



## INTRODUCTION:

Statistically, I should be dead. No question. Both Jay and I consider it a miracle I lived, as does our world-renowned neurosurgeon. And although I've made tremendous gains since my stroke, I'm not fully recovered. I have paralysis on my right side and face, and I have to use a wheelchair. So am I healed?

As I travel the country and share my story, people in turn courageously share their own, and what's clear is that, whether or not you've had a stroke, what I wear on the outside is what we all feel on the inside.

So what does it mean to be healed? I was already a Christian when I had my stroke. I'd already asked Christ to forgive my sins. I had his spirit living in me, making me new. As I lay trapped in my own body during all those hours in that hospital, I came to see that I needed more healing in both body and soul.

We pray this discussion is one of many aids that leads you to healing in Christ. You may find, as I did, that healing will need to be redefined from your original understanding. You may find that your hope rests both in spiritual healing today and our final restoration to come.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*God swept Katherine and Jay into an unexpected journey full of pain and grief, but he also led them to joy and a new hope, which brought them purpose. Their route had its unique twists and turns. However, all of us will be detoured from the life we've always expected. Perhaps this common ground is where we all may discover the uncommon Hope they encountered.*

1. Katherine opens her story describing her "detour" from the "wonderful", "straight-forward" life she assumed she would live. What detours have you taken in life? Where did you think you were heading and where have you gone instead?
2. What feelings have you experienced through these unexpected detours? How have you responded toward yourself, friends, or God?

3. On their wedding day, Katherine and Jay were encouraged to pursue a “foundation” for their marriage and future, which was Christ and Christian community. Have you ever considered yourself to have a “foundation”? If so, describe what it is and how it has been tested in your life.

*In the book, Hope Heals, Katherine writes, “I considered the reality that sometimes suffering comes because of the decisions we make, sometimes it comes as a way for God to gauge his place in our hearts, and sometimes it comes simply as a by-product of living in a world that is in a state of falling apart.”*

1. Have you ever considered these three perspectives about the origins and purposes of suffering? How might these help you understand and handle the pain you’ve experienced?
2. The nurse warned Jay that 90% of marriages in his scenario fail. What are some things that make it difficult for couples to go through tragedy and remain together? (If you are not married, how does this statistic affect how you define marriage?) How does it impact the type of spouse you hope to be?
3. Katherine said, “What I wear on the outside is what we all feel on the inside.” What did you think about that statement?

*“Our hope is Jesus,” Katherine shares. “We trust him and all he is doing - in all that we understand and, more importantly, in all that we do not. I believe we are all here for purposes beyond ourselves and beyond our comprehension. We were born to know and manifest the God who heals our souls and calls us into the kind of life that doesn’t end with death.”*

1. How would you describe your ‘hope’?
2. What is the ‘healing’ you desire in life?
3. In what ways are you having to trust God even while you don’t understand what he is doing?

## **CHANGING YOUR MIND**

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**-Romans 8:35; 37-39**

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**NOTE: For further study, see following discussion questions**

DISCUSSION GUIDE  
*for* SMALL GROUPS

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HOPE HEALS  
*a TRUE STORY of* OVERWHELMING  
*LOSS and* AN OVERCOMING LOVE



# INTRODUCTION: OUR HOPE FOR YOU



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Both Jay and I consider it a miracle that I lived. So does our world-renowned neurosurgeon. And though I've made tremendous gains since my stroke, I'm not fully recovered. I have paralysis on my right side and face, and I have to use a wheelchair.

So am I healed?

As I travel all over the country and share my story, people courageously share their own, and what's clear is that whether or not you've had a stroke, what I wear on the outside is what we all feel on the inside.

So, what does it mean to be healed?

When I had my stroke, I was already a Christian. I'd already asked Christ to forgive my sins. I had his spirit living in me, making me new. During the time I laid trapped in my own body I came to see that I needed more healing in both body and soul.

We pray this discussion guide is one of many aids that leads you to healing in Christ. You may find, like I did, that healing will have to be redefined from what you first thought. And that your hope rests both in spiritual healing today and our final restoration to come.

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Katherine + Jay

# PROLOGUE



*“What has happened to me is extreme; however, it is not that different from what everyone deals with. I am a sort of microcosm for what we all feel.”*

God swept Katherine and Jay into an unexpected journey full of pain and grief, but he also led them to joy and a new hope, which brought them purpose. Their route had its unique twists and turns. However, all of us will be detoured from the life we’ve always expected. Perhaps this common ground is where we all may discover the uncommon hope they encountered.

