



Inklings

The
Heavens Are Up To
Something!

STUDY GUIDE

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Prince



Bible Study Guide

Inklings is indwelled with scripture without containing a single quoted verse. The following discussion guide is intended for use by groups who would like to go deeper and uncover the Word behind the words. It is designed to be facilitated by a group leader with knowledge of the Bible. It is also knowingly “overstuffed.” It will likely not be possible to include all the questions each week. Please select carefully as the Holy Spirit leads, as time allows and based on the needs of your group.

The arc of the story in *Inklings* follows the apostle Paul’s prayer in Ephesians. A good starting point is to pray it with or for the participants in your study group.

I ask...

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 1:17-18

Week One - Book Discussion

1. Who was your favorite character and why?
2. What were some of your favorite scenes?
3. What about Prince’s writing style did you like? Did you dislike?
4. The book contains several deep and several far reaching storylines. What was one of the deep or far reaching themes you noticed?
5. Did you learn anything or were you reminded of something you had forgotten? If so, what?
6. What surprised you in the story? ... about the book?
7. If you could change one thing in the storyline what would it ?
8. Have any of the lessons or phrases stuck with you? If so, what and how will you apply them to your life and calling?

In closing - Ask everyone to bring a bible and their copy of *Inklings* next week.

Week Two

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened

There is a battle raging in the cosmos and all around us and for us. The church often refers to this battle as **spiritual warfare**.

1. Do you believe spiritual warfare exists? Read Acts 26:18, Ephesians 2:2 and 6:12. Discuss.

2. In chapter 6, Mandlenkosi laughs at his ability to entertain himself with his mismatched shoes and the poignant symbolism of this his battle of the soles." Who fights the battle of the soul?

3. In chapter 27, Ntombi and Daniel have a conversation. She says, "so the battle is for the mind?" He replies, "The Battle is for the soul, the mind is the porch." How does satan influencing one's thoughts impact the soul? the Spiritual life?

4. In chapter 8, Mae says, "The Bible says the sheep will know His voice... to know his voice you have to know the other one. Well, not know him but know his voice. Know when he is lyin' to you. He is a liar. Everything he sayin' is a lie." Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 aloud. What happens when we don't take thoughts captive for Christ?

5. In chapter 23, Ntombi is with Daniel as he reveals to her the voices of the enemy. Some of the things she overhears are:

- "one of the best weapons is hurry...Don't let them have any quiet time."
- "Body worship is an easy sell."
- "Have them worship anything in creation but never the Creator."
- "Use fear."

As you listened to the minions of Lucifer, did you recognize any of the ways he distracts? How do you kick him out of your head?

