

The Contemplative Mom
Study Guide

A companion to
The Contemplative Mom
Restoring Rich
Relationship with God
in the
Midst of Motherhood
written by Ann Kroeker

Chapter 1 – Our Richest Relationship

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

Icebreakers

1. Picture yourself as a nun. (Try not to laugh too hard.) What do you imagine it would be like? Which parts of that life would you love? Which would you have a hard time with?

Relationships with Others

1. Imagine the early days of romance.... What do you remember from dating your husband? Have you ever had that with God? Explain.
2. Which of the relationships listed (p. 11-14) is easiest for you to relate to? Friend to friend? Father to child? Master to servant? Why?
3. Which relationship is the most difficult for you to comprehend? Any ideas why?

Relationship with God

1. How would you describe a close, intimate relationship? Why is intimacy with God important?
2. What does your "walk with God" feel like right now? A pleasant excursion? A wretched assignment? Why?
3. Did any of the "Moms Speak Out" quotes catch your attention? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. What is the next step on your spiritual journey? Share this with someone you know.
2. Pick 3 of the practical steps on p.7-9 to try. List them here:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
3. Pick one verse from the book or directly from the Bible and write it on a note-card. Prop it by your sink, the mirror, your car's dashboard, or some other prominent location. Talk to God about it each time you read it. What is God teaching you through this verse?

If you don't have a personal relationship with God and would like to begin one, ask your small group leader or another Christian how to begin this process. They would love to pray with you!

A Little Deeper

1. Look up a couple of the verses listed in the book. Read the Bible text surrounding the verse to get some context. Then, think about them throughout the day. Ask God what He's teaching you through these scriptures.
2. Do you see yourself as belonging to God? Ask Him how He wants to live His life through you. Then search the scriptures for 4 or 5 verses that answer that question for you personally.
3. Start a prayer journal--a place to record a dialog between you and God. Skim through p. 71-74 for some ideas on how to get started.

Chapter 2 - Time Alone with the Beloved

And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. Matthew 14:23

Icebreakers

1. What do you do on date nights?

2. What are your favorite activities to do with friends?

Relationship with Others

1. What are some of the most creative things you've done to find time to be with your husband?

2. Ask your husband or a close friend to describe you. Do you feel like God knows you in this way?

Relationship with God

1. How would you describe God? What experiences led you to see God in this way?

2. What are some of the most creative things you've done to find time to be with God?

3. When do you feel most like God's beloved child? When do you question that God really loves you?

4. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. Pick 2 verses from the book or directly from the Bible and write them on a note-card. Prop it by your sink, the mirror, your car's dashboard, or some other place where you spend a lot of time. Talk to God about it each time you read it. What is God teaching you through these verses? Read these verses to your children throughout this week (before bed, as a prayer, etc.).
2. Take some extra time this week to be alone with God. Share what God talked to you about with someone you know this week.

A Little Deeper

1. Read Romans 8:38-39. Are we ever alone?
2. Read Psalm 139. Journal your thoughts.
3. What will you do differently every week to make time for a "spiritual date" (p. 25-26, 34)?

Chapter 3 - Divine Companionship

Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20

Icebreakers

1. Who do you go to first when you have great news to tell?

2. What is the first thing you see when you wake up in the morning? What is the last thing you see when you go to bed at night?

Relationship with Others

1. What activities are you doing with a half heart instead of with a servant's heart?

2. What are some ways you can involve your children in your walk with God? How can you share your divine companionship with them?

3. All Mother Theresa did was "love Jesus and do small things with great love." In what specific ways can you do this in your life?

Relationship with God

1. Did you spend some time with God as you did your chores this week? What did you do, and what did you talk about with God?

2. What pennies or letters have been left in your path lately?

3. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. Pick 3 reminders (p. 43-47) to try this week. List them here:

4.

5.

6.

2. Are there any reminders you already use? If so, what?

A Little Deeper

1. What does intimate companionship look like in our world today? How can we have this intimacy with God?

2. Read Psalm 23. Imagine walking with God as your companion and friend through all of the situations as you read the Psalm.

3. Find John 11:1-44. As you read the passage, picture yourself with Jesus as one of His closest friends. What emotions do you feel? What are you thinking? How do you picture the expressions on people's faces and their body language as the story unfolds? What would your conversation with Jesus be on the day after the event?

