

# DOES GOD REALLY CARE?

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## INVITATION

*Are you willing to rethink your current concept of God?*

Life can be a tangled mess — our relationships, our jobs, our health, even our thinking can get so confused. From one day to the next, we never know what kind of tangle is going to pop up, but there's certainly going to be one.

So, what do we do when life is tangled and we feel alone? When we wonder if He's really with us? Where is God in the middle of our chaos?

To answer these questions, we need to first look at how we view God because if we're asking God to be in the middle of our chaos, we need to know who He is. And the truth is, just because we know things about God, it doesn't mean, on those really bad days, that we experience Him that way. Our feelings, beliefs and thoughts may not always line up with what we know. And although correct theology is important, it doesn't untangle life.

As we walk through this study, we're going to look at the character of God and compare it to what we believe about God on our hardest days — those days when we beg Him to change our circumstances, take our pain and rescue us from it all. The days we wonder why our Father who is all-powerful, and all-knowing, won't just snap His fingers for us and change it all. Who is God? What is He like?

Are you willing to rethink your current concept of God?



Is it possible that some of the fear, anger or confusion you're experiencing stems from a skewed concept of God? Our prayer for you today is that, as you work through this study, you will open your heart and your mind to see God in a new way, and that you will allow Him to show you His true character. Oftentimes God doesn't change our circumstances, but instead, changes us. Bringing us to a place where experiencing Him on the inside, causes us to be okay on the outside. Will you let Him change you? Will you let Him reveal His true character to you?



## THE KNOT

God reveals many of His characteristics to us in His Word, but is He really who He says He is? Or is He who we think He is? This isn't something we tend to think too much about until our lives get tangled up in some way. It's at these times when it takes a little bit longer to get in touch with the true character of God because we don't always see His love and care for us in the midst of our pain — in fact, these are the times when our skewed beliefs of God make us feel that we are alone, forgotten or unloved.

So, where does our concept of God come from?

Well, often our concept of God can be attributed to our upbringing from parents, teachers, relatives, ministers — really anyone who played a role in shaping us into the people we've become. How we saw those people and their love and care for us then become the characteristics we attribute to God. For example, if your parents were never home, or home but too busy to spend time with you, you may have the belief about God that you are alone in this life to figure it all out, or that you are unimportant to Him. A.W. Tozer wrote, "Nothing twists and deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy concept of God." An unworthy or inaccurate view of God will stop us from experiencing the true character of God.





## THE UNTANGLE

So, who is this God we're talking about? What are some of His characteristics? Scripture reveals to us that:

God is love.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love... We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:7-8, 16).

God is for us.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, ‘For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39).

God gives us good things.

“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him” (Matthew 7:9-11).



God comforts us.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

God is patient and kind.

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance” (Romans 2:4).

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his deeds” (Psalm 145:17).

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

God is just.

“For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him” (Isaiah 30:18b).

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

God is unchanging.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

God is compassionate and merciful.

“You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful” (James 5:11b).

“Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you” (Isaiah 30:18a).



“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us” (Ephesians 2:4).

Obviously these are only a few of the characteristics of God. Certainly there are too many to list.



## *Who Is God to Me?*

Below are 14 questions to take you deeper into your journey with Christ, and to untangle any lies you’ve been believing about God. Take your time. Your answers should be based on how you think and feel about God when life feels tangled — not on a day when everything in life is going as you dreamed it would.

Be honest and put aside any desire to answer as you think you should or what you know intellectually. Give God time to speak with you, to work in you, and to reveal any skewed beliefs about Him that may exist. It is through this honest time of reflection that you can be set free to experience the beautiful character of your Heavenly Father.

*When I think about God, I feel...*

*When I have to trust God, I feel...*



*When I think about God, I wish...*

*Sometimes I get angry with God when...*

*It frustrates me when God wants me to...*

*I really enjoy God when...*

*The one thing I would change about myself to please God is...*

*When I think about God's commands, I feel...*

*Sometimes I wish God would...*

*I can really depend on God when...*

*In my relationship with God, I am always sure that He will...*



*The one thing that frightens me about God is...*

*God surprises me when...*

*The one thing I am afraid God will do is...*

## *My Concept of God*

Take some time and ask God to bring to your mind a time when your circumstances were difficult or painful — a time when life felt very tangled. Then draw a picture of your concept of God below. Is God near you or distant from you? Is He big or small? Is He even there? What expression does He have on His face when He looks at you? What body language does He display? Be as detailed as you can.



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

As you've taken some time to reflect, do you feel that you have had a tangled view of God throughout your life? What is the most significant truth God has spoken to you during this study?

Our concept of God is crucial, and until we actually stop and take a moment to ask God to show us our skewed beliefs of Him, we will live in fear, full of anger and resentment. Oh, how He longs to change our tangled views of Him! My prayer for you is that regardless of your childhood experience in your family, you will know that God is the perfect Father. He is not bound by human limitations — He can carry the weight of your world on His shoulders. He is never mad at you, disappointed with you, nor is He distant from you. He is for you and with you. He will not forsake you.

Even if you have negative thoughts, doubts and beliefs about God, they are not true. Truth is what God says regardless of what we think or feel. I pray that you will be honest with Him and ask Him to show you His true Self in the middle of your chaos and to untangle the lies that are knotted up in your thinking.

Blessings to you,

Pam & Scott

### References:

The Best of Tozer, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978; pp 120.

All Scripture taken from the NASB version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

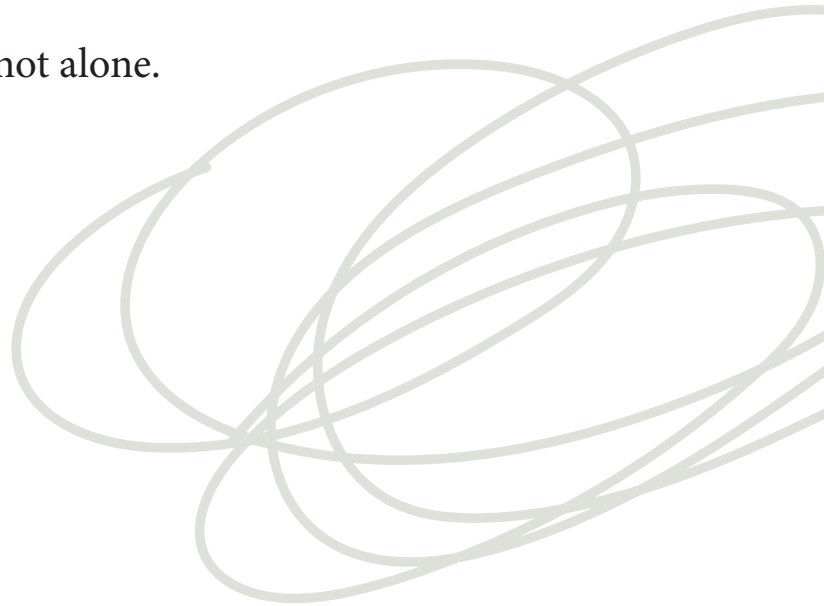




Are you feeling bogged down and tangled up in your circumstances? It happens so easily in this world. Regardless of where you're at in your journey, Life Untangled wants to help you experience the love and power of God in a truly meaningful way. God sees you and your circumstances, and He longs to heal your wounded soul and lead you to a place of hope. If you would like to speak with someone on our team you can do so by contacting [www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us](http://www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us).

We offer a safe place where you can find hope and help on your journey of healing. Our experienced Christian counseling staff helps you discover God's good intentions for your life, especially when your life feels tangled. We guide men, women, and couples through understanding unwanted behaviors, difficult emotions like anxiety, depression and anger, and most importantly, to experience God's design for victory in life.

You are not alone.



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

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## INVITATION

*Are you willing to rethink your current concept of who you are?*

Have you ever wondered if there was something wrong with you? Most of us have. In fact, I don't think there's a person on this planet who hasn't at one point or another contemplated or even longed to be different.

Just like we discussed in our last lesson, our perspectives can be skewed. Not just our concept of God, but also our concept of self!

In our study entitled *Does God Really Care?*, we discovered that even though we know who God is, we don't always believe that He really is all those things for us. To others maybe so, but we somehow wonder if He'll show up for us the same way. Sometimes what we believe about God and what we feel about God are two completely different things. Just as we can have a skewed concept of God, so also our concept of self can get all tangled up.

We're going to look at the mess and tangle of what's wrong with us — a question we've all faced. If God is really as good as the Bible tells us — but our relationship with Him isn't so good, or our life is still chaotic, or our personal relationships are a mess, or our circumstances are just plain bad — then we might conclude that we must be the problem. But is that the right conclusion?

Maybe we are the problem, maybe we're not. Either way, the truth is that God has a solution for us. Are you willing to rethink your current concept of who you are?



Let's take a look at how God designed us and how we can live from that beautiful design.



## THE KNOT

In this fallen world men are often left wondering if they're good enough, or if they have what it takes to succeed in life. When they ask those questions they can be filled with fear. Women struggle much the same way — wondering if they're good enough, smart enough, interesting enough, or pretty enough. Both men and women have evaluated themselves in these and other areas and determined that if they had created themselves, they would certainly have done things differently. Even the most seemingly confident, capable people, still experience this struggle.

Is it possible to rethink our view of ourselves? Absolutely! And you will discover that rethinking how God made you can be one of the best things you will ever do. Will you let Him show you the truth of who you really are?