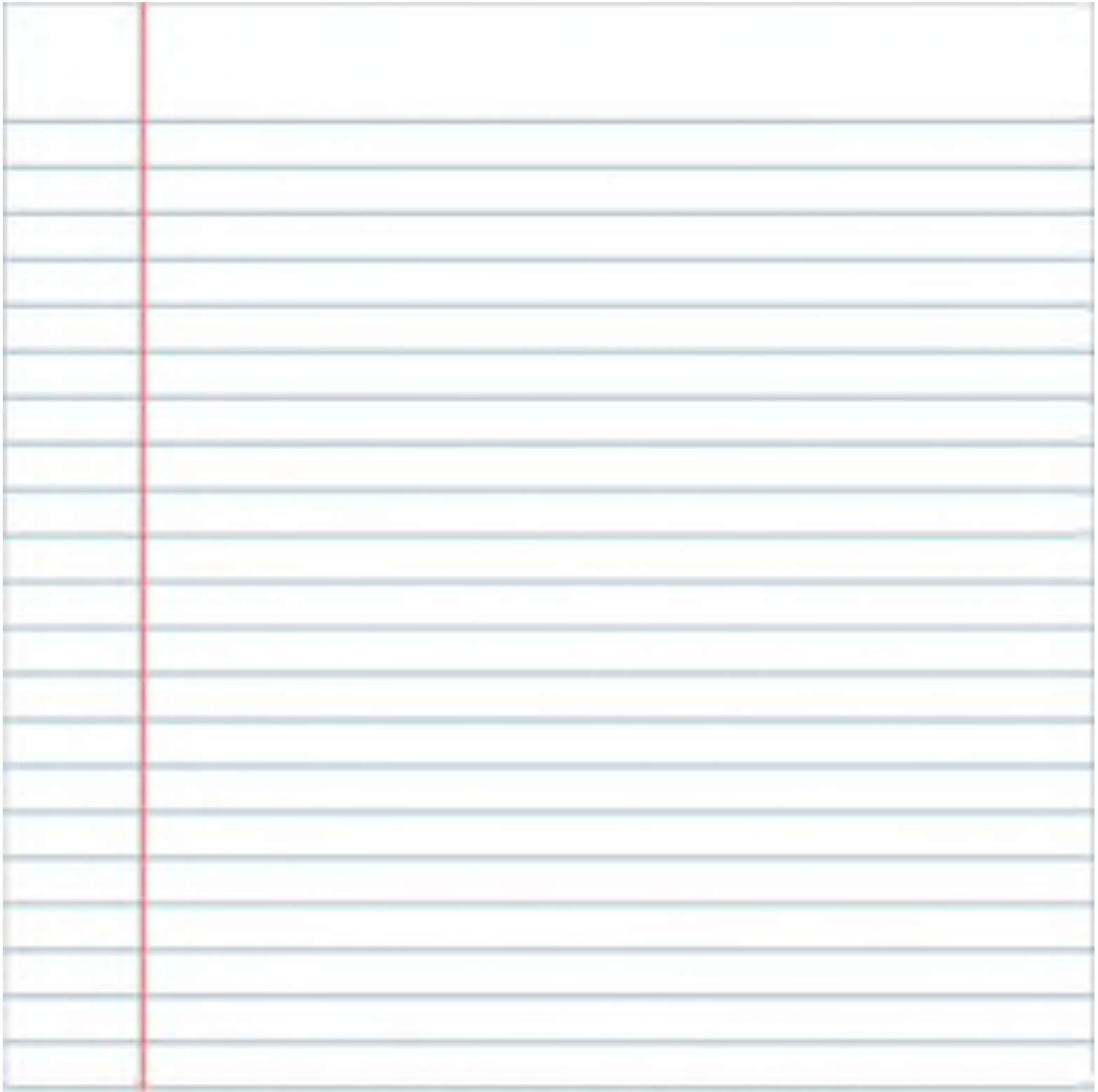
6. In chapter 34 Mae says, "Child, if satan ain't nippin' at your heals you ain't a sheep...It's a war...How do we fight the war as Christ did in Mathew 4:1-11? in Ephesians 6:10-18?"

