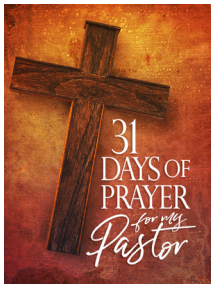




The IMAGINE Series focuses on the hope of a different world as followers of Jesus make disciples who make disciples.



From a Pastor's Heart

I had been in ministry for more than 20 years. I was an effective shepherd of

our congregation; I loved my people well. I was an effective communicator of God's Word, accurately preaching and teaching the truths of Scripture. At the same time though, I struggled to prioritize my own spiritual growth. On one particular evening, I had a new kind of encounter with Jesus.

I was studying the story of the ten lepers in Luke 17, when I read Jesus' words, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine" (Luke 17:17 NIV)? And that's when the Spirit revealed: This wasn't a Savior who needed to know the location of ten lepers; this was a Savior whose heart was acquainted with sorrow and grief (Isaiah 53:3). This was my Savior who felt sadness and disappointment that there had been only one leper return to give thanks. More personally, the Holy Spirit showed me that I had been like one

I. Introduction: The Forgotten Purpose of Truth

"On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:40). There is a "forgotten purpose" of truth that His Spirit wants to make real. This forgotten purpose can serve His longing to restore relevance to His church, exceeding abundance to His followers, and great gospel witness.

A. The Rational Purpose of God's Truth.

We know that Scripture tells us what we should believe and that God's Word is the determiner for what is true, immovable, unchangeable, and eternal. For example, Acts 4:12 tells us, "There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." This boundary of right doctrine lets us know that to claim there is any way to salvation other than Jesus is error or sin.

B. The Behavioral Purpose of God's Truth.

Most of us are also acquainted with the behavioral purpose of God's truth. We look to God's Word to tell us how to live our lives. We know that the Bible gives us commands and principles for how to live a life that is pleasing to God and in harmony with one another. Ephesians 4:29 speaks of not letting any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth (reproof), but only what is helpful for building others up (correction). Therefore, to revile, judge, or gossip with our words is to fall outside of the boundary of right living. These are sin.

While these two purposes of truth are critical for life and ministry, they are not sufficient in themselves. God's Word gives us boundaries for our life and ministry. The Bible defines the limits of sound doctrine and clearly sets the boundaries for what *we are to believe*. God's Word also gives us boundaries for how we are to live our life and outlines *how we should behave*. Yet, we must see that these are boundaries given by God in order to direct our journey toward a relationship with Him and with those He loves.

of those nine. I had saddened the heart of my Savior because I rarely took time to express my gratitude. I wept with Jesus. I shared moments of repentance and compassion for Jesus. It was a personal moment of deep connectedness between Jesus and me.

This very personal encounter with Jesus brought change in me. I now begin most mornings alone with the Lord. I imagine myself kneeling beside that one leper, giving Jesus thanks.

—Excerpt from *31 Days of Prayer for My Pastor*

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C. The Relational Purpose of Scripture



As we will elaborate in the section to follow, the relational purpose of truth is this: God's Word was written so that we might have a loving, intimate relationship with the One who wrote it as well as with those He loves.

2 Timothy 3:16–17: “All Scripture is God-breathed (Greek: *Theopneustos*—*Theos*—“God”; *pneustos*—“breathed”) and is useful . . . for teaching doctrine (Greek: *didaskalia*—“context of teaching”) and rebuking or correction (Greek: *elegmos*—“reproving wrong” and *epanorthosis*—“restoring proper condition”).

Many of us, though, get sidetracked on this journey toward a deep, intimate relationship with God. We carefully look to Scripture in order to tell us what to believe and how we should behave, but we miss the opportunity to more deeply know the God of the Bible. As a result, our lives may suffer from a lack of significance and diminished eternal impact for the cause of Christ. Our ministries may be void of relevance and demonstrable impact because week by week, we leave church knowing what to believe and how to behave, but we never take the journey into a deeper relationship with the God of the Bible. Tragically, many of us infrequently experience the relational purpose of truth.

