FILLING THE EMPTY PLACES STUDY GUIDE

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Filling the Empty Places Study Guide
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THE ESSENTIAL EMPTINESS

1.	What is the "essential emptiness" in a person's life? Who is the only One capable of filling that emptiness? Have you personally experienced this essential filling? Write a brief testimony of that experience.
2.	What is the "ultimate reference work" for the Christian? Who is our Great Physician?
3.	Explain the metaphor of the wind (John 3:8) on the empty places of our lives.

4.		ve an example of a Bible character who made a wrong responsive choice at affected his or her destiny. Briefly describe the story.
5.	exe "al	od abundantly blessed King Solomon in 2 Chronicles 1:11–12 with ceptional wisdom, yet Solomon later proclaimed in Ecclesiastes 1:2 that I is vanity." According to the following verses, list some of the things lomon chose to fill the empty places of his heart.
	A.	Ecclesiastes 2:3
	В.	Ecclesiastes 2:4
	C.	Ecclesiastes 2:7
	D.	Ecclesiastes 2:8
6.		ing the Bible as your main guide, list the specific effects that the Bible s on people:
	A.	Romans 15:4
	В.	Psalm 119:165

	C.	Psalm 19:7–11
	D.	Hebrews 4:12
		DELVING DEEP
1.	to :	we world turns to psychiatry, psychology, therapy, and other alternatives address their unmet needs. As you think of areas in your life where you we unmet needs, "empty places," to whom or where do you turn for fillment? Explain.
2.		ad Psalm 119. The Bible, God's love letter to us, should be our "ultimate erence work." How do the following verses tell us to approach the Bible?
	Α.	Psalm 119:9–11
	В.	Psalm 119:15–16
	C.	Psalm 119:24

- D. Psalm 119:105
- E. Psalm 119:162

THE NATURE OF EMPTINESS

1.	What is the origin of emptiness?
2.	Briefly describe the story of Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden.
3.	What is our human tendency when we find an empty place in our lives?
4.	Name some "winds of want" that women have. Do you have any of these? Explain.

5.		omfort is one of people's "wants." Describe the comfort people need at the stage of life—baby, childhood, teenage, and adult.
6.		cording to Psalm 135:7, "He [God] bringeth the wind out of his asuries." What is a treasury?
7.	W	hat else is in God's treasury?
	Α.	Psalm 50:10–12
	В.	Malachi 3:10
	C.	Matthew 6:25–34
	D.	Philippians 4:19

DELVING DEEP

1.	Tł	ne author talks about four categories of emptiness. Name them.
2.	fac the Ac	aink about your own experiences and the emptiness you may have seed or even now may be facing. Read Psalm 139. David describes how broughly God knows each of us and how present He is with each of us. cording to the following verses, explain how deep God's knowledge and we for us are.
	A.	Psalm 139:2
	В.	Psalm 139:3
	C.	Psalm 139:4
	D.	Psalm 139:5
	E.	Psalm 139:7–12
3.		sed on how intricately God knows us, what should be our prayer (Psalm 9:23–24)?

MENTAL EMPTINESS

1.	Mental emptiness begins early in life with what three little words?
2.	As we mature, the "questions" we don't understand become much more complicated. List some of the questions you have struggled with over the years.
3.	What should be our main Source as we struggle with life's questions and our inability to "answer for God"? Can we really "answer for God"? Explain.
4.	According to 2 Timothy 2:15, what should be the chief aim of our studies?
5.	From 2 Timothy 3:16–17, list the four ways the Bible profits Christians that leads to our spiritual maturity. How will others know we are maturing spiritually?

6. The Bible draws many distinctions between a wise man and a fool. In the following verses, what are some qualities of a fool?		
	Α.	Psalm 14:1
	В.	Proverbs 1:7
	C.	Proverbs 14:9
	D.	Proverbs 18:6
	E.	Proverbs 29:11
7. In this next set of verses, what are some qualities of a wise man?		
	Α.	Proverbs 9:10
	В.	Proverbs 11:30
	C.	Matthew 7:24–27
	D.	Matthew 25:1–13
	E.	James 3:13–18

8.	We often ask why God allowed or did not allow something in our lives. According to Proverbs 3:5–6, what should we do instead of asking why?
	DELVING DEEP
1.	The Samaritan woman asked many questions of Jesus, some addressing the culture of the day. Each one of Jesus' answers to her led her closer to her ultimate spiritual fulfillment. Read John 4:4–42. What were some indications that the woman had empty places in her life?
2.	When the woman realized that Jesus alone could fill those empty places, what was her immediate response, and what happened to many in the city because of her response?