1. Katherine opens her story describing her “detour” from the “wonderful”, “straight-forward” life she assumed she would live. What detours have you taken in life? Where did you think you were heading and where have you gone instead?
  2. What feelings describe your experience through these unexpected detours? How have you responded toward yourself, friends, or God?
  3. What parts of your life seem “broken”, hindered, or damaged as a result of your unexpected or undesired experiences in life? How have these experiences impacted your soul?
  4. Katherine has come, “to redefine healing and to discover a hope that heals the most broken places: our souls.” If you have come to this study, hoping for a type of healing, would you be willing to share what this is? What do you seek relief from? Is there anything you fear will never change?
  5. What robs you of joy?
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## PART 1: THE DREAM BROKEN



*“It was a surreal vision, a waking dream, a stark reminder that perhaps in the breaking of precious things, something even more precious than we can imagine might be unleashed. Perhaps in the breaking, we can find the healing we long for.”*

Like silt quietly nestled at the bottom of a clear glass of water, our doubts and fears resurface with the jostling and tumbling of tragedy. What we’ve dreamed, what we’ve always assumed we knew - about life, God, relationships, our identity, and hope - faces a stronger challenge than ever before. Some people simply run and hide, trying to convince themselves it’s not as bad as it seems. Others grit their teeth and force themselves to ‘be okay’. Or we try to stoically wait until the dust settles, hoping that time alone will heal all wounds. The Wolfs took a different path with Christ, looking straight into their brokenness. Here in the following questions, you are invited to look into the same things.

1. On their wedding day before tragedy struck, Katherine and Jay were encouraged to pursue a “foundation” for their marriage and future, which was Christ and Christian community. Have you ever considered yourself to have a “foundation”? If so, describe what it is and how it has been tested in your life.
2. In the midst of Katherine’s surgery, Jay experienced a “strange conflict” while reading Romans 8. Read Romans 8:31-39 together. These reassuring verses “torqued his insides” as the battle raged between belief in God’s goodness and the tragedy of what he was experiencing. Describe your own experience in choosing to trust God’s goodness, love, or wisdom in the midst of difficult circumstances. How does it describe God’s character?
3. “We all walk through this life on the edge of a blade, and yet we rarely allow ourselves to feel the weight of our potential losses or the grace of our potential gains,” Jay writes. How might an awareness of the blade – the fragility of life – shape the way you approach its joys and pains?
4. Jay continues, “We had seen something miraculous in the circumstances surrounding Katherine’s stroke and survival, and we felt compelled to share what had been given to us with others in need.” Can you describe an experience in which you have experienced something miraculous in the midst of suffering? Have you ever felt so loved by someone, so cared for by friends and by God, that you felt you must share this comfort with others, (2 Corinthians 1:1-7)?

5. Katherine writes, “I considered the reality that sometimes suffering comes because of the decisions we make, sometimes it comes as a way for God to gauge his place in our hearts, and sometimes it comes simply as a by-product of living in a world that is in a state of falling apart.” Have you ever considered these three perspectives about the origins and purposes of suffering? How might these help you understand and handle the pain you’ve experienced?
  
6. As the quote says above, “[P]erhaps in the breaking of precious things, something even more precious than we can imagine might be unleashed. Perhaps in the breaking, we can find the healing we long for.” What “precious things” in your life have been broken? Did this bring up questions or confusion about the character of God? If so, would you be willing to share those?
  
7. For those who also have been given hopeful glimpses from God in the midst of brokenness, would you be willing to share about these with the group?

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## PART 2: THE HOPE DEFERRED



Healing is a process. It is not an overnight, instantaneous experience where hardship is ended, and we resume our prior lives ‘after-the-commercial-break’. Instead, healing tends to be subtle, haltering, misshapen, and inconsistent. Often we find ourselves retracing the same steps of recovery each day. In the midst of the healing process we rarely have the luxury of knowing “why”. Rather than grasping for ‘the answer’ to “Why?”, what if we allow ourselves to spend time with the problem?

1. If we rest our hope in regaining normalcy, in getting back on track or stabilizing our circumstances, despair often moves in. As you’ve wanted normalcy or stability to return, what unexpected delays have you endured?