## THE UNTANGLE

We are wanted by God, and as David put it, we were fearfully and wonderfully made. He took great care when He designed you — and He made no mistakes with you.

We were made in the image of God; intricately knit together with three distinct parts: spirit, soul and body. Genesis 2 tells us,

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).



# God's Design of Man

Genesis 2:7 | Hebrews 4:12 | 1 Thessalonians 5:23



“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

“And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...’” (Genesis 1:26)

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

## Three Parts of Man

Spirit: through his spirit, man relates primarily to God.

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

A person's spirit determines true identity. Identity is determined by birth. Adam's identity at creation was 'son of God' (Luke 3:38).



Soul: a person's soul or personality is the psychological part. Through his soul, man relates primarily to other people. There are three functions of the soul:

- mind (thinker – seat of reason, logic and memory)
- emotions (feeler)
- will (chooser)

Body: the body relates primarily to this physical world. It houses the soul and spirit. All information comes into the brain (which is part of the body) through the senses.

*Man is a spirit who has a soul and dwells in a body.*

God also made us with a basic need for love, acceptance, worth, and security. We live in a world that tells us to be independent and to not need anything or anyone. But whether we realize it or not, we're all depending on something or someone — even if it's just ourselves. But God created Adam and Eve, and every one since then, to be dependent — to be receivers of Him and the love He wants to pour out on us.

We all know how the story goes. Adam and Eve made the choice to eat from the tree God told them not to eat from. But did they die? Physically, they didn't die, but their bodies did begin to decay. Their souls too were still alive; they continued to feel and make choices. In fact, their souls became what they strictly operated from. They immediately chose to hide because they were afraid. The fact that they suddenly began to feel fearful tells us something significant had just happened. Isaiah 59 tells us,

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2).

It was at that moment that they were disconnected from the relationship they had with God, and Scripture calls this death. God was still very much present and they were still absolutely loved, cared for, and provided for. They still had spirits, however, they were now void of God-life. They no longer experienced and related to God as they had before. They were disconnected from Him. That was what we call the fall.

Genesis 5 goes on to say,

“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (Genesis 5:3).



What this means is that when we are born, we are now born in Adam's image. Birth, not behavior determines our identity. Everyone born in Adam is a sinner.

## Fallen Man



### God's Warning

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die’” (Genesis 2:16-17).

### Man's Choice

Man's Spirit Died – Without God Life  
 “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings” (Genesis 3:6-7).

### Sin Separates Man from God

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2).

## The Fallen World

Then to Adam [God] said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you...” (Genesis 3:17-19).



## Flesh

- a pattern of getting one's needs met from one's own resources, apart from God
- Negative/Inferior Flesh – Moses:

But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?” ... Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’” ... Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue” (Exodus 3:11, 4:1, 10).

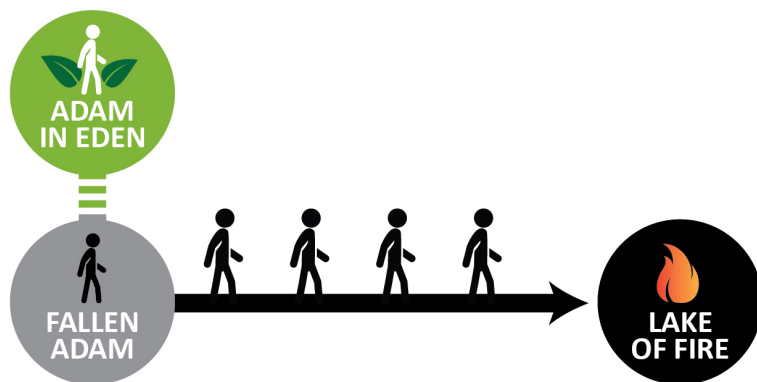
- Positive/Superior Flesh – Paul:

“Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Philippians 3:4-6).

## Born in Adam

Since we were in Adam, when he:

- sinned, we sinned (Romans 12:b)
- died spiritually, we died spiritually (Romans 5:15a)
- was condemned, we were condemned (Romans 5:18)
- became a sinner, we became a sinner (Romans 5:19a)



“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (Genesis 5:3).

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).



“Since by the transgression of the one the many died...” (Romans 5:15a).

“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men...” (Romans 5:18a).

“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners...” (Romans 5:19a).

*Birth - not behavior - determines identity.*

We all come into this world in a body, we have a soul to relate to one another, but our spirits are dead. Just like Adam’s spirit post-fall, we are without God-life. There’s a place for God, but He’s not there, and it sends us on a search that often leaves us coming up short as we turn to anything we think might fill the void inside us. But nothing satisfies and fills us like God does, and any substitution will leave us empty and hopeless.

Since all of us were born in Adam, we all start at the same place in life. Though our childhoods and histories may differ, all of us were born in Adam, into a fallen world, and in desperate need of God.

So, what’s wrong with us?

Something big! We are each born into this world, on our own, with spirits that are dead to God. Yet we deeply crave things that we don’t yet know, only He will ever satisfy. So we depend on anything that we think will meet those needs and quickly learn what works and what doesn’t. Our dependency naturally gravitates to anything that will help us avoid pain.

As you move onto your Heart Work, I pray that God will reveal to you where you came from and where you’re going. Diving deep into this next step can be painful, but it can also be truly life-changing. There is a problem and indeed it is us, but understanding the problem is the key to finding the solution.







## HEART WORK

We are wired to experience pleasure and avoid pain, born apart from God are desperate to get our basic needs met. We each have our own method of feeling ok and avoiding what hurts—this is our own personal tree of knowledge. Think about your personal paradigm, what do you do to experience pleasure or avoid pain?

	GOOD	EVIL
Childhood	<p>Example</p> <p><i>If I help people, they like me</i></p> <p><i>Use my manners, people are proud of me/respect me</i></p>	<p>Example</p> <p><i>When I act up, I get attention</i></p> <p><i>I'm gonna get in trouble regardless, might as well have fun</i></p> <p><i>Withdrawal keeps me safe</i></p>
Adulthood	<p>Example</p> <p><i>Humor keeps it from hurting</i></p> <p><i>Try harder</i></p>	<p>Example</p> <p><i>Sarcasm keeps people at a distance</i></p> <p><i>Give up</i></p>



We were designed to have our need for Love, Acceptance, Worth, & Security (LAWS) met in order to feel ok. Being in Adam, something is wrong. Apart from God we are left to our own devices to get these needs met. Consider your personal tree of knowledge. What needs are you trying to meet right now in your own strength?

*Adequacy*

*Being Wanted*

*Being Known*

*Importance*

*Being Heard*

*Being Cared for*

*Being Seen*

*Safety*

*Etc...*

## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

The beautiful thing about all this is nothing surprises God. He is not caught off guard when you develop your own belief systems, thinking you're not good enough, not smart enough, not loveable or somehow unworthy. He wanted you here and He wants to take over now as your Heavenly Father.

Even when we didn't have Him living inside of us, He was still a good God and He loved us regardless. We were simply missing out on a relationship of love with Him. He wanted so much to show us His love and to bring us into real life with Him that He found a way. He found a way to bring life out of death and to bring us into a relationship with Him. That's what we're going to talk about next time. Let's close today with this beautiful verse.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”  
(John 3:16).

He's not caught by surprise, my friend, and He's going to give us a wonderful invitation to join Him. Something is wrong with us, but there is a solution. Stay tuned!!

### References:

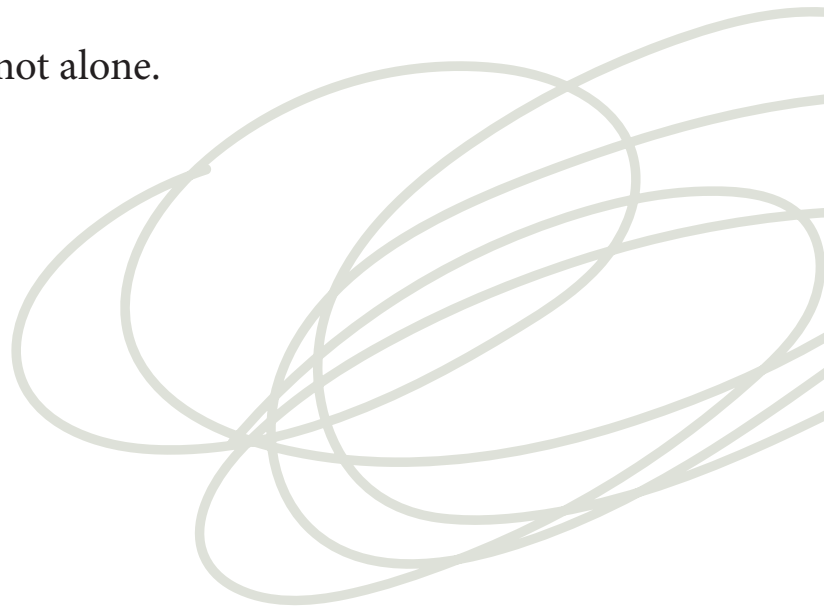
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# RESCUED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

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## INVITATION

*Will you let us show you what it looks like to be born  
into a New Life in Christ?*

In our study entitled *What's Wrong With Me?* we learned that God created every one of us with a body, soul, and spirit. He also created every person with the need for love, acceptance, worth, and security. Before salvation, we are cut off from God and look to ourselves to meet these needs that only God can fulfill. Even as Christians we sometimes feel like we have to strive to get our needs met. What is the solution that God has for us?