II. Truth Is a Person

Imagine for a moment that you are in that hall with Pilate and his prisoner. Imagine the words of the governor's question echoing off the marbled walls of that great hall. Imagine the expression on Pilate's face as he poses the question, scornful at first, then turning serious when the answer does not quickly come. Seconds tick by. Still the prisoner and the governor study each other. Imagine the governor's thoughts: Who is this Man? Why does He gaze at me so?

And the prisoner's thoughts: Have I not just told you? I came to bring truth into the world. Pilate, you are looking at the answer to your own question. “I am the truth” (John 14:6).

Pilate was not just discussing the truth in his Jerusalem palace the day he met Jesus; he was literally looking at it. Truth was standing before him, clothed in human flesh! Jesus Christ is the very embodiment and essence



W-1 Frequently being led by the Spirit into deeper love for the One who wrote the Word

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

Moral and spiritual truth isn’t so much a concept as it is a person. It isn’t so much something we believe, as it is someone to whom we relate. Moral and spiritual truth has flesh. Thus, truth is not just conceptual; it is intrinsically relational. Truth is a person!

A. Truth Is a Person . . . Whom We Encounter in the Word

“Jesus replied, ‘Philip, I’ve been with you all this time and you still don’t know who I am? How could you ask me to show you the Father, for anyone who has looked at me has seen the Father?’” (John 14:9)

Imagine the sadness that must have been in the Savior’s heart as He uttered these words. Picture the scene in the upper room. Jesus’ faithful followers surround Him. Christ has already experienced the painful distraction of the disciples’ argument about who was to be the greatest in the kingdom. He has vulnerably shared how His body is about to be broken and His blood is about to be shed, only to be met with the dispute of His closest friends (Luke 22:17–26).

Then, as a testimony of humble servanthood, Christ takes a basin of water and a towel and begins to wash the feet of each disciple. He washes the feet of Peter, James, John, and even Judas (John 13:5–15). He washes the feet of His betrayer, extending love and grace to him one final time. During the Passover meal, Christ turns to Judas and says, “What you do, do quickly” (John 13:27). Judas then departs to complete the terms of his agreement to betray Christ.

As you revisit this familiar story, pause and reflect upon the heart of the Savior:

- What might Jesus have been feeling as He experienced the dread of crucifixion and the insensitivity of his disciples’ response and the anticipation of His imminent betrayal and the departure of His closest friends?
- What feelings might have been in Christ’s heart in the upper room?
- Imagine that this One, who is “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” experiences additional pain as He utters His next words (Isaiah 53:3).
- Allow the Holy Spirit to gently lead you to respond to the heart of Jesus as you hear Him say, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me?”
- Now allow your compassion to prompt your deepened longing to know Him: “Lord Jesus, I want to better know You. I want to know You for who You really are.” A life of abundance requires fresh, frequent encounters with Jesus to empower and motivate our participation with Him in kingdom living.

Pray like this: *“Jesus, as I sense Your sadness that Your followers have often missed knowing You, my heart is _____.
As I seek to live a life of Spirit-empowered discipleship, prompt me often Holy Spirit to consistently pursue a deeper knowing of Jesus.”*



W-2 Being a “living epistle” in reverence and awe as His Word becomes real in my life

B. Truth Is a Person . . . Whom We Express Through the Word

The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:29, 30).

From this significant discourse, we find a critical imperative to living a life of a *living letter*, contributing salt and light in the daily traffic patterns of life—a two dimensional imperative: HE must increase and I must decrease!

The imperative is not just for John the baptizer, but also for each Spirit-empowered follower. Practically, “what does it look like” for Jesus to gain preeminence as we trust the Holy Spirit to make us a *living witness* of His life and love? Think about your daily living, your thoughts and activities, your attitudes and priorities.

Scripture reminds us that:

- His THOUGHTS are higher than yours (Isaiah 55:8).
- His ACTIVITY is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit and never the deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19–24).
- His ATTITUDE is characterized by humility and thinking more highly of others (Philippians 2:3–7).
- His PRIORITIES focus on loving His Father, loving people, and imparting the gospel that others might embrace Him and these priorities (Matthew 22:37–40, 28:19, 20).

