

DISCOVER...



WAYFORWARD
ADVENTURES

Your time on the trail will be more than a great adventure, it will be a discovery expedition that will leave you headed home a different person than when you came. Our prayer is that this week is a watershed experience in your life, one that you can look back on and see how you changed to become more like the person God created you to be.

We live in a world that tells us that if we can get everything right on the outside, it will eventually deliver us the satisfaction we long for on the inside. This is the hidden message behind all the advertisements and marketing that we are bombarded with each day. One of the biggest traps we can fall into is believing that this is actually true. The Bible explains that God has set things up the exact opposite way. He desires to transform us on the inside, letting that drive the way we live on the outside. The world's promises leave us unsatisfied, but living God's way leads us to a Life of Meaning, the kind of life for which we have been longing.

As you GET OUT this week from your normal routines, may I challenge you to LOOK IN to the deep longings of your heart? God desires you to LIVE OUT who you have been created to be. When we do, He is most glorified, and we are most satisfied.

Instead of focusing on what you should and shouldn't DO, this week will be filled with time and space to reflect on who you were created to BE.

If you will trust the process and give it your all, I promise you will not be disappointed with what you discover.

I can't wait to hear about it!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Todd Pinkston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Todd Pinkston | Founder & President

The goal of this book is to guide us through building a framework to a Life of Meaning. We hope that the rhythms of life you experience on the trail (life stories, laughter, meals, hiking, etc.) will instill a vision of how this can be achieved back home. As you experience the structure of this process, you can then replicate it in the different environments or situations in which you find yourself for years to come.

The contents have been broken up into two parts: lessons and devotionals.

The Lessons are designed to be completed later in the day when your guides set aside extended time for each person to spend alone. There are questions throughout these lessons that will be discussed as a group during the trip. While we hope you think through and answer them in the space provided, we don't want you to be limited to these questions. Let this be a starting place. There is no need to work ahead. Each lesson is better when you allow it to sink in. Your guides will prepare time for each lesson. Don't worry. There won't be a quiz and you won't have to turn these books in. This is for your growth and development.

The Devotionals are designed to be thought-provoking, inspiring passages for you to read alone in the morning. There are not designated questions with these, and they may not be discussed formally by the group, but our hope is that they will set your minds on things above and guide your thinking for the day. What you focus on in the morning will be the lens in which you see things throughout the day.

Capitalize on this time and make the most of it. When you create a space for God to transform your thinking, it can result in dramatic life change.

Life Stories are a staple of every WayForward trip. For most folks, this becomes their favorite part of the week. Throughout our time on the trail, we are going to carve out space to hear everyone's story and ask them questions. We have a deep desire to be known. It is core to who we are. Please refer to the longer description in the back of the book

for a better understanding of why this is an integral part of the week and how you can process through your story in preparation for your time to share.

Understanding the Bible

Whether this week is the first time for you to read your Bible, or this is something you do every day, we hope your time on the trail is filled with fruitful times of reading and talking about the scriptures. While we don't expect everyone's view of the Bible to be the same, we will use it as a guide to discussing a Life of Meaning. Our hope is to pull out the timeless truths that God communicates in the Bible and apply them in our life today. This can be effectively done when we follow this simple plan.

First, slowly read through the passage of scripture several times. Reading it out loud might also be helpful.

Then, work through the questions provided in this book and explore questions of your own. Breaking the questions down into these categories can be helpful to navigate the text. *You don't have to know the answer. Sometimes asking the right questions is half the battle.*

Observation: What do I see?

- ▶ These are simple questions which can be answered by looking at the passage.
- ▶ Answer—Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Interpretation: What do I think?

- ▶ These questions help us to understand what is meant by the verses in the passage by processing through the deeper meaning of the text.
- ▶ Why does it say that? What does it mean by that? If that is true, what does it mean about my view of God?

Application: How does this apply to me?

- ▶ Look inward, and think through how you can take the truths from the Bible and apply them to your life.



LESSON 1: LOOK UP

DISCOVER YOUR #1

“Everybody worships; it’s just a matter of what, or whom, we serve.”

