

FORTIFIED *FORTIFIED* *FORTIFIED* *FORTIFIED* *FORTIFIED*

**BUILDING YOUR LIFE IN THE
STRONGHOLD OF THE LORD**

An 8-Week Journey Through the Life of David

JEFF JENKINS



Fortified: Building Your Life in the Stronghold of the Lord

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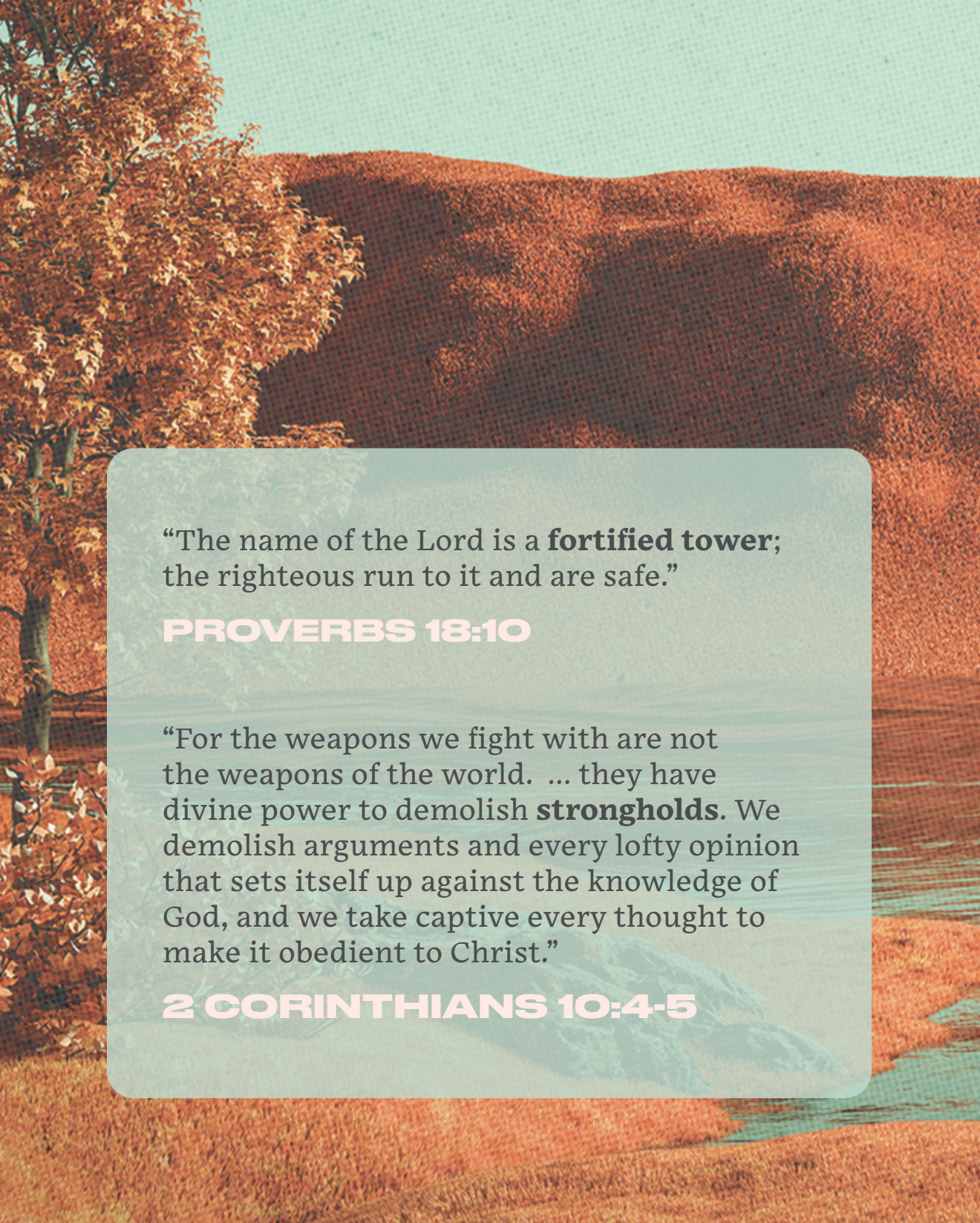
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“The name of the Lord is a **fortified tower**;
the righteous run to it and are safe.”

PROVERBS 18:10

“For the weapons we fight with are not
the weapons of the world. ... they have
divine power to demolish **strongholds**. We
demolish arguments and every lofty opinion
that sets itself up against the knowledge of
God, and we take captive every thought to
make it obedient to Christ.”

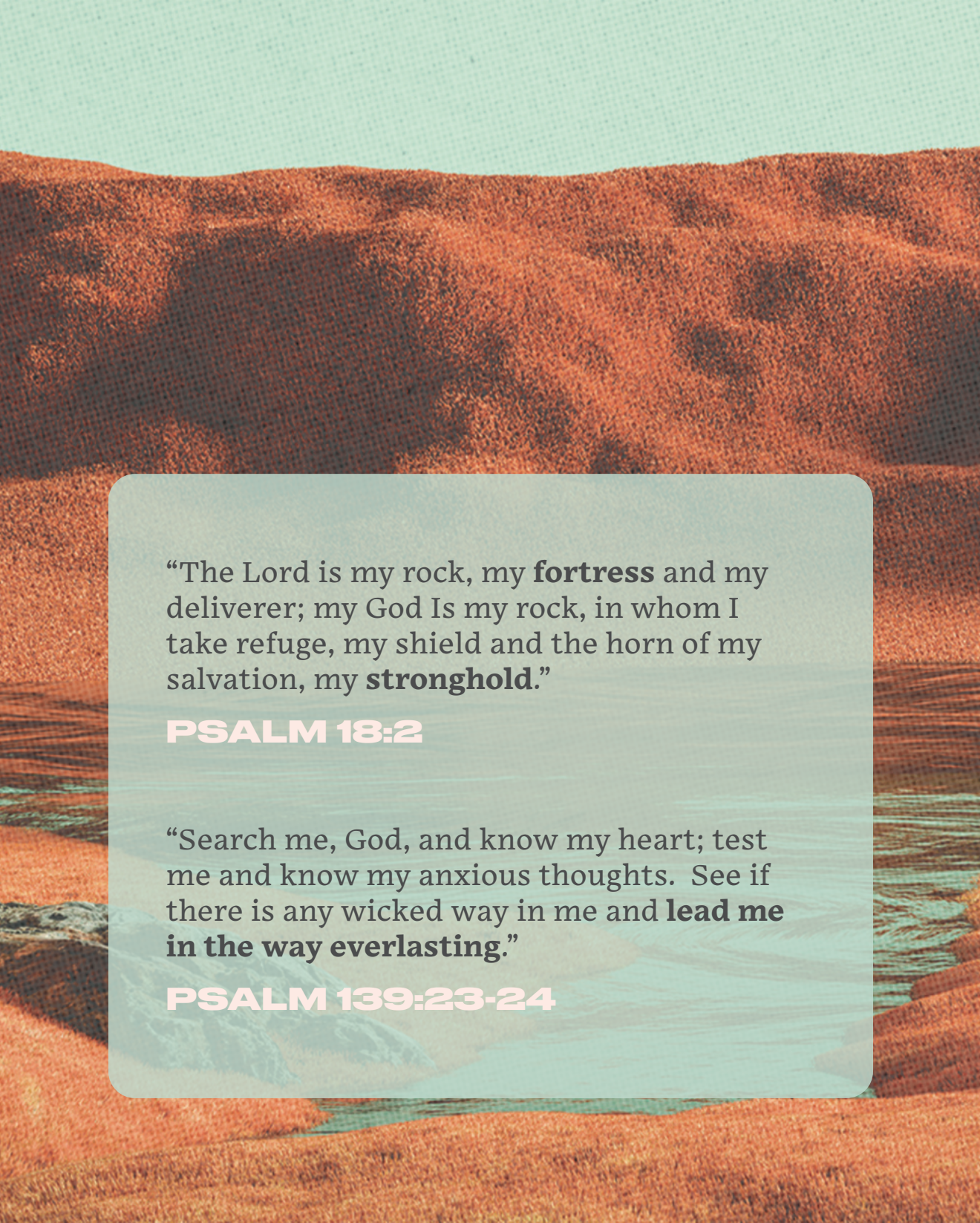
2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5

