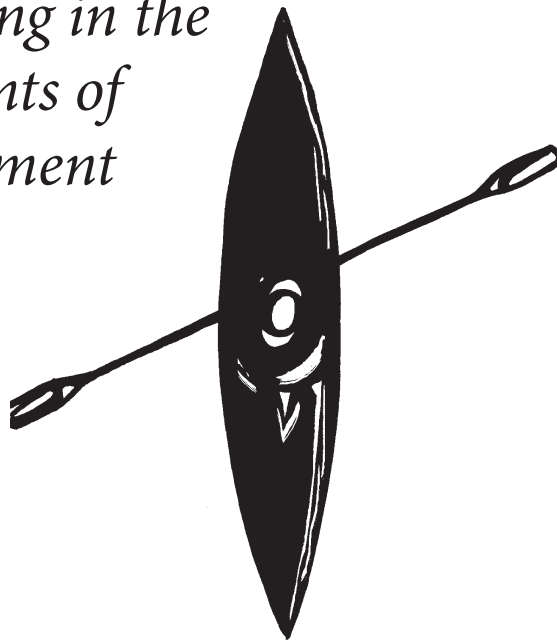


Restreaming

*Thriving in the
Currents of
Retirement*



STUDY GUIDE



Church Publishing
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Study Guide

The purpose of this supplemental guide is to provide resources that may provoke and foster self-reflection and facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation for the journey we are all undertaking in our human existence. As you read this book, you may have come across several metaphors, personal stories, life themes, poignant aphorisms, and even some hints of wisdom and grace that have sparked attention in your mind, body, or soul.

Everyone has different learning styles and personal ways to approach and “open” packages of ideas and themes. In this study guide, you’ll find several options to help address these subjects, including personal reflection, journaling, discussion groups, and others. The guide offers a selected list of major topics from various vignettes in the book.

Mega Questions

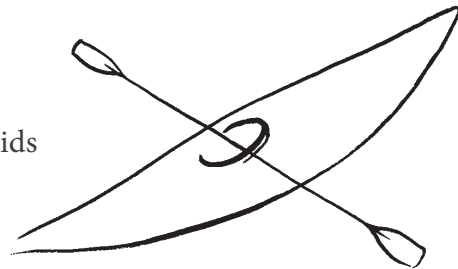
In the preface of the book, there are some big life questions that may capture your attention and draw you into complex and open-ended answers. Review the following questions, reflect on them, write about them, and discuss their relevance in your life:

- Who am I in this new context of aging and senior status?
- How am I going to spend the last chapters of my life?
- What kinds of relationships will foster and enrich my later years?
- Are there new ideas, interests, directions I can pursue?
- How can I make a difference and contribute to the lives of others?

The Kayak

The kayak image is a metaphor used throughout the book as a balanced and functional vessel in which to ride the streams of our life. Like many metaphors, the kayak may have hidden meanings to you.

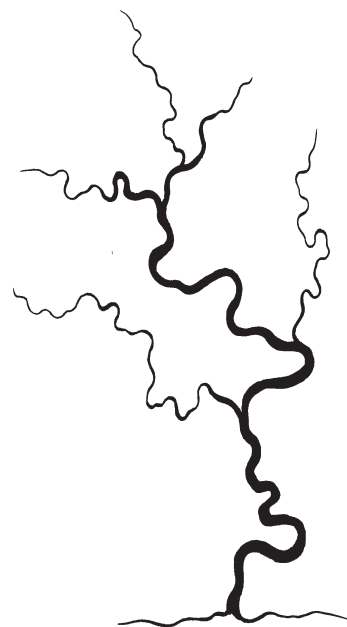
- What kind of kayak do you have?
- What do you carry in your kayak?
- Is it stable, balanced, and waterproof?
- Have you learned to ride through the rapids and turbulent waves? How?



Living Streams

Reread the vignette on page 44. Try to look back on your life as a journey in a stream.