Chapter 4 - Talking to God

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:8

Icebreakers

1. What did you do when you first found out you were pregnant? When was it? What happened? Who did you tell?

Relationship with Others

1. Describe a time when you called someone to share something, and they seemed genuinely interested in listening to you. Do you feel this way with God?
2. How do you feel when a friend or family member calls you first to share important news?
3. Have you ever experienced a personal betrayal? Is this still affecting your relationship with God and others?
4. Discuss trust. Is it easy for you to trust others? Hard? Why?

Relationship with God

1. Describe prayer. What is it? How do you "do" it?
2. What is the most difficult area for you to trust God with? Why is it so difficult?
3. In what ways do you prefer to share with God - writing, walking, praying, singing, etc.?

4. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

A *Application*

1. Spend some time pouring out your heart to God in writing. Begin a prayer journal if you don't have one already. Which of Ann's suggestions (p. 71-74) are you going to use as you journal?

2. Which verse (p. 67-68) spoke to you the most? Why? Write this verse as a prayer in your prayer journal.

A *Little Deeper*

1. Take some time to read from the book of Psalms. What do you notice about the Psalms? Can you picture yourself saying some of those things?

2. Find 5 additional Bible verses that talk about God's faithfulness and love.

3. Read Mark 4:35-41. Do you trust God with the storms in your life?

Chapter 5 - Listening to God

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! Psalm 139:17

Icebreakers

1. Are you more of a talker or listener? Do you feel comfortable with silence or do you attempt to fill it with words?

Relationship with Others

1. What has God taught you lately through a friend, husband, or child?

2. What has been the greatest gift you ever received? Have you ever thought of the Bible as a love letter from your Beloved? How would that perspective change how you read the Bible?

Relationship with God

1. Which is the most reliable and dynamic way God speaks to us? How should we compare this source with all others?

2. Can you think of a time when you felt God clearly was telling you to do something? What was He telling you? How did you respond?

3. What has God been laying on your heart lately? How does this measure with His Word and the advice of other godly counsel?

4. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. What scripture verses would you like to have written on your children's hearts? Why did you choose those verses? When and how will you teach them to your children? Begin to memorize a verse together this week.

2. Set a 15 minute appointment with God on your calendar. Sit and listen while He speaks to you. What do you hear Him saying?

A Little Deeper

1. Read Psalm 119:11. Why is it important to memorize scripture? Now, pick 5 additional scripture verses you would like to have written on your heart. List them here and begin to memorize them.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

2. Briefly describe Ann's method of "Divine Reading" (p. 83-86). Pick a chapter of the Bible and read it using this method.

3. Read Psalm 19. What is revealed about God through His Word and creation?

Chapter 6 - Taking His Advice

You are my friend if you do what I command. John 15:14

Icebreakers

1. Have you given any unique or funny commands to your kids lately? What were they?

Relationship with Others

1. What commands do you give to your children most often? How do you feel when they don't obey?
How do you feel when they obey right away?
2. What are the "two" greatest commandments? What is the key word?
3. How do you respond when others give you advice? Is it harder when it is a family member or a friend?

Relationship with God

1. What commands do you personally struggle with the most?
2. Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed really bizarre? What was it and how did you respond?
3. God will empower and enable you to do anything He asks of you, if you yield to Him. Have you ever experienced this? How?

4. Is there something God is asking you to do now that is out of your comfort zone? Maybe a "first impression" He wants you to follow through on? What is it and what are you doing with it?

5. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. A rich relationship with the Lord is key to obeying Him. Knowing the Lord Jesus, being known by Him, is all part of it. When we trust Him enough to pour our hearts out to Him, He is freed up to work in us. Is this where you're at? If not, is this where you want to be? What will it take to get there? Begin to take the next steps.

If you don't yet know Jesus personally or you want to know Him deeper, please talk with your small group leader. She would love to help you take the next step!