The answer lies in being born again. What do you think of when you hear the term “Born-again Christian”? Maybe, as a believer that is how you would identify yourself. Or maybe that term leaves a sour taste in your mouth. Perhaps the problem lies in not understanding what it really means.

Oftentimes, believers think being born again means our sins are forgiven, and the benefit of that is we get to go to heaven when we die. We think eternal life is a gift that God gives — a ticket to heaven. This is true, but there is so much more to eternal life in Christ. We need more than just forgiveness of sins, we need *new life!* What we want to study today is what it looks like to go from being born in Adam and disconnected from God to experiencing rebirth in Christ.





## THE KNOT

God's original design for Adam and Eve in the garden was for them to live in spiritual union with Him. God created them in His image with a body, soul, and spirit. But when Adam ate from the tree his spirit became dead to God. He still had a spirit but he was no longer connected to God. Then all of Adam's children, including us, inherited a dead spirit from him.

When we were in Adam, God couldn't meet our needs for love, acceptance, security, and worth, so we tried to meet them in our own strength. We learned to function simply from our soul; in the strength of our mind, emotions, and the choices we make. Apart from God, we function in body and soul, but our spirits cannot relate to Him. So here we are, born in Adam, with the ultimate destination of hell. But did God leave us there? No, God did not leave us in Adam. He wanted more for us. He wanted to restore that relationship with us. He wanted that dynamic connection with us again. Even when Adam and Eve sinned, God was there. He pursued them. God has been pursuing us from the beginning. And He will always pursue us because that's His nature.



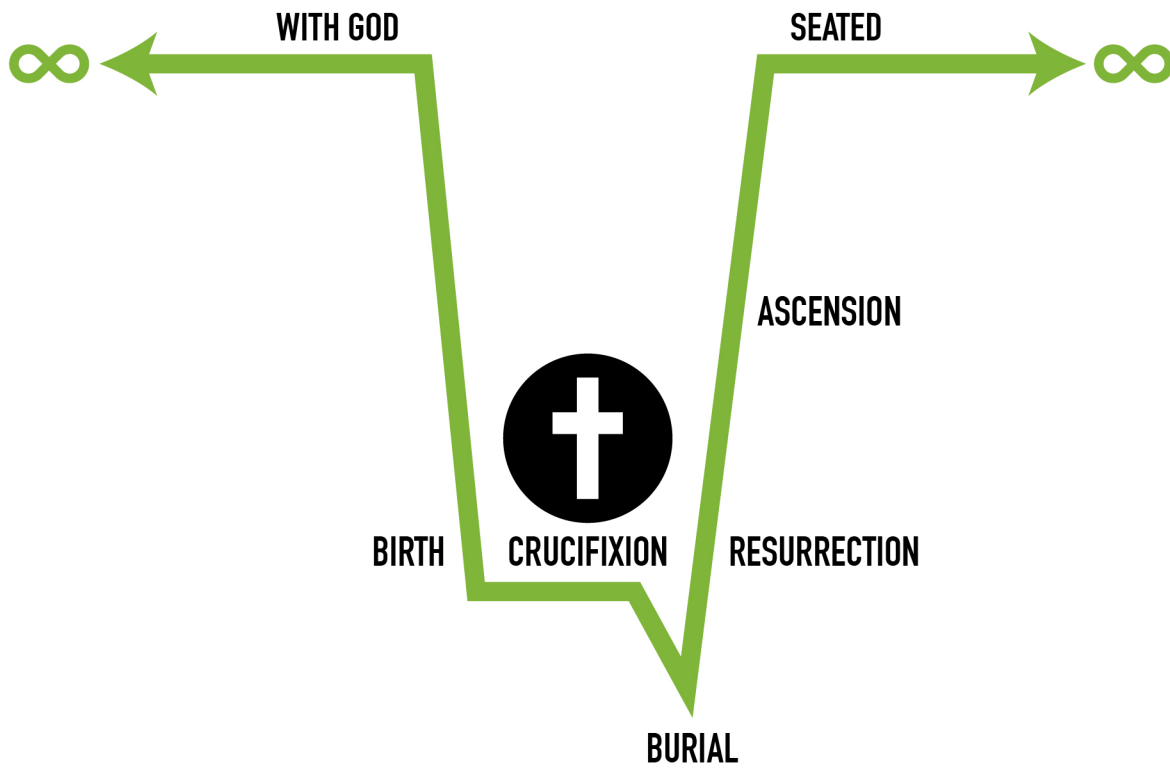


## THE UNTANGLE

Being spiritually dead and separated from God, we need life and a connection with God. Therefore, God sent Jesus to give us life so we could be in union with Him.

### *Life of Christ*

1 John 1:1-2 | 1 John 5:11-12, 20



∞ Colossians 1:16-17	✝ 1 Corinthians 15:3	ASCENSION Acts 1:9
WITH GOD John 1:1-2	BURIAL 1 Corinthians 15:4a	SEATED Ephesians 1:20-21
BIRTH John 1:14	RESURRECTION 1 Corinthians 15:4b	



“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life – and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you **the eternal life**, which was with the Father and was manifested to us” (1 John 1:1-2).

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. <sup>20</sup>And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and **eternal life**” (1 John 5:11-12, 20).

## Infinity

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. **He is before all things**, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17).

## With God

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with God**, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning **with God**” (John 1:1-2).

## Birth

“And the Word **became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

## Crucifixion, Burial & Resurrection

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ **died** for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was **buried** and that He was **raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

## Ascension

“And after [Jesus] had said these things, He was **lifted up** while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).



## Seated

“... which [God] brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and **seated** Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Ephesians 1:20-21).

### *Jesus Christ is Eternal Life.*

Jesus said,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6b), and in 1 John we are told, “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (1 John 5:12).

So, we see here that eternal life is not something, it is really someone. When we understand that Jesus is life, and we understand our union with Christ, we can understand eternal life. It’s not a destination — it is a person!

Salvation is being born again which places us into union with Christ. God takes us out of Adam, and puts us into Him! When Christ went to the cross, He took on our sin and He gave us His life. I’m reborn into Christ at the point of crucifixion some 2000 years ago. That means, if you have received His salvation you live in Christ now! Because we are now in Him, He has

“raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

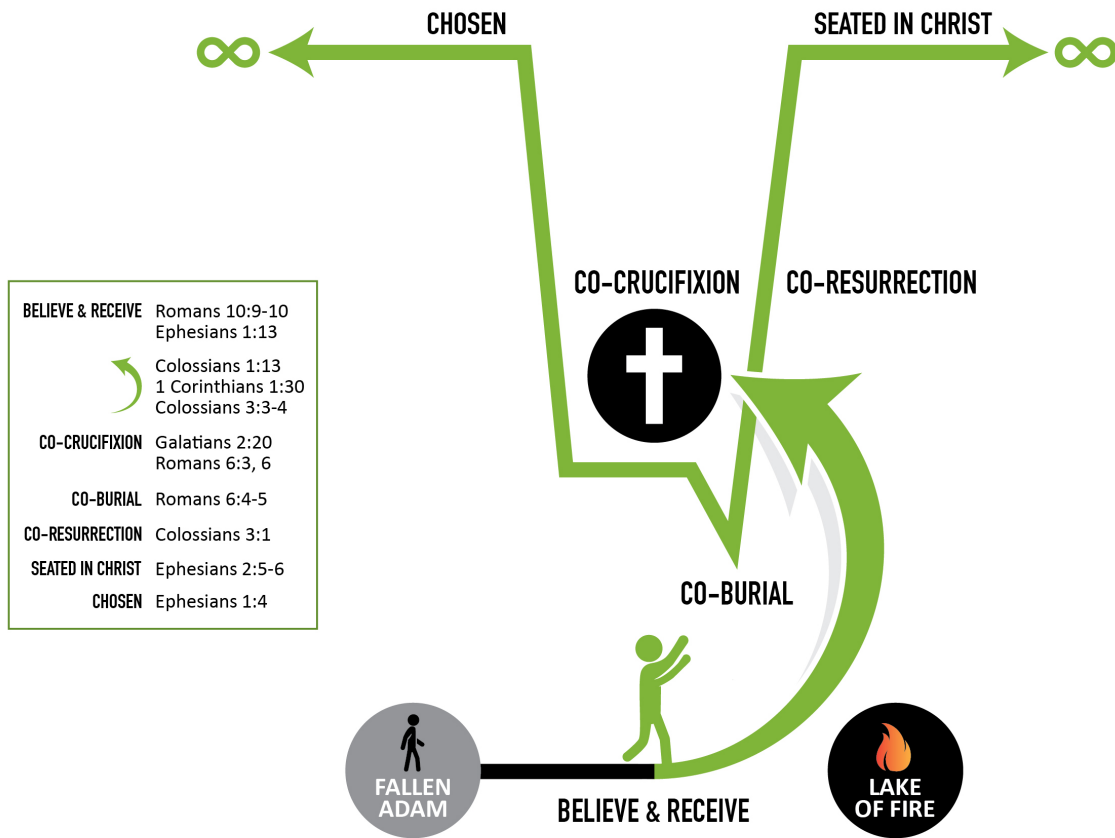
In Galatians, we read,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).





