



This sermon series and book study is designed to help your people:

1) Experience in their body what they believe about God in their head.

2) Notice when they are falling into stuck predictable patterns and 'attempted solutions in their faith habits.

This work brings brings relief and breakthrough, is theologically sound, and provides actionable tools.

The Expectation Gap has 9 chapters. Every chapter has discussion questions for groups as well as practical tools to try. The appendix also has Steve's famous 'gauntlet of anxiety questions.'

We recommend a multi week sermon series to go along with small group reading and discussion. **The book hits a significant felt need, so we anticipate that you could use this series to increase small group engagement.**

Concepts and Tools In The Book With Brief Explanation:

Below is a brief description of every concept in the book. Many of these overlap and continue in one theme. They also come with actionable tools to practice. We offer this list below for those who want to create their own sermons or discussions.

Core Beliefs vs Precious Belief. Many of us assume that Jesus is our deepest, most core belief. Our church momentum is toward that assumption, we use language that reinforces that assumption, but Steve proposes that Jesus is in our fact most *precious* belief, but we have some *core* beliefs that block our precious beliefs. Some core beliefs we hold, some have hold of us.

Head Beliefs Vs Body Beliefs. Similar to above, for some Christians, our faith resides mostly in our head. Our head believes in peace and freedom, but our body can betray other beliefs. It is often worried and bound. The body wins every time. Much of this book is about integrating head and body beliefs so we can relax into God's presence.

Put Yourself On Your Conscious List Of Relationships. Many of us do not consider that we are in relationship with our self, so we are often unaware when we are

disconnected. Also, we tend to treat others much better than we treat ourselves. Jesus said, 'love your neighbor.' But he added that pesky amendment, 'as you love *yourself*.' The book offers tools to align the way you treat yourself with how God treats you.

Consider your relationship with God the way you consider your human relationships. We tend to think of our God relationship as categorically different from our friendships and family, but it is helpful to consider that it is similar, because then we can pay attention to:

The Four dynamics that infect every relationship. These are: assumptions, reactivity, predictable, recurring patterns and attempted solutions.

Tools To Open Your Soul To God. A simple set of tools anyone can try that may help them engage God in a more connecting and soul satisfying way.

The Story We Tell Ourselves Committee. We all have parts, such as an inner critic, a family of origin propagandist or a trauma soldier, who work together to protect us from pain and trouble. They send us messages that compete with or displace the message of Jesus.

Using Peter's Denial of Jesus As a Rorschach Test. The story records that 'Jesus looked at Peter' after Peter denied him. What look was on Jesus' face?

The First and Last Word. We tend to let our inner critic speak uncontained. But we can learn to contain it with God's first and last word.

The Unreliable Narrator. Our brain cannot always tell between a true threat, such as needing to brake and swerve to avoid a car accident, and a false threat, such as the need to please everyone. Our brain is like an unreliable narrator in a movie. We trust it, but can learn to sift its guidance through Jesus.

The Big Five False Needs of Every Human. Every human struggles with one or more of these false needs: control, perfection, having the answer, being there for others, approval.

God And The Big Five. We discover that God has the proper characteristics of the Big 5. The first temptation to humans was 'you can be like God.' We get reactive when we try to do God's job rather than a human sized job.

The Nature of Every Belief Or Gospel. Every belief has 3 elements. We can learn to measure our beliefs to see which are true and which are false.

God Is Already In The Room. Anxiety has a gospel and one of its messages is, 'you are on your own.' We can learn to relax into God's presence ahead of anxious meetings and situations.

Super-disciples. We are prone to stack all the best traits of people in the Bible and form them into a 'super disciple' that we must be like.

Miracles Per Page And Mundane Days. Jesus' ministry was approximately 1250 days long, but only 52-57 of those days are recorded in all four Gospels. We compare our mundane lives with the condensed history of Scripture. Also, what should we expect in the way of miracles?

The Division of Labor Between Us and God In Spiritual Transformation. What is our job and what is God's job and what happens when we try to do God's side of the labor agreement?

The Life Giving List. How to go on the hunt for the goodness of God and capture it in a list of life giving people and habits.

Redemptive Vs Preventative Gospel. What happens when we make the wrong one foundational.

Paul's Values vs Our Cultural Values. It is ok that we hold different values than Paul. Paul lived, 'to live is Christ and to die is gain.' Most of us actually live, 'to live is gain and to die is Christ.'

Home and Shalom. We can be exactly ourselves when we are 'home.' This posture allows God's deeper work and brings us relief.

Sin As A Noun. We think of sins as 'things we do and do not do' but Paul often talks of sin as 'a condition we are in.' Sin is more infection in need of healing, being lost and needing to be found, than it is a list.

Self Righteousness. We think it means, 'I am better than you' but in the Bible, it is, 'what I depend on to be well when I am not depending on Christ.'

Reservoir or Canal. St Bernard of Clairvaux warns us to not be 'more generous than God.' He says too many people are canals - everything that comes in goes out and we are empty. God is a reservoir, serving and giving out of the overflow of abundance.

6 Sermons:

We have provided 6 sermon manuscripts for guidance with the understanding that you will contextualize to your voice, your people and series length.

*Our recommended 4 sermon series is sermons 2, 3, 4 and 6.

1. **Intro to Faith Gaps: Precious Belief Vs Core Beliefs.** We notice the gaps and begin to examine what blocks our enjoyment of God. We look at Mark 9, 'Lord I believe, help my unbelief' and we normalize the gap experience.
2. **I Believe God Loves Me But I Don't Feel It.** We tackle our Inner Critic, how it is a competing gospel and we work through 1 John 3:19,20.
3. **I Believe God is With Me But I Don't See It.** We tackle our false needs and how they block awareness of God. Every human has up to 5 core false needs. We use Genesis 3 and Genesis 28.
4. **I Thought I'd Be Further Along By Now.** We tackle the way we appropriate the Bible for self improvement instead of for engagement with God. We use Matthew's version of Peter walking on water. (Matthew 14.)
5. **OPTIONAL: Would You Rather: Preventative Vs Redemptive Gospel.** Which is foundational? What happens when we flip them. We use 1 John 4:19.
6. **Home and Shalom.** We tackle our understanding of sin, punishment and God's love. We use the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 and Paul's use of sin as a noun, not a verb in Romans.