



THE DESIGNER

UNTANGLING OUR CONCEPT OF GOD



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INTRODUCTION TO LIFE UNTANGLED

Did you know God cares about all the big stuff and even all the little stuff in your life, because He cares about YOU? He knows your struggles, hurts, and wounds.

He wants to show you the source of your mess—because we ALL have mess. And then, He wants you to trust Him to lead you to a place of healing and hope. He is eager to help you learn to depend on Him for ALL things!

Welcome to Life Untangled, where God’s love meets our chaos!

We know that most people, even Christians, can feel bogged down and tangled up with the circumstances of life. The writer of Hebrews talks about how sin and emotional wounds have tangled us up so much that we’re not able to run this race we call life:

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB)

That first verse tells us to lay aside, or let go of the things that entangle us. You might be thinking, “I’ve tried to let go, and I can’t!”

Letting go happens when we more fully understand the amazing gifts God gave us in Jesus, and the wonderful changes He made in us when we were saved.

In this new ebook series, you will see how we were not only designed to become His children through salvation, but to depend on Him as our actual source of life. We will discover our true selves, and we will see how doing life God’s way is the best way!

**NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE,
HE LOVES YOU, MESS AND ALL,
AND HE’S ON YOUR SIDE.**



WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THIS E-BOOK?

In this ebook, the first part of our “Life Untangled” series, we will focus on God, the Divine Designer.

He created you with purpose and gentle care. God wants to be in relationship with you and me as our good, good Father, guiding us into new life with Him.

However, our own warped sense of who He is creates a distance that keeps us from the deep intimacy He longs to have with us.

**HE CREATED
YOU WITH
PURPOSE
AND GENTLE
CARE.**

In this ebook, we’ll take a look at why and how this happens, and what to do about it. We’ll also look at who God really is—and who we are!—so that as we root out the lies, we can replace them with truth.

It is so important to get to the root of lies you have believed about who He is. This will set you free so you can enjoy the fullness of the life you have been given in Christ Jesus as a child of God!

GOD CREATED US

God is the Designer of life itself. He created us, and we are here because God made us part of His plan!

The Scripture starts out in Genesis 1:1 with four key words: “In the beginning God...”

Everything starts with Him. All of creation, all of life, all of the universe — it all starts with Him.

**GOD DOES
NOT NEED
US — HE
WANTS US!**

His creation displays His character and His glory (Isaiah 43:7). According to John Piper, “God created us to make Him look like what He really is.”

God is holy and it is His intent for mankind to manifest the beauty of His holiness. And even though God is not lacking or lonely, He created us to enjoy fellowship with Him. God does not need us — He wants us!

WHY OUR CONCEPT OF GOD MATTERS

When our concept of God is inaccurate or tangled, we are hindered from entering into the resurrection life and having real intimacy with Him.

“Nothing twists and deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy conception of God,” A.W. Tozer wisely said.

If your concept of God is that He’s out to get you, that He’s angry with you, that He’s disappointed in you, you may think that He’s going to give you a flat tire because you didn’t read your Bible today!

That’s not who God is.

Instead, He’s asking you, “My child, will you trust Me?” Will you take that chance and trust Him with your health, your bank account, your family, your spouse, your kids, your job, your passions...your whole life?

When our concept of God is lacking, inaccurate, or just plain wrong, it’s hard for us to trust Him with *anything*, let alone *everything*, isn’t it?

Take a moment to honestly reflect. Do you trust Him? Somewhat, a lot...completely?

It’s okay to acknowledge where you are. Maybe you don’t trust Him as fully as you want to, or as fully as you can. If that’s where you are, God longs to show you He is trustworthy, and that He loves you! Know that He’s not mad at you, or disappointed in you.

Here's the thing you need to know. It's okay for you to unpack and examine how you really feel about God. When you identify your true feelings, you are in a position to be delivered from self-hatred and bring the hurt into the light for healing.

WHEN YOUR THINKING LINES UP WITH GOD'S TRUTH, EVERYTHING CHANGES.

God cares about your emotional health! When your thinking lines up with God's truth, everything changes. To get there, you have to first deal with the lies you believe about God. This doesn't happen by mustering up your own strength to explore your inner self. This is a process that can only happen through a revelation by the Holy Spirit. Invite your Heavenly Daddy to show you who He really is.

Go ahead, ask Him. What is He showing you?

Embrace the love and truth that He WILL show you! He wants to set you free, so He delights in doing this for you! He is faithful, and He's wild about you!