A Little Deeper

1. As you read through the list of commands on p. 105, write down 3 commands that stand out. How are you going to follow through with these commands this week? Be sure to ask God for His love to work in you and through you as you learn to obey.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

2. Read 1 Samuel 3. What did God tell Samuel to do? How did he respond?

3. Read Psalm 119 as a prayer to God. Only through His Power can we ever hope to obey His Words.

Chapter 7 - Exploring the Great Outdoors

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. Psalm 19:1-2

Icebreakers

1. Describe your favorite place to go in nature. Why is it your favorite?

Relationship with Others

1. What family events do you remember with fondness? Briefly describe them.

2. In Romans 1:19-20, scripture indicates that "God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen,so that men are without excuse." How can your love and gratefulness of God's creation be used to share Christ with your family and friends?

Relationship with God

1. What is your favorite season? What is your least favorite season? What do you learn about God through these seasons of life?

2. Read Psalm 19:1-4. What does this passage tell you about God's creation?

3. Do you treat God's creation like it is holy ground? How can you show more reverence to His creation?

4. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. Take your children on a walk with God. Listen to what God is saying through them.

2. Pick 2 verses from the book or directly from the Bible and write them on a note-card. Sit outside and read these verses to God. Remember His great love for us as you read these verses.

3. Pick 3 of Ann's tips for the "Reluctant Naturalist" (p. 123-125) to try. List them here:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

A Little Deeper

1. Spend some time "ruminating" about the scripture Ann shares in this chapter. Do any of them stand out? What do you notice?

2. Read one or more of the parables listed (p. 127-128). What is God saying to you through these parables?

3. Read Psalm 104. In your journal, write a love letter to God about His creation.

Chapter 8 - Experiencing Community

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-20

Icebreakers

1. What does the word "community" mean to you?

Relationship with Others

1. Do you have safe people in your life whom you can share with? Do you provide a safe place for people in your life? Ask God to guide you in your relationships.
2. What is the hardest thing you've had to walk through with another person? How did this make you stronger?
3. What things do you do as a family to keep community?
4. Are you committed to a church family? Why or why not?

Relationship with God

1. What about community do you struggle with? Keeping peace with other believers? The thought of needing others? Having others dependent on you? How can God help you with these struggles?
2. Do you have a relationship that you need to give over to God? Take time right now to talk to Him about it.
3. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. Read Mark 2:1-12. What do you learn about the four men who carried the paralytic? What do they teach us about community? How can you model this type of friendship in your life?
2. Write out some of the names of those who God has called you to live in community with. Pray that God will fill you with extraordinary love and commitment for these people.
3. Pick 2 verses from the book or directly from the Bible and write them on a note-card. What is God teaching you through this verse? Share these verses with a woman in your "moms" community.
4. Try one of the "Creating Community Traditions" (p. 152-154). Share about your experience with a friend.

A Little Deeper

1. Read Romans 12:1-21. Write down any words that pop out at you. What is God talking to you about as you read this?
2. Read Job 2:11-13. What do you learn about friendship through Job's three friends and their love for Job? Verse 13 tells us "they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights." Imagine a friendship so deep where someone would sacrifice 7 days to mourn with you.
3. Read John 17:20-26. Replace "they" and "them" with your own name as you read this passage to personalize it. Do you realize that Jesus was praying this for you?

Chapter 9 - A Love Like No Other

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. Revelation 4:8

Relationship with Others

1. Jesus Christ is our connection to God. Is there someone in your life whom you look to as an example, someone who models a walk with God as a companion and who understands that this companion is the Holy God of Israel, the one true God? What, in particular, do you notice about their life?

Relationship with God

1. What 3 attributes do you think of when you think of God? How does your perspective change when you take time to focus on God's attributes?
2. What do you find most fascinating about God?
3. When do you take time to worship God? Describe the circumstances (music, setting, etc.).
4. Was there a mom testimony that spoke to you? Which one(s) and how?

Application

1. Pick one Bible verse that speaks directly to you of God's holiness. Write that verse on your heart and mind. Worship God in song or through reciting as you memorize it.
2. Find a quiet place and read the "Room" poem aloud (p. 169-170). Think about how God has changed you and is making you into a "fit vessel." Think about His power that "causes broken hearts to live."

Final Words

God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:15-16

Take time to reflect. What have you learned about yourself through this study? What have you learned about God? Now, write your own "Moms Speak Out" quote. What would you say about being a contemplative mom? Try to verbalize what it's like to restore a rich relationship with God in the midst of motherhood.