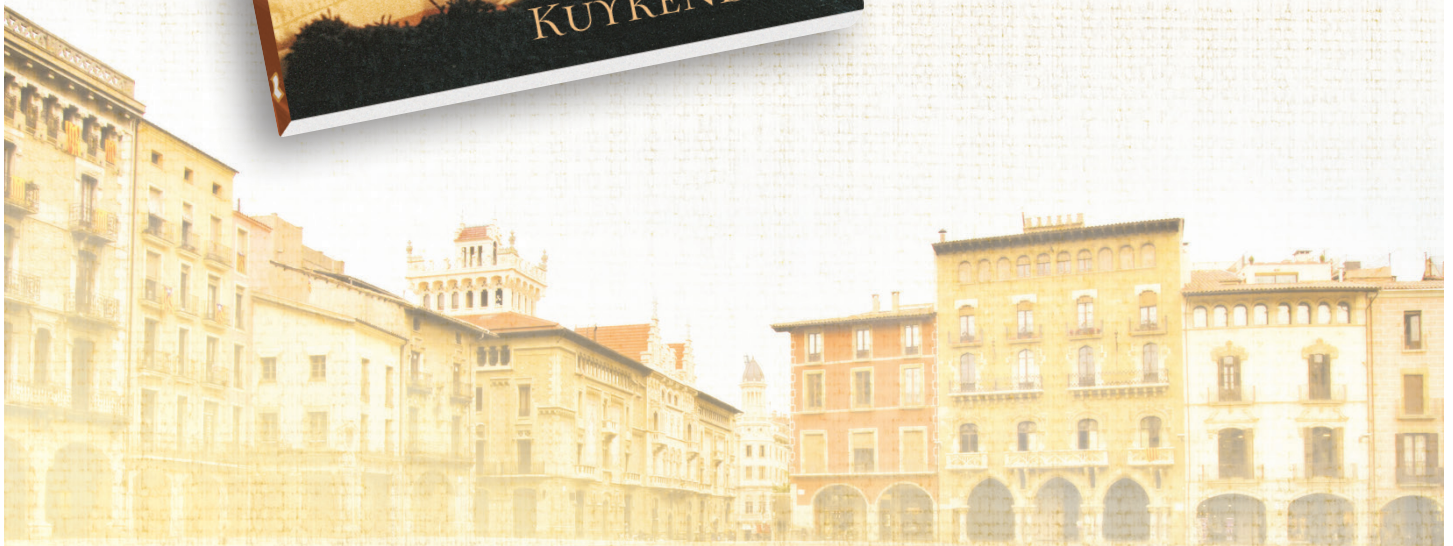




STUDY GUIDE

by Alexandra Kuykendall



 Revell

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SCHEDULE

Here is a suggested schedule for a four-week book group:

WEEK ONE

Sections 1–2

Understand your family of origin, and discover the impact of your early years on your identity and your ability to give and receive love.

WEEK TWO

Sections 3–4

Relationships and marriage add layers to the definition of your own self and how you connect with others as an adult.

WEEK THREE

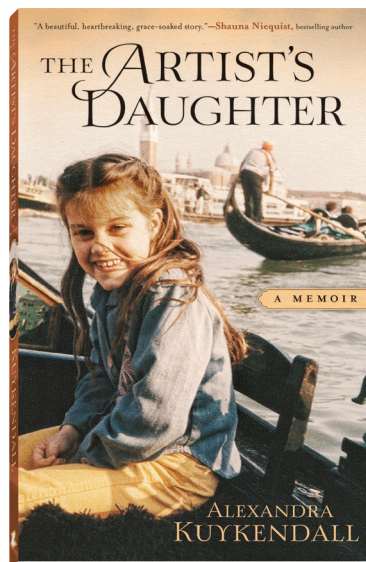
Sections 5–7

As you move into adulthood, you can decide the path you want to make for yourself. As you are “coming into your own,” you no longer let the past define you, but realize that, along with God, you can determine your course.

WEEK FOUR

Sections 8–11 & Epilogue

In the midst of crises, grief, and difficult situations, you face choices about who you are and how you respond to difficulties in life.



Reading *The Artist's Daughter: A Memoir* with a group of women is a great way to delve into the story. You can make your own application of the process of defining yourself and answer these questions: **Am I loveable? Am I loved? Am I loving?**

Gather a group of women from your church, MOPS group, playgroup, or neighborhood to read and discuss the book. The chapters are short sketches of incidents in Alexandra's life that are organized into sections. Your group might want to discuss the book one section at a time (for a total of eleven sections). However, many readers may find that they want to read and discuss larger portions of the book at once. If you are discussing multiple sections at one time, select a few key questions from the study guide to get your discussion started. While a memoir is one person's story, you can reflect on your own story as you respond to Alexandra's story.

“A refreshing perspective on motherhood, forgiveness, faith, and belonging.”

—Emily P. Freeman, author of *Grace for the Good Girl* and *Graceful*

Questions for Reflection

SELECT A FEW QUESTIONS FROM EACH SECTION TO GUIDE DISCUSSION
IF YOU ARE DISCUSSING MORE THAN ONE SECTION AT A TIME.

SECTION 1

INSECURITY

Barcelona

1. What was your relationship with your father like? Your mother?
2. Describe a moment when life didn't meet your expectations.

Italy

1. What childhood experiences shape who you are today?
2. Where did your eight-year-old self imagine she would be today? How is it the same? How is it different?

Apartment

1. When have you wanted more from something or someone?
2. How did the place, the culture, you grew up in impact your understanding of the world?