- Reflect on how this metaphorical stream carried you along over the years.
- Were there moments that were swift and chaotic?
- What rocks, logs, or other obstacles snagged you along the way?
- Has the stream deepened with a slower current in your later years?



Turning Points

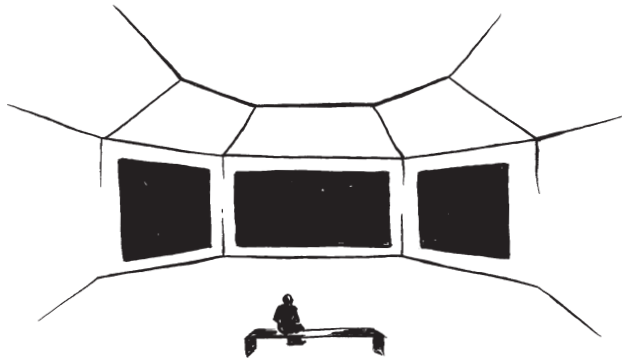
Reread the vignette on page 12. Draw a long straight line and mark sections for each decade of your life. Reflecting on your past, note major changes and “turning points” on this line. Think about these shifts and consider addressing the following questions:

- What were the causes and correlations that prompted me to take this path in my life?
- How have these turning points impacted my life, my family, others around me, the world?
- What have I learned from this inward reflection of my past journey?

A Sense of the Sacred

Reread the vignette on page 16. Reflect on times in your life when you sensed a special moment of grace, a sacred space that opened up a deeper relationship with yourself, with others, with God. Think about these special times and consider addressing the following questions:

- What made this sacred time feel holy to me?
- How can I be more attentive and open to the sacred spaces in my life?
- How has this experience impacted my life?



Fear

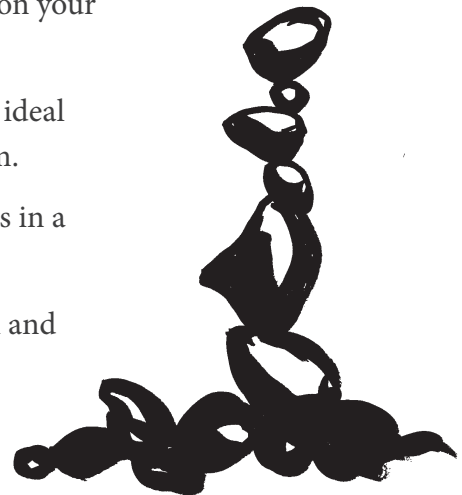
Reread the vignette on page 24.

- What were some major fears in your life?
- How did you cope with them? Did they slowly vanish or do they remain with you today?
- Make a list of your current major fears and prioritize them. What can you do about them? How do you plan to address them? How do they influence your behaviors and your attitude toward life?

Balancing Life

Reread the vignette on page 8.

- Make a list of the major time commitments in your life (personal time, family, church, work, play, friends, sleeping, etc.). Try to allocate a percentage to each of these areas.
- Draw a large circle on paper and create a color pie chart with sections representing four to five major areas based on your percentage allocations.
- Make another list of major areas and assign to them ideal percentages of time you would like to spend on them.
- Draw another large circle with these ideal allocations in a color pie chart.
- How could you change your life to achieve this ideal and balanced perspective?



Cross-Training

Reread the vignette on page 28.

- How frequently do you physically exercise?
- How do you exercise (running, weights, yoga, swimming, biking, other)?
- How can you cross-train using a variety of exercises to attain a better physical balance and health?
- How frequently do you practice spiritual exercises?
- In what ways (morning devotion, prayer, *lectio divina*, meditation, compline, other)?
- How can you cross-train using a variety of practices to attain a better spiritual balance and health?

Letting Go

Reread the vignette on page 30. The older monk in this Zen Buddhist story spoke of helping the young woman by putting her down on the other bank.

- Can you recall times in your life when you have carried things in your heart and mind too long?
- Reflect on what happened and why you carried it with you.
- How can you learn to let go of these burdens?
- Can you think of a story in the Bible that captures the importance of letting go?

A Rhythm of REP

Reread the vignette on page 32.

