



Seeing with the Heart: A Guide to Navigating Life's Adventures, by Kevin O'Brien, SJ

Week 2 - Chapters 2 & 3

Check in Question: Karl Rahner calls God “Holy Mystery,” Brian Grogan calls God “Loving Presence,” and Greg Boyle calls God “the Tender One.” Based on your own experience, what name would you give to God?

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

You call us to see not only with our eyes, but with our hearts.

In moments when certainty feels comfortable and secure, remind us that truth is deeper than winning an argument or proving a point. Teach us humility, that we may listen as carefully as we speak.

When doubt unsettles us or clouds our path, help us not to fear it. Let our questions draw us closer to You rather than farther away. May our searching become prayer, and our wondering become trust.

Give us courage to hold both certainty and doubt with grace — may our certainty be clothed with understanding and openness to others, and our doubt open us to growth and compassion. Help us to walk gently with those whose journeys differ from our own, remembering that You are present in every honest seeking heart.

Open our eyes to see You in mystery, our minds to seek wisdom, and our hearts to recognize Your quiet voice guiding us always.

Amen.

Reflection questions:

At the end of every chapter, Fr. Kevin suggests an Ignatian style of journaling through reflection questions. These questions may be helpful for personal prayer or for conversation within your faith-sharing group. However, we have also created a few additional questions that we hope will be especially fruitful for your discussion together as a group while journeying through Seeing with the Heart by Kevin O'Brien.

For our faith-sharing time, select one or two questions that resonate with you and share your thoughts with the group.

Chapter 2: Living the Questions

1. When have you felt the absence of God in your life?
2. Have you ever wrestled with God during times of struggle, grief, or uncertainty?

3. Father Kevin suggests that at the heart of faith is a desire for relationship with God. If you were meeting God for the first time, what would you say or ask?
4. Have you ever experienced a moment of transcendence — a time when you sensed God’s presence beyond words or understanding? Please describe it.
5. Father Kevin writes that neither of us is absolutely certain about God, yet we can remain humbly open. How does this idea resonate with you?
6. Is it comforting to know that God can hold your doubts and questions? Why or why not?

Chapter 3: Living with Depth

1. Have you ever experienced God in an ordinary moment, like Father Kevin on the subway, Thomas Merton’s experience in 1958 in Louisville, or in the purple flowers in *The Color Purple*?
2. When has God surprised you in your life?
3. Do you believe God is present in every person? Why or why not?
4. Father Kevin talks about the sacramental imagination — seeing God unlock the potential of all things. He gives the example from *Chariots of Fire*, where the main character feels God’s presence while running. How do you sense God’s joy or presence in your life?
5. Father Kevin prayed through the grief of losing his father. Have you had a similar experience where prayer helped you navigate loss?
6. Quoting *The Little Prince*, Father Kevin writes: “One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes.” How does this statement resonate with you?
7. Who have you “tamed,” and who has “tamed” you? How has that shaped your understanding of responsibility?
8. Father Kevin, quoting Father Greg Boyle, reminds us that there are no villains, only people suffering unfathomable pain. How might this perspective change how you see people who are difficult or in need of guidance?

Closing Prayer

For this closing prayer, we are combining the Examen with concepts from Chapter 2, creating a time to reflect and be aware of God’s presence.

- *Begin by lighting a candle as a visual reminder that we are gathered in God’s presence.*
- *Invite everyone to share any prayer intentions silently or aloud.*
- *The leader or facilitator will then read the guided reflection slowly. Faith sharers may choose to follow along with the text or close their eyes in quiet contemplation.*
- *Encourage everyone to listen, reflect, and allow the words to speak to their own experiences of God, doubt, gratitude, and compassion.*

This prayer time is meant to help each person notice God’s presence in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life and to carry this awareness forward into the week.

Let us take a moment to quiet our hearts and invite God into this time. Breathe deeply, and open yourself to God's gentle presence.

Think back on our time today. Where did you notice God — in ordinary moments, in the sharing, in a kind word or a smile? Where did you sense God's delight, God's care, or God's quiet guidance? *(pause)*

Bring to mind any moments of struggle, doubt, or grief. Where did you feel the absence of God? Did you wrestle with Him, question Him, or cry out to God? Let those moments come gently to mind, without judgment. *(pause)*

Remember the words of *The Little Prince*: "One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes." Where has your heart been touched — by someone's love, by your own gifts, by a moment of transcendence or insight? Who has influenced you, and whom have you touched in return? *(pause)*

Consider any lingering anger, resentment, or judgment. How might letting go of these feelings bring freedom? How might seeing others with compassion — even those who challenge you — reveal the humanity and struggle within them? *(pause)*

Take one final deep breath and rest in God's presence. God is here in the ordinary and extraordinary, in joy and grief, in the seen and unseen. Carry this awareness into your life this week, seeing with the heart, acting with love, and remaining open to God's movement in all things.

Amen.

Next time: Chapters 4 & 5
