



*The Last*  
**BRICKMAKER**  
*in* **AMERICA**

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Introduction

Henry Cobb, a warm and honest man, has proudly poured 57 years of sweat and blood into his family's brickyard. After toiling from dusk until dawn every day but Sunday, every week of the year, Henry's passion for his work disappears and is replaced by grief from the death of his wife and fear of automation's increasing hold on American manufacturing. Then, 12-year-old Danny Potter enters Henry's life. Henry becomes a mentor to the boy, offering Danny a refuge from his bickering parents and the role model he so desperately needs. In turn, Danny rejuvenates Henry's passion for life.







## About the Discussion Guide

This guide is designed to help your family or group have some deeper discussion about the important biblical themes found in *The Last Brickmaker in America*. You can use it for personal study and reflection as well.

## Questions for Discussion

### SUCCESS

*The Last Brickmaker in America* explores the difference between the world's version of success and the actions that bring true and lasting joy. Danny's father seeks success in higher pay and more prestige at work, but he loses his family as a result. His foreman sees success as getting things done quickly and cheaply, but Henry sees success in doing a job right, even when it takes more time and effort.



## QUESTIONS

*God's guidelines for success in life are often very different from the "rules" of the world. How did **The Last Brickmaker in America** demonstrate this principle?*

*How do you and your family define success? What can you and your family learn from Henry when it comes to doing the job right no matter the cost?*

*Is your pursuit of wealth a higher priority than your family right now? If so, what specific things can you begin to prioritize today to make more of an investment in your family?*

"Great eagerness in the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, or honor cannot exist without sin."

- DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR REFLECTION

Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.

ECCLESIASTES 5:10 NIV

You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure. Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom; in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be. But now, Lord, what do I look for?

My hope is in you.

PSALM 39:5-7 NIV

Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.

PROVERBS 10:4 NIV







## PASSION

Henry and his wife both lived lives of passion. Henry's passion was the art of brickmaking, while Dorothy's passion was fostering a love of learning in others through her role as a librarian. When Dorothy died, Henry's passion was lost in his grief. When Danny enters his life in need of guidance, Henry finds his passion reignited because he has a purpose again, "a reason to get up in the morning." God gives us all gifts, talents, and passions that, when used for His purposes, make the world a better place and touch the lives of many. Henry's bricks literally built the town. His example of commitment and perseverance changed Danny's life, and Dorothy's passion for learning left a legacy to many generations.



## QUESTIONS

*What do you love to do?*

*How could your passions be used to touch the world and leave a legacy for generations to come?*

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

- ATTRIBUTED TO HOWARD THURMAN

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR REFLECTION

God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues. All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11 MSG

Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.

ROMANS 15:17 NIV

## SECOND CHANCES

*The Last Brickmaker in America* illustrates the grace of God through second chances. Henry struggled to find a purpose after he lost his wife, but he was given a second chance when Danny came into his life. Danny had given in to his anger over his parents' disintegrating marriage, but he was given a chance to redeem himself and change his behavior when Henry took him under his wing. Danny's parents had given up on each other and their marriage, but as they watched their son change, their hearts were softened toward one another as well.

## QUESTIONS

*Think of a time when you gave up hope. Perhaps a relationship was falling apart, a circumstance just seemed too daunting, or you made a poor decision that cost you dearly. How did you come out on the other side? Did you see God's hand in redeeming the situation?*

*Are you still in the midst of a seemingly hopeless circumstance? How might God give you a second chance if you open your heart to Him?*

"Hold the fleet angel fast until he blesses thee."

- HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR REFLECTION

That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

1 TIMOTHY 4:10 NIV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NKJV

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

ISAIAH 61:1-3A NIV