# Receiving Life in Christ



“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive”  
(1 Corinthians 15:22).

## Believe and Receive

“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

“**In Him**, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed **in Him** with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).



## Rescue

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...” (Colossians 1:13).

“But by His doing you are **in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption...” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

“For you have died and your life is hidden **with Christ in God**. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:3-4).

## Co-Crucifixion

“**I have been crucified with Christ**; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ...knowing this, that our **old self was crucified with Him**, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin...” (Romans 6:3, 6).

## Co-Burial

“Therefore we have been **buried with Him** through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection...” (Romans 6:4-5).

## Co-Resurrection

“Therefore if (since) you have been **raised up with Christ**, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).



## Seated

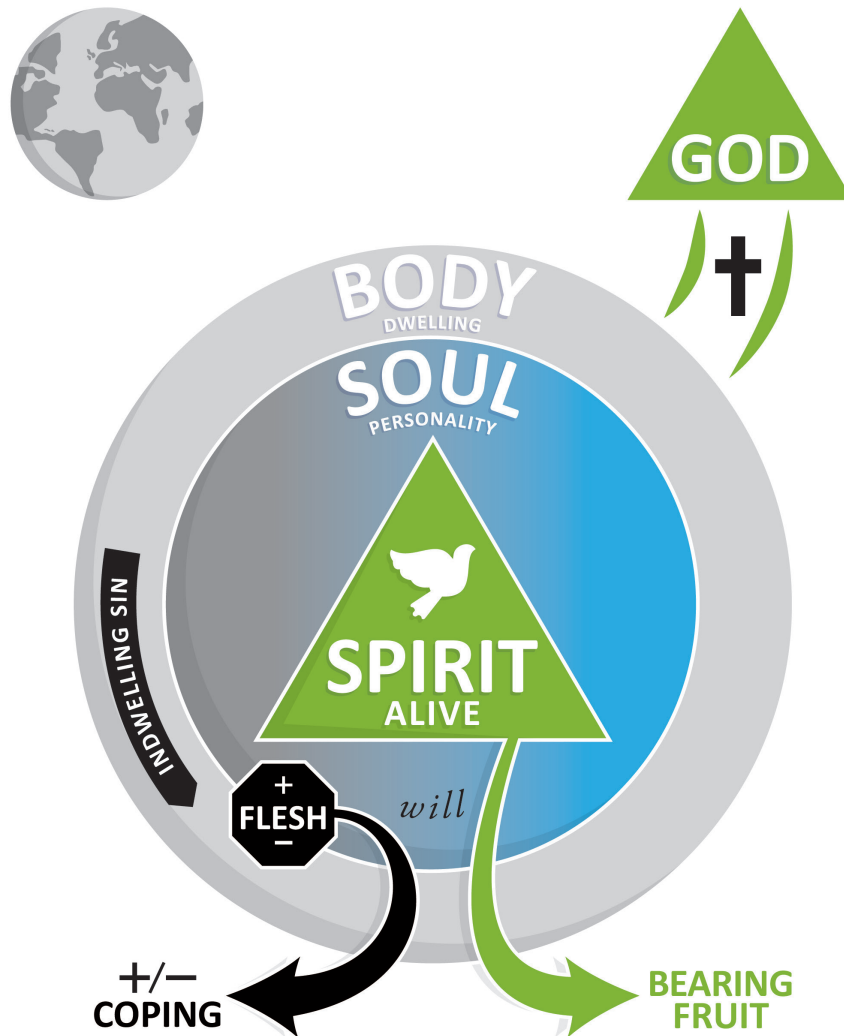
“...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and **seated us with Him** in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**” (Ephesians 2:5-6).

## Chosen

“...just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him” (Ephesians 1:4).

## *New Man*

2 Corinthians 5:17 | Ephesians 2:10



## Cross

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He **made you alive** together with Him, having forgiven all our transgressions, having **canceled out the certificate of debt** consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13-14).

“The next day [John] saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who **takes away the sin** of the world!’” (John 1:29).

## New Man

“Therefore if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“For we are His workmanship, created **in Christ** Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

## Bearing Fruit

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he **bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).

“But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

## The Exchanged Life

At salvation our life was exchanged for Christ’s life. We now have Christ living in us and we are in Him. We have a choice to walk after the flesh or walk in the Spirit.

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a **new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put **My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:25-27).



“And we know that God cause all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:28-29);

“He **restores my soul**; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psalm 23:3).

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2).

“But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Romans 13:14).

“For I will not presume to speak of anything except **what Christ has accomplished through me**, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed...” (Romans 15:18).

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to **the power that works within us...**” (Ephesians 3:20).

Most Christians get the forgiveness part, but do not always understand that we are indeed new at our core — in our spirits:

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We now have this new life, and therefore have been made righteous. It’s not about you trying to live a righteous life, it’s about you receiving the gift of God’s righteousness and living from this truth. Living a righteous life requires a choice. Do I put my faith in the work of Christ, or do I continue on with my own plans?

In addition to having His righteousness, Scripture tells us

“we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16b), and because Christ is in us, we bear the Fruit of the Spirit: “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).





## HEART WORK

Have you received His gift? What is God showing you about the fullness of salvation? Journal about the aspects of what it means to be “In Christ” — being forgiven, accepted, born again, made righteous and having the Holy Spirit living within you.





## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

We are not rescued to *perform* righteously. We *already are* righteous! We have been given a new identity that is completely righteous in Christ. When you know and live from that truth, your whole world looks different. Everything about you is different because you've had a rebirth. There's more to this Christian life than having a ticket to heaven. It's actually a whole new existence. It's a whole new identity that He gives to us. Peter tells us that "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4a).

Often people mistakenly think, *It's not about me, it's all about Jesus*. And this is true. But Jesus wants to express His life uniquely through *you*. Ephesians tells us that we are His masterpiece. You were designed by God, so you get to just be you! Maybe you've always thought that being yourself was a bad thing, but it's not. Rest and relax my friend, you are a masterpiece, there is no one like you, and that was on purpose. If you can't be yourself resting in Jesus, the whole world loses a masterpiece.

I pray that the eyes of your heart and mind will be enlightened to the magnitude of the gift you have in your salvation. I pray that understanding your forgiveness will leave you in a place where your guilt begins to fade as you realize that the penalty has been paid on your behalf by our Jesus. I pray that God will show you what it looks like to live from Him as your new source of life, and you will experience the peace that comes when you cease striving to accomplish what only God can.

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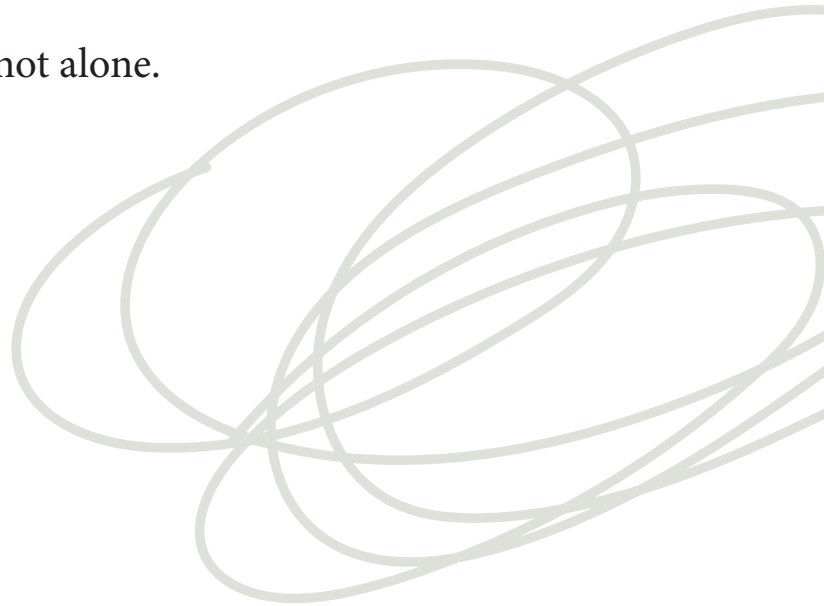




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# I'M A SAINT ACTING LIKE A SINNER

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## INVITATION

*What if becoming a Christian impacts your life now,  
and not just when you get to Heaven...*

Last time in *Rescued For Righteousness*, we learned about being born in Adam, into sin. And the good news that at the point of salvation we were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ! The eternal life that we are given is not just a ticket to heaven when we die, it is something we can experience right now because Christ is in us. We are now made righteous. We are saints, not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ did for us on the cross.

While we are new creations, we don't always feel like new creations. Sometimes the internal struggles we experience seem to beat us up, and other times we still act like sinners. That's why many times life feels all tangled up. Scripture tells us our old man has been crucified and buried — we don't drag him around with us anymore. But there is still a battle we face, and if we don't understand what that battle is we will live in constant frustration!

Today we will look at this battle, understanding that it's the flesh against the spirit, not me against me!

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Galatians 5:17).

When we understand what the fight is, we can more fully enjoy this eternal life we have been given!





## THE KNOT

If I am a saint, why do I keep sinning? It feels like I'm fighting against myself. Paul says in Romans:

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:12-13).