FORTIFIED

**BUILDING YOUR LIFE IN THE
STRONGHOLD OF THE LORD**

Your Name _____

Start Date _____



“The Lord is my rock, my **fortress** and my deliverer; my God Is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my **stronghold**.”

PSALM 18:2

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and **lead me in the way everlasting**.”

PSALM 139:23-24

Introduction

FORTIFIED

A stronghold is a **well-fortified** place. In the spiritual life, it is the presence of God. In a practical sense, it's a deeply rooted and relationship-centered belief system that fortifies you, resources you and protects you. Scripture talks about two kinds of strongholds:

The Lord as a Stronghold. Psalm 18:2 says, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." God Himself is the safe place we were designed to run to and live from as our source. It's His presence.

Enemy Strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 tells us we have divine power to demolish strongholds, to destroy arguments and every lofty opinion that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. These are the lies, the fears, the habits that have mastered us. This is the presence of lies and darkness.

Paul says in **2 Peter 2:19**, "People are slaves to whatever has mastered them."

A negative stronghold isn't just a bad habit. It's a fortress built within the parts of your inner being. It's made up of memories, messages, filters, beliefs and methods of comfort, and protective patterns that have been developed over years of pain and survival. If you have a desire to overcome the negative strongholds, there's great hope for you. You have the power of Christ to enter the deep work of building a whole new life **FORTIFIED** in the Lord. He is present right now to start leading you in the spiritual art of building your life in the Holy Spirit according to His Word and presence.

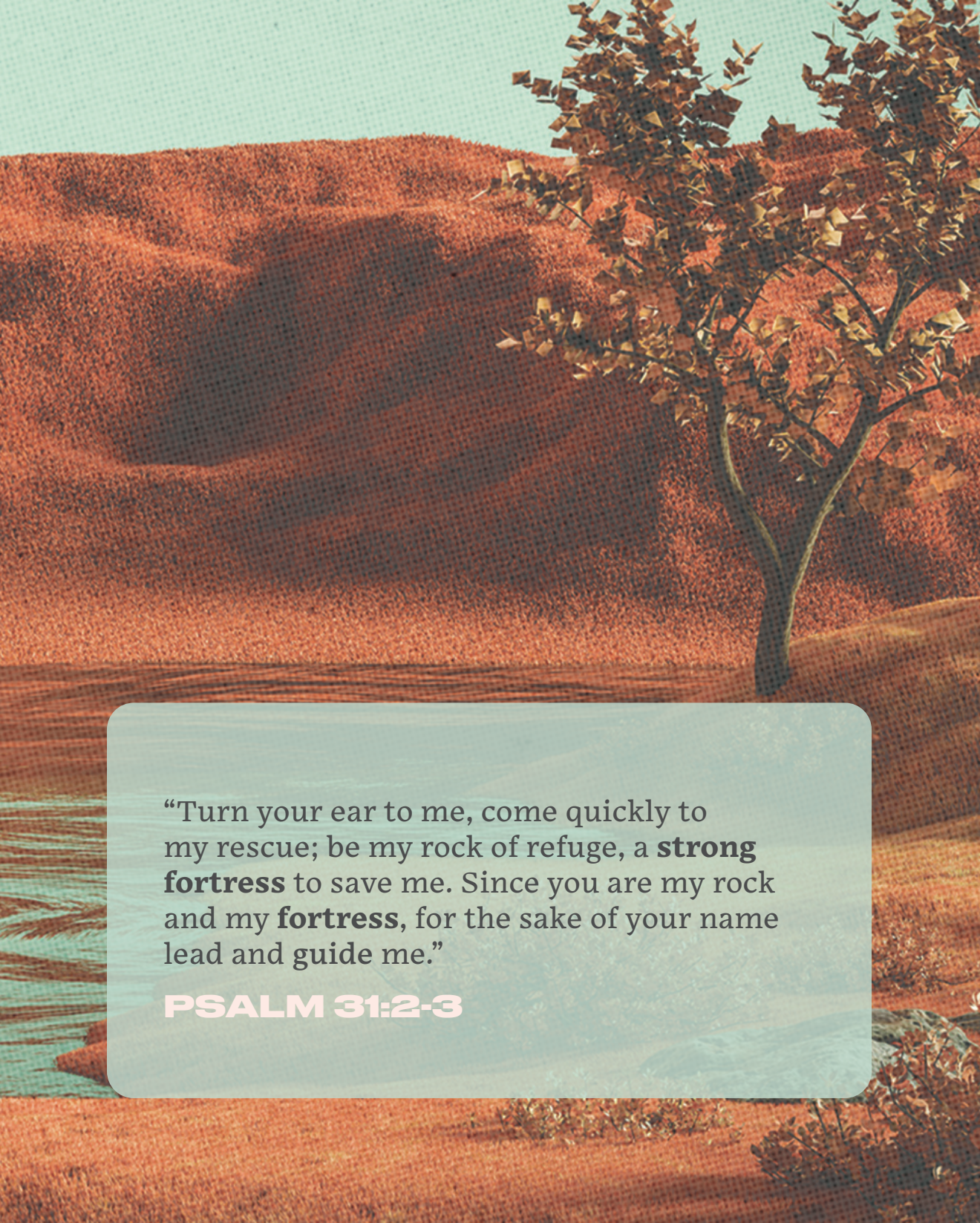
HOW THIS DEVOTION EXPERIENCE WORKS

We will study **THE EIGHT TYPES OF STRONGHOLDS** King David dealt with. We'll study how he ultimately **FORTIFIED** His life in the Lord despite costly failures, setbacks, and pain. As you read and work through this content, our goal is for every believer to fully engage in God's love and His Word and develop the daily disciplines to keep your heart journeying toward freedom in Christ. Some of you will experience deliverance from broken ways. Others of you will experience deeper formation in Christ.