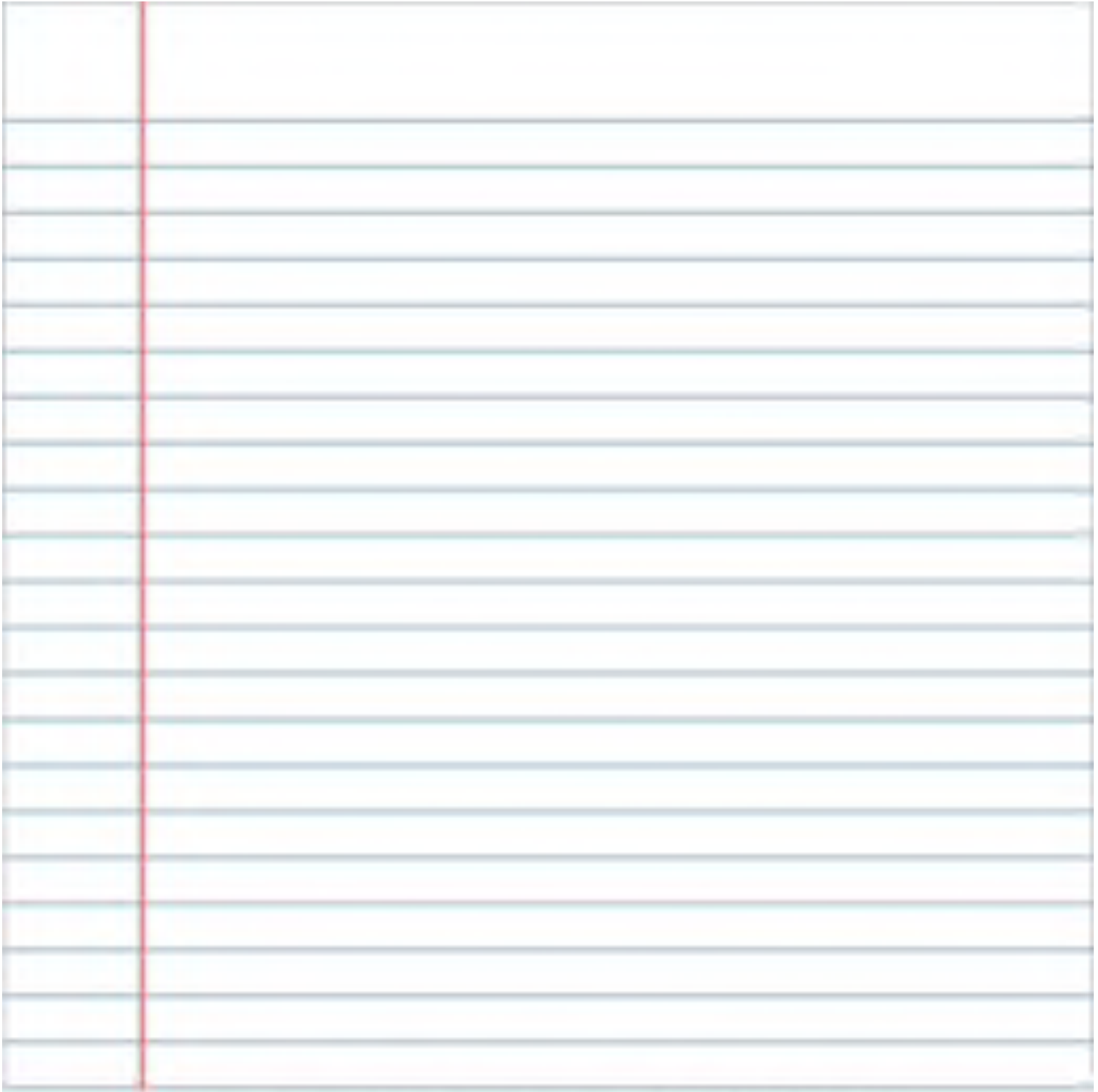
7. In chapter 17, Tata explains, "It is impossible to experience fear and gratitude at the same time." Do you agree or disagree? Why? Have you tried praying thanks when anxious? Does it work? Not convinced, do some research and see how science and medicine are discovering the part of the brain where fear resides is the same part where gratitude resides and the two cannot co-exist simultaneously. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. What is Paul teaching us with this statement?

8. In chapter 10, did you chuckle when you learned it was Daniel who hit the light switches? Read Psalm 91:11. Do you believe in guardian angels? Does God really handle some things for us that are Him and not coincidences? Does an incident come to mind?

9. In chapter 10, Ntombi learns from Daniel about some of the more subtle tactics of the enemy. Daniel says, "Good can be the enemy of highest good...It is one of the enemy's tactics. He'll even use a good trait like tenderheartedness to lure someone." Has the enemy ever used one of your good traits to lure you away? Have you ever been nice instead of holy? How can we avoid being on the fence with ungodly behavior of ourselves or others?

In closing - Remind everyone to bring a bible and their copy of *Inklings* next week.





Week Three

That you may know what is the hope to which He has called you

Each member of God's Kingdom on earth is called up to know him more clearly, to love him more dearly and called out to follow him more nearly. This week, we will look at how we are **Called out** to follow.