This is such a foreign concept for us. We think, *Here I am, I'm a new creation in Christ but I still have this chaotic mess to deal with.* We are tempted to keep doing what we have always done to try and untangle things. We try to control our environment or get people to like us and accept us. We are so used to these old habits and patterns, and when we believe the lie that we need them, we actually allow them to have power over us. But we've got to go back to the truth. Romans says, my old man is dead, right?

“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6).

You are no longer a slave to sin — you are alive to God. But you still have the flesh. The flesh is your own attempt at trying to get your needs met apart from God. The flesh can feel like you, because you are so used to behaving that way — but it is not who you are. It is not your identity. So you have a choice, to walk out of your true identity in the spirit, or respond to the chaos of life from the flesh.





## THE UNTANGLE

We tend to define ourselves based on what we do. Isn't that sad? Perhaps without even realizing it, we can do this to God too! In our first module, *Does God Really Care?*, we talked about our personal concept of God, and how we may appropriate God's character based on what He does. For example, we may interpret that if God rescues the child that fell in the well, then God is good. If He doesn't, then He is bad. When we do this, we have attributed His goodness to His behavior. We do this to ourselves as well — if I do good then I am good, if I do bad, then I am bad.

Though our behavior should reflect who we are, it sometimes looks more like who we *used to be*. If you don't understand your new identity as a saint, you may struggle to function like one! Our spirit is our true identity and our soul is the battleground.

We can yield it to the flesh, or we can yield it to the spirit. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, we have a choice. We are free to sin, and we're also free to live according to the spirit. The spirit within us is already perfected for all time. Now we are in the process of learning to rest and trust our spirit and not trust what's familiar in our flesh. This change in behavior and response to chaos and circumstances doesn't just happen overnight. We are creatures of habit. But as we begin to experience the truth, we begin to walk by the spirit and it starts to feel more natural. Walking by the spirit is consistent with who we really are!

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

It was for freedom that He set you free, and if you are not walking in freedom, then there is a truth yet to be revealed. It's not just information, it's a revelation: Christ is actually your life. He has changed you, exchanged you, and given you His righteousness and taken your sinfulness upon Himself. God is pleased when we are resting and trusting Him. The New Covenant says that God has already blessed us and now we live in response to that. We do not have to earn it — we already have it! Philippians tells us:

“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).



It is Christ at work in us when we yield ourselves to the spirit and choose not to present our bodies to sin. We no longer have to try to get our needs met through our own effort. Instead, we are called to trust God to meet our needs.

When we sin, do we have to run to God and ask for His forgiveness? Not anymore! We simply receive it. When we see that we have sinned, we agree with God, confess it, and then thank Him that the behavior is not who we are anymore. Sin has consequences, but our forgiveness was already dealt with at the cross. We may need to ask for forgiveness from others when we sin against them, but in relationship to God we can just say “thank you.”

What about condemnation, is it from God? The short answer is “No.” The flesh will condemn you when you try to live up to certain standards and fail. That’s not God. “I need to perform to be okay” is an old concept from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Scripture clearly tells us:

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

We are free from condemnation and can now experience His peace and rest. That’s the spirit-life in us — the connection that we lost when we were in Adam and Eve, but have now regained because we are in Christ.

Remember that shame wants us to believe that there’s something wrong with us — with who we are. It’s a belief that we are defective. Guilt is a little different, it tells us that we’ve done something wrong. When guilt comes we can take it to God. If it’s from Him, it will be specific to something we have done. If it is from God it will never be condemning. Jesus has dealt with both our sin and shame! He dealt with guilt through forgiveness, and He has dealt with our shame by giving us a new identity. It is no longer about *what I have done*, but rather *who I am*. And who I am has been taken care of at the cross. It is now our choice whether we will live out of our own strength or choose to live in the truth that we are now saints.





## HEART WORK

Let's look at the people and events in our lives and the ways that we have learned to cope in order to get our needs met. What things cause you stress? Do you see unhealthy patterns of behavior in yourself?

As you examine these patterns and behaviors, ask God what they are accomplishing for you. What need are you trying to meet? Then invite God to show you how He has already met those needs for you.

Refer back to module 2, look at your personal tree of knowledge. Identify how you coped and fill in the column below:

Example

*Over achiever*

*People pleasing*

Identify the need that your behavior seeks to meet. Love acceptance worth or security?

Example

*Value*

*Love*

Invite God to speak. How does He meet your needs fully?

Example

*He values me as much as Jesus, sending Him to redeem me.*

*He loved me while I was still a sinner, sending Jesus to die for me.*



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

God is the One we are to look to for our acceptance, worth, and value. He is our Creator and *His* opinion is the only one that matters. Salvation and righteousness are a free gift from God. We are no longer sinners, we've been given a brand new identity — we are saints — even though we may not always feel like it. May we live each day remembering that it's His love and kindness that woos us — it is His love and kindness which gives us life. He will guide us to walk and behave through the spirit. We simply get to enjoy the journey and share it with others.

*Papa, You have given me and the world an amazing gift. You have given us Life. Saying, "thank you" seems so inadequate. Even though we do not always live out of our righteousness, we are righteous nonetheless. Show us that the way to actually act like a saint is to receive and believe that your word is true and that the work You accomplished on the cross was enough to change us from a sinner to a saint. I ask that you continue to renew our minds to the Truth that will set us free.*

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# NOT FEELIN' IT

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## INVITATION

*Are you willing to trust God even when you're not feelin' it?*

At this point, we have talked quite a bit about our new reality in Christ. In *I'm a Saint Acting Like a Sinner*, we learned that we are new creations — saints, holy ones. However, we often still feel like our old selves, experiencing guilt and shame. What we *know* is one thing, but what we *believe* is another. Just because we learn a specific truth about who God says we are doesn't mean our emotions instantly agree with it! Our feelings are connected to what we believe. Every time we experience negative feelings it is an opportunity to look closely at what we are believing and invite God to speak. Thankfully, God extends kindness and patience towards us; He never rushes us. In fact, He will go as slow as we need to. Are you willing to allow your past hurts, disappointments, and rejections to come to the surface for healing so you can finally feel and experience God's love and care?







## THE KNOT

The big question for us to look at today is, *why don't I feel what I know?* Our feelings are attached to the memories and experiences in our lives, both good and bad. Perhaps you've experienced a traumatic event or a lot of small hurts that add up to something big. These emotions need healing. Emotions are like a window into our soul. They tell us what's going on and what we are believing. Emotions are helpful because they cause us to look at our beliefs and ask some important questions — What am I feeling? Why am I feeling it? Then we have to decide what to do with those feelings. Our beliefs when combined with negative circumstances cause certain feelings, which in turn causes us to act in a specific way. This can lead to a lot of frustration. We must look for God's truth in our spirit.

If we've accepted God's free gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit now resides in us as believers and He wants to direct our every word, thought, and action. But as we all know, often something seems to get in the way of that. It's like having a light bulb that is covered up and not visible — it doesn't mean the light bulb is not lit — something is just preventing the light from being seen. Today, we're going to discover what covers the light, and how God will help us uncover it.





## THE UNTANGLE

Evaluating our beliefs is not something we ordinarily do unless we're forced to. In fact, that's part of what God does with the chaos in our lives. He uses it to help us uncover our beliefs. God gave us the ability to feel because we were made in His likeness. God celebrates that we are creatures with emotions because that is what He is. But while God has emotions, He is not controlled by them.

Our emotions are to be experienced — we know this as a fact because of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus had the same emotions we do, and He expressed them! Perhaps the most profound expression of His emotions was in the garden of Gethsemane before he was crucified. Jesus knew what was about to happen; it was what He came to this earth for. Yet, He still grieved and sweat drops of blood as He cried out to His Father and asked if there was any other way.

The Christian life here on earth is really a journey of the soul. The soul is where the battle takes place between flesh and spirit. Each day we must choose if we will believe the lies from past messages and programming or the truth that comes from the spirit. We can stay in the soul, trusting in The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, or we can trust the spirit which is united with Christ. You see, it is the lies that “cover our light bulb.”

As we begin to learn more about who we are in our spirit, we may find that we don't know who we are in our soul. God wants to guide you in the discovery of your emotions and show you what you've held on to, or buried within your soul. It is likely that this may be a painful time as God reveals heavy emotions, like anger, grief, or rejection. Your anger may even be directed at God — and that's okay. Admitting how you feel toward God allows you to deal with it, instead of burying it. No matter what your emotions are telling you, God loves you, and He is never threatened by your emotions — even anger directed at Him. Be honest with Him and He will bring healing to the broken places within your soul.

God also wants to deal with shame. The best way is for Him to bring it to the surface and show us our false beliefs and real hurts. Most of the time in that pain, we see ourselves as worthless, as a child of shame. But we must ask God who He says we are. In Him, we are children of honor, the opposite of shame!



Shame tells us to be embarrassed and to keep hiding. But if you are His child, that means you can hold your head up high!

Remember, we have the mind of Christ. He lives within us and we have a new heart.

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

The Spirit within us is God, Himself, wanting to guide and direct us through life. The things that get in the way of that are our false beliefs. Not only do we need to know the truth, but we need to really believe it. And when we truly believe the truth of our identity in Christ, no one can take it away from us. When God takes the truth and He makes it yours, it is yours, you can stand on it with every confidence in the world. Yes, doubts will creep in, but that is why we keep renewing our minds with truth.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Agreeing with what God says about us doesn't mean our feelings always line up immediately with His. Hebrews says:

“Let us **labor therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall according to the same example of unbelief” (Hebrews 4:11, KJV).