WHY JOURNAL?

We believe it is MORE beneficial to actually write out your prayers in addition to your worship, praise and personal cries of prayer to God. You need to go back through this at the end of the 21 Days of Prayer and note your personal development and deepen your reflection, meditation and personal prayers. Our prayer is that as you read your daily verses and engage in worship and prayer, you will be able to hear God and allow His voice to shape your will more closely to the One God you truly love.

Best Ahead!
Pastor Jeff



“Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a **strong fortress** to save me. Since you are my rock and my **fortress**, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.”

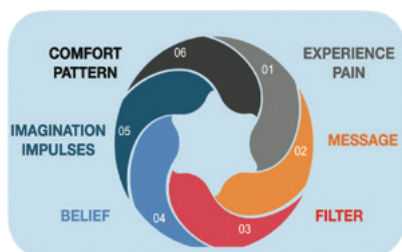
PSALM 31:2-3

THE TWO CYCLES

"Search me, 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." **Psalms 139:23-24.** This is the single greatest passage in all of Scripture for how to practice healthy fortifying work in the depths of your heart.

Every person on earth has deeply integrated broken ways of living, thinking and behaving. There are different levels of bondage and chaos, for sure; but, we all have broken ways in us. The following is one way of interpreting the reality of our lives and learning to live forward in greater degrees of wholeness by the Spirit of God.

THE BONDAGE STRONGHOLD CYCLE



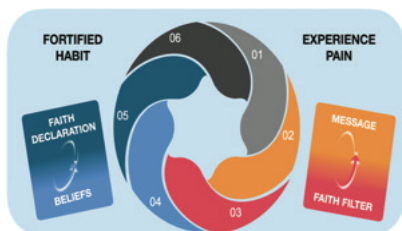
- 1. EXPERIENCE PAIN:** Rejection, betrayal, trauma, failure, loss.
- 2. MESSAGE:** "You're not safe," "You're not enough," "You can't trust anyone," "You have to take control."
- 3. FILTER:** Fear filters all messages with lies and hopelessness.
- 4. BELIEF:** The filter hardens into belief. Now you live as if the lie is true.
- 5. IMAGINATION & IMPULSES:** Imagination and impulses rise up to trigger protective and comforting defaults.
- 6. COMFORT PATTERN:** Life-long defaults set to manage image and comfort pain.

And then the cycle repeats.

The comfort patterns may produce temporary good feelings, but they are loaded with shame and powerlessness. The pain resurfaces eventually. The messages get louder. The beliefs get stronger. The impulses get harder to resist.

This is bondage. This is what Jesus came to save you from and empower you through.

THE FREEDOM STRONGHOLD CYCLE



- 1. EXPERIENCE PAIN:** Rejection, distance, betrayal, trauma, failure, loss.
- 2. MESSAGE:** "You're not safe," "You're not enough," "Fix this."
- 3. FAITH FILTER:** "Lord, search this with me. Show me what is here."
- 4. BELIEF:** Practice Psalm 139:23-24 with God establishing truth in your inner parts.
- 5. FAITH DECLARATION:** Declare to your own soul the truth of God's wisdom, promises, and way of life. Secure, calm and whole.
- 6. FORTIFIED HABIT:** Nothing on earth is like The Name of the Lord and fortifying your whole heart in His truth and presence.

And the cycle repeats.

But this time, it leads to strength, wholeness, maturity, and freedom.

This is what it means to make the Lord your stronghold.

The System of the Heart

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SPIRIT-LED FORMATION

For generations the Christ-followers have tried to make spiritual transformation simple: *find the lie, replace the lie, walk in truth*. But transformation is rarely that tidy. You know it and so do I.

I've experienced deep disappointment from failed attempts at transformation. There were years in my adult life where I tried every single "technique" the church offered. I eventually discovered that there is no one-size-fits all technique of transformation. There's no magical deliverance that changes everything. There's no "moment" when a lie or a spirit is gone and the fight is over.

There is also no single work that you can "do" to tear down a stronghold and be just like Jesus forever. Sorry, but that's the truth.

The human heart is not a single room with a single switch. It is a very complicated and sometimes even fragmented system. It's loaded with all kinds of deception, chemicals, imaginations, desires, weaknesses, voices, triggers, impulses, memories, patterns, defenses, secrets, filters and much more. These all operate around what Scripture calls the *inner man* or *the heart*.

The Bible gives us language for this complexity. It's not clinical language and it's not found in most psychology, philosophy or self-help resources. It's actually a spiritual anatomy. David prayed:

"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." —**Psalms 139:23-24**

David assumes what most of us intuitively know: what troubles us is not *one* thought; it is an entire system of "me" or "self" and it has deeply carried systems of anxious thoughts, hidden motivations, protective patterns, and long-standing internal reactions.

The Psalms are a goldmine of stronghold work. David has personal disciplines and belief systems that enter the Stronghold of the Lord with deep expectations for God to reveal not merely one lie, but *any way* or any internal pathway that is shaping his life in a direction other than God's.

Paul echoes this dynamic when he teaches how strongholds are torn down:
"We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." —**2 Corinthians 10:5**

A stronghold, in Paul's language, is not simply a lie to be corrected; it is a whole structure of thoughts, imaginations, fears, interpretations, and internal reactions that set themselves up against the knowledge of God. Where David uses the word "way," Paul uses the word "stronghold." They are talking about the same thing: internal systems that shape external lives.

In Scripture, the heart is not flat. It has depth. It has layers. It has patterns. It has places we avoid and places we overwork. It has instincts that protect us and impulses that comfort us. It carries wounds from the past and expectations for the future. It stores memories, fears, habits, and hopes. And all

of these internal movements operate around what the Bible calls the *inner man*, the *spirit*, or what we will simply call the Self. This is your “new creation”. This is the Image of God in you. This is the redeemed core within you, made new by the Spirit of God, capable of being led, healed, strengthened, and established in truth.

When we talk about the “system of the heart,” we are naming what Scripture already reveals: Your life is shaped by more than a lie; it is shaped by the way your inner world has learned to operate. And God wants to meet you there. God doesn’t just want to correct your thoughts, He’s working in you to reorganize the whole system around His truth, His presence, and His way everlasting.

THE SELF: THE CENTER GOD LEADS

The New Testament describes the believer as a new creation with a renewed inner self. Your life is now capable of being strengthened by the Spirit, rooted in Christ, and led into transformation. This is the place in you that wants God, that trusts God, that responds to God, and that knows His voice.