3.	The disciples had gone to get food during the time Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman. When the disciples returned, they begged Jesus to eat. Even though Jesus was facing physical emptiness, He responded with a spiritual metaphor. What was the metaphor?
4.	Jesus admonished His disciples through another metaphor—the law of the harvest, sowing and reaping. In John 4:34–38, how does Jesus want us to respond to the work of the Lord?
5.	What have you done recently to sow and reap in the Lord's harvest? Pray that the Lord will use your time working in His harvest to help fill some of the empty places in your life.

REMEASURING MENTAL **EMPTINESS**

	THINKING THROUGH
1.	What do you think the author means by the words "kneeling stone"?
2.	Isaiah comes onto the scene during a time of emptiness in his own life. What had happened to bring about that emptiness (Isaiah 6:1)? Why would that occasion bring special concern to Isaiah?
3.	What "sight" completely filled Isaiah's intellectual empty places? What was Isaiah's immediate response to the Lord? To where should we turn to gain that sight ourselves?

4.	In James 1:5, what does God long for His children to ask Him for? What is His promise if we do?
5.	What is the difference between "pearls of wisdom" and "faux pearls" when dealing with advice or counseling? Where can you turn to be assured of "pearls of wisdom"?
6.	The author mentions five things that rightly bringing our thoughts into the obedience of Christ will do (2 Corinthians 10:5). List them.
1.	DELVING DEEP Read Job 38–41. Job stood in awe of the mind of God. What were some of the questions that God asked Job?

2.		Job 42:1–6 is Job's response to his omniscient God. Our human comprehension and our finite thoughts cannot fathom our God. What does the Bible say about our thoughts and God's thoughts?
	A	. Job 42:2–3
	В	. Psalm 139:2
	С	. Isaiah 55:8–9
	D	. Daniel 2:29–30
	Е	. Micah 4:12
3.		Philippians 4:8 talks about our thought life. According to this verse, what qualities should characterize our thought life?
4.		Pray Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." Ask the Lord to help you obey 2 Corinthians 10:5, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

NATURAL EMPTINESS

THINKING THROUGH

1.	VV	nat are the three avenues of natural emptiness:
2.	ap pr	1 Samuel 16:7, God tells Samuel that we tend to look on the outward pearance of people; therefore, it should not surprise us that the world omotes "self-image" and perceived physical beauty to the extreme. What other verses tell us about our physical being?
	A.	Psalm 119:73
	В.	Psalm 139:14–16
	C.	John 9:1–3
	D.	Matthew 6:27
	E.	Luke 12:7
3.	Pł	nysical limitations can often lead to feelings of physical emptiness.

However, God is able and so desires to be our fulfillment. Paul wrote Philippians from jail; read what he said in 4:11. Rather than complaining that leads to bitterness, what should be our response to our limitations?

4.	W	hat is the essential factor in our "thought control"?
5.	me	ho is our arch-enemy? He wants us to feel entally empty. God has left His Word to us to fill our minds. According the following verses, what does God's Word do for us?
	A.	Psalm 17:4
	В.	Psalm 119:24
	C.	Psalm 119:104
	D.	Psalm 119:130
6.		rt of emotional emptiness is lack of emotional control. What two andles" do we need to gain emotional control?
7.	W	hat two emotions in Romans 15:13 exemplify "emotional fullness"?

DELVING DEEP

1.	Psalm 94:19 states that "thy [God's] comforts delight my soul." What are some ways that God has comforted you lately? Think of special promises you have found in His Word, things He has taught you, demonstrations of His love and power, and even His chastening love.
2.	God is described as having great emotion as He deals with His creation. He truly is our "role model" as we look to have a balanced emotional life. List the emotions attributed to God in these verses. A. Psalm 86:15
	A. Psalm 86:15 B. Psalm 145:8
3.	God's greatest emotion is love. What is the most significant manifestation of His love toward us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)?
4.	Love proves us to be followers of Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 13. What are some of the characteristics of Christ-like love and how have you shown that love in your interactions with family and friends?

EMPTINESS IN PREPARATION

1.	What three areas of preparation emptiness are discussed in this chapter?
2.	Each woman's childhood home life certainly contributed to her current character and personality. However, Psalm 138:3 shows how to overcome those perceived background limitations. What is that?
3.	Instead of self-focus, where should our focus be? Why?
4.	How should a Christian woman seek to overcome her insecurities? Where should her confidence be (Psalm 118:8; Proverbs 3:26)?
5.	Where does negativism come from? Can a negative spirit be overcome? Explain. Are you or do you know people who are negative? What is your reaction to them?

