

# Book Club Sample Schedule & Questions For Dane Ortlund's *Gentle & Lowly*\*

---

By Karen Wade Hayes | [karenwadehayes.com](http://karenwadehayes.com)

Below is the schedule I followed while hosting a five-week book club to discuss *Gentle and Lowly* by Dane Ortlund.\* Ortlund's companion study guide is divided into ten lessons, but I combined them into five for my group. We met every other week at lunchtime. My co-host and I provided a light meal for the first session, but we simplified the remaining four by having everyone bring a "brown bag" lunch. After eating together, we discussed the book for the remaining 45 minutes of each meeting. Those who had jobs outside of the home were able to conveniently participate over their lunch break.

You could follow the study guide and meet for ten weeks or condense, as outlined below, to five sessions. Under each session, you'll find the reading selection, along with the corresponding pages from Ortlund's study guide, as well as additional questions of my own that we covered as a group:

---

## Session 1

### **Lunch; Introduction to book (no reading required for this session)**

*At home: Read chapters 1-5 (pp. 17-57); Study Guide Lessons 1 & 2 (pp. 8-19)*

- If you were writing a book about the savior of the universe and needed to come up with two words the savior might use to describe himself, what would they be?
- How do you feel about returning to Jesus again and again for comfort, forgiveness, or mercy? Do you find yourself working to earn these things? Or to prove your worthiness, or to "do better"?
- Do you believe that "the more difficult life gets, the more alone we are"? (p. 48). What would it look like to share in our sufferings with Christ in a real sense?
- Think about how waywardness was dealt with in your family of origin. Is it possible that you tend to believe Jesus deals with you the same way?

---

## Session 2

### **Discuss chapters 1-5 (pp. 17-57), questions above & Study Guide (pp. 8-19)**

*At home: Read chapters 6-9 (pp. 59-94); Study Guide Lessons 3 & 4 (pp. 20-31)*

- Which better describes your tendency: to diminish the horror & consequence of humankind's sin, or to diminish the abundant and free heart of God covering the sin of any who accept that covering? (p. 74-75)
- p. 82: Ortlund asks, "Do you not find within yourself an unceasing low-grade impulse to strengthen his saving work through your own contribution?" And do you "have some small pocket...where (you) have difficulty believing the forgiveness of God reaches?"

## Session 3

---

### Discuss chapters 6-9 (pp. 59-94), questions above & Study Guide (pp. 20-31)

*At home: Read chapters 10-14 (pp. 95-133); Study Guide Lessons 5 & 6 (pp. 32-43)*

- On pg. 99, Ortlund asks, “Why not build in to your life unhurried quiet, where, among other disciplines, you consider the radiance of who he actually is, what animates him, what his deepest delight is?” What would this look like for you?
- Ortlund also talks, on pg. 100, about the idea of drawing our children to Christ by helping them to know the beauty of his heart. How do we do that?
- On pg. 105, Ortlund asks, “What does a godly emotional life look like?” What does your emotional life look like? How do we get to a place of healthier inner/emotional life like Christ?
- pp. 114/115, “Who in our lives do we feel safe with – really safe, safe enough to open up about everything?” And “Won’t most of us admit that even with our best friends, we don’t feel comfortable divulging everything about our lives?” What does it mean to you that “Jesus is not the idea of friendship, abstractly; he is an actual friend.” (p. 120)
- What are your thoughts about the purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- As we have progressed through this study/book, how has your view of God changed or become more accurate? (p. 127)

## Session 4

---

### Discuss chapters 10-14 (pp. 95-133); questions above & Study Guide (pp. 32-43)

*At home: Read chapters 15-23 & Epilogue (pp. 135-216); Study Guide Lessons 7-10 (pp.44-67)*

- As you consider how Jesus and the descriptions of God in the New Testament relate to what we read about God in the Old Testament, do you believe that “his deepest heart is (our) merciful restoration”? (p. 138)
- p. 151, Ortlund says, “The Christian life, from one angle, is the long journey of letting our natural assumption about who God is, over many decades, fall away, being slowly replaced with God’s own insistence of who he is.” What do you think about this? How have you experienced this journey of discovery in your life?
- Don’t miss chapter 17! What feelings does it evoke?
- p. 166: “Who do you perceive (God) to be, IN your sin and your suffering? Who do you think God is – not just on paper but in the kind of person you believe is hearing you when you pray? How does he feel about you?” “Out of his heart flows mercy; out of ours, reluctance to receive it.” Do you believe this is true?
- Read page 179. Meditate on it and spend some time enjoying it!
- p. 193-194: Once we are saved, it is hard to believe and remember that God still loves us despite our current “post-salvation” failures. Do you find it hard to remember that, though we leave him and often turn away, He never will?
- After a brutal description of what Christ endured for all, Ortlund asks (p. 202), “But why would he go through with it? Why would he step down into the horror of hellish condemnation when he was the one person who didn’t deserve it?”
- What is the meaning of everything? (p. 205). How can we live out this purpose?

## Session 5

---

### Discuss chapters 15-23 & Epilogue (pp. 135-216), questions above, & Study Guide (pp. 44-67)

*This concludes the study - thank you for participating!*

\*Ortlund, Dane. *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*. Wheaton IL: Crossway.