and boldly live out their purpose. Hosanna speaks in churches, conferences, prisons, and other events around the world year-round. She and her husband, Guy, serve in various ministries, equipping the local and global church.

More information at www.hosannawong.com

DISPLAYING GOD'S LOVE IN TODAY'S WORLD

When it comes to talking about Jesus with our family members, friends, classmates, and coworkers, many of us aren't sure how to go about doing it. We don't want to come off as awkward, pushy, or weird. We wonder if we have the right answers or if we'll say the wrong thing. As a result, we sometimes give up on sharing about Jesus altogether.

In this five-session study, bestselling author and spoken-word artist Hosanna Wong crushes the lies that hold us back from sharing the most important story in the world. Join Hosanna in discovering what God's Word actually says about revealing His love to the people right next us, and how we are already equipped to reach those who don't know how much God loves them (yet).

With honesty and humor, Hosanna will help you:

- Embrace your unique story to naturally talk about Jesus without being weird or pushy.
- Discover the three most effective steps to take when fighting for a loved one who is in a tough place.
- Overcome the lies that hold you back so you can step into your calling and empower people to encounter God.
- Heal from past hurts in the church and learn how to create the community you've longed for.

This study guide includes:

- Individual access to five streaming video talks from Hosanna
- Group discussion questions and video notes
- In-between gatherings personal Bible study

Sessions and video run times:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Revealing God's Love
through Relationships (18:00) | 3. The Power of Your Story (19:00) |
| 2. God's Power, Not Ours (21:00) | 4. The Truth About Community (22:00) |
| | 5. Never Giving Up (26:00) |

Streaming Video Access Code Included*
WATCH ON ANY DEVICE

DVD also available, sold separately.



HOSANNA WONG is an international speaker, bestselling author, and spoken-word artist empowering this generation to know who they are and boldly live out their purpose. Hosanna speaks in churches, conferences, prisons, and other events around the world year-round. She and her husband, Guy, serve in various ministries, equipping the local and global church.

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