

NOOMA® DVD Series

The name NOOMA is an English phonetic spelling of the Greek word pneuma which is commonly translated to “spirit” or “breath”. Pneumatology refers to the study of spiritual beings, particularly the interaction between humans and God.

NOOMA is a new format for spiritual direction. It is short films touching on issues that we care about and that we want to talk about. It's a format that's there for us when we need it, as we need it, how we need it. NOOMA is short films that really speak to us. Concise and to the point, 10- to 14-minute DVDs tackle topics like forgiveness, discipleship, and unconditional love, making biblical truths vivid and relevant for today's generation. They will surprise you, touch you, help you to think in new ways and spark meaningful discussion in your small group.

Each DVD is packaged with a 32-page discussion book with questions, related Scripture passages and quotes from the DVD. The NOOMA DVDs can be checked out from the resource center located on the lower level of the church.

Rob Bell, the creator of the NOOMA series is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan, one of the fastest growing churches in American history. He lives with his wife, Kristen, and their two boys in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

RAIN *Things don't always work out the way we want them to.*

Things don't always work out the way we want them to, or the way we think they will. Sometimes we don't even see it coming. We get hit with some form of pain out of nowhere leaving us feeling desperate and helpless. That's the way life is. Still, it makes us wonder how God can just stand by and watch us suffer. Where is God when it really hurts? Maybe God is actually closer to us than we think. Maybe it's when we're in these situations, where everything seems to be falling apart, that God gets an opportunity to remind us of how much he really loves us.

FLAME *What's up with the word "love?"*

I love these shoes. Really? The same way I love my wife? What's up with the word "love"? It doesn't have much meaning when we use it so loosely. Maybe we don't really get it. Maybe we don't understand what real love is. What it involves to really love somebody. What it means to give yourself to someone else. We mistake things like friendship, commitment or lust for love, but God wired us in a certain way to experience all that love was really meant to be. Not to hold us back or make us miss out on the best that life has to offer. God created love, and wants us to feel it all in the way it's meant to be felt.

TREES *Do our lives really matter?*

We want to know why we are here. If our lives really matter. How our religion is relevant to this life. Today. We want to understand what significance this minute, hour, week, month, and year has to our lives. To our world. We need a God who cares about this life, in this world, right now. We want to understand why everything we think, everything we say, and everything we do matters. We don't want to just sit back and wait for something to happen or someday to come. We want to know if all the choices we make now will shape our world and lives for eternity. Because we want our lives to have meaning today, and our lives today to have meaning forever.

SUNDAY *Why do we do the things we do?*

Why do we go to church or give money away? Because we're supposed to or because we think that God needs it? Do we honestly put on our best clothes for an hour once a week, stand and sit at all the right times, and sing all the appropriate songs for God's sake, or because it'll make us look better to the world around us. We're tired of all the empty rituals and routines. And so is God. God hates it when we call ourselves Christians but ignore all the things he really cares about. He hates it when we go through hollow religious routines out of some feelings of duty or obligation. God doesn't want the meaningless rituals. God wants our hearts.

NOISE *Why is silence so hard to deal with?*

Why is it so much easier for us to live our lives with a lot of things going on all the time than to just be in silence? We're constantly surrounded with "voices" that are influencing us on how to think, feel, and behave. Movies, music, TV, Internet, cell phones, and a never ending barrage of advertising. There's always something going on. Always noise in our lives. But maybe there's a connection between the amount of noise in our lives and our inability to hear God. If God sometimes feels distant to us, maybe it's not because he's not talking to us, but simply because we aren't really listening.

KICKBALL *Why can't we always have what we want?*

We always think we know what's missing from our lives in order to make us happy, don't we? If only I had that car, or that job, or if only I could lose those 15 lbs, then I'd be happy. Really? How often do we want something only to find out that it wasn't that great after all? Sometimes we ask God for things and if he doesn't deliver right away, we start questioning whether God really understands or even cares. Do we really trust God? Do we trust that God is good and sees a bigger picture than we ever could? It's easy to want what's right in front of us, but maybe God knows what's better for us, and sometimes we just can't see it.

LUGGAGE *It isn't always easy to forgive.*

Maybe a friend turned their back on you. Maybe someone you loved betrayed you. We all have wounds and we end up carrying around these things that people have done to us for weeks, months, and sometimes even years. It isn't always easy to forgive these people and after a while these hurts can get really heavy. So the only way to feel better seems to be somehow getting back at the people that hurt us, to get revenge. But does revenge ever truly satisfy? Maybe forgiving isn't something you do for someone else to let them off the hook. Maybe forgiveness is all about you. God didn't create you to carry these wounds around. God created you to be free. .

DUST *Does God believe in us?*

Believing in God is important, but what about God believing in us? Believing that we can actually be the kind of people we were meant to be. People of love, compassion, peace, forgiveness and hope. People who try to do the right thing all of the time. Who act on the endless opportunities around us every day for good, beauty and truth. It's easy for us to sometimes get down on ourselves. To feel "not good enough" or feel like we don't have what it takes. But maybe if we had more insight into the culture that Jesus grew up in and some of the radical things that he did, we'd understand the faith that God has in all of us.

BULLHORN *Can we separate loving God from loving others?*

God loves everyone, so a Christian should, too. In fact, Jesus said the most important thing in life is to love God with everything we've got and love others in the same way. But it's not always easy to love everyone around us, is it? Sometimes we strongly disagree with other people's political views, religious beliefs, behaviors, or something else, and it makes it hard to love them when we feel like we're right and they're very wrong. But Jesus doesn't separate loving God and loving others. So maybe the best way for us to show our love for God is actually by loving other people no matter how hard it sometimes is. Maybe it's the only way.

