



The  
Gospel  
Comes  
with a  
House  
Key

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**STUDY GUIDE**

This study guide was designed to supplement *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* by Rosaria Butterfield (Crossway, 2018). After reading each chapter, you can use these questions and prayers to help you reflect on the content of the book and make it personal. Whether you use this study guide on your own or in a group setting, may God use it to richly enhance your understanding of how to apply the practice of radically ordinary hospitality in your everyday life and deepen your love for your unsaved neighbors and for God himself.

## CHAPTER 1

*Where else but a Christian home should neighbors go in times of unprecedented crisis? Where else is it safe to be vulnerable, scared, lost, hopeless? (p. 19)*

- How can you arrange your morning schedule in order to better love God and love your neighbor?
- When was a time you were tempted to make your to-do list more important than the pressing needs of others?
- How does the awareness that everyone is your neighbor change the way you think about how you open your home?
- How does being a Bible-believing Christian help you make sense of tragedy?
- How does the knowledge that “the sin that will undo me is my own, not my neighbor’s, no matter how big my neighbor’s sin may appear” (p. 19) change how you love your neighbor?

*Dear Lord, help me to know the gospel bridge that will lead me to my unsaved neighbor. Give me wisdom for how to structure my daily schedule and to-do list in order to meet the needs of others. Renew in me a greater love for my neighbor as I become increasingly aware of the love and grace you have shown to me.*

## CHAPTER 2

*Christians are called to live as the family of God and to draw strangers and neighbors in, with food and a bended knee, beseeching God's grace to pour out on those who do not yet know the Lord and to encourage and uplift and fuel those who do. (p. 35)*

- “I know I can't save anyone. Jesus alone saves, and all I do is show up. Show up we must” (p. 24). Freed from the burden to save anyone, brainstorm ways that you can simply “show up” for others in your particular season of life.
- In what ways are you afraid to draw close to hurting people? How can you learn from Jesus's example of healing the leper in Luke 5?
- What excuses do you make for not giving until it hurts? How does the knowledge of God's generous, saving grace for you remove the power of those excuses?
- What private sins in your life are preventing you from opening your home to others?
- List people you know who are lonely and could benefit from living more communally with your family.
- “We are hosts and guests together, and both generous giving and open receiving bless God.” What does it mean to be both a host and a guest?

*Dear Lord, give me a faith in Jesus that says, “I love my neighbor because she is mine, and not because she loves me back.” Show me how you loved those who were hurting even when it wasn't comfortable, and help me to repent of the selfishness, fear, and idolatry that keeps me from loving fellow image bearers. Build in me a willingness and humility to be both a guest and a host.*

### CHAPTER 3

*The hospitable meet people as strangers and invite them to become neighbors, and, by God's grace, many will go on to become part of the family of God. This transition from stranger to neighbor to family does not happen naturally but only with intent and grit and sacrifice and God's blessing. (p. 62)*

- Are you able to articulate to a post-Christian neighbor the distinction between acceptance and approval?
- In what ways have you failed to respect the reality of your neighbors' lives and households, neglecting to show them genuine love?
- Pray right now that God would enable your words to be Christ's words of grace to those who share their burdens with you.
- How does awareness that all humans are made in the image of God affect how we view our post-Christian neighbors?
- What are the consequences and expectations of being created in the image of God? (p. 60)
- "It costs money and time and heartache to run a house that values radically ordinary hospitality and nightly table fellowship." How have you been drawn to sinfully keep for yourself instead of share and give away?

*Dear Lord, you are the holy God, and I am a human made in your image. Help me to steward well what you have given me. With my relationships, help me to articulate love and respect while upholding the truth. Enable my words to show grace. Open my tight-fisted hands where I am tempted to keep for myself, so that I may share what wasn't even mine to begin with.*

## CHAPTER 4

*Our lack of genuine hospitality to our neighbors—all of them, including neighbors in the LGBTQ community—explains why counterfeit hospitality seems attractive. Our lack of Christian hospitality is a violent form of neglect for their souls. (p. 71)*

- Who around you would benefit from you being “unshakably and prayerfully present” in their life?
- How can you use your space in order to follow Jesus’s example of “dining with sinners”?
- What would it cost you to see things the way God does? Are these things worth keeping if it means disobeying God’s commands to show hospitality?
- Do you have a community of people around you with whom you “accompany one another in suffering, help each other repent of sin, bear the cross, and make biblical sense of things” (p. 88)?

*Lord, give me so much love for my neighbors that I desire to show genuine hospitality freely and generously. Give me persistence to not only extend an invitation but also keep following up. Free me from the selfishness of keeping things for myself, rather than holding my things loosely. And surround me with a community of people who will show me how to understand things from your point of view.*

## CHAPTER 5

*Our post-Christian neighbors need to hear and see and taste and feel authentic Christianity, hospitality spreading from every Christian home that includes neighbors in prayer, food, friendship, childcare, dog walking, and all the daily matters upon which friendships are built. (p. 95)*

- Do you agree that you are called to replicate the miracles of Jesus in ordinary, nonmiraculous ways?
- How does awareness that “you, your house, and your time are not your own but rather God’s ordained way of escape for someone” change how you think about hospitality?
- “Start where you are.” Where can you start? What are the particulars about your life that you can utilize to bless others?
- Think about and process this quote: “A more crucial question for the Bible-believing Christian is this: Is it safe to fail to get involved?” (p. 115). What does true safety mean in this context?
- With what can you ask God to replace fear of the stranger?