*Labor* to enter into rest — that sounds contradictory, doesn't it? Why do we need to labor in order to rest? Well, when we begin to see new truth, quite often our emotions don't line up. Part of the labor is actually making the choice to believe, even when our emotions don't feel it.

At a certain point, our emotions will get caught up with the truth and we won't be laboring to enter that rest anymore. We will be able to just rest. When that is happening, that means our mind has been renewed. Those connecting points in our brain have been reprogrammed and we're walking in the spirit and not the flesh. Being able to express emotions honestly allows us to have an intimate relationship with God and allows God to heal us on an emotional level.

Maybe you have always thought of yourself as God's second choice or felt unloved. But look at this verse in Isaiah:

“Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love



you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life” ( Isaiah 43:4).

God is saying, “You are honored and loved. You are precious in His sight.” You may not feel it, but believe it! Walking in this truth will change how you do life. You are a child of honor, and nothing you can do will ever change that. And that’s the truth that sets us free. We have the peace of God with us all the time, and as we rest into His presence, that peace is available in every circumstance, no matter what.



## HEART WORK

Find a quiet spot to be alone and journal. What is something you’ve learned about your new identity? How does it feel to be a child of honor and no longer a child of shame?

Because I was formerly a Child of Shame, I sometimes feel like I am...

Example

*I’m unlovable*

*I am dirty*

*I am broken, something is wrong with me*

Now because I am a new creation, a Child of Honor I can rest in the fact that I am...

Example

*I am loved*

*I am made clean*

*I am cherished*

*I am whole*



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

God gave us emotions. He's okay if we get troubled or fearful, He just doesn't want us to live there because He loves us so much. His desire is for us to have peace.

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful”  
(John 14:27).

You are the righteousness of God. You are pure, righteous, and holy, and *that is the truth that sets you free.*

*Papa, thank You that truth does set us free. Sadly, we are often confused about what we believe. My prayer is that You give us the courage to allow You to uncover our past hurts, disappointments, and false beliefs. We understand that our old beliefs are standing in the way of living from what we know about You and about our new identity. We need You to show us the lies we have believed about You and about ourselves that are causing this lack of intimacy we have in our relationship. Thank You that You love us enough to heal our hurts and set us free.*

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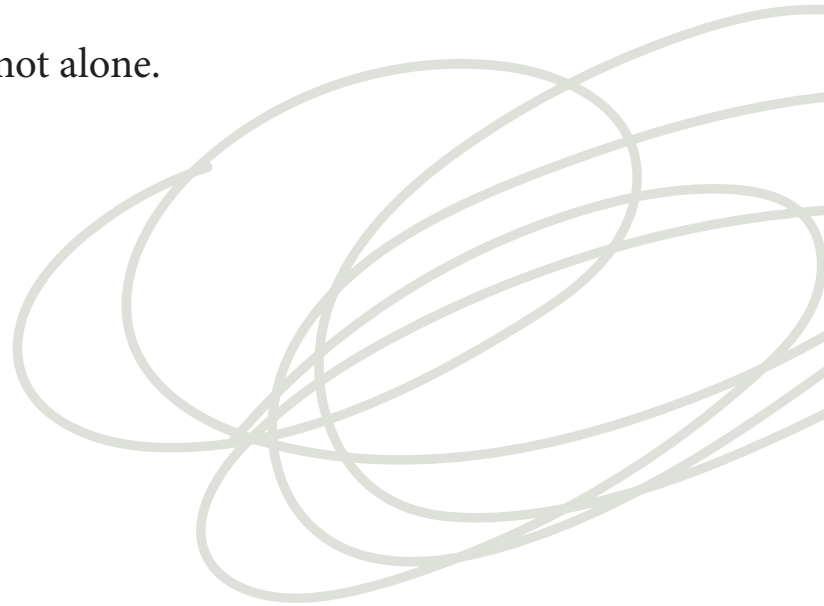
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# FEELING LIKE IT'S ALL UP TO ME

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## INVITATION

*Are you willing to give up on your own ability, and trust the God who would rather die than live without you?*

Last time in *Not Feelin' It*, we looked at the difference between what we *know* and what we *feel* and how often, the two do not line up. We discovered that our emotions are neither good nor bad but they can sure get tangled up in a lot of different ways! We can let emotions control us, or we can embrace and own them, asking God to show us what they are revealing and how to walk in freedom.

We've probably all wondered at some point in our lives — *if God can change our lives and fix our circumstances, why doesn't He?* Often when God doesn't change our circumstances we want to take matters into our own hands. This is so easy and tempting since things often don't go the way we think they should.

In our first lesson *Does God Really Care?*, we dove deep into our concept of God and compared our perceptions to the true character of God. In doing so, we discovered that we are infinitely loved by a God who would rather die than live without us. Knowing that, are you willing to give up on your own ability and instead trust Him?





## THE KNOT

*If God can, why doesn't He? Does He really care? Can I trust Him to do what I think is best?* If the answer to these questions is no, then we will try to control the outcomes of our circumstances which actually creates a tangled mess — attempting to control our lives always creates chaos and death.

There are many different ways we control. It can either be overt yelling and physical violence, or it can be covert and subtle. People-pleasing is even a form of control. If we need to be treated in a certain way to feel loved and accepted then we are going to act a certain way to make that happen. Control can also mean we shut people or events out of our lives because they are too much for us to handle. Ultimately, control is either attempting to gain acceptance, love, or worth, or it's trying to defend against being hurt.

If we want to understand what areas of our lives we try to control, we can ask ourselves this question — how do I try to get my needs met?

The truth is, everyone who is trusting their flesh is attempting to control someone or something. Did you know that we even at times try to control God by doing “good” things, or participating in “Christian” work or disciplines? Anything done in our own effort, even in an attempt to serve Him is control. Every one's flesh is controlling. It's only as we learn to rest and look to Christ and who we are in Him that we can slowly begin to give up control. That is God's solution for us.



## THE UNTANGLE

God wants to be your peace, joy, patience, security, and acceptance. When He can be those things to us, we can begin to release our grip of control because He is trustworthy and reliable. God is the One that created us with needs that only He can fill:





“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

We were designed to live dependent on God, and when we’re depending on Him, it sets us free.

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

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The truth is, we don’t need to have all the answers — not for ourselves and not for our children, our spouse, our friends, or our co-workers. We are able to talk to God about every circumstance in our lives and He is able to work it out. We can go to Him in prayer and say “Lord, I can’t control this. I can’t figure it out.” In second Peter it says:

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We spend so much time and energy trying to figure things out when all along, God is the solution and is so willing to show us! Just like our salvation, it’s not about attaining, it’s about receiving. When you receive, you’ll learn to live *from* God instead of living *for* Him.

This can be easier said than done, and we can sometimes stumble into roadblocks that keep us from trusting God in the midst of our struggles. Here are three reasons why we might try to control our circumstances and the people around us.

## **1. I believe that God doesn’t care about my problems.**

While you might believe this, Proverbs tells us:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

God cares about the big and little things in your life because He cares about you. He is so intimately acquainted with you that He knows the number of



hairs on your head. If He's counting every hair, He is certainly concerned about your circumstances and relationships. God wants you to experience freedom and He wants you to trust Him in all things. He is not a control freak, He simply wants to show us a better way. He loves you and He is the One Who knows your future.

## **2. I believe God doesn't understand my emotions.**

While you might believe that God doesn't "get" what you're going through, His Word tells us:

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God is the only one who does get us; after all, He created us! Nothing is too big or small. Jesus felt deeply and He went through painful times and outright rejection. However, He always looked to His Father for wisdom in every situation. He always chose to trust His Father in the midst of negative emotions, He invites us to do the same. It's not about achieving something, it's about receiving the gifts that we've already been given because we are worth it.

## **3. I believe that trusting God with the outcome of things in my life means I will be left feeling sad, hurt, and rejected.**

While you may be fearful about trusting God with your circumstances, God wants you to know and trust His character of love toward you. Scripture says:

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18a).

What does love have to do with fear? If you receive His love and understand that He loves you unconditionally, no matter what you just did, or said, or thought, then what are you afraid of? You might be afraid someone is going to reject you but God says you are valuable, loved, and accepted by Him. When you start looking at His perfect love, it starts to dispel your fear and you can begin to release the control you are trying to hold over your circumstances. You don't have to take charge anymore. Let God do His job.

Trusting God means you have to surrender the results of your circumstances. You can hold the people and circumstances in your life with a tight grip — so tight that your hands get tired. Or you can hold them with an open hand and



trust them into God's care, and relax. Giving up control and trusting God is not passive, it is waiting for His direction and leaving the results to Him.

Being able to trust God always comes back to our concept of who He is. If we believe God is good and that His plans for us are good, then we will be able to trust Him. In a lot of ways, trusting God is simply saying thank you, knowing that we can have joy in every circumstance because God is good and His love for us never fails.



Fear promotes control. Sit with God quietly and ask Him to show you your fears and the areas you are trying to control.

What do I fear?

Example

*Being alone*

How do I try to fix this?

