

Different Discussion Questions | Chapters 7 and 8

We are making our way through Different! Have you connected in a new way with any mothers around you? We love to hear how God is using this book to reach women.

Chapter 7: Wrestling God

This chapter talks about how Nathan had doubts and feelings of discouragement and anger that he needed to express to the Lord. From page 99, ““God loves it when you wrestle Him, Nathan,” she said. “Because wrestling is a full-contact sport, and God loves it when you are in contact with Him. Maybe He has a bigger view of your life and is willing to do more than you can presently see.””

How do you react when your children question God or faith?

Page 103, “So many years later, when each of my children came to me with deep doubts, I understood. Their pathway was one I had walked, and I knew their need for compassion, sympathy, and support. So I would put aside the screaming demands of my own busyness, listen to their words, and seek to comprehend their soul issues.”

How do you set aside your own “screaming demands” to listen to your children’s doubts and needs? How can you remind yourself that life is short and the relationships you build are the most important thing?

As mothers, we sometimes have same doubts and struggles as our children. Consider in your mind, who do you go to with your own doubts and insecurities? Who is one person with whom you can initiate a more intimate relationship? Share some ideas for building a closer one-on-one relationship with a woman around you.

Chapter 8: Different Drumming

On page 106, Nathan describes how mental illness and personality traits are not something we choose. They are not able to be turned off and on. We and our children all have things like this even if they aren’t as difficult as the issues Nathan struggles with.

What personality traits or thought patterns are like this for you? Anxiety, depression, insecurity? Some of these things are extremely deep rooted and aren’t easily walked through. Where do you find yourself getting stuck? How do you need the Lord to change your perspective?

One page 113, Sally shares how “Many times [she] just felt a need for someone to listen, to sympathize, to understand and to pray.”

We all need both: someone to listen to us and someone who can share openly with us. Often, these are found in two different people. How can you cultivate and choose these types of relationships? Are you committed to listening to someone? Have you reached out and asked someone to listen to you? The book *Safe People* by Cloud and Thompson has helpful guidelines on healthy communication.

Page 117, "Part of my learning to deal with him was to accept the fact that (1) I would never totally understand him or know how to respond to him, but that (2) that was okay! Carrying guilt for being unable to anticipate all his needs would just add more burden to our lives. An emotional backpack loaded with feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and failure can perilously slow us down or even stop progress entirely."

How can you let the Lord carry your emotional backpack in order to be okay with never getting it exactly right or having all the answers? Do you need to ask for help to unpack your emotional backpack? The freedom of walking lightly through life is worth getting help.

On page 120, Sally shares how she and Clay came to the understanding that Nathan "was an essential part of the particular story that God wanted us to live out, the place we could best glorify Him...We had to accept Nathan with God's unconditional love- just as he was."

What issues or circumstances in your life are you struggling to accept as part of God's story for you?

On page 127, Sally gives a list of decisions and actions she had to take in order to effectively reach Nathan and disciple him along the way. What do you need to do or make peace with in order to help your children thrive?