GET THIS: Your spirit is *redeemed*. It is the part of you capable of receiving truth rather than being overwhelmed by patterns of fear or control. Spiritual growth happens when your spirit-nature becomes strong enough, calm enough, humble enough, and surrendered enough to lead the whole inner system under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 139 is essentially David saying: “*God, help my true self see what my inner world is hiding.*”

2 Corinthians 10 is Paul saying: “*Bring every internal movement under Christ’s leadership.*” Together they form a map for spiritual maturity.

THE HEART AS A SYSTEM, NOT A SINGLE ISSUE

A stronghold is not merely:

- a root lie
- a wrong thought
- a root spirit
- a sinful impulse

A stronghold is a whole internal system that forms around fear, wounding, self-protection, or self-comfort.

Overreacting isn’t one lie. It’s a system.

There may be:

- fear of rejection
- protective instincts
- old wounds
- pressure to perform
- hidden shame
- internal rules you’ve lived
- assumptions about others

All of that works together.

Shutting down emotionally isn’t one belief. It’s a system.

It might include:

- past hurt
- pressure to appear strong
- learned survival patterns
- the belief that emotions equal weakness
- fear of being disappointed

People-pleasing isn't one deception. It's a system.

It may include:

- fear of abandonment
- desire for approval
- about love and acceptance
- avoidance of conflict
- childhood stories

Addictive comfort isn't one temptation. It's a system.

It may include:

- overwhelm
- anxiety
- unresolved memories
- the need for escape
- the desire to numb pain

David calls these internal patterns “ways”—pathways worn into the heart. Paul calls them “strongholds”—structures built out of thoughts, emotions, imaginations, and reactions.

Here's my point: everything changes when you shift from thinking you're just fighting a lie; and you start the patient long-haul lifestyle of discipline in knowing God and His Spirit working in you to lead an entire inner system of being, knowing and living.

This is **FORTIFIED**. It's a lifestyle of rooting your whole life in the Spirit of God.

HOW THIS STUDY WORKS WITH THE HEART'S SYSTEM

Every topic in this guide touches an inner system, not a single idea. When you pray, reflect, and work through these chapters, you are essentially saying:

“Lord, search me. Show me the internal pathways that are shaping my life. Reveal the systems that are pulling me toward brokenness. Lead me—lead my whole inner world—in the way everlasting.”

Here's how each topic reflects a system rather than a single lie:

- **Fear** is a system of imagined futures, learned survival patterns, and internal alarms.
- **Shame** is a system of old messages, identity wounds, and hidden burdens.
- **Control** is a system of self-protection, mistrust, and internal vows.
- **Comparison** is a system of insecurity, longing, and distorted identity.
- **Anger** is a system of blocked needs, perceived threats, and unresolved pain.
- **Anxiety** is a system of internal scanning, catastrophic thinking, and emotional overwhelm.
- **People-pleasing** is a system of relational fears, approval needs, and old narratives.
- **Self-reliance** is a system of independence, pressure, and avoidance of vulnerability.

You will replace lies with truth, but this is more than just “lie replacement.” You will rebuke the enemy, but it's much more than that. You will declare truth out loud and say prayers that feel like mere talk into the atmosphere, but it's much more than talk.

You will experience the beginning joy of an inner reorganization of your whole story and being. You will experience systems of God's ways forming inside you, where the Spirit of God strengthens your Self (or your spirit). You'll see some simple revelation of similarities between your inner life and David's inner life.

You'll see what he prayed about and how he journeyed through the deep internal ways of God. You'll experience the leading of the Lord working in your whole being—into the way of God, everlasting.

The Life of David:

CONTEXT GUIDE

David's life is the story of a **well-fortified** man who learned to make God his stronghold. He wasn't perfect. He failed spectacularly. But he knew where to run when the walls came down.

TIMELINE OF DAVID'S LIFE

BETHLEHEM (1 Samuel 16) David is the youngest son, overlooked and underestimated. God chooses him anyway. Anointed in secret. Sent back to the sheep.

THE VALLEY OF ELAH (1 Samuel 17) David faces Goliath. He steps into a battle no one else would fight and wins in the Name of the Lord.

SAUL'S COURT (1 Samuel 18–20) David serves faithfully, but jealousy and paranoia turn Saul into an enemy. David runs for his life.

ADULLAM AND THE WILDERNESS (1 Samuel 22–26) David hides in caves. The rejected, the desperate, and the broken gather to him. God forms him in the wilderness.

ZIKLAG (1 Samuel 27–30) David loses everything in a raid. His men almost stone him. He strengthens himself in the Lord and recovers all.

HEBRON (2 Samuel 1–5) David becomes king over Judah, then over all Israel. He brings the Ark to Jerusalem with wild, unashamed worship.

JERUSALEM (2 Samuel 6–10) The golden years. Victory, blessing, rest. David wants to build God a house. God promises to build David a dynasty.

THE FALL (2 Samuel 11–12) David commits adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrates the murder of her husband. Nathan confronts him. David repents. Psalm 51 is born.

ABSOLOM'S REBELLION (2 Samuel 13–19) David's family unravels. His son Absalom rebels. David flees Jerusalem, broken and weeping.

THE FINAL SONGS (2 Samuel 22–23; Psalm 18) David reflects on a lifetime of God's faithfulness. He doesn't hide his failures. He magnifies God's rescue.

LEGACY (1 Kings 1–2; 1 Chronicles 29) David passes the throne to Solomon and dies. His final words are about the covenant, the kingdom, and the coming King.

KEY TERMS

STRONGHOLD: A FORTIFIED place; in the inner-being of a person. This is a deeply rooted, highly sensitive, well-established system of feeling, thinking, responding, acting or reacting that either serves to advance what is good and healthy for a person or what imprisons and hinders a person from being who they were created and redeemed to be.

AN ATTACK: A sudden or gradual pestering of distractions, thoughts, feelings, emotions or life experiences that cause you to lose hope, fear, panic, or drift from security and experience pain in some way. Physical pain hurts our body. Emotional pain hurts feelings. Mental pain hurts thinking. Volitional pain hurts decision making. Spiritual pain hurts praise and worship.

NAME OF THE LORD: The attributes of Yahweh and the essence of His presence & authority.

FILTER: The lens through which we discern wisdom, knowledge, understanding and the experiences we have. A Filter is a mode of processing and interpreting thoughts, emotions, feelings, and the experiences of life. A filter is shaped by either false information or truth.

BELIEF: A deeply held conviction we live by and not necessarily what we say with our mouth. There are parts of our inner being that hold opposing beliefs at times. This causes instability in the soul. When our Spirit/True Self is leading us by the truth of God, then our beliefs will have incredible power over all other modes or forms of information, ideas or experiences.

COMFORT: Anything we turn to for relief. Unhealthy comfort numbs our long-term pain. Healthy comfort builds long-term stability, peace, wholeness and satisfaction Christ.