6.	What is the difference between education and wisdom? Which is more important (Proverbs 4:7)?
7.	How does one overcome a spiritually deficient background (1 Timothy 4:15)?
	DELVING DEEP
1.	According to the author, our "manner of thinking is really the empty place." What do you tell yourself that leads to that emptiness? Do you blame your background for character deficiencies or insecurities? Are there other areas in your life for which you blame your parents or your background?
2.	Read Philippians 3, where Paul gives his testimony. He had been religiou all his life, but he did not take that occasion to "boast in himself"; his "glory" was the cross of Christ. What was his advice to the Philippian believers?

3. Ephesians 4:17–32 describes the differences between the saved and the unsaved and then tells us to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" and to "put on the new man." What are the differences that should characterize the Christian woman, according to these verses?

EXPERIENTIAL EMPTINESS

1.	What are the three areas of experience in which women tend to feel emptiness?
2.	What are the two biggest contributors to feelings of insignificance?
3.	When you struggle with feelings of self-pity (the "I don't matter" syndrome), where should you really direct those feelings of pity?
4.	Read Jeremiah 9:23–24. What do these verses say should be our significance?
5.	What does success mean to you?

6.	Answer the following: I will feel successful when I have
7.	In discussing satisfaction, the author contrasts expectations with actual experiences. What are some things that you "idealized" and set as life
	expectations as a child that you have brought into your adult life?
8.	How should we deal with these unfulfilled yearnings (Romans 8:28)?
9.	Proverbs 10:28 tells us what the result of our spiritual expectation should be. What is that?
	DELVING DEEP
1.	Read 1 Samuel 1. Hannah faced the emptiness of a barren womb. Ultimately, how did Hannah face her emptiness, and how did God respond to her heart's cry?

2.	he yo	though you may receive a different answer from God to a prayer of you art, God longs to fill the empty places of His children. What verses have u read lately that have comforted your heart, and what made them a mfort to you?
3.	W	hat do the following verses tell us about God's care for His children?
	Α.	Isaiah 46:4
	В.	Jeremiah 29:11
	C.	Matthew 6:25–34
	D.	Hebrews 13:5 <i>b</i>
	E.	I Peter 5:7

THE EMPTINESS OF LOSS

	THINKING THROUGH
1.	What are the three areas of loss discussed in this chapter?
2.	What are some position losses one may face? Often the adjustments that must be made due to a position loss cause extra pressure on an individual or a family. What insight does James 4:8 give us on handling that pressure
3.	The loss of place moving from Mom and Dad into adulthood—either through marriage or singlehood—or relocation due to a job or family need can often be difficult for a woman. What comfort does Jeremiah 23:23 gives us for some of the emptiness of place?

4.	The author deals with two different types of losses of person. What are they and what are the differences?
5.	What are some of the challenges you or your friends may face in the difficult times of a loss?
	DELVING DEEP
1.	Read Ephesians 2. This chapter especially encourages the Christian as to her position in Christ. How has Christ filled those empty places of position?

2.		ad Psalm 139:7–16. What assurances do these verses give us about our nes of loss of place?		
3.		Jesus longs to fill the empty hearts of His children who have lost loved ones. What do the following verses have to say about death?		
	A.	Psalm 116:15		
	В.	Proverbs 14:32		
	C.	Ecclesiastes 3:2		
	D.	Isaiah 25:8		
	E.	Philippians 1:21		
	F.	1 Thessalonians 4:13–18		
	G.	Hebrews 9:27		

RELATIONAL EMPTINESS

1.	W	That three "Cs" are provided in relationships?
2.	W	Vhat is the difference between an acquaintance and a friend?
3.		ccording to the following verses, how should a Christian conduct herself work and how should she treat her colleagues?
	Α.	Proverbs 13:4
	В.	Ecclesiastes 9:10
	C.	Romans 12:18
	D.	2 Corinthians 8:21

E.	Ephesians 6:5–7
F.	Colossians 3:22–23
G.	1 Timothy 6:1–2
Но	ow does Proverbs 18:24 <i>a</i> instruct us to behave if we are to have friends?
rel wi	you reflect on your friendships, how would you best characterize your ationships? Have you experienced the emptiness of a lost relationship th a friend? Who is the friend that "sticketh closer than a brother" roverbs 18:24 <i>b</i>)?

4.

5.

DELVING DEEP

- 1. The author gives a barometer with which to gauge the health of our friendships. Evaluate your three to five closest friendships based on this barometer.
 - A. This friendship encourages my and her spiritual growth.