-Paul David Tripp

WHAT DO YOU WORSHIP?

QUIET TIME: Who do you say that I am?

Reading: Matthew 16:13-19

- ▶ What question does Jesus ask His disciples?
- ▶ Why do you think He asks that?
- ▶ Who do you say that Jesus is?
- ▶ Who does your life say that Jesus is?

EXERCISE: Determine the #1

“We are not primarily called to do something or go somewhere; we are called to *Someone*. We are not called first to special work but to God. The key to answering the call is to be devoted to no one and to nothing above God Himself.” -Os Guinness

As we set out on this great adventure of discovering a Life of Meaning, it is important that we step back and start with some foundational questions. Since the beginning of time, one of the most asked questions is ‘Why am I here?’ We’ve called this desire different names: purpose, God’s will, calling, but for the sake of simplicity, we’re going to refer to it as a Life of Meaning (LOM) in these lessons.

Thinking about a LOM can sometimes be a daunting task and often leaves us with more questions than answers. One of the problems is that we have associated calling with a career. While these sometimes line up, it is not always the case. Therefore, we must start any discussion about a LOM by first addressing two important topics; what we worship and how we view life.

First, Who or What is my #1? We were created to worship, this is fundamental to who we are and is wired into our DNA. “Human beings by their very nature are worshipers. Worship is not something we do; it defines who we are. You cannot divide human beings into those who worship and those who don’t. Everybody worships; it’s just a matter of what, or whom, we serve.” (Paul David Tripp) The foundational question we must ask is this: what am I worshipping? It

is out of this answer that we filter the rest of our decisions. If we are devoted to worshipping ourselves, then we need not look any further but to our own interests. But if God is our #1, then it is primarily to Him we must look to discover what we were created for, and that is where we discover our LOM. If we are ever going to discover a calling, we first have to identify the Caller. It is no coincidence that the first two of the Ten Commandments are about not having any other gods or idols. God is very concerned with being #1 and He knows that if that position is occupied by anything else, it prohibits us from finding true life. That's how He wired us. The calling to belong to Christ goes deeper than a workplace "calling". For this reason, it is important to start our exploration of calling with the call to follow Jesus. We are first called to follow Christ, which should affect our outlook on life. Then, we can be called to live out our giftedness and passions in specific contexts.

Take some time to think about your relationship with God. No matter where you stand on this topic, everyone has created some view of God has interaction with Him. In this process, we have created a vertical relationship with God that spills over into our horizontal relationships with others. The way we think about God affects how we see ourselves in this world, where we derive our identity, how we understand purpose and what our relationships with others looks like. If you find your horizontal relationships with others strained, it might be a result of an issue in your vertical relationship with God.

- ▶ Who or What is your #1?
- ▶ In the story of the ships that we discussed when you got to basecamp, the question they rarely ask is 'Why are we out here in the first place?' What about you? Why do you think you are here on Earth?
- ▶ What does it look like in your life to worship your #1?
- ▶ Is your current #1 what you want to be your #1?

Second, How do you view the world? This may seem like an intimidating question, but when we take a step back and look at our lives from a high level, we are often on one of two tracks and interpret life through these lenses.

Works Track:



Grace Track:



Cycle of Grace by Frank Lake in Clinical Theology. Adapted by WayForward Adventures.

1. Works Track: This lens develops out of the fact that we are immersed in a world where we are awarded for the things we "do." This is not introduced to us in our professional life, but rather is the way of thinking that was introduced to most of us at a young age. On this track, we start by working hard to achieve our goals with the hopes that these worldly successes will bring us significance. Out of that significance we believe will come our sustaining strength. Then, when we have worked hard enough on this track, we will reach the acceptance from God and others that we long for deep within. In this view, we *do* in order that we might *become*.

2. Grace Track: This lens starts with who we are...our being. We believe our being is given to us by God and it is not something we earn. You can exhale; the pressure is not on you to “be all that you can be.” On this track, the order is completely reversed. Here, we start with the idea of being accepted for who we are, not by any work of our own, but by God’s love. We believe our being is given to us by God and not something we earn. That gives us the sustaining strength to live and the feeling of significance. Out of the overflow of these is the desire for achievements, and our output is an overflow of what God has put into us.