For Him to increase and me to decrease will impact all of life, my thoughts and activities, my attitudes and priorities. Living out this one Bible verse gives a powerful but simple goal for each day . . . “let Jesus increase!” A lifestyle of Spirit-empowered faith is characterized by living out John 3:30 each day with evidences of His thinking and activity, His attitude and priorities.

Colossians 3:16 Moment:
“Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you . . .” (Col. 3:16).
Pastor/Teacher:
 Vulnerably share your own story of Jesus *increasing* in some aspect of your daily walk.

Pause to reflect and celebrate recent evidence of Him “increasing”:

- *I recently was having more of HIS thoughts as I . . .*
- *Recently in my daily activity, I sensed the fruit of His Spirit being expressed when . . .*
- *His attitude of humility and thinking first of others was evident recently as I . . .*
- *His priority of love toward others was expressed recently when . . .*
- *His priority of sharing my life and the gospel was recently demonstrated as I . . .*

Recently

Celebrate one or more of these evidences of Him “increasing” and then pray for one another that these changes would continue as you “decrease.”



W-3 Yielding to the scripture's protective cautions and transforming power to bring life change in me.

C. Truth is a Person . . . Who transforms us through the Word

"And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1:38 NASB).

The life of a Spirit-empowered Jesus follower is characterized by this same "yieldedness" to the Word as we see in Mary. Our cry is the same as hers. Today, I want to "Do" Your Word as I walk in the light of Your Word through frequent experience of Scripture (John 12:35; Psalm 119:105).

"Since you have in obedience to the truth, purified your souls—fervently love one another from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22). Prayerfully reflect on the Bible verses below. Which one of these might you need to experience more often?

- Proverbs 15:1—"A gentle answer turns away wrath."
- Romans 15:7—"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you."
- James 5:16—"Confess your sins to each other."
- Ephesians 4:32—"Forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- Ephesians 4:15—"Speaking the truth in love . . ."
- Ephesians 4:29—"Let no unwholesome words come out of your mouth but only such words that edify (buildup)."

Take time to reflect on this one verse. Pray together with a partner or small group. Ask Jesus to make this verse truer of you and empower you to do the Bible.

Lord Jesus, lead me beyond merely knowing the truth. Please lead me into a genuine experience of truth. Replace any prideful knowledge with Your love that builds up as Your truth is lived out (2 Corinthians 8:1). I sense that Your Spirit might want this verse to be particularly true of me in my relationship with _____

III. Truth Is to Be Experienced and Expressed

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).

As surely as truth sets us free, the lack of truth produces bondage. Our nation has slowly drifted away from the biblical moorings we had as a young nation. We have strayed significantly from the days when our first president, George Washington, concluded one of his many public prayers in 1752 with these words, "Let me live according to those holy rules which Thou has this day prescribed in Thy Holy Word. Direct me to the true object, Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (Washington's Papers, Burk, W. Herbert, 1907, p. 87–95).

In our twenty-first century world, vain imaginations have replaced moral absolutes. Permissiveness and tolerance have been lifted up as moral ideals. The definition of tolerance (correctly defined as respect for other people without necessarily sharing their ideals, beliefs, and practices) has been twisted to mean that all individual beliefs, values, lifestyles, and "truths" are equal in value.



W-4 Humbly and vulnerably sharing of the Spirit's transforming work through the Word

A. Truth when Experienced . . . Prompts Our Testimony

"I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed" (Psalm 119:46), and "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2).

"I will delight in your principles and not forget your word" (Psalm 119:16). Claim the promise of Psalm 119:16. Disciples delight in God's Word, not forgetting how His truth has blessed them. Consider a specific Bible verse that has become especially meaningful to you. Then reflect on how God made it alive for you, leading you out of darkness into light.

- Maybe God used a particular Bible verse (like John 3:16) to draw you out of sin's darkness into a new-birth encounter with Christ.
- Maybe God used a particular Bible promise (like Psalm 23) to lead you out of a valley of despair into "green pastures."
- Maybe God used a specific Bible admonition (like Ephesians 4:31) to challenge you to rid yourself of some area of darkness so that you could walk with Him and hear His voice. After sharing your responses with your partner or small group, pray together, expressing gratitude for the power, promise, and potential of the light of God's Word.



