



The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom

By Henri J.M. Nouwen

Pages 84-98

Opening Prayer:

Loving God,
In the midst of our struggles, you speak a quiet word of hope.
Help us to listen to your voice — the voice that calls us beloved.
In our brokenness and in our strength, may we hear the truth that sets us free.
We open our hearts to you in this time together.
Amen.

Sharing prompts:

- 1. Control Your Own Drawbridge (p. 84)**
Why is it difficult—or easy—for you to “close your drawbridge” and protect your inner space?
- 2. Avoid All Forms of Self-Rejection (p. 86)**
Is it easier for you to celebrate your giftedness or to remember your struggles and failures?
- 3. Take Up Your Cross (p. 88)**
Nouwen says a cross is a place of growth and learning. Has that been true in your life? In what ways?
- 4. Keep Trusting God’s Call (p. 89)**
How do you recognize the inner voice of God—in your own heart and in the voices of others?
- 5. Claim the Victory (p. 91)**
When have you experienced the truth that “love is stronger than death”?
- 6. Face the Enemy (p. 93)**
When the “enemy” speaks, how do you turn to Jesus?
- 7. Continue Seeking Communion (p. 95)**
Nouwen writes that the opposite of the fear of death is communion. Do you agree? Why or why not?

8. Separate the False Pain from the Real Pain (p. 97)

How do you distinguish between the pain of failure and the deeper pain that leads to growth?

9. Say Often, “Lord, Have Mercy” (p. 98)

When you are surrounded by worry or fear, how has God rescued or sustained you?

Farwell and Closing Prayer:

- Invite everyone to share the one word or phrase they would like to take into the next week/month (depending how often you are meeting).
- Close with the Serenity Prayer ... *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.*
Amen