How you view life must start somewhere. Does your track begin with works or grace? With you or God? How you view the world creates the story that shapes how you see yourself in the world. It also shapes the script that plays in your head. If you are working hard externally to produce a desired result internally and it is not going as planned, there is a huge amount of pressure put on your shoulders to work harder.

▶ What would it look like if you traded in *achievements* for *acceptance*?

“And Grace calls out, ‘You are not just a disillusioned old man who may die soon, a middle-aged woman stuck in a job and desperately wanting to get out, a young person feeling the fire in the belly begin to grow cold. You may be insecure, inadequate, mistaken or potbellied. Death, panic, depression, and disillusionment may be near you. But you are not just that. You are accepted.’ Never confuse your perception of yourself with the mystery that you really are accepted.” -Brennan Manning

- ▶ As you dig a little deeper and evaluate how you process life and your motivations, is there one of these two tracks that most resonates with you?
- ▶ Do you think it is important to think about how you process life? Why/why not?
- ▶ What do you hope to get out of this time on trail?



LESSON 2: LOOK IN

DISCOVER YOUR IDENTITY

“One reason we fail to flourish is because we allow the true meaning of the word to be hijacked by a shallow substitute.”

-Steven Graves

WHO AM I?

QUIET TIME: BE Transformed

Reading: Romans 12:1-8

- ▶ Who gave us our gifts?
- ▶ What does transformation look like? What are we being transformed from/to?
- ▶ What is God's role?
- ▶ What is ours?
- ▶ Why do you think He sets it up this way?

EXERCISE: Discover you...

“Be who you is, because if you ain't who you is, then you is who you ain't.” -Chuck Swindoll

When we discover who God has created us to be, it sets us up for a life of impact and meaning. A LOM is possible when our identity is found in who God says we are. Answering the question 'Who am I?' can be more complex than it appears. We are tempted to spout off all of the titles we possess or accolades and accomplishments from our hard work. When we try to answer the question of *who* we are with *what* we do, we are operating out of the Works Track which can lead to an identity crisis. This leaves our deep desire of being known and accepted at the mercy of others and the world. Should the unforeseen happen and we lose a spouse, or job, we could be left without an identity.

The Bible portrays our identity not as something we earn, but rather something we are given. The Bible says that, amongst many others, you are loved (1 John 4:19), chosen (John 15:16), a child of God (Romans 8:14), and free (John 8:36). Our identity doesn't change based on our circumstances, but rather our circumstances provide new platforms to live it out. What we do isn't who we are, but who we are magnifies what we do. This is the Grace Track we talked about in Lesson 1.

Looking at the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, Jesus explains that the talents each person is given are from God and are to be put to use. To each man that is obedient to using his talents, Jesus says “Well done, good and faithful servant!” The topic of success here is defined by Jesus as using what we have been given to its maximum potential. Success in God’s eyes is not the same as the American Dream. Becoming who we want to be is a very different target than becoming who God has created us to be.

“Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is an illusion.” -Brennan Manning

- ▶ Where have you historically looked for your identity?
- ▶ What are the talents you feel like God has given you?

Let’s take a deeper look at what God has given us. As we consider this idea of talents, this can be broken down into gifts and passions. When our identity is found in God, we share the common title: child of God. Everyone has also been given qualities, traits, skills and passions that make them unique. To continue discovering our LOM, we need to see ourselves as God does and evaluate the gifts and passions He has given us. While this lesson will not be an exhaustive exercise, we hope it will get us moving in the right direction.

Gifts: What am I particularly talented at?

It’s What Others Tell You That You Do Best

We are uniquely knit together by the God of the universe with different skills. We can easily point out what someone else is good at, but we must be able to humbly identify what we are good at too. For some, the practice of listening comes naturally for them, while others

are gifted with the skill of making difficult concepts understandable. Some can work with numbers, others with people. Some are natural leaders while others have beautifully creative minds. As you look within, unhindered by insecurities or shame, what gifts do you believe God has given you?

