

## Questions for discussion

### 1. Do you strive to be normal?

I feel that people get annoyed with the abnormal for a reason. They are uncomfortable with them. Do they strive for normal? Do those who think outside the box scare them. Do the abnormal ruin a normal world? It takes a lot of effort to keep things normal. We are not on a normal planet. Look around space, were not the norm. Life is hectic at times. Normal seems the right way. I am not so sure it is or ever was.

*“In a way, my pursuit of finding myself over the last 15 years has hurt me. What I’ve discovered is that the original me is not accepted. People want the me they desire. I should smile more, dress better, choose better words, and on and on it goes. I need to recreate myself to fit each person I meet. That is a life’s pursuit. To be all that each person needs me to be. Not! That would-be suicide and crazy. This is not a trivial pursuit. Living in the world of other people is hard work. Finding me and pleasing them is tough slugging.” Chapter 4, p, 1*

### 2. Are you in pursuit of happiness?

I feel happiness is a runaway train. Once it starts moving then good luck stopping it. What I mean is also trying to capture it. Happiness is always moving because our lives change. our wants and desires change. Really all you have is you. Being happy with the inside “you” is all you need to be happy. You are certainly unique. Nobody thinks and lives the way you do. Find happiness in you or it might become a train wreck.

*“Kids always love to say are we there yet. Is that their pursuit of happiness? I know for a fact that my ex-wife has had trouble in her new marriage. Is it better than the one we had together? I’m sure she would say yes, but is it what she hoped for? Nothing is ever what you thought. In my pursuit of finding me I have realized that I’m either more than satisfied or somehow left feeling that I’m less than stellar. However, it never is exactly like I envisioned. Sometimes getting there is half the fun. It is? We do hope for a perfect future result. An anticipation that drives us to cry out every 5 minutes are we there yet.” Chapter 4, p, 3*

### 3. What is normal to you?

I thought being married with kids, a wife, and a house was normal. I thought having a job and mowing the lawn on weekends was normal. After divorce, nothing has ever been normal since. Becoming a Christian means life will never be normal again. My view on normal has changed. I don’t chase normal. Life on this planet will never give us

normal. So often we reject the odd and abnormal. What were really rejecting is everything. From Darwin to God: there is no normal.

*“I had to point these things out because we look at people with a judging eye. People are different than us. Sometimes it’s because they are acting outside the “normal.” We have to admit it. Sometimes we hate people acting outside what we consider normal. I was in a very conservative church one fine Sunday and a woman stood up and spoke for the Lord. Now I don’t know if you have ever been to church but in this place, it rocked their boat. Rocked it in a bad way too. What she did was not normal. The pastoral leadership discerned her actions behind closed doors. This really ruffled feathers. After very little debate they decided that what she did was not from God. In the congregation, what she did was bang on, but it was not the norm.” Chapter 4, p, 5*

### **4. Is feeling normal filling a hole?**

I have always said God gives us 10% of who we can be. The other 90% we have to ask for. What it means to me is this. We should be searching for meaning. Asking God does not mean he is holding us back. In not asking, we are holding us back. There is a vacancy in every one of us. There is more to discover about you? Why live with a vacant feeling? Being normal will not make things normal. Living an ever growing and changing life will.

*“What would happen if we were all normal? What would happen if we were all complete? I suspect there would be longer naps, more holidays, and the pursuit of nothing. My autistic daughter is funny. One day I told her I could make her move magically. She said “no you can’t.” I opened all the cupboards in the kitchen and left the room. Within 30 seconds I heard the cupboards closing. I gave her meaning because she had to close them. It was her nature. I suspect it’s our nature to fill a hole in our lives, close the doors, and find the answers.” Chapter 4, p, 7*

### **5. What if you discovered your not normal?**

I said earlier that it might have been terrible that I found myself. It meant that people were right about me. I am different than them. Are they normal? Am I the abnormal? Maybe, but I am me. Discovering your different is revelation of the soul. To know your different means, you are unique. Is Trump unique? Is the Pope unique? There might be nobody like Michelangelo. Maybe your abnormal is unique and not a bad thing?

*“That is, it in a nut shell. We wear masks to look normal. We tell tales to look normal. We create dimensions to look normal. I think it comes down to what Jon Gertner said in the Beginning of his article about David Gilbert. (happiness professor). “If Daniel Gilbert is right, then you are wrong. That is to say, if Daniel Gilbert is right.”*



## **Normal** Chapter 4 (Dirty)

*That is in response to Gilbert asking if we are all not well. It's possible we are all not well. Maybe what is on your inside is standing up. Maybe we need to let it out. What if you can't stand the abnormal because you want to be one of them but don't have the balls. What if being abnormal is secretly in." Chapter 4, p, 11*

### **6. Does your heart need a revolution?**

Our frustration with our lives means something. It could be frustration with how this life is shaking down. If people think were not normal then who cares. If you fear being a little reckless then maybe it's time for a change. How about a heart revolution? It's time to take back our hearts. To discover that we matter. That we are unique. If someone hates the way you are, then maybe it's they that need to change their heart towards people. Maybe you need to change your heart about yourself too.

*"G Campbell Morgan is a famous preacher of the early 1900's. He said in regards to the heart "revolution not evolution." I think Darwin got it wrong. The normal so called people got it wrong. Evolved from monkeys? The more people I meet the more I am convinced we already know who we are. We just stubbornly refuse to let it out. We want to hide that person behind a mask. We only show certain parts of us in a fishbowl we display. Why is it that some people lash out? They are becoming the very thing they hated? It's because we tend to bar the freedom of being who we truly are. It's time for a heart revolution." Chapter 4, p, 13*