

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

### Week 3 - Chapters 4 & 5

**Check in Question:** Reflecting on the past week, when did you feel closest to the freedom God intends for you, and when did you feel constrained by something you are holding onto that does not bring life or grace?

### Opening Prayer

*Loving and faithful God,*

*You created us for freedom — the freedom to love, to serve, and to live in the truth of who we are as your beloved children. As we gather in faith and trust, help us to notice where we truly experience that freedom in our lives: in moments of gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, and deep peace. Open our hearts to recognize the places where your Spirit is moving and where grace is already at work within us.*

*Gently reveal to us, Lord, the places of unfreedom — the fears, attachments, resentments, expectations, or habits that hold us back from loving fully. Show us what we cling to that does not give life or grace. Give us the courage to loosen our grip on whatever keeps us centered on ourselves instead of on you. May this time of sharing draw us closer to one another and into the deeper freedom that comes from trusting completely in your love. Amen.*

### Reflection questions:

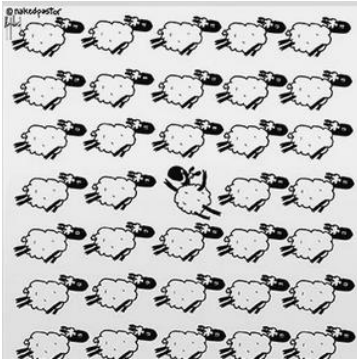
*At the end of every chapter, Fr. Kevin suggests an Ignatian style of journaling through reflection questions. These questions may be helpful for personal prayer or for conversation within your faith-sharing group. However, we have also created a few additional questions that we hope will be especially 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 4: Living in Freedom

1. St. Ignatius recognized that letting go of old dreams makes room for greater ones. He suggests this is a lifelong process. Is God calling you to embrace bigger dreams at this stage of your life?
2. What has been your “Pamplona event” — a moment of disruption, injury, or awakening that changed your direction?

3. Father Kevin speaks about the difference between freedom and license. Do you seek true freedom — freedom from disordered attachments — or do you choose license?
4. Jesuit theologian James Keenan defines sin as “the failure to bother to love.” Do you find this definition helpful? Would you define sin differently?
5. How are you called to “love the sinner and hate the sin” in your daily relationships?
6. Gratitude turns us outward toward God and others, while ingratitude can trap us in self-pity or self-absorption. Have you experienced this struggle? What helped you move beyond it?
7. Fear can also be a natural signal that invites us closer to truth and trust in God. How has fear shaped your spiritual growth?



*Between the two chapters, read the cute prayer by Thomas Merton:*

Good Shepherd, you have a wild and crazy sheep in love with thorns and brambles. But please don't get tired of looking for me! I know you won't. For you have found me. All I have to do is stay found. (76)

(<https://nakedpastor.com/products/go-against-the-flock-cartoon-print>)

## Chapter 5: Living Out of Great Desires

1. Do you believe that our deepest desires ultimately lead us to God? Timothy Radcliffe suggests that God is both the source of our desires and the fulfillment of our deepest longings. What do you think about this?”
2. When have you experienced a shift from being focused on yourself to becoming more attentive to others or to God? What helped bring about that change?
3. St. Ignatius invites us to strive for the *Magis* — the “more” that leads us closer to God. When have you felt called to seek the *Magis* in your life?
4. What do you believe God desires for you at this stage of your life?
5. For Jesus, healing was relational rather than transactional. How does this shape the way you understand healing, sin, and reconciliation?
6. In the *Spiritual Exercises* (SE 48), St. Ignatius suggests that God invites us to share our desires openly. Are you comfortable asking God for what you desire? Why or why not?
7. What do you believe is God’s dream for our world today?
8. Father Kevin suggests that reflecting on our desires can help us understand where God may be leading us. How do you make sense of your own desires?

9. Sometimes when we feel overwhelmed, we choose to do nothing. Father Kevin encourages us instead to act with magnanimity — generosity of heart. What is one small step you could take to share the *Magis* with others?

## Closing Prayer

*For whom and what shall we pray...*

Let us pray

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.  
This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

*This prayer was first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015. This reflection is an excerpt from a homily written for Cardinal Dearden by then-Fr. Ken Untener on the occasion of the Mass for Deceased Priests, October 25, 1979. Pope Francis quoted Cardinal Dearden in his remarks to the Roman Curia on December 21, 2015. Fr. Untener was named bishop of Saginaw, Michigan, in 1980.*

Next time: Chapters 6 & 7
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