Zoo

1. When have you had to hold feelings in?
2. When has a hurt come bursting out? How did it feel when it finally did?

SECTION 2

LOVE IS A CHOICE

Jesus

1. When was the first time you heard about Jesus? What was difficult to believe? What was easy?
2. What influenced the way you understood him?

Boys

1. How did your childhood impact your understanding of boys and men?
2. Who were your role models for marriage, if you had any? How did they impact your thoughts on marriage?

Perfection

1. Do you struggle with performance or perfectionism?
If so, who are you trying to impress? If not, what motivates you to do well?
2. How did or do your parents respond to your achievements? Do they still influence how you make decisions today?

Choose Me

1. When have you failed to get someone else's attention? How did that feel?
2. How do you define love?

Questions for Reflection are also found in the back of the book.

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SECTION 3

TRUST

Trajectory

1. If given the chance to do anything, how would you react? Would you feel freedom? Would you be paralyzed? How would you decide your next steps?
2. Have you ever felt God's prompting? If so, describe the experience. If not, would you like to? What would you need to sense his prompting?

Impressions

1. Describe a time when you have been vulnerable with others. Did it feel risky? Safe? Why?
2. How do you decide when it's time to hold it in and when it's time to share?

Secrets

1. Has anyone ever shared a painful secret with you? How did you react?
2. How do you make sense of God when terrible things happen?

Surrender

1. When has trusting felt risky?
2. When have you surrendered to trust?

SECTION 4

LEGACY

Fights

1. When have you expected someone to meet your needs?
2. How did you balance your expectations with the reality of what the other person could offer?

Heroes

1. Are there beautiful and ugly parts to the legacy your ancestors offered? How do you manage those?
2. What parts of your family history would you like to pass on to your children as a legacy?

Forgiveness

1. When has forgiveness felt like a challenge?
2. Do you think forgiveness is more about you or the person you are forgiving? Why?

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SECTION 5

MOTHERHOOD

Pregnancy

1. How was your adjustment to pregnancy and motherhood? How did it differ from your pre-mothering expectations?
2. How have you fit into the family of your child's father? Has this changed since becoming a mother?

Delivery

1. Describe your entrance into motherhood through birth, adoption, or marriage. What did it feel like in those first few moments? First few days?
2. Did you have an instant connection with your child? How did you grow in your understanding of your role?

Hormones

1. Have you ever suffered from mood disorders due to hormones or depression? Were you able to realize it at the time? If so, describe that time.
2. What is your current support system? Has it always been this way?

Rocking

1. Has being a mother impacted your understanding of your own parents? If so, how?
2. Has parenting impacted your understanding of God? If so, how?

SECTION 6

FRIENDSHIP

Longing

1. What is it like for you to make new friends? Are you naturally able to connect to others?
2. Do you ever feel alone in a crowd? If so, what things help you connect with others?

Comparisons

1. When have you compared yourself to someone else and fallen short?
2. What assumptions could others make about you based on appearances? Would those assumptions be correct?

Judging

1. When do you find yourself judging others? Why do you think those moments are your triggers?
2. Do you consider yourself a rule follower? Does that make it easier or more difficult to know Jesus? Why?

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COMING INTO MY OWN

My Baby—Myself

1. Do you feel like you are an extension of your mother? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel your child is an extension of you? Why or why not?

O Christmas Tree

1. Were there parts of parenting you dreamed about? If so, what were they?
How did your dreams compare with real life?
2. Do you sometimes “forget to remember”? What helps you remember?

Daddy’s Girls

1. How do you parent with your child’s father? How do his personal qualities and strengths show up in his parenting?
2. When have you expected someone to do things like you would?

Retreat

1. In what ways do you seek affirmation?
2. How does the knowledge that no parents are perfect impact your understanding of your parents? Of yourself as a mother?

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SECTION 8

THE MAIN THING

Anger

1. What makes you angry in a given day? If you are not sure, track it.
2. When do you find it difficult to keep the main thing the main thing?

Change

1. When have you successfully implemented a heart change in your life?
How have you done that?
2. Has a difficult experience ever been a catalyst for change in you? If so, how?

The Right Way

1. Have you ever changed your mind on a strongly held belief? If so, what prompted that change?
2. What part of your daily routine makes your soul sing? How can you add more of that to your life?

SECTION 9

THE ACCIDENT

Headlines

1. When have life circumstances caused you to ask, “Why, God?”
2. Have you ever wanted someone else to take over as the grown-up in your life?
How did you press forward?

Grief

1. How have you held up in a crisis? What helped you cope?
2. When has someone’s death impacted you? How did you make sense of it?

The Wall

1. Where would you place yourself in the steps described in this chapter?
2. Have you pushed through a wall? Have you been transformed?
If so, what does that look like?

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SECTION 10

FEAR

Prayer

1. When are you afraid? Do you pray when you're scared?
2. Do you have difficulty trusting God with people you love? If so, in what area?

Facing It

1. When have you faced a fear? What was the result?
2. Describe a time when you've been surprised by your feelings or your reactions.

Plans

1. When have you been afraid of God's blessings?
2. What can only you do?

SECTION 11

TEN DAYS

Fast and Furious

1. When does life seem unfair?
2. When have you seen God's goodness and life's hardships at the same time?

At My End

1. When have you reached your end? How did you cope?
2. What or who did you find was left when you had nothing?

Phone Call

1. How easy is it for you to shift gears when life requires it?
2. Describe a time when you were surprised by how well you handled something.
What does that say about you, the circumstances, and your growth?

I'm Okay

1. Do you believe God sees you and knows you? Why or why not?
2. What defines your soul?

EPILOGUE

MY INHERITANCE

1. Do you think you will ever "arrive"? If so, under what circumstances? If not, why not?
2. Do you consider yourself God's daughter? Why or why not?

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