HOW IS OUR CONCEPT OF GOD FORMED, AND HOW DOES IT GET TANGLED?

Let's take a look at how our concept of God is formed, as well as how it can get skewed.

Our families, specifically our parents or parental figures, are the first to shape and influence our concept of God. In fact, how we perceive God can be directly tied to how we see our parents.

HOW WE PERCEIVE GOD CAN BE DIRECTLY TIED TO HOW WE SEE OUR PARENTS.

Did you have a distant dad who didn't pay much attention to you? Maybe he was always busy working. Or perhaps your mom was always angry, so you expected to be in trouble all the time. Maybe you felt that your parents withheld love based on your performance.

Do you see how this can lead you to have an incorrect concept that God the Father is the same as your parents? It can lead you to believe that God doesn't want to be too involved in your life, or that you have to fight hard to get and keep His attention.

Even our view of ourselves can skew how we see God!

What we're taught about God also affects our concept of God, for better or worse. As an example, if you were taught that God is sovereign and you need to accept things the way they are, you may never learn to question any experience and falsely believe everything is God's will. As a result, you never work through your own responses and feelings.

Skewed concepts about who God is can also occur when you've experienced great trauma. Just like the story of Gideon (more on that later), you may feel abandoned by God and find yourself waiting for Him to prove His love to you by rescuing you.

Expectations can also set us up to believe God is a certain way. For example, high expectations of God may result in us believing God is involved in every single thing, leaving no room for man's choices. Low expectations may mean we attribute nothing in our lives to Him, and everything to our own actions.

WHAT ABOUT OUR FEELINGS?

Let's remember that God created us with feelings, so feelings aren't bad. They're a great indicator to what's going on inside us, or how we're interpreting our circumstances. However, depending solely on feelings can lead us to determine truth subjectively. For example, if someone were to read about God's love in Scripture, but not tangibly feel His love, they may conclude His love isn't real! On the other hand, we also may look for physical manifestations of God to prove who He is (seeing is believing), instead of trusting in His character.

Have you been able to identify some of your own skewed views? What inaccurate concepts of God do you have? Write them down. Ask yourself where those beliefs came from. How are they affecting how you see Father?

DIGGING A LITTLE DEEPER...

We've discussed how important it is to examine your feelings surrounding God, and your concept of Him - but why? Well, **when you see and understand what your feelings about God are, you can see how your beliefs about Him impact your life and decisions everyday.** To help you uncover these feelings, move through the following exercise.

Imagine your WORST day. Maybe that day is today, maybe it was recent, but bring yourself back to a time when you were feeling your worst. Once you're in that place, answer the following questions.

Remember: the "right" answers will immediately come flying to your mind. Ignore the urge to give the answer you think you should, and instead, answer truthfully from your heart and experience. Bring your thoughts and feelings into the light where God can heal and restore them; where He can show you who He really is. **He loves you, He knows you, and He can handle your feelings!**

When I think about God I feel...

When I have to trust God I feel...

It frustrates me when God wants me to...

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

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

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

As you're probably realizing, you (like most people) know about God, but on those bad days, we often feel something different than what we know because our beliefs are different than what we know. In other words, feelings follow beliefs — not knowledge.

FEELINGS FOLLOW BELIEFS — NOT KNOWLEDGE.

Sometimes, our skewed concept of God means that we come to believe Jesus' character is different than God's. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the disciples that if they knew Him, they would also know the Father and that if they had seen Him, they would have seen the Father also. Jesus makes it very clear that He and the Father are One (John 10:30). Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are one God: Three in One. Same God. Same character.

If we feel like there is a difference in the character of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are deceived and God wants to give us truth and clarity!

THE STORY OF GIDEON

Let's take a look at the story of Gideon in Judges chapters 6-7. Gideon's story will help you see how our circumstances and feelings can skew our concept of God, and leave us trusting our feelings, instead of God's goodness.

The people of Israel had been handed over to the Midianites for seven years because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. When we meet up with Gideon, we find him hiding in the winepress trying to beat out the wheat in the hopes of saving it from the Midianites.

Gideon was hiding! He felt abandoned, scared and inadequate. It's likely that he doubted God, too.

But what happened next?

An angel of the Lord was sent to him. The angel tells Gideon that despite feeling abandoned and afraid, God is with him. He also calls him "O valiant warrior," showing Gideon his true, God-given identity. You see, God was Gideon's Divine Designer! God knew who Gideon really was, even though Gideon didn't feel like a valiant warrior.

