



Ordinary Mysticism: Your Life as Sacred Ground Study Questions – Week Three

October 19 - 25

Based on “*Ordinary Mysticism*” by Mirabai Starr

Surrender: Radical Amazement

1) Begin by reading this aloud (with different readers in your group). Read each paragraph slowly and let it land.

In Chapter 3 of *Ordinary Mysticism*, Starr invites us into the practice of surrender and radical amazement - a way of loosening our grip, opening mind and heart, and allowing ourselves to be held and guided by the great Mystery we call God.

Starr encourages us to “*practice random acts of wonder*” and to tug on the loose threads of our belief system until they begin to unravel. For her, “*not knowing isn’t a problem to be solved, but rather a reality to be celebrated.*”

This is the spirit of *Beginner’s Mind* in Zen Buddhism - a *way of seeing* that meets the world with open curiosity instead of control. It’s about showing up to life without pretense or conclusion.

Starr weaves this with the words of Saint Francis: “*Preach the gospel always, and if necessary use words.*” She reminds us that silence has its own wisdom. In what she calls the **holy hush**, she writes, “*Who needs to comment on a kiss, analyze a sunset, or explain the birth of a baby while the baby is being born?*” Some things ring true... and speak loudest in silence.

She also invites us into the practice of “**Awe**” - the kind that stops us in our tracks when we encounter something vast, beautiful, or mysterious. Awe humbles the ego. As Starr writes, it “*rescues you from the prison of individualism and sets you free in the vast cosmos - your true home.*” Awe reminds us that we’re not separate or self-contained, but part of something infinitely larger, wiser, and alive.

Starr challenges us to “*reclaim the holy ground of learning... and ‘rewild’ our brain.*” Because to truly learn is also to *continually unlearn* - to strip away what we think we know - until the mind stands open and ready for revelation. Only then can wisdom take root in the fertile ground of wonder.

Study Questions: Living the Paradox of Surrender

2. Letting Go vs. Giving Up

Starr reminds us that surrender isn't resignation - it's trust. But how do we tell (and feel) the difference in our own lives?

For example: Have you ever released a relationship, a project, or a challenge after trying to control the outcome - and then found unexpected peace or clarity?

And have you ever "let go" in frustration, only to realize later that you were actually giving up? Where does surrender end - and giving up begin?

3. Doing Your Part

When Star prays, "*Here, Mama, you take it,*" she still remains connected and engaged, but she is also trusting something larger is at work. How do you stay engaged while also trusting that something larger is at work?

Think about: A health or financial challenge, a relationship conflict, a stuck place or a hard situation. What does it look like to truly hand it over - without checking out or giving up?

4. Learning to Live More Peacefully with the Unknown

"Not knowing isn't a problem to be solved, but a reality to be celebrated."

Where in your life have you had to make peace with uncertainty - a diagnosis, a loss, a waiting season, a mystery? What helped you stay grounded when answers didn't come? How might you practice embracing or celebrating mystery - instead of resenting it?

5. Moments of Awe

Starr says awe "*humbles the ego... and rescues you from the prison of individualism, setting you free in the vast cosmos—your true home.*"

When was the last time something stopped you in your tracks - a piece of music, a mountain view, a newborn's breath, a crowd singing, a transcendent encounter.... ?

What stirred within you in that moment? Did it remind you, deep in your bones, that you belong to something larger, wiser, and vibrantly alive?

- **Reading for next week** – Chapter 4, “Ordinary Mysticism”

- **Mysticism in Practice**

- ~ **Continue the Daily Practice**

- At the start of the day, place your hand on your heart and ask: “*What is my deepest intention today?*” Identify it and say it aloud. Invite it to guide your day. Then, at bedtime, reflect a moment on that intention... and give thanks for the way it guided you today.

Optional - Practice Surrender with “The Hard Thing”

1. Identify Your “Hard Thing.”

Take a few quiet minutes this week to name one area of life that feels heavy, stuck, overly worrisome or unsolvable. Write it down simply and honestly (for your eyes only).

2. Reflect on Your Current Posture (*your energy and attitude*)

Ask yourself:

- How am I relating to this situation right now - controlling, avoiding, overthinking, numbing, resentful, hopeless, blaming, obsessing.... surrendering?
- What might openness look like here? What would wise trust feel like in my body?

3. A Small Act of Surrender.

Each day this week, practice a tiny gesture of letting go. It could be as simple as taking three slow breaths *before reacting*, saying “Be here now” when you catch yourself looping in worry. Or, praying something similar to Starr’s words: “*Here, Mama, you take it.*” Notice what shifts - not necessarily in the situation itself, *but in you*.

4. Practice “Holy Curiosity.”

When frustration, worry or fear rises, try pausing and asking a question.

“What might this be trying to teach me?” “What can I still count on? What do I know to be true here?” See if reframing the question opens something new.

5. Closing Reflection.

At the end of the week, return to your “hard thing.” Ask yourself:

- What has changed in how I hold it?
- What have I learned about myself and surrender - not as escape, but as a deeper way of being present and meeting life?

6. Notice and Cultivate **moments of AWE** along the way. Share them on social media – they are positively contagious.