

# Love's Braided Dance Study Guide Week 1

This week's reading: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2

## Spiritual Practice

[Visio Divina](#) with [Christ in the Rubble](#) by Kelly Latimore

## Scriptures

**Ecclesiastes 9:4 NRSVUE**

"Whoever is joined with all the living has hope."

### [Doctrine & Covenants 164:9 a-c](#)

"a. Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God's ultimate vision for the church.

b. When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

c. This covenant entails sacramental living that respects and reveals God's presence and reconciling activity in creation. It requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church's restoring ministries, especially those devoted to asserting the worth of persons, protecting the sacredness of creation, and relieving physical and spiritual suffering."

## Discussion

1. **Life's Meaning and Purpose** - On page 5, Wirzba says that the migrants Carmine rescued "also rescued him because they put him in touch with life's meaning and purpose."
  - How do we become disconnected from life's meaning and purpose?
  - What experiences have you had that have put you in touch with life's meaning and purpose?
2. **Hope vs Optimism** - Wirzba claims, "Hope and optimism are not the same thing. In fact, optimism often works against hope because it does not sufficiently acknowledge or protest against the injustices that currently degrade and destroy life." (pg 13) He goes on to talk about how optimism pacifies but hope gets us off the couch to work for our future.
  - How have you seen this difference in your own life?
  - In what ways can we shift from our tendency to offer simple, pacifying optimism in the face of difficulty or challenge?
3. **Being Open to Joy** - "To experience joy people must be willing to open and give themselves to life's surprising and sometimes unsettling possibilities. For many people

this prospect is fearful because it places on them a demand that they live in such a way that their feelings are affirmed and that their endeavors are, as Lorde says, 'in accordance with that joy we know ourselves to be capable of'" (pg 17).

- How can we be open to joy and possibility?
  - In what ways has your "faith adventure" been surprising to you?
4. **Hope for the Future** - Wirzba quotes Greta Thunberg on page 41. She says, "If the adults really loved us they would at least do everything they possibly could to make sure we have a safe future, a future to look forward to. But they are not doing that."
- In what ways can we work to build a future for the young people we love?

## Weekly Practices

- Journaling - Wirzba urges us to shift our question from "What gives me hope?" to "What do I love" and "How does this love change what you hope for?" (pg 17). Take a few minutes to consider these questions and journal about them. Reflect on what you've written throughout the week and add to your lists.
- Take some time this week to learn about the places in your community where compassion is already at work: organizations supporting refugees, unhoused neighbors, survivors of domestic violence, or local food security efforts. Consider one simple way you might join in: offering your time, sharing your gifts, or contributing resources. Reach out and take that first small step toward connection.
- Read, watch or listen to one of the resources listed below. Think of ways you can use this piece of media to start a conversation that goes beyond the superficial. Share it with a friend or family member.
- Share the spiritual practice from this week with your congregation or small group.

## Closing Poem

### Late Fragment

By Raymond Carver

*From A New Path To The Waterfall*

And did you get what  
you wanted from this life, even so?  
I did.  
And what did you want?  
To call myself beloved, to feel myself  
beloved on the earth.

## Other Resources

- Podcast: [Love's Braided Dance | YCFC](#)
- Podcast: [Is joy an act of resistance? : Code Switch : NPR](#)
- Article: [10 Ways Your Church Can Take Solidarity Beyond Sympathy | Sojourners](#)
- Video: [Why Hope is Different than Optimism | Norman Wirzba](#)

- Instagram Reel: [Community Building: Rachel Maddow on Fighting Authoritarianism](#)
- Poetry [Amanda Gorman Recites 'The Hill We Climb' | TIME](#)