

Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is designed for an individual or a four-week group study of *Rhinestone Jesus*. Within each week, the questions are broken out by chapter so you can adjust for a shorter or longer study as best fits your needs. Feel free to focus on the questions or issues that resonate the most with your group; the guide is intended to be a starting point for deeper conversation, community, and spiritual growth, so use it as a base and let God guide your time together.

Week one: Read chapters 1–4

Chapter 1: Rhinestone Jesus

Kristen Welch says that most of us view roadblocks in our path of life as setbacks, leaving us discouraged. But if we pay attention, God provides us with a detour around the roadblock that gives us an opportunity for something new.

1. Think back to your younger days. Did you have childhood dreams?
2. What events in your life have quieted or completely quenched your dreams?
3. Are there dreams you still long to pursue?

Chapter 2: When Motherhood Becomes You

Kristen admits that she has struggled with mom guilt at times, thinking she doesn't live up to the standards of motherhood she has set for herself. When she finds herself falling into this mind-set, she focuses on one goal: to connect with her children every day in some small way.

1. Do you ever struggle with mom guilt? Does something specific trigger this feeling?
2. In what small ways can you connect with your children every day?
3. It is easy to be so focused on meeting everyone else's needs that you ignore your own. What have you done for yourself lately? What would be an indulgence for you?

Chapter 3: Finding Beauty in the Broken Pieces

In this chapter, Kristen shares the “ground zero moment” in her life—how God took the broken pieces of her heart and life that seemed irreparable and through His healing process made something astonishingly whole and beautiful.

1. Is there something that feels broken in your life today?
2. How can you turn what you are wrestling with into an opportunity for growth and strength?
3. If you have experienced brokenness at some time in your life and now, looking back, can see

God's hand in the situation, what advice would you give to someone who is still struggling?

4. Where have you found beauty in the barrenness?

Chapter 4: The Sweet Spot

Kristen discovers her "sweet spot" of writing—God's unique purpose for her to glorify Him. Thus begins her journey of saying yes to Him, no matter what it requires. Your yes won't look like anyone else's yes; it will be completely one-of-a-kind, just like you.

1. What is your "sweet spot"? What comes easily and naturally to you?
2. What do you believe God put you on the planet to do?
3. What is stopping you from doing the thing you love?
4. How can you take your "sweet spot" and accomplish even more for God?

Week two: Read chapters 5–7

Chapter 5: The Day I Woke Up

When Kristen stood in Vincent's humble dwelling in the Kenyan slum, she realized for the first time that even though the young African boy had so little, he was richer than she was in his love for Jesus. Surrounded by squalor, Vincent demonstrated that Jesus was all he needed in life to be happy and fulfilled. This became a defining moment for Kristen, what she describes as her "moment of redemption."

1. How satisfying would you say your relationship with Jesus is?
2. If everything you considered important in your life was taken away except for that relationship, would your perspective change? Would Jesus be enough to bring you joy and fulfillment?
3. In your life, consider the priority that Jesus and others have above yourself. Do you think your priorities are out of balance?
4. What would it take for you to make Jesus your first priority? What do you need to offer Him this moment?

Chapter 6: Giving Birth to a Dream

Kristen's God-sized dream of Mercy House didn't happen because she wished it into existence. It was a hard, painful process made up of many small sacrificial steps. Radical changes had to be enacted in her and her family's lives. But in the end, something extraordinary was birthed.

1. Kristen cautions "Be careful what you pray for." Why does she say that? Have you ever said

that to anyone? What did you know that the other person might not have known?

2. According to Kristen, a God-sized dream

- is bigger than your capability
- will require hard labor
- will look impossible
- requires great dependence on God

In your life, have you ever had a God-sized dream that encompassed one or more of those criteria? How difficult was it to hang in there and see it become a reality? How did that experience grow you as a person?

3. Do you want to pursue other God-sized dreams? What will you do differently this time?

Chapter 7: The Yes That Changed Our Family

Kristen and her family know that saying yes to God is a scary proposition. It often means being asked to step out of your comfort zone for God to do His work most effectively. Bottom line? Saying yes will cost you something.

