

GO DEEPER: IS THIS ALL?

A Reflection Guide for "Is This All? When Faith Meets Life's Biggest Question"

INTRODUCTION

In this deeply personal episode of Making Sense of Faith, Adam Hamilton takes us back to the very beginning—his first sermon 35 years ago in a funeral home chapel. Through his grandmother's deathbed question and the heroic story of Edward William Spencer, Adam invites us to wrestle with life's most fundamental question: Is there more to life than what we see and touch? As you reflect on this conversation, use this guide to explore your own answer to this question and consider what you're willing to do about it.

3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to consider what stood out to you most from this episode:

1. Adam shares how "Is this all?" appears in different forms throughout our lives—in despair, grief, achievement, and moral compromise. When have you asked this question in your own life? What form did it take?
 2. Young Adam believed his church would be great not because of programs or buildings, but because people would "decide to live as people of the Resurrection" and "lay their life on the line for someone else." What would it look like for you to live as a person of the resurrection in your everyday life?
 3. At the end of his first sermon, Adam acknowledged that about half the people wouldn't return the next week. Yet he remained confident God could do something amazing. When have you had to trust in possibility despite uncertainty? What gave you the courage to keep going?
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2 KEY INSIGHTS

1. The question "Is this all?" is universal—and so is the longing for something more

"As far back as recorded history goes, human beings have been asking these questions... Around the world and in every culture and among all people, in all the great world religions, people have struggled to answer this question. Is there more? And the world religions, while each has come up with a different answer, each its form and content is different, the answer is still the same: Yes, there is something more."

Question: What evidence in your own life points to "something more" beyond what you can see and touch?

Reflection: Think about moments when you've felt a deep longing—for purpose, for connection, for meaning that transcends your circumstances. These longings aren't signs of weakness; they're clues pointing toward

the question Adam's grandmother asked. Whether you're deeply religious, skeptical, or somewhere in between, acknowledging this universal human question is the first step toward finding your answer.

2. Knowing there's "something more" demands a response—the real question is what you'll do about it

"Most people will dismiss the question outright. We'll just assume that there's something more and leave it at that. So what?... This I think is the real critical question: What are you willing to do about it?"

Question: If you believe there's more to life than what you currently experience, what specific action could you take this week to live in alignment with that belief?

Reflection: The Apostle Paul didn't claim to have everything figured out, but he chose to "press on" and "strain ahead" toward the calling he sensed. Edward William Spencer didn't hesitate when he heard cries for help—he dove in repeatedly, even past the point of exhaustion. Believing in something more isn't passive; it's an invitation to struggle, to commit, to live sacrificially. What would change in your daily choices if you truly lived like there's something more?

1 PRACTICE EXERCISE

The "One Life" Reflection

Find 10 minutes of quiet time this week for this exercise:

1. Read slowly: Reread or listen to the Edward William Spencer story from the episode. Notice what emotions arise as you hear about his choice to keep diving back into dangerous waters.
 2. Journal on these prompts:
 - If I could "pack my whole life into one evening" like Spencer did, what would I do?
 - Who in my life needs me to "dive back in" for them right now?
 - What holds me back from living more sacrificially?
 3. Identify one concrete action: Based on your reflections, identify one specific way you could "lay your life on the line" for someone else this week. This doesn't have to be dramatic—it might be:
 - Having a difficult conversation you've been avoiding
 - Giving time or resources that cost you something
 - Standing up for someone who needs an advocate
 - Reaching out to someone who's struggling
 4. Make a commitment: Write down your intended action and share it with one trusted person who can encourage you to follow through.
 5. Reflect afterward: After you take this action, notice how it feels. Did living sacrificially connect you to "something more"?
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QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"I want to know Christ. Yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participate in his sufferings, becoming like him." - The Apostle Paul (Philippians 3:10)

"Ed didn't have to stop and think. He said, 'You bet your life I would. Not many people get to live 17 lives.'"

"God could do something amazing here, not because of me, but if we actually believed in the resurrection, if we believed in Christ and wanted to follow him, and we lived as selfless and sacrificial people like Edwin William Spencer did."

"God help the rest of us to pack those nine hours into the rest of our lives."

CLOSING REFLECTION

The question "Is this all?" doesn't require a religious upbringing to understand—it requires only honesty about the longing in your heart. Whether you answer "yes, there's something more" with certainty, doubt, or curiosity, the invitation remains the same: What will you do about it? Your answer won't be found in certainty or perfect understanding, but in the willingness to press on, to struggle, to dive back into the waters when you hear someone crying for help. That's when you discover that living for something more isn't a burden—it's the very thing that makes you feel most alive.

This reflection guide was created to accompany the Making Sense of Faith podcast episode "Is This All? When Faith Meets Life's Biggest Question." For more resources like this, visit makingsenseoffaith.com.