Passions: What do I feel deeply inspired by?

It’s the Thing That Gets You Up in the Morning

Certain causes bring us to life. When we hear stories, particular issues make us want to take action. These are passions for justice, mercy or generosity that God has wired in us. As John Eldredge asks, “what if those deep desires in our hearts are telling us the truth, revealing to us the life we were meant to live?” Jennie Allen helps us see more clearly that, “passions have become nearly synonymous with pleasures and what excites us in modern culture. But consider that passion was originally defined as the moment of the deepest willing suffering of Christ for our good. It lifts the word from human desires to a monumental love willing to suffer.” Our passions should align with God’s passions and be something for which we are willing to suffer.

- ▶ What gifts do you believe God gave you? How do you see them in action?
- ▶ What makes you come alive?
- ▶ What are your passions that align with God’s passions?
- ▶ How does Jennie Allen’s definition of passion change your view of the word?



LESSON 3: LOOK OUT DISCOVER GOD'S PLAN

“What the world
needs are people who
have come alive.”

-Howard Thurman

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

QUIET TIME: Unity and Purpose

Reading: Mark 12:28-34

- ▶ What question does the teacher ask Jesus?
- ▶ What do you think his motivations are in asking?
- ▶ How does Jesus answer?
- ▶ What does it mean to love God? Your neighbor?

EXERCISE: Discover God...

“Don't ask yourself what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive. What the world needs are people who have come alive.” -Howard Thurman

The next phase in discovering a LOM according to Scripture is finding the overlap in your gifts and passions to meet a need in the world. Remember, your identity is not found in what you can do, but who God has created you to be. Our purpose and meaning begins to really make sense when we search for the alignment in who we are and what God is about. Another way of thinking about it is this: our purpose for today is rooted in God's grand purpose for the world.

We long for purpose, which is why we try to attach it to any venture we pursue. We deeply fear not having purpose. This statement by Rick Warren couldn't be more true: “The greatest tragedy is not death, but life lived without purpose.” The Bible lays out our purpose in two categories: general and specific. Our general purpose is common to all people and is applicable in every situation. Our specific purpose is unique to each individual and can change over time. Let's look at our General Purpose, we'll discuss Specific Purposes in the next lesson.

You have thought about your gifts and your passions, now you get to point to the need in which those two can come together to make an impact. God wants to use you in two areas: 1) take the gospel to those who do not yet know Jesus and 2) to assist believers to grow in their faith. This is what Jesus meant when he told the teacher that the second greatest commandment was to “love others.” In fact, the

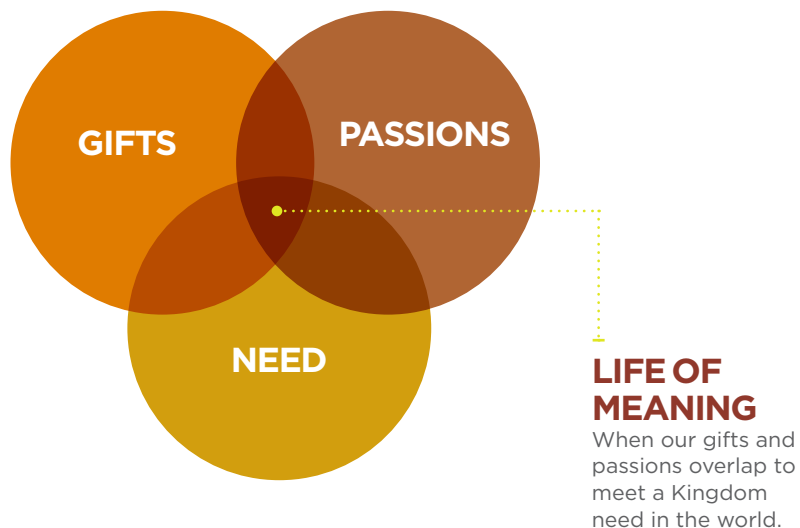
final instructions he gave the disciples before departing were the same. He told them to take the good news to everyone in Acts 1:8 and to make disciples in Matthew 28:19. It will look different for everyone, but the process of thinking through how your wiring can be used for God's purposes will land you on the doorstep of your LOM. We are not looking for a career change, but rather a perspective change. As your mind is transformed to think through the lens of God's General Purpose, you can discover meaning in even the smallest areas of life.