INIQUITY: A broken default in a person's inner being. This is a word for an inner-bend toward sin. It can even be a generational or habitual pattern that we have picked up genetically, or in our experience with others in our upbringing. Iniquity is the tendency to wander from truth.

DELIVERANCE: Every broken way is ultimately from the Father of Lies, Satan. He is who originally distorts truth through the waves of our own desires and life experiences. The messages are laced with power to hold our sense of knowing and being captive. The truth of Christ sets us free from the bondage of lies. The process of getting free is called "Deliverance". Deliverance is freedom FROM darkness and INTO truth and life in Jesus Christ.

PRESENCE: The nearness of God; the foundation of all spiritual warfare and formation.

REPENTANCE: A turning away from sin and toward God; leaving the old, embracing the new.

REFUGE: A safe place; God Himself is the only true refuge.

AUTHORITY: The delegated power of Jesus; we fight and live in His Name.

WORSHIP: Exalting God above all else; a weapon of war and a posture of surrender.

IDENTITY: Where you fortify in who God says you are; chosen, loved, equipped, victorious.

LEGACY: What you pass on; the fruit of a life fortified in God's stronghold.

HOW TO S.O.A.P

*You'll need three items (Bible, Pen & Journal)
to S.O.A.P. each day!*

S — SCRIPTURE

The number one and most certain way to fortify your life is by God's voice through His written Word, The Bible. Open your Bible to your reading for the day. Take time reading each verse and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O — OBSERVATION

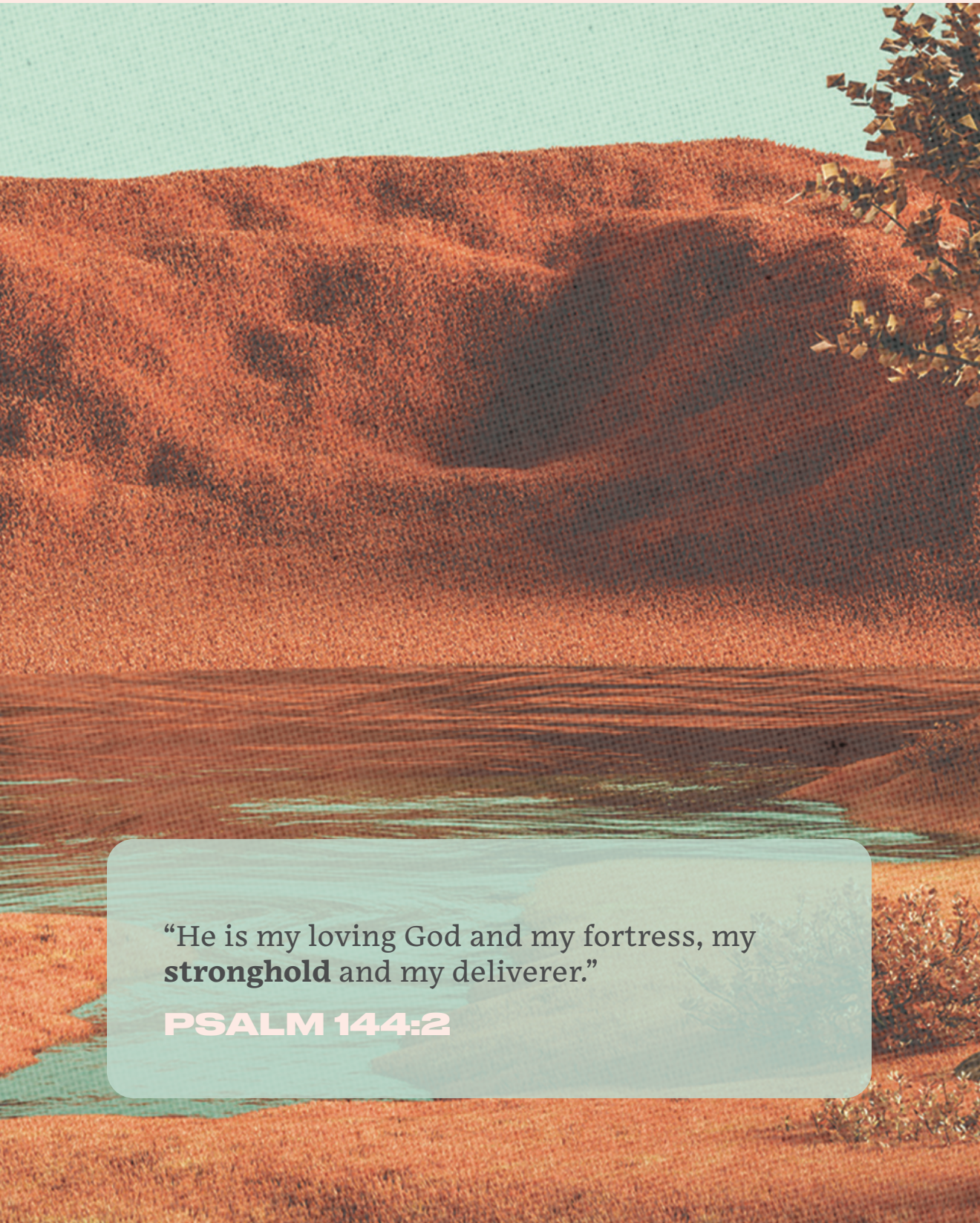
"SEARCH ME, OH GOD...". This is bringing the Lord into the core of your being and being led by his light. Pay attention to the words, pictures, memories, ideas, or impressions you had when reading. Write down what you sense. These are all things to observe to help you discover what God may be working to fortify in you through this scripture. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

A — APPLICATION

Allow the truth of God's word speak to the parts of you that may be carrying a burden, are afraid, hurting, feeling shame, isolation, pain or any burden. Apply what you have heard or read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, direction, a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

P — PRAYER

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or even a prayer for a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.



“He is my loving God and my fortress, my
stronghold and my deliverer.”

PSALM 144:2

WEEK ONE

OVERCOMING REJECTION

Love is man's greatest need. Rejection is man's greatest fear. Nothing shapes our sense of security like acceptance. Sensing rejection from parents, guardians, siblings, friends and even self, especially early in life, hides in memories and small moments. It whispers lies about our worth and our place in family, social structures and even the world itself.

David knew this pain well. His story helps us see that rejection does not have to define us. God heals the places where we feel unseen and sets us in the identity He always intended for us.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

PSALM 27:10

I SAMUEL 16:7

EPHESIANS 1:6

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

DAY ONE

THE PAIN OF BEING OVERLOOKED

MAIN FOCUS: **GOD SEES YOU WHEN OTHERS DO NOT.**

Rejection leaves marks on your memories and distorts reality. It has no power to restrict the way you operate in the call of God on your life. David was passed over by people but chosen by God. The same God sees you with perfect clarity when you feel passed over by people you want affirmation from.