1. In chapter 2, Chip says, "I grew up with a godly mother... I asked why a lot. She would say, 'Because I said so.' It is the same with God. 'Because He said so,' is gracious plenty." Have you ever sensed the Holy Spirit urging you to do or say something without knowing His purpose or timing? Do you act or hesitate?
2. In chapter 7, Ntombi is explaining her research to Daniel. She says, "The call of God and more specifically, the voice of God... Not necessarily what people are called to do, but how they know it is of God." How do you recognize the voice of God?
3. In chapter 8, Mae is teaching Ntombi a bit about God's economy. Mae says, "(God's) definition of big people and ours is total opposite....thems that know he's big and they in great need of him is the big-'uns. Those that's big on earth have a harder time loving him, you know...." Read Mark 10:42-45 and then answer these questions. What is the world's definition of big people? What is God's definition? What does this teach us about calling?
4. In chapter 17, Ntombi shares some of Tata's wisdom when she says, "Tata has often said that some serve a cause and others serve Christ." What's the difference? Why does it matter?

5. In chapter 17 on page 113, Ntombi asks Rev. Doty, "In mentoring others about their call, what are the common patterns you see?" He responds with, "...restlessness, dissatisfaction." Has restlessness or dissatisfaction ever led you to something the Lord had in mind for you?

Ntombi goes on to ask, "What are the common mistakes people make in discerning call?" Rev. Doty answers with, "The hunch method... it is their desire, not God's." How do you discern between your will and God's?

6. In chapter 9, page 66, Ntombi is talking with Ben after their swamp adventure. Ntombi says, "I learned I don't have to know where I'm going to enjoy the ride.... God gives us time to learn." How do we stay on the path God wants us on? How should we handle missteps? What would satan want us to do when we get off God's path?

7. In chapter 34, Ntombi (and we as readers) receive a foreshadowing of her calling in the form of a vision. We read, *Ntombi...knew it to be the resurrection...."These are the ones joining the kingdom through your calling."* Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 19. How are these passages consistent with Ntombi's vision? Does a vision from God ever contradict scripture?

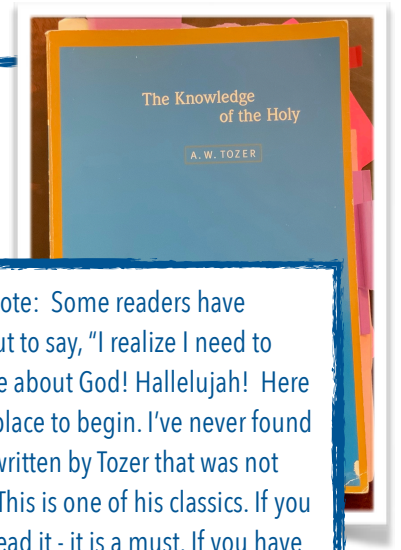
8. In chapter 45, Clarkson's note says, "Scripture teaches us that many are called but few are chosen...may you grow into all God had in mind when He created you and placed you among so great a cloud of witnesses." What do you think he meant by this prayer for Ntombi? Read Mathew 22:14 and Hebrews 12:1. Discuss.

Assignment: Think this week about all those in your cloud of witnesses? Give thanks.

In closing - Remind everyone to bring a bible and their copy of *Inklings* next week.

Week Four Knowledge of Father God

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory
may give you the spirit of wisdom and of



Author's Note: Some readers have reached out to say, "I realize I need to know more about God! Hallelujah! Here is a good place to begin. I've never found anything written by Tozer that was not anointed. This is one of his classics. If you have not read it - it is a must. If you have read it, you are smiling and thinking you should read it again."

1. In the above prayer (taken from Eph 1:17-18) by the Apostle Paul, who is the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Why does he ask that we would have wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Father God? What does knowledge of God do in a believer's life? What have you done to increase your knowledge of God? How could you do more?
2. Read or listen to the words of the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Be still. Let the words settle in.
3. In chapter 9, Ben tells Ntombi, "You know something of the Word of God... It is time to learn the God of the Word." What does Ben mean by this? Is it possible to learn scripture and miss out on knowing God? Explain.
4. St. Augustine (354 to 430) is quoted in saying, "Oh Lord, you made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. In chapter 45, Ntombi said it this way, "Father, it is you we long for. We don't know what we're missing." How are these statements similar and true?
5. In chapter 41, Whitting tells Ntombi, "You hit on the crux last night. The objective is God himself not what he can do for us. The beauty, the goodness, the truth we long for is in Him and through Him." Why do we yearn for beauty, goodness and truth? Which of these transcendentals (truth, goodness or beauty) was Ntombi most passionate about? What about Mandlenkosi? What about Becca? What about you?