В.	This friendship makes me tolerate unbecoming speech and behavior in myself and her.
C.	This friendship is so important to me that I ignore ethical considerations and biblical principles.
	ne Bible has much to say about friendship. What aspect of friendship is scribed in each of the following verses?
A.	Proverbs 16:28
В.	Proverbs 17:9
C.	Proverbs 17:17
D.	Proverbs 18:24
E.	Proverbs 22:11
F.	Proverbs 22:24
G.	Proverbs 27:6

2.

- H. Proverbs 27:9
 - I. Proverbs 27:17
 - J. John 15:13

EMPTINESS WITHIN FAMILIES

1.	The author deals with three types of family relationships. What are they
2.	Sibling rivalry is often stereotyped and laughed at in television situation comedies, but the reality of broken family relationships is no laughing matter. What does Proverbs 18:19 say about siblings?
3.	As we mature, what are some ways we can "live peaceably" with our siblings when there are disagreements?
4.	The empty places left by broken relationships between parent(s) and child(ren) are some of the most difficult to deal with. You cannot change or control your past, but you can forgive. Is there any exception to the "forgiveness clause" found in Mark 11:25–26? Explain.

5.	Divorce is a very traumatic time for the whole family, but especially for the children. Most of us, if not through personal experience, have at least been touched by divorce through friends. What are some of the effects children may feel because of their parents' divorce? What are some verses you can share with them to help them through this time?
6.	There are also difficulties faced based on remarriage and blended families. What are some of the effects children may feel because of their parents' remarriage? What are some verses you can share with them to help them through this time?
7.	Genesis 2:24 should help both parent and child to "cut the apron strings." What does the verse say?

8.	W	hat does the author mean by horizontal versus vertical relationships?
		DELVING DEEP
1.	we dif	the rate of Christians divorcing almost equals that of non-Christians, must be prepared to help friends, or even ourselves, through these ficult times. How can you reach out to those in need (especially the ildren) during the stressful time of divorce?
		ne Bible has much to say about forgiveness affecting both our horizontal d vertical relationships. What do we learn about forgiveness in the lowing verses?
	A.	2 Chronicles 7:14
	В.	Psalm 32:1
	C.	Psalm 86:5
	D.	Matthew 6:14–15

F. Mark 11:25–26
G. Luke 6:37
H. Luke 17:3–4
I. Ephesians 4:31–32
J. 1 John 1:9
3. Write briefly anything on your heart dealing with family relationships.

Ask the Lord to help you overcome areas of longing and hurt and to give

E.

Matthew 18:21-22

you the spirit of forgiveness.

ROMANTIC EMPTINESS

THINKING THROUGH

1.	This chapter deals extensively with singleness and the emptiness that often results. What are the six areas of emptiness the author discusses?
2.	What are some of the common misconceptions about single women and singleness in general?
3.	As parents and as a church, we often encourage some of those misconceptions. How can we adjust our attitudes to rightly mold our daughters (Psalm 144:12 <i>b</i>)?

4.	List and briefly describe the seven "C" columns of godly femininity.
5.	What are the three areas of commitment that a single woman should make to be faithful to her Savior?
6.	Paul recommends singleness for some in 1 Corinthians 7:8. What are some of the benefits that a single woman would have, especially as relates to ministry effectiveness?

DELVING DEEP

1.	Luke 2:36–38 briefly shares the testimony of Anna. Anna was single through widowhood. She was honored with seeing the infant Messiah. What was her testimony? How did she serve the Lord?
2.	Read the book of Ruth. We first meet Ruth as a widow whose response in her grief put her in the Bible and in the line of Christ as the great-grandmother of King David. What were the attributes of Ruth that gave her such a great testimony?
3.	Whether you are single or married, this chapter is important for you. What are some changes to your thoughts, attitudes, and practices you may incorporate based on misconceptions of singleness you may have?
4.	What are some specific things you can do to provide encouragement to a single woman in the near future?

EMPTINESS IN MARRIAGE

THINKING THROUGH

	THINKING THROUGH
1.	What are the seven areas of emptiness in marriage discussed in this chapter?
2.	Ephesians 5:33 tells a wife to "reverence her husband." What are some of the words used to describe that term? If you are married, what are some of the ways you can show that reverence?
3.	What is the "threefold cord" the author describes as relating to marriage and the proverb "two are better than one?"

