Journal Questions for Raymond Carver’s “Cathedral” Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1.) Is the narrator a sympathetic protagonist? Does our opinion of him change as the story progresses? Does the narrator develop or change or "grow" over the course of the evening?

2.) What are the primary emotions displayed by the narrator throughout, and how can we understand them in terms of the life he leads? What are some adjectives you would use to characterize him? What role does alcohol play in his life?

3.) What is the narrator’s attitude toward his wife? Describe the narrator’s marriage. What kind of marriage do they have, and what evidence do you find to support your conclusion? Is the narrator’s jealousy of Robert irrational?

4.) How does Robert shatter the narrator’s preconceived notions of blind people? How do his appearance and bearing resist every stereotypical image the narrator has about blind people, and why is this so upsetting?

5.) What does the narrator learn from his encounter with Robert? Is the ending convincing? Do you believe that there will be a significant change in his outlook from this point on?

6.) How or why is the cathedral an important image or symbol in the story? What is the significance of Carver’s choice of a cathedral as catalyst for the narrator’s learning experience? What added dimension does this symbol bring to our understanding of the story? Can you tie it to any previous detail?

7.) What does Robert “see” over the course of the evening? In what ways is this story about “seeing” and/or learning?

8.) In what ways is this story about communication and connectedness? (Think about the poems, the tapes, the ham radio, etc.)

9.) For Carver, salvation lies in human contact and connection.  Comment critically.