

THE SECOND ACT

COUNT WHAT REMAINS

Six sessions on faith, family, forgiveness and second chances

Participant Study Guide inspired by the themes of The Second Act.

FAITH • FAMILY • FORGIVENESS • SECOND CHANCES

Prototype curriculum for church and small-group use. Scripture references and theological notes should receive pastoral/theological review before publication.

Welcome

This study begins with a film, but it is not ultimately a study of a film. The story gives us characters and questions; Scripture gives the study its authority and direction. Across six sessions we will practice honest prayer, surrender, reordered priorities, faithful presence, forgiveness with truth, and hope that refuses to call loss good.

Group covenant

- Listen before fixing.
- Keep personal stories confidential within the limits of safety and church policy.
- Do not pressure another person to reconcile, disclose trauma or explain grief.
- Make room for uncertainty while returning together to Scripture.
- Pray for one another without using prayer to preach at one another.

Session 1: When God Doesn't Answer the Way We Want

Theme	Faith in grief and unanswered prayer
Read	Psalm 13; Psalm 34:18; John 11:32-36
Big Idea	Biblical faith makes room for lament.

From the film

Audrey's grief refuses easy explanations. Henry gives her permission to speak honestly to God, and later Daniel refuses to explain Henry's death with a cliché.

Biblical perspective

Biblical faith makes room for lament. Scripture repeatedly shows faithful people bringing confusion, anger and sorrow directly to God. Lament is not the opposite of faith; it is pain spoken in God's direction.

Discuss

- What is the difference between complaining about God and lamenting to God?
- Why do people feel pressure to explain suffering quickly?
- What would honest prayer sound like for you this week?

Practice this week

Write a one-paragraph lament to God using four movements: what hurts, what you do not understand, what you are asking for, and what you can still entrust to Him.

Prayer prompt

God, help me tell You the truth, receive Your grace, and be faithful with what You have placed in front of me. Amen.

Notes:

Session 2: Handing God the Hard Parts

Theme	Surrender and honest prayer
Read	Psalm 62:8; 1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6-7
Big Idea	Surrender is not pretending to be calm or certain.

From the film

Henry teaches Audrey to hand God the hard parts, even anger. Daniel's first prayer in years is awkward and uncertain, but it is still a return toward God.

Biblical perspective

Surrender is not pretending to be calm or certain. It is entrusting what we cannot control to God while continuing to act faithfully with what He has placed in our hands.

Discuss

- What are you trying to control that is not actually yours to control?
- How can surrender and responsible action happen at the same time?
- What makes honest prayer difficult when faith feels thin?

Practice this week

Make two columns: 'Mine to carry faithfully' and 'Mine to hand over.' Pray through both.

Prayer prompt

God, help me tell You the truth, receive Your grace, and be faithful with what You have placed in front of me. Amen.

Notes:

Session 3: What Are You Chasing?

Theme	Calling, ambition and reordered priorities
Read	Matthew 6:33; Mark 8:34-36; Proverbs 16:9
Big Idea	Ambition can become an idol when achievement is asked to provide identity, security or worth.