- Reflect on the impact of these three keys to your “restreamed” journey (Relationships, Exercise, Purpose).
- Make a list of major events and activities you have experienced in the past week.
- Note how they have aligned with REP.
- Are there activities in the past week that have not fulfilled you in these areas?
- Can you be more intentional in getting into this rhythm of REP?

Radical Amazement

Reread the vignette on page 53. Rabbi Heschell suggests that happiness is tied to understanding life as filled with wonder—wonder-filled.

- Can you recall moments in your life when you experienced wonder?
- When have you been absolutely amazed?
- Take a casual walk and stare at the clouds, trees, flowers, birds. Try to open your senses to nature surrounding you.
- How can you break through the “muck of a routine life” and be open to new wonders?

Humility

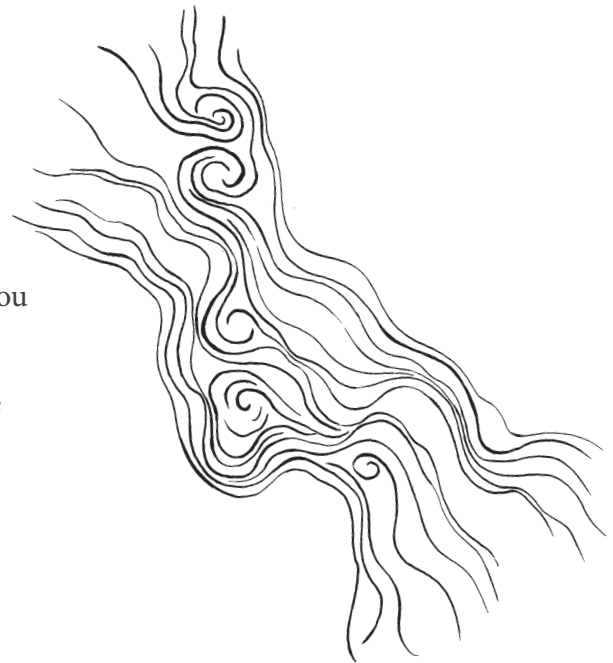
Reread the vignette on page 62. The word “humility” may be translated as “the quality or state of being humble,” but also as “grounded” or “from the earth,” since it derives from humus (earth).

- Have there been people in your life who you recall as humble?
- What traits and attributes contributed to their being perceived as people with humility? How have they influenced you?
- What does humility mean to you in relationship to other people, to God, to the world?
- How can you be more aware and practice humility?

Rip Currents

Reread the vignette on page 71.

- Have there been times in your life when you were emotionally “swept away” by major events? How did you feel?
- How did you cope with these “rip currents”? Who has been present with you in these critical junctures in your life?
- How will you react and respond to these currents in the future?



Legacy

Reread the vignette on page 78.

- What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your life?
- Has it changed over the years? If so, how?
- Write your obituary confirming this ideal legacy.
- How have you lived your life to ensure your legacy?
- What can you be and do differently to align with your legacy?

Seeking Wisdom

Reread the vignette on page 96.

- Make a list of three people in your life who you admired and respected as wise mentors. What attributes did they possess that lifted them up in your perspective?
- In the vignette, there is a reference to Confucius's three paths to wisdom: reflection, imitation, and experience. Reflect on your own wisdom journey in these three areas. Would you agree that experience is the "bitterest"?
- How has your understanding of wisdom shifted in your retirement years?



Hope vs. Optimism

Reread the vignette on page 102.

- Do you agree that hope is different from optimism?
- Can you recall a time in your life when you felt you had lost hope?
- In what ways can you rediscover and sustain hope in your life?
- What is the greatest hope in your life? Has it changed since you have retired?

The Paradox of Mortality

Reread the vignette on page 115.

- Why, in our culture, is there a resistance to bringing up the subject of death?
- What is meant by the phrase “the paradox of mortality”?
- How do you wrestle with the inevitability of death (nonexistence) and your own sense of immortality?
- Where does hope fit into this dialectic?