*Lord, help me to view my home as not my own, and to see the ways in which I can use it to practice regular, ordinary hospitality. May you grant me help to listen well to my friends and then to meet their needs. Open my eyes to sacrifices I can make in order to bless my community and neighbors. Guide me as I seek to start serving where I am.*

## CHAPTER 6

*It is a million times safer to include unbelieving neighbors and people who have not claimed the blood of Christ or the citizenship of the church than to let a potential Judas run loose in the church. (p. 127)*

- What initially comes to mind when you hear about church discipline?
- What is your emotional response to those going through church discipline? How can you pray for them and love them instead of feeling bitterness or hatred?
- Where have you seen hypocrisy in your own life?
- How can you cultivate a teachable spirit in your life?
- Are you daily walking in repentance and mortifying your sin as you read your Bible and spend time with your community?

*Lord, thank you for the gift of church discipline that sets apart your people, upholds the truth of the gospel, and wakes up each member to the reality of sin. Lead me into daily confession and repentance. Help me cultivate humility, teachability, and repentance in my own life, and work to see this in the lives of others as well.*



## CHAPTER 7

*We prepare for our heavenly home by recognizing that only two things will last forever: our souls and God's Word. (p. 158)*

- Who have you neglected to pray for because you think there is no way they will come to Christ? Start praying for the grace of God to reach them so they can understand the gospel and know Jesus as their Shepherd.
- List three excuses you have for not sharing the gospel with your family members.
- How does the knowledge that faith is a gift from God free you to proclaim Christ even to those who mock the Bible and reject God altogether?
- What are the difficult relationships in your life that God is using to keep you on your knees? Thank him for these hard relationships because of what he is working in you through them.

*Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of faith, and for the salvation you offer to sinners—the salvation you offer to me. Please remind me to pray and to bring to your throne those around me who don't know you. Thank you for hope that heals old wounds and remakes us as our faith grows stronger.*

## CHAPTER 8

*Christian hospitality cares for the things that our neighbors care about. Esteeming others more highly than ourselves means nothing less. It means starting where you are and looking around for who needs you. (p. 166)*

- In what sphere are you most likely to avoid helping people because your interests don't line up? How can you start serving people in the things they care about?
- Who is someone you could call "the best bridge person you know" (p. 165) and what cues can you take from their life?
- What are your strengths and interests from which you can launch radically ordinary hospitality?
- What is one simple step toward others you can take this week?
- What is a practical way you can serve children in your life, no matter what season you are in?
- What are the biggest things keeping you from having the emotional space to recognize the needs of those around you? How can you limit/remove them?
- Describe a time when you saw a need that you didn't meet. How would you do things differently next time?

*Dear Lord, thank you for being the giver of all things good in me. Thank you for gifts and strengths in my life. I want to leverage them for the good of others. Would you help me find creative, sacrificial, and faithful ways to do that? Open my eyes to the needs of those around me, and intersect my passions with their needs. Make me compassionate and sensitive to those around me, even those who are strangers. Most of all, help me abide in you and your strength rather than my own, for the daily grind of bearing another's burdens takes more strength than I have.*

## CHAPTER 9

*The same power that raised Jesus from the grave he has given to those who have committed their lives to him, so that we can serve gospel peace and be a bridge to the Lord himself in this dark world. But there is much work to do. (p. 185)*

- What barriers do you have keeping you from inviting people into your home?
- Are you present enough in your neighborhood that your neighbors know they are able to turn to you when crisis comes?
- Why is it freeing that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you when you share the gospel with your neighbors?
- What does grieving look like for you as a Christian? How does God's Word change how we grieve?
- How can your home be used for your neighbors in times of personal or national crisis?
- Why is it important to be there for your neighbors in both word and deed? Is one of these easier or harder for you? Why?

*Dear Lord, work your mercy in me. Help me to have mercy because I have peace with you. May I not complicate my life, but do the simple act of hospitality that serves gospel peace to my neighbors. Open my eyes to the work that needs to be done. Help me to serve others in times of crisis, both by meeting immediate needs and by speaking true words of the gospel into their situations. Thank you for your supernatural power in me by your Spirit.*

## CHAPTER 10

*Grace does not make the hard thing go away; grace illumines the hard thing with eternal meaning and purpose. Grace gives you company in your affliction, in Christ himself and in the family of God. (p. 200)*

- Name three specific ways you can emulate Jesus in your hospitality ministry.
- Describe a time when, instead of walking with another person in their suffering, you gave a pat answer. How can you do this differently in the future?
- What has God pulled from your life that you need to grieve? How have you seen him care for you in your grief?
- Do people in prison make you fearful?

*Dear Lord, thank you for the example of Jesus that empowers us to walk with others in their suffering. Thank you for taking on suffering by becoming a man and living and dying and rising for us. Make my words rich with relevance that resonates with people's hearts because I have spent time with them and know them. Thank you for caring for me so I am free to care for others. Help me to recognize those whose lives cause me to fear, and help me to instead show lavish love and care for them.*

## **CONCLUSION**

*Counterfeit hospitality comes with strings; Christian hospitality comes with strangers becoming neighbors becoming family of God and gathering in the great expectation of God's coming world. (p. 215)*

- What are some go-to meals you can have on hand in order to always be prepared for daily hospitality?
- What are your personal barriers to daily hospitality? What do you need to repent of? How many are legitimate?
- How can you prepare for ministry based on what you know about your personality and needs?
- Have you taken the time to unlearn bad habits? Have you surrounded yourself with people who encourage you toward good habits rather than enabling your bad ones?
- What are creative ways you can meet the needs of your family while still being open to practicing hospitality?

*Lord, give me practical, creative, and efficient ways to prepare for hospitality. Break down the barriers that I have put up for myself that keep me from showing hospitality, and replace bad habits and false beliefs with truths about what you are capable of. Help me have the right amount of self-awareness in order to prepare best for ministry based on how you have created me, and help me to encourage others based on their natural giftings as well.*