1. As Katherine transitioned into her inpatient care facility she and her friends found themselves “strangely mourning the end of the unique experience [they] had shared” during her stay in ICU, (pg. 61). What had they gained in suffering together that they now found themselves losing as Katherine transitioned to the new facility?
  
2. Listening to their birthday CD brought Jay face to face with his own sense of loss and pain. However, as he looked deeper into his heart, he felt he was “glimpsing a wound under an old bandage... that vulnerability and grief were love’s inevitable companions.” How have you discovered a similar commingling of vulnerability, grief, and love?
  
3. Facing the discouragements of her slow recovery, Katherine began to wonder if perhaps God had made a mistake - that she should have died. Have you ever felt like that? God immediately spoke into her situation. How might her summary of God’s speech speak to you?
  
4. Her “epiphany” that God does not make mistakes and is in fact redeeming her situation compelled the Wolfs “not to hang out in the place of fear and of questioning what might happen.” Instead they would “cling to what is beyond anything [they] know and understand.” What do we gain from worrying about the future? How do we let go of these fears? What does it look like to replace our grip of our preferred future with holding tightly
  
5. The Wolfs heard a, “call to give thanks, not at the end, but in the midst,” of the trial. What benefits might come from giving thanks before experiencing the “ending we hoped for” (1 Thes 5:18; Phil 4:6-8)? Spend a few minutes in your group simply being grateful for the experiences you’ve had and what you’ve learned.
  
6. Without relishing in complete physical healing or soaring in the success passing the bar exam, the Wolfs felt that God had given them their deepest desire: himself. What do they mean?

7. According to scripture, our deepest desires are met by Jesus Christ, sent to forgive sin and adopt you into his family forever (John 3:16, Ephesians 1:5, Romans 8:14-17)? If you haven't yet had this desire met in Christ, would you like to receive Christ now? If you already know Christ as your savior, would you like to pray for God to show you how he satisfies your deepest longing?

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## PART 4: THE HEALING FOUND



The beauty of the gospel is that it not only redefines healing, it redefines everything. Through Christ's tragic suffering and death we redefine love. No longer can we think in romantic categories of love as that thing that 'makes me feel special' or 'completes me' or 'affirms everything about me.'

Love is sacrifice or self-giving that seeks what is best for the one we love. We also redefine glory, power, honor, and status when we see God himself humbly coming to earth, serving, and sacrificing for the sake of ungrateful people. One way the Gospel heals us, in addition to providing forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice, is by redefining words to give us God's true perspective on life and help us to thrive "when all around gives way."

1. Sometimes we can't "tell our most vulnerable stories in the moments they occur for fear they may undo us. We have to wait until we are in a season of safety before can open up our deepest wounds". Have you found a "season of safety" in which you can share your story? What has made the timing right for you? If you are not ready to share, how are you possibly comforted by others' stories in the group?
2. As the Wolfs returned to LA, new issues and obstacles compelled them to begin redefining home, hope, and healing. What is 'home'?
3. How would you describe your 'hope'?



## EPILOGUE



*“However, over the past seven years of this saga, I have learned to do many things well—to wait well, suffer well, cope well, persevere well, and even to lose well. Our culture tells us to succeed, be beautiful, avoid pain, and be happy. What if everything important in our lives is actually the opposite?”*

1. How have your some of your terms been redefined as you’ve worked through this study guide together?  
Hope, healing, love, marriage, and purpose?
2. The Wolfs place a lot of value in activities our culture guards itself against: waiting, talking about pain, ‘suffering well’, and persevering in relationships even when you ‘gain’ so little. Perhaps you’ve gained new value or plan to be more intentional in certain activities you avoided or devalued. Would you be willing to share more about your new perspective, what activities you hope to enter into more fully, and what it looks like in practice?
3. “Our hope is Jesus,” Katherine shares. “We trust him and all he is doing - in all that we understand and, more importantly, in all that we do not. I believe we are all here for purposes beyond ourselves and beyond our comprehension. We were born to know and manifest the God who heals our souls and calls us into the kind of life that doesn’t end with death.” In what ways are you having to trust God even while you don’t understand what he is doing?
4. What might you be manifesting to others about God and hope right now?
5. How would you like to end your study together? What if you spent time in prayer, praising God for his glorious love and healing in your study mates? For faith, hope andn love to increase in us all?