Example

*Finding community*

*People pleasing*

*Manipulation*



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

God is the only One who is able to meet our needs. Any attempts we make to do so will fail. We don't need to try and control our circumstances or the people around us. Sometimes we are going along in our lives and we want God to come and help us out with our plans. But the truth is, life is about God and He wants us to join *Him*. He invites us to come to Him, and let His life be lived out through us. He is God and we are His beloved children. We can partake in His invitation that says:

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

You will find that rest is available for you to receive. Isn't that amazing? We have an amazing Father. We really can trust and rest in Him and Who He is.

*Father, I thank You that You're in control. Father, I thank You that whatever results happen, they're Yours. I'm going to do what You show me to do. I'm going to pursue what You show me to pursue. Show me the futility of my illusion of control. Remind me often that my life — and the lives of people I care about are in Your hands. You know best. I do not. I trust You to guide my steps, guard my heart, and provide for me and my loved ones a future of hope.*

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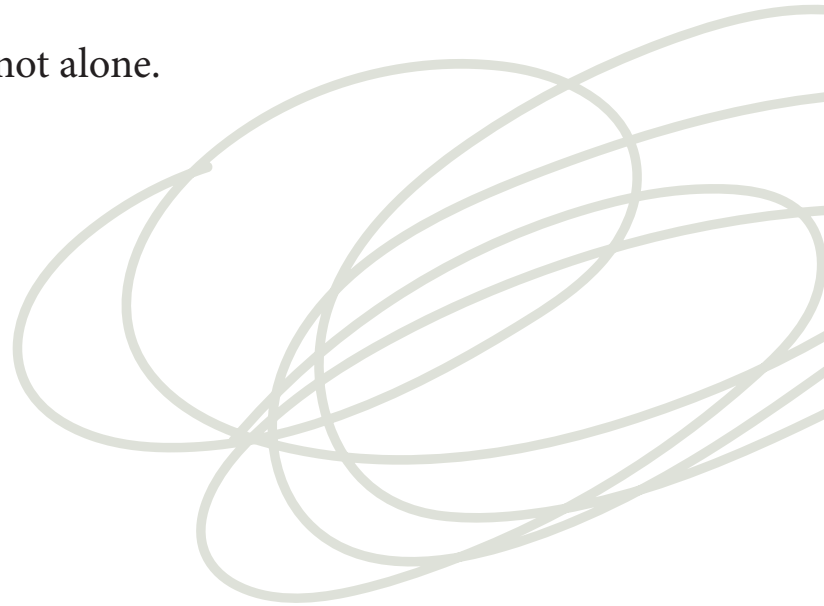
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# FEELING LIKE IT'S ALL UP TO ME

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*Are you willing to give up on your own ability, and trust the God who would rather die than live without you?*

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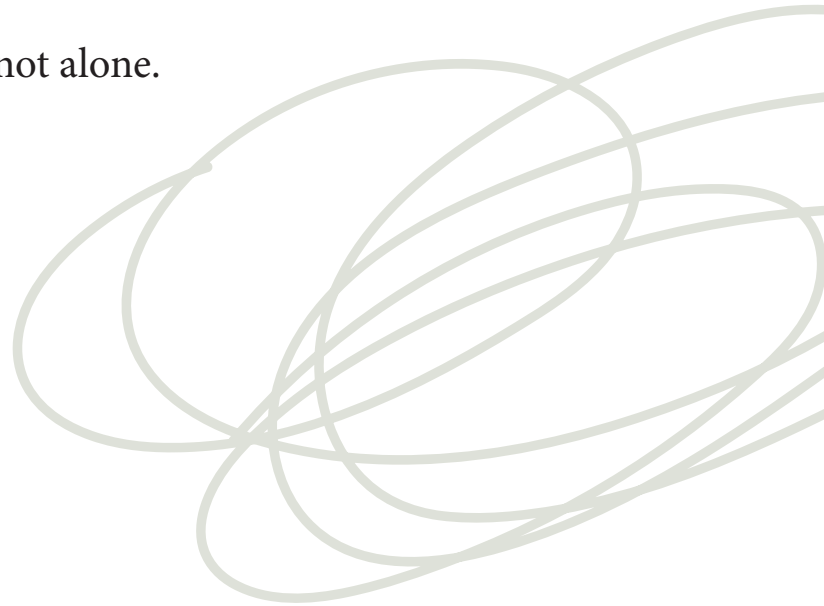
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# IN HIS HANDS

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## INVITATION

*Will you risk it all on who He says He is?*

It's common to struggle with certain fears when we think about trusting God. We might begin to ask some important questions — *Can I really trust God with my hopes, dreams, and future? If God is for me, and if God can do all things, why doesn't He fix this situation? He's all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing, all-everything — so why doesn't He just change my circumstances and make me happy?* We often think we know what is best for us and God does not. We are deceived. God does know what's best for us, even if we don't agree or understand what He's doing or not doing.

In *Feeling Like It's All Up to Me*, we talked about how we can take matters into our own hands and often leave God out of the equation completely. We lose patience and instead of waiting on Him, we grab the reins in an attempt to achieve peace and rest and avoid being hurt. Our way may work for a moment, but it usually creates another set of problems.

Why is it such a risk to trust Him? What are we afraid of? It usually boils down to one of two questions — if not both: *Does God care about me? And Is He good?*

Most Christians know that God can do anything He wants to do, but *Does He want to do good for me? And does He care what I want?*

What we have to face is the emotional need we are trying to have God meet by doing a certain thing. Everything we want and do in life is based on trying to



get a physical, emotional, or spiritual need met. In this lesson we are looking at trusting God for our emotional needs for love, acceptance, worth, and security. Being wired to avoid pain and seek pleasure, we will do whatever it takes to get what we think we need. We usually think we have the best idea and do not even consider God's point of view.

We learned that control is the opposite of trust. So how do we move from trying to control to trust, if we think God does not care or is not good?

*If it's really true that I don't have control, can I really trust God with my hopes, dreams, and fears?* The more we know God and His character, the more we will be able to surrender to Him and stop trying to control our circumstances.



## THE KNOT

It can be hard to let go. *If I trust Him, will He deliver? If I trust Him, will I lose out on what I really want?* God doesn't promise that we will have an easy life or get what we think will make us happy. We live in a fallen world and life has many challenges. Historically, life has not always been easy for believers. Jesus said:

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

This world is opposed to God and there is going to be tribulation in life. But, in the midst of the difficulties, God says He's going to be with us. He promises us peace in the middle of our chaos, circumstances, and fears. God invites us to take the risk of handing Him our dreams, our hopes, our fears, our jobs, our children, and our very lives.

For example, a person may think that if they get married they will feel loved, accepted, valuable, and secure. They certainly believe that God wants them to feel that way too, so they do everything in their power to meet “The One” who can fulfill their every need. That is a problem. No one can meet the needs of another person. You see, it is God's job to meet those emotional needs. He



certainly uses others to manifest His love, but we need to know that simply by merit of being God's child are completely lovable, acceptable, valuable, and secure - with or without a spouse. He certainly brings others into our lives to enjoy and have relationships with, but not to be *The One* who *meets* those needs.



## THE UNTANGLE

While God has never promised perfect circumstances, He has promised to provide all we need for an abundant life. It is by the grace of what God did on the cross through Jesus that all of our emotional needs have been met. Again, He does call us into human relationships and community to experience the fullness of His gift. This brings us to expectations and expectancy.

### **Expectations vs. Expectancy**

What do expectations and expectancy have to do with resting in the fact that God meets our needs? First, let's look at the difference between them. Expectations are predetermined disappointments, whereas expectancy is the hope we have in God for our future.

When we have expectations of God or others in our lives, we are holding them to a specific standard or outcome in the relationship - which often ends in disappointment. We may believe we know the best way and timeline for events to occur in order to get what we need. But what happens when things don't turn out the way we want or in the timeframe we think is necessary?

For example, we have expectations that our spouse will meet certain needs, and our kids will live a certain way. So we may start to make demands, or try to manipulate it into being. The trouble is, it doesn't work. The results are disappointing, relationships suffer, and our efforts produce death rather than life.

However, expectancy is a different thing.



We all have desires, and that's not a bad thing — God gives us desires — but we get into trouble when we start making our desires into demands to fulfill us. Expectancy is telling God our hopes, desires, and dreams and asking Him to provide what we need. Expectancy is the hope and assurance that God is going to do something to meet our needs, but it may not look like our plan. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

We have a tendency to decide what we need in order to feel love, acceptance, worth, and security. We make a plan, establish a timetable, and set out to get it. Oh, sometimes we ask God to bless our plans or make them happen, but we try to tell Him how to do it or we try to manipulate it into happening. Expectancy says, “Papa, here are my dreams and I look to You with great hope and expectancy that you are going to take care of me.”

We may be tempted to use our fleshly skills and try to help God. But when that temptation comes, ask God to show you a way out of that temptation.

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Expectancy is focused on the character of God in our day to day journey — not outcomes. It means we don't know what God is going to do, but we do know that He is going to show up and bring about the best result because He loves us. Expectancy is expressing our desires to God and then surrendering them to Him. We then choose to trust God to show up in our desires. God is with us moment by moment to guide our steps as we trust in His character, regardless of the outcome.

If we are too focused on trying to get our needs met through our relationships with others we may end up missing out on a lifetime of experiencing God supplying our every need. Regardless of what God has in store for each of us, we can have an expectancy to experience Him — His peace, love, acceptance, joy, and contentment — moment by moment, every single day. We can be sure that God will show up in amazing ways in our lives.