“God never intended for us to simply be the objects of His love. We are also called to be the instruments of that love in the lives of others.” -Paul David Tripp

God has chosen to include us in accomplishing His purposes in the world. Of all the ways He could show His love, goodness, and grace, He desires to use us. When we see the world as He does, we are able to truly live out this LOM through our God given gifts and passions. This is where great meaning is found.

Life of Meaning Framework

When our identity is firmly rooted in who God says we are, a thriving LOM exists when we spend more time in the overlapping areas of: passions, giftedness, and need in the world.



Need: With a Kingdom perspective, what are needs you see in the world?
Opportunities To Use Your Energy to Make an Impact.

There are 'needs' all around us. Everyone is in need of love and acceptance, people are in need of mentors, companies are in need of workers with integrity, orphans are in need of a home, kids are in need of education, our families are in need of biblical parents...and the list goes on. When you think about the things that God loves, which of them makes you come alive? The opportunity to act on our passions with our gifts must be in the realm of possibilities available to us. There are lots of needs in our everyday lives. While we will discuss finding your Specific Purpose in the next lesson, it is important that we first learn to be obedient to seeing and addressing the needs in our everyday life. Your LOM is found when these three areas overlap. This is a life that is thriving, not just surviving. It is a life that flourishes.

“One reason we fail to flourish is because we allow the true meaning of the word to be hijacked by a shallow substitute. We equate flourishing with selfish material acquisition: buying junk and thinking it will make us happy. We trade true wisdom for lax short-term thinking. And we allow immediate pleasures to rob us of deep, enduring love.”

-Steven Graves

When we become rooted in our General Purpose, we become united with every other Christian. It is what we can stack hands on and becomes our rally cry, it is the bond that ties us together deeper than nationality, politics, economic status or skin color. This creates the unity the Bible calls the body of Christ. We are intended to live out of one purpose (Philippians 2:2). When we approach life with this perspective, our appointments and daily interactions take on much more significance. It's a game changer. Life becomes much more rich when we see it as God has created it!

“If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” -C.S. Lewis

- ▶ What does God desire in the lives of all people?
- ▶ Where could your gifts and passions intersect with a need in your neighborhood? In your city? How could God use you in this place?

 LESSON 4

DISCOVER YOUR LIFE OF MEANING

“...All works are measured before God by faith alone.”

-Martin Luther

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

QUIET TIME: Shining Like Stars

Reading: Philippians 2:12-18

- ▶ What does working out salvation look like?
- ▶ Why do you think Paul chose this analogy?
- ▶ How can you shine for Christ in your daily context?

EXERCISE: Develop the Plan (Purpose & Rhythms)
“The mystery of human existence lies not just in staying alive, but in finding something to live for.” -Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The final part of the LOM framework involves synthesizing all you've discovered into a vision and a plan for your next season. The process of living a LOM is just that: a process. Wherever you were when you entered the week, our hope is that you have taken steps towards more discovery and have a vision for living it out back home. We take the new perspective we have gained and use it as the lens in which we see our work. By work, we do not mean simply a job that someone is paid to do. Work is the role one chooses to play in the social, communal or family unit. Works can be coaching a child's soccer team, being a stay at home mom or volunteering for the school board. Martin Luther wrote, “the works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they may be, do not differ in value in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks...all works are measured before God by faith alone.”

You have spent a few days thinking about your #1 and who you are. If you see life through the lens of the Grace Track, you begin with knowing that you are accepted for who you are. Now, we get to the fun part. Because our acceptance is not dependant on our works, our works get to be an overflow and a means to create impact in the world.

What you do is not who you are...but who you are magnifies what you do.