KEY VERSES: *"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* **I Samuel 16:7**

"The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."
Psalms 9:9

CONSIDER:

Maybe you're like me . . . in the fact that I've developed a mindset to keep going no matter what my whole life. Without even meeting you, I know you're capable of zooming out and keeping on going. If you experience loss, neglect or rejection, it always hurts but it hasn't stopped you. After all, you're here aren't you? Reading—pressing in—still running your race. This persistence is deeper than will power or a human survival skill. It's truly like a resilience from the Lord to keep moving forward and those moves forward are always paying off.

Just because you're still going doesn't mean that you're becoming more whole and healthier as you get older. Growing old is not the same as growing up.

David was the youngest son in a large family. When Samuel came to anoint the next king, his father did not even call him in from the field. That is a deep kind of ongoing pain. I'm certain this wasn't the first time either. You can feel the surprise in the story. You can almost feel the sting of being left out of something that mattered.

Yet this is the moment where the Lord speaks a deeper truth. His family saw the surface of David's story. God knew David at the heart. God also sees something in you that no one else can see. That is where healing begins. Not with people changing their opinion of you, but with God revealing His vision for you and plans for you.

PRAYER:

Father, I know You see me and You love me. I'm not the total of my successes, strengths or failures. I am Your beloved and I know You know me. Today, I bring every hidden feeling of rejection to You. Heal the memories that shaped my view of myself.

DECLARE:

I AM SEEN, KNOWN AND ACCEPTED BY GOD.

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

THE LIES REJECTION TEACHES

MAIN FOCUS: **REJECTION TRAINS US TO EXPECT LESS THAN WHAT GOD IS GIVING.**
Sadly, the most painful rejection you feel in life is self-rejection. Others can only reject you based on the image you present to them. However, when you reject yourself, it's based on things you know factually to be true about you. If you want to move beyond this, you'll have to get power through the Holy Spirit to see you as God sees you . . . and love yourself the way God loves you.

KEY VERSE: *"In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame nor let my enemies triumph over me.
No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame..."*
Psalms 25:1-3

CONSIDER: By the time I was eleven years old, I already had a massive fortress of well-fortified lies built up in my little mind about what a man is, what power is, what reality is and what belonging is. My experiences in life up to that point were so multifaceted and complex. Long before I had the ability to take a thought or experience captive . . . I was building unhealthy survival and acceptance skills. The older I got, the more developed they became.

David carried some of these patterns too. Even after he killed Goliath, even after God used him in powerful ways, he spent years wondering if Saul would destroy him. He knew he was called, yet he hid in caves for long stretches of time. Trauma does that. Early wounds try to interpret present circumstances.

But every time David turned his attention back to the Lord, something shifted inside him. Trust grew again. The Psalms remind us that David talked to God about his fears. He did not hide them. He brought them into the light. That is what unlearning lies looks like. You talk to the Father who tells you the truth about who you are.

Quite often . . . especially over the past few years, I talk to the Lord about my whole life. As our children are getting older, I'm learning even more in the presence of the Lord. He's still fortifying my heart and He's still replacing decades-old broken ways with abundant life. Life keeps on flourishing every day.

PRAYER: Lord, You always expose the truth to me. Show me where fear has shaped my expectations. Teach me to trust You today. Let Your love steady my heart. Your way is always truth and life.

DECLARE: **FEAR WILL NOT SET MY EXPECTATIONS.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY THREE

WHEN REJECTION BECOMES COMPARISON

MAIN FOCUS: **COMPARISON IS THE FRUIT OF REJECTION,
STAND IN YOUR TRUE IDENTITY**

Comparison grows from the wounds of being overlooked. David faced this pressure constantly. God invites us to lay down the need to measure ourselves against others.

KEY VERSE: *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Your works are wonderful. I know that full well."*
Psalm 139:14

CONSIDER: Comparison feeds rejection. Think of these as two pedals on the same bicycle. Press one and the other one starts. It sounds like this, "Wow, how'd they get that? What do they have that I don't have? I must be missing something? Something is wrong with me? . . ." Before you know it you can't even tell what's comparison and what's rejection.

Just because someone else is winning doesn't mean you're losing. Just because someone else is chosen doesn't mean you're rejected. These are very childish ways of interpreting reality.

David eventually learned to bring his identity back to the Lord. Psalm 139 shows a man who finally lets God define his worth. He chooses to believe he was created with purpose and intention. This is the freedom God wants for you too. The New Testament reminds us that we are His workmanship. You are not an accident. You are not a lesser version of someone else. You carry a calling that fits no one else.

Once your heart feels rejected, it looks for evidence to confirm why you must have been or why you should feel rejected. It's very crafty and fast in the ways it scans the rooms of your life, family, church and world to find reinforcement to FORTIFY the notion that you simply aren't enough.

Break that right now! Comparison is killing your contentment in Christ and it is ruining your joy. In Jesus' Name, repent of the sin of comparison and be healed by the Love of Christ. Amen.

PRAYER: Father, set me free from comparison. Teach me to celebrate what You have placed in my life. Remind me that You formed me with purpose. Heal the places where rejection shaped my identity.

DECLARE: **I AM GOD'S FAVORITE. I AM UNIQUELY KNOWN AND LOVED.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY FOUR

OVERCOME ALL INADEQUACY

MAIN FOCUS: **GOD TEACHES YOU TO RISE WHEN FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY PULL YOU DOWN.**

A mindset of inadequacy is formed in life's circumstances that shout, "You're not enough" or "If you were a better leader, this wouldn't have happened." It depletes strength, but God restores it. David discovered how to encourage himself in the Lord. You can learn the same rhythm of courage and renewal.

KEY VERSE: *"David was greatly distressed because men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God."* **I Samuel 30:6**

CONSIDER: When I hire someone, I take it very seriously. I always overlook their flaws and usually move right past yellow flags because I know every person is going to require grace, mercy and commitment. I'm not arrogant in this or blind . . . I just try to be realistic.

Then in some cases, it becomes inevitable that a person has gone as far as they can go in a ministry or leadership position with me. A change has to happen. Every single time, I feel inadequate. I feel pain. It always hurts. I always feel like, "I could have done more."

I think every good parent feels this too. We always feel like there's something we could have done differently. We rehearse all kinds of bargaining tools to try to make sense of a painful reality. Eventually, we have to stop the spiraling and face reality. We're not God and even God allows things to spiral . . . and He never fails.

One day, David and his men lost their entire village. All of their loved ones were stolen. David felt terribly inadequate. But something sacred happened in that moment. David did not spiral. He did not withdraw. He did not collapse under pressure. Scripture says he strengthened himself in the Lord. This was a turning point. He remembered who God was and who he was. Courage returned. Clarity followed. God led him to recover everything that was lost. He entered the Stronghold of the Lord and saw great victory.

PRAYER: Lord, teach me to find strength in You. Remind me that You are my source, my courage, and my stability. Strengthen my heart when rejection tries to weaken my confidence. Lead me forward with clarity.

