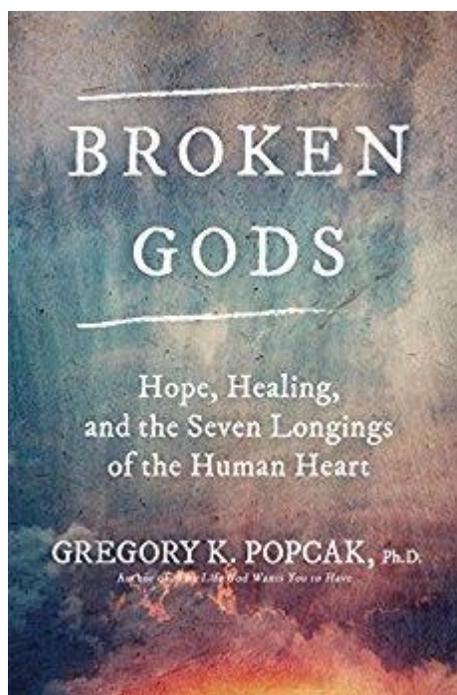


# One Book, One Church Diocese of Baton Rouge

Study Guide  
For



## **BROKEN GODS**

**Hope, Healing, and the Seven Longings  
Of the Human Heart**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the program “One Book, One Church” sponsored by the Secretariat of Christian Formation for the Diocese. The goal of this program is to intensify the inspirational presence of the Holy Spirit within the Diocese by inviting small faith-sharing groups to read and discuss the same spiritual book at the same time. Lent seems to be an ideal time for this type of spiritual exercise.

## **FORMAT**

Based on the six weeks of Lent, we would like to suggest the following plan for working with this material.

Week One: After an opening prayer, the Facilitator distributes the books and invites different group members to take turns reading aloud the material in Chapter One. Afterwards, the Facilitator leads a discussion of the material using the questions provided for Chapter One in this Study Guide. When the time is up (an hour and a half is recommended), the Facilitator instructs the group to read Chapters Two and Three before the next meeting. Time for fellowship and refreshments may follow.

Week Two: The group uses the questions in the Study Guide to reflect on Chapters Two and Three. (Facilitator assigns Chapters Four and Five to be read before the next session.)

Week Three: Group discusses Chapters Four and Five. (Chapters Six and Seven are assigned to be read before the next session.)

Week Four: Group discusses Chapters Six and Seven. (Chapters Eight and Nine are assigned to be read before the next session.)

Week Five: Group discusses Chapters Eight and Nine. (Chapters Ten and Eleven are assigned to be read before the next meeting.)

Week Six: Group discusses Chapters Ten and Eleven.

## Chapter One:

### More Than You Can Imagine

1. What does the phrase, “God intends you to be a god” mean to you?
2. How are you affected by the idea that you are meant to be a “god”?
3. How do you experience yourself as a “broken god”?
4. The author cites three elements (piety, objective morality and worship) that assist us in moving toward “divinization.” What role does each of these elements play in your life?
5. When have you experienced an “ache for more”?
6. How have you responded to that “ache”?
7. What deeper longing do you think that “ache” represents?

## Chapter Two:

### The Seven Divine Longings of the Human Heart

1. Up to now, how have you viewed the role of your desires in your spiritual life?
2. How has this chapter affected your view of the role of your desires in your relationship with God?
3. How has this chapter affected your view of the meaning of “virtue”?
4. What do you think about the author’s assertion that the “seven deadly sins” reflect seven divine longings?
5. Which correlation between a deadly sin and a divine longing makes the most sense to you? Which correlation is the hardest to understand?
6. Overall, how did this chapter touch you?

## Chapter Three:

### Set Free From Struggle, the Secret of the Imperfect Mystic

1. How does the author's understanding of a "mystic" compare with your own understanding of a "mystic"?
2. What do you see as the role of guilt in your spiritual life?
3. The author suggests that our brains are more receptive to changing if we adopt an attitude of curiosity, openness, acceptance and love (COAL). Which of these attitudes are already meaningful to you and which ones are challenging?

## Chapter Four:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Abundance

1. What are some examples of hedonic (“pleasure driven”) happiness vs. abundance (“meaning driven”) happiness?
2. The author claims that “abundance” results from the pursuit of: meaningfulness, intimacy and virtue.
  - a. What are some examples of your attempts to bring meaningfulness into your life?
  - b. In pursuing intimacy, with whom do you seek communion and with whom do you feel a need to set boundaries to help the relationship become healthier?
  - c. What is an example of when you exercised virtue by growing through a difficult experience?
3. What is your understanding of how pride hinders the experience of abundance?
4. When have you experienced humility opening you up to abundance?

## Chapter Five:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Dignity

1. What are some factors that might make it difficult to believe in your own dignity?
2. Can you recall an experience when you truly sensed that you were loved by God? How did that experience affect you?
3. Think of an experience when someone was especially kind to you. What did that experience do to you? How did that experience affect your view of that person?
4. What do you think of the idea that performing an act of kindness can integrate and connect different areas of the brain?

## Chapter Six:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Justice

1. How does your understanding of justice match or differ from the view of justice presented by the author?
2. What messages have you received from authority figures about the emotion of anger?
3. What do you understand to be the meaning of each of the qualities of “righteous anger,” namely that it is:
  - a. Thoughtful
  - b. Appropriate
  - c. Respectful
  - d. Proportionate
4. The author claims that “wrath causes us to act in a manner that makes things worse.” When have you experienced that to be true?
5. What factors make it difficult to develop the virtue of patience?

## Chapter Seven:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Peace

1. How would you summarize the author's view of peace?
2. How does that understanding of peace help you?
3. Describe a situation in your life when you were tempted to respond by resorting to sloth.
4. What makes it difficult to remain diligent in pursuing peace?
5. What have you found to be helpful in sustaining your diligence in difficult situations?

## Chapter Eight:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Trust

1. What in your experience tells you that you have a deep longing to trust God?
2. What are some of the negative effects of greed?
3. When have you been tempted to succumb to greed?
4. What do you notice happening to you when you have the courage to be generous?
5. What are some signs of God' generosity to you?
6. Describe an incident when you experienced the freedom that came from trusting in God.

## Chapter Nine:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Well-Being

1. Which element of well-being is the strongest in your life:
  - a. Hedonic
  - b. Eudaimonic
  - c. Psychological
  - d. Social
  - e. Physical
2. Which element of well-being needs the most attention in your life?
3. What have you been taught about the role your body plays in your spiritual life?
4. How does your understanding of the sin of gluttony match or differ from the author's view of gluttony?
5. Has your view of the virtue of temperance been changed after reading this chapter? If so, how?

## Chapter Ten:

### Satisfying the Divine Longing for Communion

1. How do you experience the longing for communion?
2. How does Pope John Paul's ideas about the "nuptial meaning of the body" affect your understanding of marriage?
3. How does the author's description of lust affect your view of that deadly sin?
4. What did you find helpful in the author's view of the virtue of chastity?
5. How were you challenged by the message of this chapter?

## Chapter Eleven:

### Approaching Divinity: The Ladder of Love

1. How does the image of the “ladder of divine love” affect your view of your spiritual journey?
2. What feelings emerge when you read the author’s claim that you are destined to become a flame in the fire of God’s love?
3. Describe some instances when you tend to say, “I Do” to God. When do you say, “I Don’t”?
4. What impact has this book had on you?