In Philippians 2:12, Paul says to work out our salvation. Does he mean we have to earn our salvation by works? By no means! Look again at verse 13. God works in us... our works don't earn us one bit of our salvation, but they are the overflow of that amazing gift. We get to live out the amazing truth of God's love and make a huge impact during our time on Earth. That's what God created us for! Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Just like a craftsman uses a tool specifically designed for its purpose, we too are created by the master craftsman for a purpose, with unique qualities that made us the right fit for a specific need.

As you are living out your General Purpose every day, God can also call us to a specific place, job, location, friend group, gym or cause. This does not replace our General Purpose, but focuses our time on a specific area. Think of being on a sports team. There are certain qualities you share with everyone on the team (end goal, practice times, mascot name, jerseys, etc), but there is a specific position you play on that team that magnifies your gifts for the purpose of achieving the end goal. God can lay a vision on our hearts for how our wiring can be used to make specific impact. Let's explore what that could look like.

Specific Purpose

Finding our Specific Purpose can be confusing and difficult at times. If you are looking for a burning bush or a blinding light, you might be waiting for a few thousand years. God can work like that, but it's not the way most people find their calling. Don't overthink your 'calling,' but lean in to these questions and be willing to say 'Yes' to a position or opportunity when it arises.

1. Are you WILLING?

When Jesus called his disciples to follow him, he did not tell them where they were going or how hard the road ahead would be; He simply told them to "follow me" (Mark 1:17). They left what they were doing and said 'Yes' to this adventure with their Master. God doesn't need our executive plans or refined skills as much as our willingness to follow.

As you process and pray about opportunities with your family and community, it can come down to trusting that God is at work and taking a step or staying put in faith. We should be faithful to where we are and have an attitude like Isaiah: "Here I am Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). When God does make a new path clear, we will have the courage to go.

▶ If Jesus were to give you a crystal clear, direct call, what would keep you from obeying on the spot?

As we evaluate this question, it can help us to uncover things in our lives that might have become an idol to us. If something causes you to hesitate in following Jesus, no matter how 'good' that thing might be, it will never be as good as a life of obedience to Christ.

2. Are you ABLE?

We have discussed our gifts and passions in the previous sections. God desires us to use our gifts (that He gave us) to accomplish His mission (1 Peter 4:10). Remember, this is not a prideful evaluation of how great you are, but an honest discovery of who you have been created to be. If you are willing to say yes, the next question you must evaluate is your ability in an area you feel called to or see an open door in.

▶ What are you uniquely gifted to do? (This is an ongoing discovery.) Does this line up with the direction of your calling?

God desires to use us in alignment with the way He designed us.

3. Is there an OPPORTUNITY?

The final question we should evaluate revolves around the opportunity. As God nudges us to take steps of faith in a specific area, we have to trust that he will also move in others to create an open door to continue our process. This can look like a job offer, invitation to be part of a committee, request to speak to a group, provide resources for a cause and many others. It can also simply be an unshakable passion for the neighbors on your street or the kids on the other side of town that don't have the means to hear the gospel. There is not a 'one size fits all' approach to this, but we need to have our eyes open to see Kingdom Needs and our heart attuned to the passions we get most excited about.

This involves listening to the Holy Spirit and staying in step with the things that God is up to (John 15:13, Hebrews 11:1).

▶ Is there an opportunity or nudging from the Holy Spirit to step out in faith?

The process of finding God's Specific Purpose for your life is one of discovery, steps of faith and evaluation in community. We use our head to discover our own gifts and learn what God is about. Our heart helps us discover the deep-seated passions God wired into our being that bear His image. Our feet are used to discover the path we should go down, walking in steps of faith. When all of this is done in a community of like-minded believers, we have a great opportunity to discover our LOM and live out a great adventure. This is the "life to the full" Jesus refers to in John 10:10.

Ultimately, God will accomplish His purpose in the world, but He invites His people to do it with Him. Wherever you are in life, God is calling you to take part in His work of redemption.

“Embedded in the larger story of redemption is a principle we must not miss: God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the lives of others.”