You can read the rest of the story in Judges, but in short, with God's guidance and faithfulness, Gideon led 300 Israelite troops in a triumphant victory over the Midianites.

What's the take away? Well, God was faithful to meet Gideon exactly where he was at. God encouraged him, and restored Gideon's faith in His character. Gideon needed God, and God met him in his weakness. God wasn't afraid to prove Himself and His ability, despite how Gideon felt about himself or about God.

**HE WANTS
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You see, God isn't afraid of your skewed concepts either. He wants to prove Himself to you over and over, lavishing His love upon you! He knows there are times you feel fearful, abandoned, alone and insecure, even angry, and He is aware that you may doubt Him.

God wasn't angry with Gideon, and He isn't angry with you!

Can you remember a time when you felt the way Gideon did? What did you feel about yourself and the circumstances, and what did God show you to be true?

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

No matter what skewed concepts you and I may have, God is good! Let's take a look at what He's like.

For starters, God is omnipotent, omnipresence, and omniscient — in short, let's just say **you cannot escape His all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing, and loving presence!** He created everything, nothing is impossible for Him, and He transcends time and space.

God also has a triune nature, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

To help explain this, let me tell you about Niagara Falls in the wintertime. I grew up about 15 miles from Niagara Falls. When we'd go to the Falls in the wintertime, do you know what we'd see? Ice, water and mist — all three, even on the coldest of days! You see, even on the coldest of winter days, all three, distinct forms of water (solid, liquid, and gas) co-existed. It's the same with God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

He is the Creator of everything, the Divine Designer. One day, God decided to create a universe. Within that universe, He made the Earth and the animals. Then God decided to create man. "I'm going to make him in My image," God said, "male and female, created in My image." And He did, because He is the Creator.

God is unconditional love! One of the Bible verses that tells us the most about God's love is found in Romans.

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6-8

God is the Sustainer of life (Romans 4:17b).

God is kind and patient (Psalm 145:17, Romans 2:4).

God is unchanging — the same yesterday, today and forever! (Hebrews 13:8)

God is our Redeemer and Deliverer (1 Peter 1: 18-19).

God is a righteous Judge (Psalm 7:11, Romans 5:9).

God is also the only One who can meet our innermost human needs (Philippians 4:19).

**GOD LONGS FOR
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You see, God designed us with certain needs like love, acceptance, worth, significance, and security. When we rely on our own efforts to meet these needs, we fail miserably and don't experience life.

Since God is a good Father, He wants — in fact, He longs — for us to depend on Him to get those needs met, which He is able to do fully and completely and joyfully!

He is also holy, glorious, faithful, sovereign, merciful, gracious and more. The truth is, we could go on and on about who God is. And because God is all these things and more, including trustworthy, you can indeed trust Him when He tells you who YOU are!



WHAT'S NEXT?

Knowing and believing the truth is crucial to our relationship with God, with other people, and also to our understanding of ourselves.

That's why we suggest you take the time to uncover any false and skewed concepts you have of God. Ask the Holy Spirit for help. Take your time, and remember: there are no right answers! The more honest you are, the more Holy Spirit is able to show you.

Sit with God and ask Him to bring to your mind a really, really bad day. The event itself doesn't have to be a life-changing event, but a day that was really difficult for you. Then draw your concept of God at that low moment.

Next, take a few minutes to ask Jesus to show you a moment when you felt what we call His LAWS (love, acceptance, worth, security) and presence. Draw your new picture of God!

Another way to grow and heal and change our old ways of thinking is by reading the Word of God. **As you choose to believe what the Word of God says, your hope will be renewed, and your feelings will come into proper alignment.**

**GOD IS NOT
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DAY AFTER DAY,
MOMENT BY
MOMENT.**

Remember, God is not mad at you! Instead, He wants to lavish His love on you, day after day, moment after moment.

He wants you to LIVE, fully alive in Christ! He receives glory in you being full of joy, having an abundant life, and experiencing peace.

Because you were designed and handcrafted by the Divine Designer, you are a piece of art. All art reflects back to the heart, desire and intention of the artist. You reflect, manifest, and display God's heart of beauty, love, life and creativity! That's who He is, and that's who you are!

If God is like an artist, and you are His art, what's His Divine Design? What part do you have to play in it?

Let's find out in the next ebook.