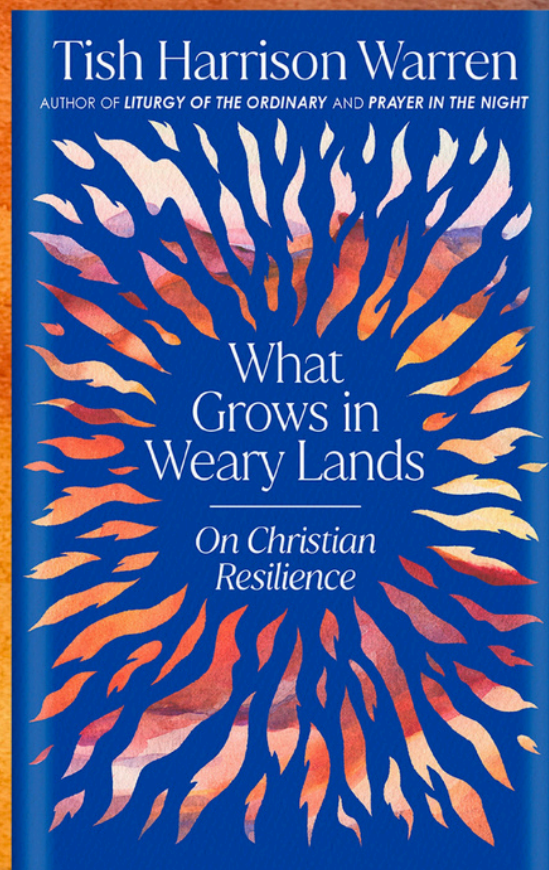


# *Book Club Questions*

*What Grows in Weary Lands*

by Tish Harrison Warren



1. What does Tish Harrison Warren mean when she refers to “aridity” and “acedia”? Have you experienced these environments and feelings in your faith journey? Discuss those times with the group. What steps did you take to regain both your faith and your verve for life?
2. What times in your life have you wanted to speed up and set to music, movie-montaging your way through? Consider what you would have missed if you'd done so. Why do you think we always want to speed through the hard or slow times?
3. How much did you know about the Desert Fathers and Mothers before reading this book? What, if anything, appeals to you about their lives and faith? What doesn't?
4. “What our culture—and what the church—tends to lack are stories of a long, steady continuation in faith.” Who in your life is an example of someone with a long, steady continuation of faith? What questions might you ask them about how they handled their own “prolonged middles”?
5. Warren cites Abba Arsenius's advice to “Stay in your cell” during the tough times. What would it mean to you, today, to “stay in your cell”? What do you imagine will be the most challenging part?
6. What delights you? How can you make more room for genuine delight in your life? Share ideas as a group, and commit to one or two during this next week. Be sure to note, at the end of the week, how you feel.
7. Warren writes that humans have three common responses to moments of struggle or difficulty: Numb out, flame out, or go deep. Which response feels most natural to you? Consider an area in which you're struggling right now. What would it look like to go deep?
8. “To keep our options ever open is to, in the end, live half a life,” Warren writes. Discuss this idea. What life paths are you having trouble closing?
9. “To go deep with God always involves going deep with others, being rooted in a place, a community, a tradition, a church,” she continues. Where can you “go deep” instead of gazing wistfully at an alternate path? How can you invest more of your time, more of your self, in your community?
10. “We don't simply find faith, once and for all. We find it and lose it and find it again. We believe and doubt and believe.” How does it encapsulate the central themes of this book? How has faith been lost or found in your own life through the years?