- Paul David Tripp

Rhythms

If you have experienced depth this week in your personal discovery, community or relationship with God, it would be good to reflect on how that happened before heading home. God's work is not as predictable as your grandma's famous pie recipe, but He does tell us the ingredients of faithfully walking with Him that promote spiritual growth. These are often referred to as spiritual disciplines and you have done many of them this week.

“While we cannot transform ourselves into the image of Christ, we can create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place.” -Ruth Haley Barton

- ▶ What practices helped you feel close to the Lord this week?
 - ▶ What practices helped you grow personally this week?
 - ▶ What practices helped you grow in deeper relationship with community this week?
 - ▶ How could you incorporate these practices into your daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms back home?
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DEVOTION 1

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“Living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led. But it does mean loving and knowing the One who is leading.”

He went out, not knowing where he was going.

—Hebrews 11:8

In the Old Testament, a person's relationship with God was seen by the degree of separation in that person's life. This separation is exhibited in the life of Abraham by his separation from his country and his family. When we think of separation today, we do not mean to be literally separated from those family members who do not have a personal relationship with God, but to be separated mentally and morally from their viewpoints. This is what Jesus Christ was referring to in Luke 14:26.

Living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led. But it does mean loving and knowing the One who is leading. It is literally a life of faith, not of understanding and reason— a life of knowing Him who calls us to go. Faith is rooted in the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest traps we fall into is the belief that if we have faith, God will surely lead us to success in the world.

The final stage in the life of faith is the attainment of character, and we encounter many changes in the process. We feel the presence of God around us when we pray, yet we are only momentarily changed. We tend to keep going back to our everyday ways and the glory vanishes. A life of faith is not a life of one glorious mountaintop experience after another, like soaring on eagles' wings, but is a life of day-in and day-out consistency; a life of walking without fainting (see Isaiah 40:31). It is not even a question of the holiness of sanctification, but of something which comes much farther down the road. It is a faith that has been tried and proved and has withstood the test. Abraham is not a type or an example of the holiness of sanctification, but a type of the life of faith— a faith, tested and true, built on the true God. “Abraham believed God...” (Romans 4:3).

- Oswald Chambers



DEVOTION 2

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“It is only through
abandonment of
yourself and your
circumstances that
you will recognize Him.”

...Peter...walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid... —Matthew 14:29-30

The wind really was boisterous and the waves really were high, but Peter didn't see them at first. He didn't consider them at all; he simply recognized his Lord, stepped out in recognition of Him, and “walked on the water.” Then he began to take those things around him into account, and instantly, down he went. Why couldn't our Lord have enabled him to walk at the bottom of the waves, as well as on top of them? He could have, yet neither could be done without Peter's continuing recognition of the Lord Jesus.

We step right out with recognition of God in some things, then self-consideration enters our lives and down we go. If you are truly recognizing your Lord, you have no business being concerned about how and where He engineers your circumstances. The things surrounding you are real, but when you look at them you are immediately overwhelmed, and even unable to recognize Jesus. Then comes His rebuke, “...why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31). Let your actual circumstances be what they may, but keep recognizing Jesus, maintaining complete reliance upon Him.

If you debate for even one second when God has spoken, it is all over for you. Never start to say, “Well, I wonder if He really did speak to me?” Be reckless immediately— totally unrestrained and willing to risk everything— by casting your all upon Him. You do not know when His voice will come to you, but whenever the realization of God comes, even in the faintest way imaginable, be determined to recklessly abandon yourself, surrendering everything to Him. It is only through abandonment of yourself and your circumstances that you will recognize Him. You will only recognize His voice more clearly through recklessness— being willing to risk your all.

- Oswald Chambers



DEVOTION 3

“It is much better to fulfill the purpose of God in your life by discerning His will.”

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. —John 13:17

Be determined to know more than others. If you yourself do not cut the lines that tie you to the dock, God will have to use a storm to sever them and to send you out to sea. Put everything in your life afloat upon God, going out to sea on the great swelling tide of His purpose, and your eyes will be opened. If you believe in Jesus, you are not to spend all your time in the calm waters just inside the harbor, full of joy, but always tied to the dock. You have to get out past the harbor into the great depths of God, and begin to know things for yourself—begin to have spiritual discernment.