## HEART WORK

We all have expectations. God wants us to be able to recognize these expectations and entrust them to Him. He wants us to enjoy life moment by moment as we trust in Him. He is drawing us into expectancy. Spend some quiet time today identifying your desires and dreams and expectations and expectancies. Ask yourself, am I trusting in my results or in the character of God?

### Dreams & Desires

Example

*community*

*belonging*

### Expectations

Example

*Because God designed us to be in community, He should provide it for me: a safe, kind, and accepting group to belong to.*

### Expectancy

Example

*God will meet my intimate needs for security, acceptance, and belonging in His way and His time.*

*"I don't know what, how, or when...But He will, and it will be good!"*



## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

Regardless of the outcome, we can trust in God. Our lives are in His hands and He is for us. When we are trusting the character of God moment by moment, He fulfills the desires of our hearts.

*Papa, I know the plan You have for me, to provide a future and a hope. I know that You are very concerned about my well-being. You know what my needs and desires are. You are the only One who can grant me what I need, and You want the very best for me! You actually give me my desires, and when I am willing to let go of my preconceived idea of how that should happen, You give me a new picture that is more than I could ever think or imagine. I trust that You know me better than I know myself and I release my expectations and look to You with expectancy. Thank You that You are good and that You care.*

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# GOING ALL IN

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## INVITATION

*Will you let Him show you how to walk in this newness of life?*

We've covered a lot of ground during the last seven lessons, so let's do a little recap of all we've talked about and journeyed through together.

Life is tangled and messy and it's easy to get lost and disoriented when we don't have a firm understanding of who God is. We first considered how we look at ourselves and how God sees us. Our concept of God and our concept of ourselves are the most important things we need to understand. If you're still struggling with these topics, you may want to consider revisiting them and asking God to root His truth deep inside you. Ask Him to show you if He really is who He says He is and take some time to seek His revelation of who He says you are.

Next, we discovered that something was wrong with us before salvation, but that God had a solution for us — He made us new! Thankfully, when He made us new it wasn't just a ticket to heaven, He gave us His life and we were rescued for righteousness. We don't need to produce good behavior in order to become righteous, rather good behavior follows as our soul learns to express the new life of the spirit within.

Our journey then led us to the fact that although we are no longer sinners, we sometimes still act like sinners because it takes our soul a while to catch up with the truth of our new identity. What we believe and feel dictates our behavior, but our beliefs don't always line up with the truth. Then we asked ourselves, *Why don't we always feel the things we know?* Feelings are normal



to have, but they don't always tell us the truth. Feelings reflect what we believe, and God wants to renew our minds!

In the end, all of these things can leave us feeling like it's up to us to figure everything out. We think, if God doesn't do something, then we must have to. But the truth is that we can trust Him because He knows the outcome and has the best for us in mind. Trusting Him is impossible when we have expectations of what the results should be. But with expectancy placed in the character of God, we can choose to experience Him moment by moment in life and trust the outcome to Him, allowing Him to decide what's best for us.

In order to experience all that we've just talked about, we must place ourselves in His hands — safely in His control. We know that we can trust Him with the outcome because we can trust His character and His love for us. Today as we wrap up, we're going to look at what it looks like to live all of this out.



## THE KNOT

Now what? With all this truth we have learned, the temptation is to start asking for the steps to follow or the instruction book in order to get it right. But instead, it starts with receiving and believing all that God has given us. Our first job is not to *do*, but instead, to *receive* — we're human beings, not human doings. This can be hard when we feel like we already know the answers to all that we need to do in order to live the Christian life. It can wind up being really taxing and based all on our own performance.

So how do we walk this new life out? There is no formula. Romans says:

“Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ”  
(Romans 5:17b).

It says you will reign in life, meaning, although life might be chaotic, you can live free and untangled from the chaos of life. You can't control the world around you, but you can be free if you have the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. It's surrendering everything to Him and letting Christ live through you — that's grace. The abundance of the gift of righteousness is the identity we've been talking about. That means you are at peace within and with God, so you can rest. Life might be chaotic, but you don't have to feel tangled in it.





## THE UNTANGLE

Let's backtrack a little bit — our concept of God is oftentimes skewed because it is based on all the messages we receive from our childhood. Not that our parents meant to give us these messages, but children are great observers and not very good interpreters. We end up forming opinions and beliefs when we're young, and we need to stop and ask ourselves if what we are believing is true or if we are believing lies. God is for me, God is love, God is patient and kind — *Does what I'm believing line up with that?*

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are” (1 John 3:1a, NIV).

He's the One who has forgiven us. He's the One who has given us a new identity. There's no condemnation when we are in Christ. He's not mad at us and He's there to guide and direct us. He has given us everything we need for the living of life. We live from a new identity now. And even though we may not feel like saints, we know that we are. In 2 Corinthians it says:

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

But if you back up one verse to verse 16, it says:

“Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

And then it says if any man is in Christ, they're a new creature. If we can understand and rest in this truth, it changes the way we live our lives. It changes how we interact with our spouse, our friends, our kids, and everyone!

But it all starts with receiving this truth for yourself. You cannot give away what you have not received. The more self-acceptance you have, the more you are able to accept others. The more self-love you have, the more you are able to love the people around you. The reason God can love us is because He is love:

“We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).



Remember guilt and shame? It's hard to forget. Guilt is focused on something *we have done*. It can be godly guilt when God puts His finger on something we have done. On the other hand, shame tells us that *we are bad*. If you are believing that you are bad, that's not from God. What has God done to help us with our guilt? He died on the cross for all of the sins past, present, and future. What has He done about our shame? He gave us a whole new identity when we were born again united with Christ. He gave us His righteousness, and now there is no condemnation. There is no need for shame.

You can live free from shame. You don't have to carry guilt on your shoulders all the time. What if you could actually hold your head up? Not in a haughty, proud way, but in a healthy way; with the knowledge of the value that has been placed inside you. You didn't earn it or manufacture it. You just received a gift because of God:

“Has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

Sometimes we think if we do good, God's going to bless us more. But that's not how God operates nor is it what this life is about.

His power and grace are sufficient for everything. We sometimes talk about the struggles in life and compare them to Paul's thorn in his flesh. Three times he asked God to remove it, and the third time God answered Him and said:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

When we find ourselves in this tangled, chaotic, messed up life, we can try to control, or we can choose to trust God right in the middle of it all. God wants to be our strength, power, and grace in the middle of our struggles. Through faith, we can let these struggles trigger us to trust Him as our source of life.

We see this in our relationships too. Maybe we hold onto a false sense of control in our marriage or with our children. Recognizing that God is already holding them, we can begin to trust Him, one small step at a time. It's been said that the best way to be at peace about the future is to trust God in the present moment. As we trust Him in each moment, we will be in that trust relationship when the “future” comes. We can trust our loved ones into His care.

So if you are really trusting Christ in your daily walk, what would it look like?



Well, you would be walking in the freedom of your new identity. You would remember that you can't achieve anything on your own but only through God in you — the Holy Spirit is in you and He's your power. Therefore, you can walk into any situation that God has called you to, knowing that He's in you, even if you fall flat on your face.

You are His child of honor and He has blessed you with every spiritual blessing. He gave you talents and strengths and abilities — all that He is and has is yours, every minute of every day. If you ever experience anxiety or worry and think, *What am I going to do? Where am I going to go?* Again, the best way to prepare for the future is to experience Him in the moment. He didn't give you grace ahead of time for the future or for the regrets of your past — He has given you grace for right now at this very moment. The great I AM is present now. We can make plans, but God directs our steps. Experiencing Christ's life is a moment by moment journey.



Write a letter to God, expressing your tangled up mess and how you see Him working out the tangles. Then listen, and write a reply *from* God to yourself. What is He saying to you? Listen to His voice and reflect on Scripture He brings to mind.

**A letter to God:**

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## WRAP-UP & PRAYER

As you have been working through these lessons, it is our hope that you are learning to trust God in the middle of the chaos in your life. We would love to hear from you! We invite you to send us an email, introduce yourself, and let us know how you're doing. We are hoping that you will continue your journey with Christ and it's our prayer that you would experience intimacy with God, know His love for you at a deeper level, and learn to rest in Christ and your new identity in Him.

*Papa, thank You for everyone who has participated in this study. Thank You that You have given them a new heart and their desire is for You and to live from You. You are the giver of life and all things needed for life. Please continue to show Yourself strong in all of our lives. We stand on what Jesus said in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." I pray that we can all embrace Your truth that truly sets us free to live, love, work, laugh, and play!*

### References:

All Scripture taken from the NASB version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.



Are you feeling bogged down and tangled up in your circumstances?  
It happens so easily in this world. Regardless of where you're at in your journey, Life Untangled wants to help you experience the love and power of God in a truly meaningful way. God sees you and your circumstances, and He longs to heal your wounded soul and lead you to a place of hope. If you would like to speak with someone on our team you can do so by contacting [www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us](http://www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us).

We offer a safe place where you can find hope and help on your journey of healing. Our experienced Christian counseling staff helps you discover God's good intentions for your life, especially when your life feels tangled. We guide men, women, and couples through understanding unwanted behaviors, difficult emotions like anxiety, depression and anger, and most importantly, to experience God's design for victory in life.

You are not alone.