W-5 Meditating consistently on more and more of the Word hidden in the heart

B. Truth when Experienced . . . Nurtures Spiritual Growth

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14 NASB)

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow" (1 Peter 2:2).

Disciples grow in maturity as they are nourished by the Word of God. Satan sought to tempt Christ in the desert, but Christ overcame Him by continuing to walk in the light of the Word of God, hidden His heart (Matthew 4:1–11). His declarations speak to the power and necessity of being nourished by the Word: "Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (v. 4). As we live out a Spirit-empowered faith and extend God's presence in a dark world, we must take full advantage of every opportunity to encounter God in His Word and to experience its nourishing benefits and blessings.

- As we **hear** the Word taught, preached, and shared, our faith will be strengthened: "Faith comes from hearing the message" (Romans 10:17).
- As we **read** the Word, we will be blessed: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3).
- As we **study** the Word, we will be approved by God as "a workman who . . . correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).
- As we **memorize** the Word, we will be less vulnerable to sin: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).
- As we **meditate** upon the Word, our yielding to it will increase: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (Joshua 1:8). Meditation upon the Word will also produce spiritual prosperity, health, and fruitfulness (Psalm 1:1–3).

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

“Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you . . .” (Col. 3:16).

Pastor/Teacher:

Vulnerably share from item 4 which one or two ways of being nourished by the Word might you need to emphasize.

Pause and reflect, allowing the Holy Spirit to deepen your “longing” for the Word.

1. How many of these five ways of being nourished by the Word of God have you taken advantage of this past week?
2. Sadly, too many of God’s children remain “babes,” as week by week they come to hear God’s Word preached or taught by others, but rarely take advantage of other avenues of nourishment.
3. What other ways of “feeding upon” the Word might you desire to pursue at this time?
4. How might you go about it?

I could pursue more of these additional ways of being nourished by God’s Word (circle any that apply):

Hearing Reading Studying Memorizing Meditating

By _____



W-6 Encountering Jesus in the Word for deepened transformation in Christ-likeness

C. Truth when Experienced . . . Leads Us to Encounter Jesus

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:33, 34).

Meditation: Close your eyes and form a mental picture of a courtroom. The words Paul uses are legal words. We still use them—“bring charge” and “condemn.” You feel intimidation at your surroundings. You look around and see the faces of people who have spoken against you, been harsh and cruel, or abandoned and neglected you. But who can condemn? Only Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Suddenly, Jesus enters the room. You see His flowing robes, sandaled feet, and bearded face. Rather than taking His place behind the judge’s bench, Jesus stands by your side, slowly eases His arm around your shoulder, and gently leads you to join Him, kneeling in prayer.

He’s praying your prayer list, for the needs in your life, and then you hear Him ask, “Where are your accusers?” You glance up and realize that the courtroom is completely empty. Every one of those faces filled with condemnation has disappeared from the room. Each person who brought a charge against you vanished. Everyone who had responded with neglect or abandonment is gone. He then proclaims, “Neither do I accuse you.” The only One who can condemn you prays for you! The only One, who is equipped to judge you does not. The Holy One of the universe prays for you!

Pause and allow the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with wonder and gratefulness for this Jesus!

“Thanks Father for Your incomparable love that empowers Christ to pray for me rather than condemn me. Praise You, Jesus, because there is no condemnation for we who are in Christ Jesus! The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free!”



W-7 A life-explained as one of
“experiencing Scripture”

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

**“Let the Word of Christ dwell
deeply in you . . .” (Col. 3:16).**

Pastor/Teacher:

Vulnerably share which of these
five “benefits” you would most like
to see deepened in your new life.

D. Truth when Experienced . . . Becomes “Explanation” for Daily Living

“But this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16).

“For the word of God is living and active . . .” (Hebrews 4:12).

This scripture tells us that the Word of God is living and active, but what is the evidence that God’s Word is truly “living” in my life? What does it look like for the Spirit of God to take the Word of God and empower our experience of it?