4.	First Peter 3:1 and 1 Corinthians 7:13–14 give encouragement to the believing spouse of an unbelieving spouse. What do these verses teach?
5.	Abuse is much more prevalent in our society today and unfortunately Christian homes and the church are not immune to its effects. What are the four types of abuse dealt with in this chapter?
6.	What are the three responses that a spouse can use in the case of abuse?
	DELVING DEEP
1.	As a woman who may have experienced abuse yourself or who may have friends in that situation, how can you help guide someone through this time?

2.		low can we help children in abusive situations become godly adults who is not continue in the cycle of abuse?
3.		his chapter is one of the more difficult ones because it is so "close to ome" for most of us. For those of you married, you may be facing some
		npty places. Read Ephesians 1:17–23. What does God desire to give you?
4.	W	That do the following verses tell us about marriage?
	Α.	Genesis 2:24
	В.	Proverbs 18:22
	C.	Proverbs 19:13–14
	D.	1 Corinthians 7:3–4

- E. 1 Corinthians 7:12–16
- F. 1 Corinthians 7:34–39
- G. Ephesians 5:18–33
- H. Titus 2:3–5
 - I. 1 Peter 3:1–7

NO EMPTY PLACES

THINKING THROUGH

1.	What are the positives of empty places, if we use them right, for both the unsaved and the saved?
2.	Read 2 Kings 4, the story of the Shunammite woman. What were some of the empty places this woman lived?
3.	The Shunammite woman appeared to be content in spite of those empty places. Why do you think that was?

4.	Why does the author use the word <i>ministry</i> in describing the works of the Shunammite woman? How can you benefit and learn from her example?
5.	What are some of the examples of the Shunammite woman's godly attitudes and her discernment?
6.	What is required to have a ministry of hospitality? Whether it is your specific gift or not, why should every Christian woman be hospitable?

DELVING DEEP

1.	live	e goal of this chapter is to have "no empty places" lingering in our es. Jesus longs to fill those empty places of His children. What do the lowing verses tell us to fill those empty places with?
	A.	Psalm 71:8
	В.	Psalm 81:10
	C.	Psalm 107:9
	D.	Matthew 5:6
	E.	Romans 15:13–14
	F.	Ephesians 3:14–19
	G.	Ephesians 5:18–21
	H.	Philippians 1:9–11
	I.	Colossians 3:16

2. As you consider some of the empty places you struggle with, meditate on Ephesians 5:18–21 and Colossians 3:16. Filling your heart and mind with God's Word, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are a necessity if the Lord is to fill the emptiness. What are some of the songs and hymns you turn to for solace? What are some of the verses of comfort and promise that you repeatedly turn to?

OUR NEEDY HEARTS

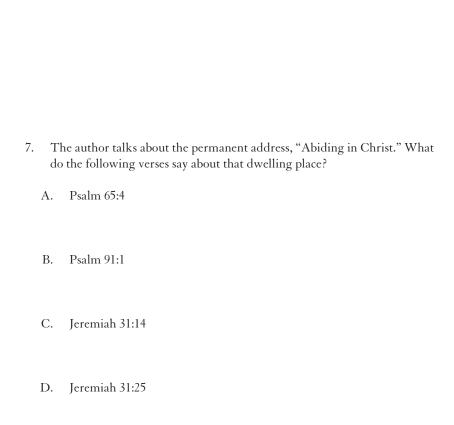
	THINKING THROUGH
1.	Briefly describe the cave and spelunker metaphor relating to our empty places.
2.	What are our true "needs" (warning: there aren't as many as you think!). How do we add to those needs?
3.	John 15:4 is Christ's invitation to His children to "abide in [Him]." Our fulfillment truly should be in Christ. What do the following verses tell us about our Lord?
	A. Psalm 62:5–7

	В.	Psalm 71:3
	C.	Psalm 73:26
	D.	Matthew 11:28
4.	WI the	nat is the difference between true biblical separation and divisiveness for Christian and the church?
5.	Wl	nat do the following verses tell us about being "in Him"?
	A.	1 Corinthians 1:30
	В.	Ephesians 2:14
	C.	Colossians 1:19
	D.	Colossians 2:3

What are the three "alls" in 2 Corinthians 9:8 that God promises us and for
what purpose are they given to us?

E. Colossians 2:9

6.



DELVING DEEP

1.		ad Psalm 15. List and briefly describe the attributes of those who will ide in thy tabernacle" and "dwell in thy holy hill."
2.	As	you complete this Bible study, answer the following questions.
	Α.	What chapter was most helpful for where you are today and why?
	В.	Which biblical character was most encouraging to you and why?
	C.	What promises and admonishments did you receive from God's Word through this study?
	D.	What specific steps will you take as you desire to be "complete in Him?" Consider praying Psalm 139:23 as you think and pray through this question.