6. In chapter 16, Mandlenkosi experiences a Theophany (of sorts) when he cries out, "O God! Where are you?" At that moment peace fell around him... holy silence. He heard, "I AM here." Why is I AM capitalized? Who do you think is present with Mandlenkosi in the container? Which person of the Trinity?

7. Pass around painting of the Trinity by Andrew Rublev (1411 to 1425-27). You will find a copy in the appendix of this study guide. Then proceed with: In chapter 41 Whitting references this painting and says, "Father God is in the center, the Holy Spirit is on... his left and Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand....To me the painting depicts the cup of salvation." Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and asked, 'If it is your will, let this cup pass from me.'" Read Mathew 26:36-46 and Mark 14: 35-42. What does the cup represent? What does the fact Jesus took the cup tell you about his love of the Father?

8. In chapter 8, Mae shares words from her preacher's sermon. Her pastor was actually quoting Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). The four degrees of loving God are:

1. . loving self for ones own sake
2. loving God for ones own sake
3. loving God for God's own sake and
4. loving oneself for God's own sake

Which category do you fall in? Which category would you like to fall in?

9. Read Psalms 37:4. How does one delight in the Lord? On page 302, how does Pearl explain to Lily the relationship between her desires, God's desires and God providing?

Week Five
the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints
aka - the fellowship of the saints in the Church

1. In chapter 17, Rev. Doty says, "People ask what they can do to get closer to God, but when I tell them to read their Bible, I know most won't." Do you agree or disagree? Read John 8:31. What are some of the substitutes people use instead of actually reading the Holy Bible?

2. In chapter 17, Rev. Doty goes on to say, "I don't believe we are in a reformation yet... There is lots of activity such as churches trying new things. I don't think becoming more like modern culture is the answer though..." Comment on the church trying new things, becoming like the culture. Does the modern day church need reformation? Why or why not?

3. In Chapter 31, Whitting and Ntombi are seated in a beautiful old worship space (aka St. Michaels in downtown Charleston). She asks him, "Do you believe in the communion of saints?" Whitting responds with, "One need only walk into this space to know we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses." Read Acts 1:9-11, Hebrews 12:1&2,. What do these passages teach us about the communion of saints?

4. In chapter 40, Ntombi is in the whirlwind as she realizes what the research is telling her. She tells Whitting, "The recent decades have been a flurry of activity in churches." He asks, "... with what focus?" Her answer is, "self." She goes on to explain what was missing, with "The word God is mostly missing...there is a lot of psychology (self help) and sociology (social justice)." She concludes many churches are focused on the wrong "ology." When was the last time you read a book or took a course about God? Where would you find one?

5. Read Psalm 119:97, 101 & 105. Why is it essential to read and meditate on scripture?

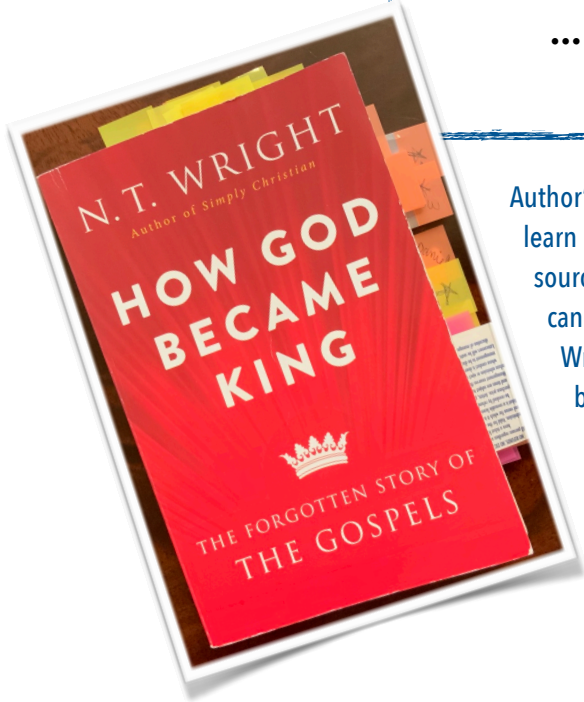
6. Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest evangelist of all time ,often witnessed an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as he preached. On one occasion, he is reported to have made a mark in his preaching notes to indicate the onset of the change. When he went back to look at his notes he discovered the moment to be when he was talking about God. Do you think teaching and preaching about God are important in the church? Why or why not?