Taking this journey into a deepened, loving relationship with His Word is an experience because any relationship must be experienced. It involves more than knowledge and dutiful compliance. Our journey in loving the Lord and others through living His Word will change our lives in relevant, meaningful ways. Here are some of the benefits of taking this journey toward a more intimate relationship with the God of the Bible:

1. You will live life with an expectancy of actually encountering Him—the One who wrote the Book!
2. You will experience freedom like never before. Your Christian life will move beyond duties and obligations, from “got to” to “get to.” You will be constrained by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14 KJV).
3. You will be empowered to actually live what you believe. You will find that this power comes not from a doctrinal treatise or a code of conduct, but from a Person!
4. You will express humility instead of pride. Your heart will not be able to fully grasp the wonder of how the Creator of the universe meets you in His Word.
5. You will demonstrate vulnerability instead of judgment. You will be excited to share what God’s Word is doing in you rather than pointing to the failures of others.

Pause quietly now with the Lord for Him to speak regarding one of the above “benefits” of daily living His Word; now pray, asking Him to make these real in and through your life.

IV. Truth when Experienced . . . Deepens our Love of God and Others

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me” (John 5:39).

Scripture has both objective meaning and relational significance. We must not be as the Pharisees who searched the Scriptures but missed Jesus!

“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:40).

We must not miss the significance of Christ’s words in this text. Not only do these two commandments constitute the nail on which the rest of the instructions of Scripture hang, they also provide a framework for the interpretation of God’s Word. Christ’s words reveal how Spirit-empowered faith is lived out when Scripture comes alive through relationships.

Christ seems to argue for relational hermeneutics (principles of scriptural interpretation) in His declaration about the greatest of commandments (Matthew 22:40). His words suggest this principle of interpreting Scripture. Scripture “hangs” on loving God and others.

We might illustrate this approach to Scripture by exploring a familiar passage which is one of a limited number of New Testament passages which contain the Greek Word *kremannumi* (“depends” or “hangs”):

- Matthew 18:6—“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck.”

Imagine the scene described in this text. You see a man with a millstone hung around his neck. The stone’s weight makes it difficult for the man to walk, and you see him stumbling toward the edge of a boat. You are quite certain that if this man falls into the ocean, the weight of the stone will cause his death. With this scene in your mind’s eye, you cannot focus only on the millstone’s objective meaning, for to do so would be to miss the relational significance. Consider the absurdity of reacting to the situation described above by simply asking objective questions about the millstone:

- “How much does that millstone weigh?”
- “How old might it be?”
- “From where might that millstone have come?”

Limiting our response to such questions would be to miss the critical significance of what we were observing. The significant issue is that the millstone is hanging around a person’s neck! To miss where the millstone is hanging is to miss its relevance entirely. Christ’s declaration in the gospel of Matthew reveals that we face a similar challenge as we interpret Scripture. We often observe its objective meaning but miss its relational significance. God’s Word “hangs” upon loving Him and loving others.



W-8 Living “naturally supernatural” in all of life as His Spirit makes the written Word (logos) the living Word (Rhema)

A. Truth when Experienced . . . Empowers the Word to Become Alive

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

“THERE’S NOTHING LIKE THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth . . . training us to live God’s way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us” (2 Timothy 3:16 MSG).

Prayerfully reflect on the Bible verses below. Which one of these might you need to experience more often in your own life and relationships?

- “think more highly of others”—Philippians 2:3
- “kind, tender-hearted, compassionate”—Ephesians 4:32
- “It is more blessed to give”—Acts 20:35
- “encouraging one another”—Hebrews 10:25
- “share each other’s troubles and problems”—Galatians 6:2 TLB

Pause to encounter Jesus in His Word, asking His Spirit to turn the written Word into the living Word through your life.

“And the sheep hear his voice” (John 10:3).

Mediate quietly on Jesus as the great Shepherd “sowing” the truth in your heart.

“The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.”
—Martin Luther



W-9 Living abundantly “in the present” as His Word brings healing to hurt and anger, guilt, fear, and condemnation—which are heart hindrances to life abundant

“Lord Jesus, what truth from Your Word might You desire for me to more often experience? Speak, Lord; I am listening.”

Meditate on the five scriptures above and listen for the Spirit’s leadership.