When you know that you should do something and you do it, immediately you know more. Examine where you have become sluggish, where you began losing interest spiritually, and you will find that it goes back to a point where you did not do something you knew you should do. You did not do it because there seemed to be no immediate call to do it. But now you have no insight or discernment, and at a time of crisis you are spiritually distracted instead of spiritually self-controlled. It is a dangerous thing to refuse to continue learning and knowing more.

The counterfeit of obedience is a state of mind in which you create your own opportunities to sacrifice yourself, and your zeal and enthusiasm are mistaken for discernment. It is easier to sacrifice yourself than to fulfill your spiritual destiny, which is stated in Romans 12:1-2. It is much better to fulfill the purpose of God in your life by discerning His will than it is to perform great acts of self-sacrifice. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...” (1 Samuel 15:22). Beware of paying attention or going back to what you once were, when God wants you to be something that you have never been. “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know...” (John 7:17).

- Oswald Chambers



DEVOTION 4

...Jesus took...them up on a high mountain apart by themselves. —Mark 9:2

We have all experienced times of exaltation on the mountain, when we have seen things from God's perspective and have wanted to stay there. But God will never allow us to stay there. The true test of our spiritual life is in exhibiting the power to descend from the mountain. If we only have the power to go up, something is wrong. It is a wonderful thing to be on the mountain with God, but a person only gets there so that he may later go down and lift up the demon-possessed people in the valley (see Mark 9:14-18). We are not made for the mountains, for sunrises, or for the other beautiful attractions in life— those are simply intended to be moments of inspiration. We are made for the valley and the ordinary things of life, and that is where we have to prove our stamina and strength. Yet our spiritual selfishness always wants repeated moments on the mountain. We feel that we could talk and live like perfect angels, if we could only stay on the mountaintop. Those times of exaltation are exceptional and they have their meaning in our life with God, but we must beware to prevent our spiritual selfishness from wanting to make them the only time.

We are inclined to think that everything that happens is to be turned into useful teaching. In actual fact, it is to be turned into something even better than teaching, namely, character. The mountaintop is not meant to teach us anything, it is meant to make us something. There is a terrible trap in always asking, "What's the use of this experience?" We can never measure spiritual matters in that way. The moments on the mountaintop are rare moments, and they are meant for something in God's purpose.

-Oswald Chambers

"The mountaintop is not meant to teach us anything, it is meant to make us something."



LIFE STORY OVERVIEW

“I began to wonder what life would be like if I dropped the act and began to trust that being myself would be enough to get the love I needed.”

-Donald Miller

“My first big breakthrough came when Bill and I were having lunch in the mansion. I was making jokes and he asked if I knew where my entertainer gene came from. I couldn’t believe he pegged me that quickly. I told him I didn’t know, that I’d always felt a need to be smart or funny. He pulled a napkin from the table and drew a small circle on it. Inside the circle he wrote the word self and explained everybody is born a self. He said I was born this way and so was everybody else, a completely healthy and happy little self. And then, he said, something happened in my life that changed everything.

He drew a larger circle around the small circle, making something like a target. Inside the second circle he wrote the word shame. Bill said at some point I realized, whether true or not, there was something wrong with me. Either I didn’t measure up to the standards of my parents, the kids at school made fun of me, or I came to believe I was inferior. Shame, he said, caused me to hide. “And that,” he said, “is a problem. Because the more we hide, the harder it is to be known. And we have to be known to connect.”

Then he drew another circle around the second one and said this outer circle was the false self we create to cover our shame. He said it was in this circle where we likely developed what we think of as our personality, or the “character” we learned to play in the theater of life. Bill said some of us learn we only matter if we are attractive or powerful or skilled in some way, but each of us likely has an ace card we believe will make us lovable.”

-Donald Miller, *Scary Close*

One of the heartbeats of every WayForward trip is the time we get to spend telling life stories. Throughout our time on the trail, we are going to carve out space where we can get to hear everyone’s story and ask them questions. We have a deep desire to be known. know. It is core to who we are. But, ever since the apple in Genesis 3, we have spent



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