9. One of the "below the surface" themes in *Inklings* is designed to convey some of Father God's characteristics. They are taught through the example of Clarkson. How does Clarkson's involvement in Ntombi's life , demonstrate the love of THE Father?

10. Whitting and Ntombi uncover signs of the next Great Awakening. Do you see any signs? Is the Holy Spirit at work? Give examples. Will there be another Awakening? Do you hope for one?

11. Ntombi discovered an "army" in formation. What's your part in the next great awakening? Are you ready? in position?

Week Six
... of our Lord Jesus Christ
Rebirth vs. being “saved.”



Author's note - Among early readers, some have expressed a desire to learn more about the Great Awakening. While the absolute best sources on the Great Awakening are those written at the time, they can be a bit turgid in voice and difficult to read. This book by N. T. Wright does an excellent job of describing what happened between the two great awakenings and how the church lost her way. Here's a photo of my copy. It deserves even more marked pages.

1. In chapter 27, Ntombi is describing what she learned from Jonathan Edwards' book. She says we have lost use of the word soul. She describes the soul as that part of man that longs for God. Then Whitting makes a reference to the "God shaped hole in each of us." Have you ever felt like something was missing? Ever felt a longing you couldn't explain or fill on your own?
2. In chapter 40. Ntombi questions, "When did we (as a Church) change our focus?" Whitting explains the transition from being reborn, (becoming a new creature) to being saved, (having our ticket punched for Heaven) came after the wrong named Enlightenment. In Edward's day (1st great awakening) they looked for a transformed person, the long term evidence of rebirth. Whitting goes on to call what has happened in recent decades as "a dumbing down of sorts." Describe what it means to be reborn?

3. In Romans 3:23, we learn "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In chapter 41, Whitting talks about the meaning of the word glory with, "...when scripture refers to glory it means the full character of God," his weight. We fall short. Read Exodus 40:34-35 for a Biblical description of glory. To understand rebirth, one must understand what the Old Testament teaches on the glory of God tabernacling with his people. The arc of the covenant is the prototype for the heart of the believer. In rebirth, God tabernacles in (and is King over) the reborn life. Read John 17:21-23. This is Jesus' prayer. What is he asking of the Father? Note: he is not praying for "unity" as the world defines it but true oneness with the Father.

4. In chapter 41, Whitting describes rebirth from some of Edwards writing with, "The soul was dying to self and being reborn... In true rebirth, the heart's desires are transformed." Explain this as Jesus did in John 3:1-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

5. Have you ever been convicted of your sins? How is conviction different than guilt? Why do you think modern psychology and the current day culture tries to eschew guilt as a bad thing?

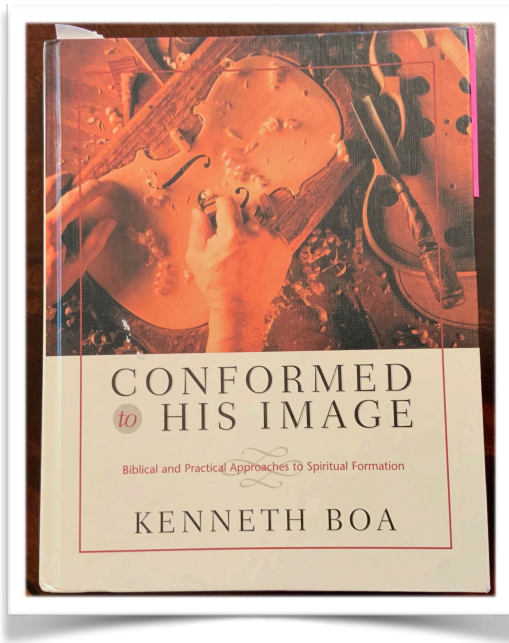
6. Find and read the words to the Hymn "Power in the Blood" (Note: This hymn has been removed from some modern hymnbooks because it mentions blood). Read Leviticus 17:11 and Luke 22:20. Why is blood important in the Bible?

