

## Chapter Eight: *Gazing Upon Christ*

### Getting Connected

In your family, who's the person who usually pulls out the camera at special events or on vacation?

Once the pictures are taken, how are they stored or displayed to look back at over the years?

### Highlights and Insights

In your own words, how would you *briefly* summarize Chapter 8?

Was there anything that really caught your attention, challenged or confused you in this chapter? Or did you find yourself struggling with applying it to your life in any way?

In this chapter, what does the author say is the difference between “seeing” and “gazing”?

Which of these two words best describes your experience with Christ right now, and why?

### Biblical Focus

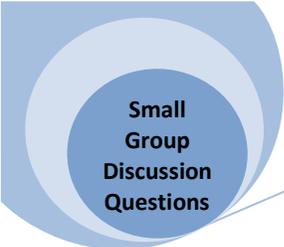
Slowly read aloud Psalm 27:4-5.

What is the Psalmist gazing upon?

How has his life been impacted by that gaze?

What are some of the things you find yourself “gazing” upon? *In other words ... what are some of the things that occupy your heart and mind on a regular basis? Or, what do you daydream about?*

How significantly do these things influence or drive your life?



# Good News For Those Trying Harder, by Pastor Alan Kraft

Small Group Discussion Questions

What would it look like for Jesus to become the center of this gaze?

Read Acts 16:16-32.

How do Paul and Silas respond to their suffering?

How is their response the same or different than yours would be if you were in this situation?

What does their response tell you about who or what they were gazing upon?

What, if anything, strikes you about the impact of their response on those who were with them?

## The Heart of the Matter

In the midst of a difficulty or challenge you might be facing right now, what are a couple of practical ways you can focus your gaze on the beauty of your Savior, Jesus Christ? List them here, and be prepared to share at least one of them with your group ...

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What difference might this make in your overall attitude toward your circumstances? In your relationship with Christ? In your relationship with the people around you?

## In Conclusion...

We'd like to encourage your group to spend some time gazing on Christ together. As group members are invited to close their eyes and quietly gaze upon Christ, play a worship song or two from a CD that will help them do this. When the song is finished, have someone selected to read aloud the prayer on page 163 for your group, making the reading plural (i.e. replacing "my" with "our", etc.). Afterwards, invite people to pray as prompted by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps a brief sentence prayer, the reading of a Psalm, or affirming love for Jesus in some way. Don't rush this time or be afraid to let there be silence. This might be new for you, and if it is, expect that there might be some awkwardness.

**On page 162, the author invites us to slowly pray Psalm 42 aloud to the Lord two or three times, tuning in to your emotions as read.**

*If you did this, what was the experience like for you?*

*How might a practice like this be helpful for you in becoming more familiar with the language of praise?*

*In gazing upon the Lord in the midst of life's circumstances?*