DECLARE: **I AM SEEN, KNOWN AND ACCEPTED BY GOD.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY FIVE

LIVING FROM ACCEPTANCE

MAIN FOCUS: **HEALING BEGINS WHEN YOU LOVE YOU THE WAY GOD LOVES YOU.**

You can only love your neighbor AS you love yourself. You can only love yourself to the degree that you are able to experience and know God's love for you. The love of God is what breaks the power of rejection. David learned to rest in God's love and calling. You can build your life on the same foundation.

KEY VERSE: *"To the praise of His glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One He loves."* **Ephesians 1:6**

CONSIDER: There's no way a child can possibly love themselves the way a healthy parent loves them. But imagine if the wisdom of God's love could enter your heart at an early age and you could re-interpret all of your life experiences through the perfect knowledge of God's love. Can you even smell the difference that would make?

David has a lot of question marks around his family of origin story. His language in Psalm 51:5 and other places indicates that there may have been some level of sin around his conception. The literal translation says, *"Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."*

He didn't say, "I became sinful." He said, he was conceived "in iniquity". His mother is clearly the subject of conception. The language here strongly suggests that the conditions of his conception were sinful.

Maybe you've felt that your origin wasn't very favorable also. Maybe, like David, your life has massive moments of you feeling alone, in the fields of some sort, isolated and overlooked. David had plenty of reasons to live as one rejected. His king hunted him. His son betrayed him. Yet in all of this, David kept returning to God. You hear it in the Psalms. He speaks of God as a refuge and a rock. He talks about God's steadfast love. He believed God accepted him long before others recognized his calling.

Take a moment and breathe that in today. You belong to God. You are loved. You are chosen. You are secure. He's been working even before your conception. Trust Him today.

PRAYER: Father, let Your acceptance settle deep in my heart. Heal every place shaped by rejection. Teach me to live from the identity You have given me. Fill me with confidence in Your love.

DECLARE: **I LIVE FROM THE TOTAL ACCEPTANCE OF GOD.**

NOTES

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“The LORD is my light and my salvation ...
the **stronghold** of my life.”

PSALM 27:1

WEEK TWO

OVERCOMING SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance feels essential in life. It provides a person a sense of strength in the moment, but it slowly drains the soul. It builds habits of control that shut out the help we need from God and others. David experienced this in his wilderness years and in his decisions at Ziklag. God invites you into a deeper trust where your strength comes from Him and not from old survival patterns.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

PROVERBS 3:5-6

PSALM 37:5

JOHN 15:5

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

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DAY ONE

THE WEIGHT OF CARRYING IT ALL ALONE

MAIN FOCUS: **SELF-RELIANCE GROWS WHEN YOU LEARN TO SURVIVE WITHOUT HELP.**

"I can do it by myself" is something each of us has said multiple times in life. Many people learn to handle life on their own because they had to. The strongest of us realize this and start taking life on with initiative, grit and drive. The problem is, what looks like strength is actually the incubator of pride and dangerous independence. You can't even breathe one breath without God. You're not all alone. Ever.

KEY VERSE: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths."* **Proverbs 3:5-6**

CONSIDER: My greatest fear in life—especially the past several months is that God will remove his hand from me. This is how deeply I know that the only good in me or about me is Him. Christ in me is the only true hope I have for becoming who He created and redeemed me to be.

David tended to spiral emotionally and cognitively. If he's like me, he probably had thousands of episodes of spiraling and then settling down. Psalm 51 was written after his sin with Bathsheba and having her husband killed. He was really in a terrible place spiritually and emotionally.

"Do not take your Holy Spirit from me..." was his plea to God. *"Do not cast me away from your presence."* This is a grappling petition.

He's begging. Sensitivity to the Presence of God is the key to a fortified life. When you lose sensitivity to Him, you will lack power in every other thing you do.

What David meant was, I cannot carry this kingdom, this life, the weight of my sin and the power of my shame. I can't face my past or my future without your presence. I don't even want to breathe without your Spirit being with me. God, please hear me, I can't carry this alone. Restore to me a right spirit—the fullness of knowing you and being with You.

PRAYER: Father, I refuse to live my life carried by my own strength. I cannot live this life without You keeping me. Teach me to trust You as I walk, moment by moment. Heal the places where self-reliance became my mode of being. Help me lean into Your wisdom and presence.

DECLARE: **I AM NEVER ALONE. GOD IS MY STRENGTH.**

NOTES

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DAY TWO

WHEN STRENGTH BECOMES A BURDEN

MAIN FOCUS: **SOME STRENGTHS YOU DEVELOP IN CHILDHOOD BECOME THE OBSTACLES YOU FACE IN ADULTHOOD.**

David was good with his weapons of choice. He killed a lion. He killed a bear. He killed the giant, Goliath. He learned resilience early, but resilience can turn into self-dependence. One thing David never did: he never took glory or credit for his victories. His strength was the Lord and He knew it.

KEY VERSES: *"Commit your way to the Lord. Trust in Him and He will act."*
Psalms 37:5

"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."
Matthew 11:29

CONSIDER: We all developed ways of survival as children that psychologists call, "managers". These are ways or modes of thinking and acting in order to control our public image and help us keep others from knowing what we're afraid of, lacking or weak at. These modes of operation are like different versions of ourselves that we step into—often without even knowing it.

I learned how to turn on a set of skills in worship leading, teaching, motivating others, telling stories, sharing scripture that others experienced as "spiritual leadership". However, I used these skills (without full awareness) to cover up for the insecurities and sin that were buried in my heart.

These skills became a form of religious performance. This became a burden the older I got. The more I performed, the more people rewarded me. The more people rewarded me, the more I sought the approval of people. The more I sought the approval of people the less sensitive I became to the Holy Spirit. The longer this cycle repeated, the heavier the burden of performance became.

Jesus knows all about this. His request is for you to come to him with your burdens and exchange the heaviness of your broken ways for His way of life. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. The real you is better than the pretend you.

PRAYER: Father, Lord, reveal where my strength has become a barrier. Teach me to trust You with the burdens I have carried alone. Lead me into Your rest. Shape my strength through surrender.

DECLARE: **MY STRENGTH GROWS WHEN I TRUST GOD MOST.**

NOTES

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DAY THREE

THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL

MAIN FOCUS: **SELF-RELIANCE CONVINCES YOU THAT CONTROL IS SAFER THAN TRUST, BUT THAT PATH LEADS TO LOSS.**

Living as if everything orbits around your decisions, your planning, your discipline, your choices and your foresight is evidence you probably think you're more in control than you really are. This is the foundation of idolatry. Placing the weight of God on the shoulders of anything created, even you.

KEY VERSE: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*
John 15:5

CONSIDER: *"I looked at Christ and the dove of peace flew into my heart; I looked at the dove, and it flew away."* – Charles Spurgeon.

The Holy Spirit is very sensitive. He knows when we are attempting to control things and He knows when our attention is on the One who is actually in control. This is a very sensitive issue.