LUMP *A lot of us have done things in our lives that we're ashamed of.*

Some are small things and some of us have really big and devastating things. Some of us even have things that people close to us don't know about. Personal junk that we keep to ourselves so we don't have to deal with it. Because we don't know how to deal with it, do we? We're afraid that if we try it's just going to make everything worse. But no matter how big our junk is, no matter how much we've done has impacted the way other people feel about us or how we feel about ourselves, it hasn't changed how God feels about us. God loves us, he always has and always will, and there's nothing we can do to change that.

RHYTHM *What does it mean to have a relationship with God?*

Is how we live connected to something that has been in place since the beginning of time? Maybe Jesus didn't come to start a new religion, but to show us how to live in tune with the life God has always planned for us. *Rhythm*

MATTHEW *Losing someone we love can be the most difficult thing to go through in life.*

All the explanations and comforting words in the world don't really help and everything can seem hopeless. But what might help us is to know, that in facing this kind of loss, Jesus wept.

RICH *Maybe God has blessed us with everything we have so that we can bless and give to others.*

There's a popular bumper sticker that reads "God Bless America," but hasn't America already been blessed? It's easy for us to fall into a mindset of viewing "our" world as "the" world, because it's all we generally see. We're constantly bombarded with images of the latest styles and models of everything, and it can easily leave us feeling like what we have isn't enough because we see people that have even more than us. But how does what we have compare to what most people in the world have? Maybe what we have is enough; maybe it's more than enough. Maybe God has blessed us with everything we have so we can bless and give to others.

BREATHE *Our physical breath is actually a picture of a deeper spiritual reality.*

How many of us ever think about our breathing, about the meaning of breathing? In the Bible, the word for "breath" is the same as the word for "spirit." We've all been created in the image of God, but our lives are incredibly vulnerable and fragile. Maybe if we had more insight into the meaning of breathing, we would better understand how God created us as human beings.

YOU *Some of the central claims of the Christian faith are the source of many discussions and heated debates.*

But are we always debating the right things? Maybe some of our discussions would change significantly if we had more insight into the actual circumstances that surrounded the first people of the Christian movement—if we had a better understanding of the things they did in the context of the world they lived in. Maybe some of the claims of the Christian faith that we typically perceive to be unique aren't really that special at all. And at the same time maybe we don't always put enough emphasis on the things that truly should matter in our lives. Approx. 13 minutes

STORE *We all get angry about things from time to time-- some of us more often than others.*

But what is really the root of our anger? Maybe if we learn where our anger comes from, we can channel it towards something constructive - something that's bigger than ourselves. How much energy do we spend on wishing things were how they used to be, thinking that our best days may be behind us? Maybe if we're too hung up on the past we fail to live our lives to the fullest, right here, right now.

TODAY *How much time and energy do we spend wishing things were how they used to be?*

We often think about times in our past when things were different and want our lives to be like that again. Some of us have even come to believe that our best days may actually be behind us. But if we're in some way hung up on the past, what does that mean for our lives now? How are we and those around us affected if we're not fully present? If we're longing for the way things used to be, what does that really say about our understanding and appreciation of our lives today? Maybe we need to learn to embrace our past for what it is, in order to live our lives to the fullest, right here, right now.

NAME *Why are we so concerned about what other people think, say or look like?*

We all compare ourselves to others. We spend our lives wondering what others think and say about us. Some of us even wish we were someone else. We question why we are the way we are and not the way we wish we could be. Some of us have let the expectations of others dictate who we've become. We act a certain way to be accepted but know that we're being untrue. But why are we so concerned with what other people think, say, or look like? What does it say about us if we are unable to accept who we are? Maybe if we really knew our true selves, we wouldn't give so much attention to other people's lives and live more in tune with the life God wants for us.

OPEN *What if there is more to prayer than God just listening and answering?*

Does God answer prayer? Some, but not all? Sometimes, but not all the time? Or does God always answer prayer and it's just that sometimes God says no. Could prayer be bigger than God listening and answering? Maybe we need a fresh perspective on how we approach the things in life that compel us to pray.

SHELLS *What are we really doing with our time?*

I'm so busy! We've got too much going! Sound familiar? Modern life sets a grueling pace, and keeping up with appointments, gatherings, and to-do lists can be exhausting. Rob Bell's thought-provoking discussion starter asks: What are you *really* doing with your time? If you find it difficult to say "no," do you know what you've said "yes" to?

SHE *When we omit the feminine, are we missing a very fundamental part of His nature?*

As evangelicals, we often focus on the masculine character of God. But when we ignore God's feminine traits, could we be missing a fundamental part of the Almighty's personality? In this thought-provoking DVD, Rob Bell seeks a more well-rounded understanding of the divine nature. A great way to spark meaningful discussion in your small group!

TOMATO *Most of us grew up believing that our worth comes from how smart, competent, fast, better skilled and good we are. Many of us believe a lie---that we are our success, intelligence, skill, and attractiveness. But Jesus says not so fast. Just as a tomato dies to help us live, our "false" self must be extinguished so that our true self can blossom. Based on Matthew 10:39, Rob Bell's newest NOOMA invites you to surrender the ideals of our image-conscious culture and embrace true identity in Christ.*