1. Is God asking you to say yes? What is holding you back?
2. Have you ever witnessed the ripple effect that saying yes to God can have? What happened?
3. Kristen learned some powerful lessons about prayer from Maureen. What were they?
4. Kristen confesses that her kids saw both her and her husband at their best and their worst during the first year of launching Mercy House. Why was it important not to hide anything from them? Why is being transparent before others so difficult to do?

Week three: Read chapters 8–11

Chapter 8: That Messy Peach Pie

In today's world of busy family schedules, finding time to unite as a family can be a challenge. Kristen recommends two things that have helped her and her family unite in their goals and grow closer in their relationships—a family mission statement and regular family dinners.

1. Do you feel you are controlling your family's schedule or your family's schedule is controlling you? If the latter, how did things get so crazy?
2. Describe your mission as a family in a sentence. (This could be a starting point for thinking and writing out a family mission statement together.)
3. Are family dinners a high priority at your house? If not, what do you need to change to make

that happen?

Chapter 9: I'm Not Going to Lie—Doing Good Is Hard

Honestly, Kristen says, doing good work for God is exhausting. When we are in the midst of the task, it's often hard to remember that there will be a harvest, whether we see it or not. We do the work, God brings the results.

1. What frightens you the most about doing good work for God?
2. Is it difficult for you not to see the results of your labor? Why is that important to you?
3. How are you balancing good work and your family?
4. When spiritual fatigue sets in, how are you renewing your strength?

Chapter 10: Power of One

With so many needs in the world, we want to address them all. But that isn't what God expects us—or even wants us—to do. All He asks is for us to be willing to do one thing well and offer it to Him.

1. What one thing are you passionate about? How can that passion be used for God?
2. Do you have the means to meet someone's small need? What is preventing you from making that happen?
3. Think of simple ways you can obey the commandment to love God and love others.
4. How can you motivate others in your community to pursue their one thing?

Chapter 11: Just Another Rich Mom

In the Western world, we have been given much more than most other people around the globe. What is our responsibility? A person needs to make a conscious decision not to be like everyone else when it comes to money and possessions.

1. What shopping choices can you make to become a more conscientious consumer?
2. Do you consider yourself rich? What makes you rich?
3. Are you emptying your life of excess? How so?
4. How can you live more generously?

Week four: Read chapters 12–14

Chapter 12: Defeating My Biggest Foes

For as much as God has accomplished through Kristen's yes, she admits that there are days when she struggles with guilt, loneliness, and doubt. When that happens, she is encouraged by the biblical reminder that God works best in a person's weakness.

1. What is the most radical thing you have ever done in your life? How did people react? Did that response discourage you or empower you?
2. People are always asked to concentrate on their strengths. Consider what your weaknesses are. What makes you feel most vulnerable?
3. Do you feel that your life has to be perfect before God can use you? If so, where did this idea come from?
4. How could you begin changing your perception of weakness from an "I can't" to a "He can" mentality?

Chapter 13: Start Small Today

Kristen says that "any time you love someone or care for another person's needs, you're changing their world, and yours, too."

1. Has anyone loved you with genuine godly love? How did it change your world?
2. Who are the people in your life—whether you have a close relationship with them or just an occasional encounter—with whom you need to share that kind of love? What would that look like?
3. What opportunities are there in your church, school, neighborhood, or community where you feel you can make a difference?

Chapter 14: What Really Happens When We Make Jesus Enough

Every person's life is a mixture of sad moments and happy ones. Relying on God in the sad moments is sometimes easier said than done. But as Kristen reminds us, "When you make Jesus enough, *He becomes all you need.*"

1. Have you ever thought you had a better plan in a certain situation than God did? What was your response to Him?
2. How did Jesus see the world? How can you look at the world in the same way?
3. Kristen says that making Jesus enough in her life makes her long for heaven. Have you ever felt that longing? When you get to heaven, what will be the first thing you'd like to say to

Jesus?