7. In chapter 41, Ntombi conveys the words she found missing in their study of contemporary Church publications (bulletins, newsletters...) One of the missing words was, "sin." Why do you think the word sin is out of vogue, out of print? Why is avoiding teaching and preaching about sin, eternally dangerous?

8. What are we to do with our sin? Why? When?

Week Seven

The Spirit of wisdom and of revelation



Author's Note: From beginning to end, Ntombi is on her path (though she is still looking for it) and a spiritual transformation is occurring. My mother, who was not a very good cook, would occasionally try her hand at biscuits. Most of the time they came out of the oven about an inch tall and hard as rocks. She called them, "cooked in the squat." Many Christians are cooked in the squat. There is no leaven. Leaven comes from the Spiritual Disciplines. Ntombi had lots of leaven (Spiritual Disciplines) in her life. The result was a transformation. She is being made ready or her calling

Conformed to His Image by Dr. Ken Boa is the best comprehensive book on Transformation I have encountered. It is a reference tool and worth reading from cover to cover.

1. The most well known resource on Spiritual Disciplines is by Richard Foster. He describes the need for the disciplines as follows: *"The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us . . . The inner righteousness we seek is not something that is poured on our heads. God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us...."* The longer list of disciplines includes:

- Meditation
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Simplicity
- Fellowship
- Journaling
- Chastity
- Stewardship
- Submission/Obedience
- Bible Study
- Evangelism
- Contemplation
- Confession
- Solitude
- Gratitude
- Self-Examination
- Silence

2. Which of these do you recall Ntombi practicing? Which of these do you practice regularly? Has it made a difference in your spiritual life? Which discipline do you need to practice more?

3. The ending of *Inklings* shows the reader, Ntombi's reflection in the airplane window yet Ntombi doesn't notice it. Contrast the last scene with the scene on page 16. What has changed? In the final scene, Ntombi doesn't notice herself. How is this lack of focus on herself reflective of spiritual growth?