*I sense it would be important for me to more often experience (which scripture) from above _____
or another scripture _____*

Take time to reflect on this one verse. Pray together with a partner or small group. Ask Jesus to make this verse more true of who you are and empower you to do the Bible.

Lord Jesus, lead me beyond merely knowing the truth. Please lead me into a genuine experience of truth. Replace knowledge with Your love that builds and edifies as Your truth is lived in my life. I sense that Your Spirit might want this verse to be particularly true of me in my relationship with _____.

B. Truth when Experienced . . . Empowers Transformation

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

God wants us to live abundantly “in the present” as His Word brings healing to hurt, anger, guilt, fear, and condemnation, which are heart hindrances to abundant life.

Hearing Jesus in the present is critical to following Him. His voice is not unclear or uncertain, but often, it’s our hearing that is impaired. To follow Him faithfully requires freedom to hear.

Be still before the Lord and offer the same prayer that David prayed as you seek to put away the things that might hinder you from hearing God:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23, 24).

- Search me, O Lord, for **unresolved emotions** that keep me from hearing You. Free me from any guilt or condemnation, any anger or bitterness, any fear or anxiety. Free me to live each moment “in the present” with You. Speak now Your servant listens. I need to put away . . .
- Search me, O Lord, for **sins that hinder me** from hearing You. Free me from all moral filth, evil, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Free me to have a cleansed heart and mind. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away . . .
- Search me, O Lord, for **childish things that distract me** from hearing You. Free me from rationalizing my behavior and blaming others, from idle chatter and self-focus. Free me to practice personal responsibility before You and others. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away . . .
- Search me O Lord, for **self-initiative that prevents me** from hearing You. Free me from my thoughts, my ways, my ideas, and my goals. May I instead embrace Your thoughts, Yours ways, Your ideas, and Your goals. Speak now, Your servant listens. I need to put away . . .

Pause and wait before the Lord. Listen as He reveals what needs to be put away. Now yield to Him, even though you may not fully know all that will be necessary:

“Lord I sense the need to put away _____ from my life. Even before fully knowing all that may be required, I yield to You. I long to hear You as I live life in present abundance. Remove this from my life, so that I can more freely hear what You reveal to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”



W-10 Implicit, unwavering trust that His Word will never fail

C. Truth when Experienced...Provides Security of Identity, Purpose, and Faith

In John 8:12–30, Jesus asserts that He is the light of the world and not from this world. In His encounter with religious leaders, He speaks to His identity, background and purpose—and offers hope to those of us who follow Him.

“For I absolutely know who I am, where I’ve come from, and where I’m going” (John 8:14).

We are becoming more and more like him, being jointly formed into His image (Romans 8:29). Notice the certainty of Jesus concerning:

- Who I am: “Then Jesus said, ‘I am light to the world and those who embrace me will experience life-giving light, and they will never walk in darkness’” (John 8:12). The religious leaders found their identity in religious performance. This is sometimes described as the religion of “who-do-ism,” which occurs when who I am is equated with what I do.
- Where I’ve come from: “I am from above. I am not from this world...” (John 8:23). Jesus found security in the love of his Father.
- Where I’m going: “You will know me as ‘I Am’ after you have lifted me up from the earth as the Son of Man. Then you will realize that I do nothing on my own initiative, but I only speak the truth that the Father has revealed to me. I am his messenger and he is always with me, for I only do that which delights his heart” (John 8:28, 29).
- Jesus defined his purpose in the context of a mutually dependent relationship with his Father—the Father reveals and the Son of Man yields.

Pause and rejoice in your identity, uniqueness and purpose as a joint-heir of Jesus.

- Rejoicing in your identity as “His Beloved” (Song of Solomon 2:4; Ephesians 1:6)
- Celebrating how God has formed you and set you apart (Psalm 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5)
- Expressing appreciation for your purpose to do that which delights God’s heart (Psalm 37:4)

Pray a prayer of gratitude for your identity, uniqueness, and purpose, allowing this joy to motivate all that you do and say as His follower:

“Lord, I appreciate how You have designed me for intimacy with You and called me to reflect Your love to other people.”