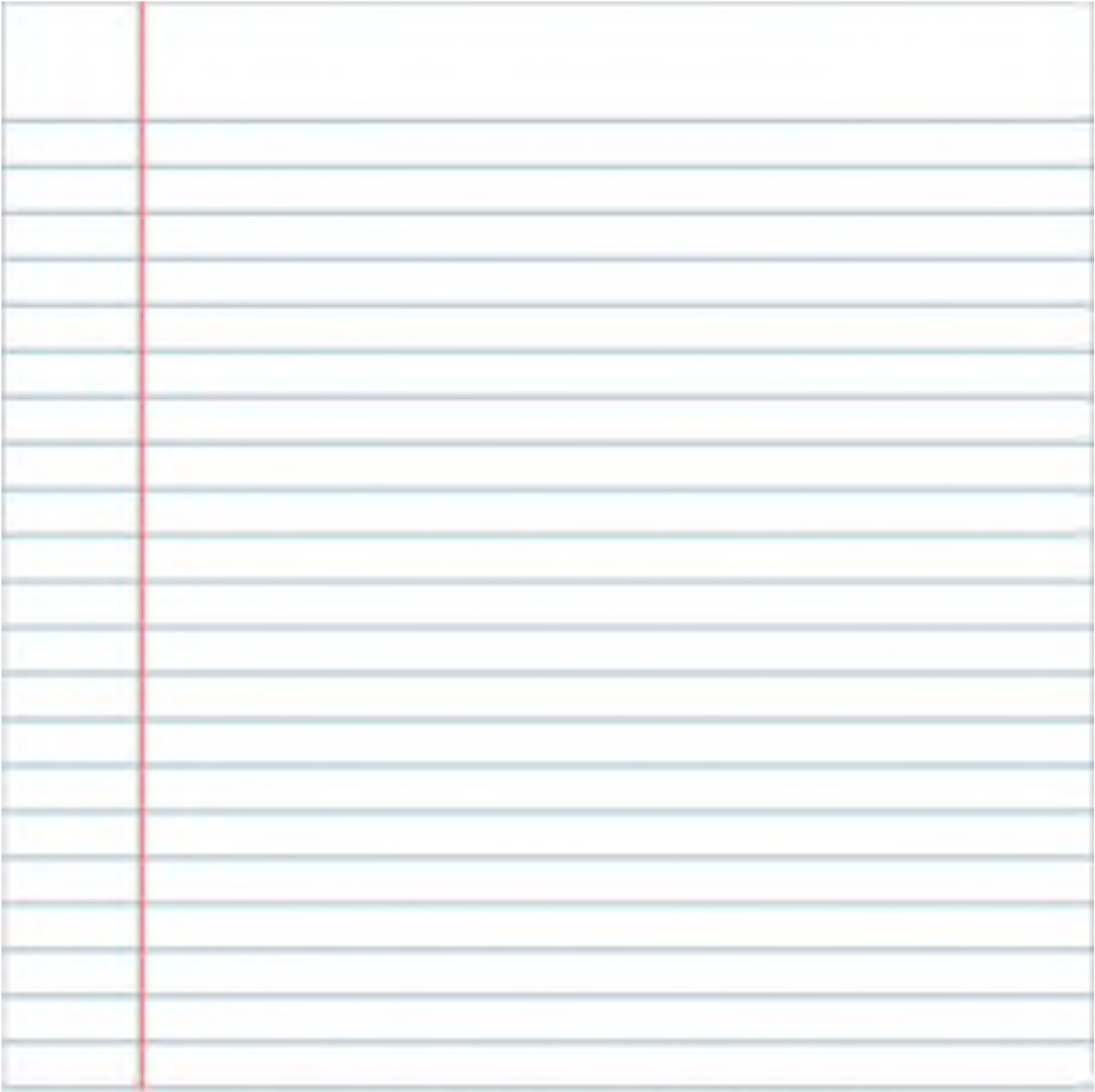
4. In chapter 29, Ntombi has a heart warming worship experience. Read 1 Corinthians 12:2-3. Many scholars believe Paul is speaking of himself here when he talks about being called up to the third heaven. Have you ever sensed a lift in your spirit as you worshipped?

5. In chapter 8, Mae tells Ntombi, "...you can tell a lot by how someone prays. Some folks sound like they given God a lecture. They tellin' and tellin'. Bible says to ask. Listen to your prayers. Do you ask or tell? Read Matthew 7:7. How should we pray?

6. The Spiritual Life is about relationship and relationships include communication. How did Ntombi reach out to God? How did God reach out to her?

7. In chapter 34, Mae and Becca take Ntombi to their prayer shed. Becca describes it as a "thin place...where the divide between heaven and earth is worn threadbare by all the prayers." Do you have a thin place? If not, where do you envision creating one?

Have you ever used a prayer journal? Did it help?



Wrap - up Discussion
The now what, so that of it all...

1. What are three things you learned from the lessons in *Inklings*?

2. What are you challenged to do differently in your own Spiritual Walk?

3. Have you started any new habits?

4. Have you learned something about God that is new to you?

5. In the words of Sir Richard of Chichester, do you want to:
 Know him more clearly
 Love Him more dearly
 and, follow him more nearly
 for his own sake?

5. Pray the Ephesians prayer aloud for yourselves or as a blessing over the group:

I ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, to give me the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of himself. I ask that I have the eyes of my heart enlightened, that I may know what is the hope to which he has called me and what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 1:17-18



Acknowledgments

A special thanks to Pam McKinney who gave of her time and amazing instructional design talent. Pam initiated this discussion guide, found many of the scripture references and created a first draft of many of the questions. From all of us who use the words on these pages - a heart felt, Thank you!