Control is a negative stronghold we all build when we don't trust God, but it will eventually become a prison that will ultimately break you.

Self-reliance is a terrible stronghold. It's a faulty fortress of illusions. Self-reliance carries an inner logic that, "If it's going to be, then it's up to me."

If you go to any self-help seminar or sales-force training, then you'll eventually hear someone in all sincerity shout, "No one is going to make it happen but you." They may even say, "Success is 100% your responsibility!" The truth is this, *You are not the hero of your story, God is.* You have a role and if you want to fulfill your ultimate role, then you have to surrender the weight and power of your story to the author, God.

David was not the hero of the Ziklag story, God was. God gave him victory. God promised His presence and victory. God delivered every life home safely. God ordered the steps and God was the victor. This moment changed David. He realized control was an illusion. He learned to seek God first, not last. He strengthened himself in the Lord. He asked God what to do. He obeyed with trust, not fear. That decision led to recovery and restoration.

PRAYER: Father, show me where I have relied on control instead of You. Teach me to release what I have been holding tightly. Lead me in trust. Restore the places where self-reliance caused loss.

DECLARE: **I TRUST GOD MORE THAN MY ABILITY TO CONTROL.**

NOTES

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY FOUR

WHEN GOD LEADS THE BATTLE

MAIN FOCUS: SELF RELIANCE GETS YOU INTO BATTLES GOD NEVER ASKED YOU TO FIGHT.

Self-reliance sounds noble. It sounds responsible. Bosses love people who take initiative and ownership over their areas of responsibility. However, there's a very fine line between taking personal responsibility for what you can control and operating your whole life independent from inquiring of God and practicing the Ways of His Spirit and Word.

KEY VERSE: *"Once again David inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered him...."*
I Samuel 23:4

CONSIDER: Self-reliance is the quickest way for me to enter battles God never intended for me to be in. Sometimes, I get involved in things God is not asking me to get involved in. A stronghold of some sort is always related.

CODEPENDENCY = working harder on someone else's problem than they are. When you work harder on a problem than those responsible for the problem, there's always some sort of control at play.

If you actually NEED a person's testimony about you to be "positive" then you will go way overboard trying to control their testimony about you. I've done this many times. If you actually NEED to have the approval of someone you respect, then you'll always take on the burden of winning their approval—when they're NOT EVEN WATCHING.

However, when God leads the battle, then you only really care about what God says, what is right and what is the way of His Spirit in all things. For David, Ziklag became a turning point in his leadership. After Ziklag, he learned to wait on the Lord. He asked before stepping into decisions. He listened. He obeyed. That habit shaped his future as king.

John 5:19 says that Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing. He moved when the Spirit led Him. This is the pattern God invites you into. When you let Him lead the battle, you walk in peace and clarity.

PRAYER: Lord, teach me to slow down and listen. Help me to ask before I act. Lead my decisions with Your wisdom. Guide my steps with Your peace. Show me where You are calling me to move.

DECLARE: **THE LORD LEADS MY BATTLES; I GO WHERE HE DIRECTS ME.**

NOTES

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DAY FIVE

A LIFE BUILT ON TRUST

MAIN FOCUS: **SELF-RELIANCE FADES AS TRUST GROWS.**

Think about all the childhood wounds of David that led him to be a self-reliant person.

- **Overlooked by Jesse.**
- **Not invited to the anointing.**
- **Treated as unimportant.**
- **Brothers belittling him.**

Still, the thing most powerful about David is that even in his own strong sense of personal responsibility, He really never became a “self-reliant” person. He lived from the stronghold of the Lord. It was by the Lord that He fought his battles.

KEY VERSE: *“He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer.”* **Psalm 144:2**

CONSIDER: I’ve never trusted God like I trust Him today. It’s a real gift from Him. He has healed my heart in ways that have deepened my trust. The more He heals my trust issues the stronger my heart and life are.

When I have felt alone, abandoned, and even incapable of finding a knowable connection to God, the strongholds of fear and shame fortify. God literally calls off the enemy so strongly at times, I know with perfect certainty that He is near and his presence is with me.

David experienced this same shift. By the time he reached Hebron, he was no longer the young man who ran on instinct. He was no longer the man who lived by survival skills. He had learned trust. He waited on the Lord. He listened to God about when to move and where to go. He became a leader shaped by surrender.

Jesus teaches me to cast my whole thought life and the realm of my imaginations to Him. He is so powerful to carry what I care about. He is for His glory being revealed through me. This is the heart of trust.

I bring my cares to God. He places his care on me. The win in life IS HIM. I have the joy of living with confidence because I know He holds me.

PRAYER: Father, You always help me to build my life on trust. You are training me to cast my concerns on You. You always calm my heart with Your presence. I stand in rich and deep confidence in Your goodness and care.

DECLARE: **I TRUST GOD WITH MY LIFE. HE IS MY STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE.**

NOTES

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P – PRAYER

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“The Lord is my **rock**, my **fortress**, my deliverer.”

II SAMUEL 22:2

“The **peace of God** will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

WEEK THREE

EXPOSING HIDDEN SHAME

Shame hides in the quiet places of the heart. It usually develops its structure and strength at a very young age. As we get older and go through thousands of experiences, it deepens as it shapes decisions, reactions, and relationships. Shame convinces you to cover what God wants to heal.

David carried shame from his family, his failures, and the secrets he tried to bury. God met him in those places and restored him. This week will help you bring shame into the light where freedom begins.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

PSALM 32:5

PSALM 51:10

ROMANS 8:1

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

[illegible]

[illegible]

DAY ONE

WHEN SHAME STAYS QUIET

MAIN FOCUS: SHAME GROWS WHEN IT STAYS HIDDEN.

Psalm 69 tells us that David felt like a total stranger to his own brothers. He hints at major family of origin pain. He did not feel fully wanted in his own home. By the time he gets to Bathsheba, this wasn't a sin of lust only, this was about the true depletion of David's soul through buried shame. That's what I believe.

KEY VERSE: *"Those who look to Him are radiant. Their faces are never covered with shame."* **Psalm 34:5**

CONSIDER: David was the least in his father's house. David was treated as unworthy. David had small petty responsibilities with a "few sheep". David was treated as if he was unseen. He was not chosen. He was not wanted.

By the time Bathsheba was called into his bedroom, David had years of managing his public image as a "Warrior-King". I see hints of a lifestyle of at least trying to prove to God and the world that he was worth choosing.

He was handsome. He was talented. He was a lover. He was a poet. He was a singer and musician. He had a massive resume for others to desire him, yet deep in his soul . . . I get the sense that he didn't always remember his real value to God. Shame becomes louder when we don't know it exists in us. God's invitation is simple. Bring it to Me. Let Me lift what you have been burying and numbing.

Imagine the moment David's wife, Mikal shames him. What if David took her by the cheeks and said, "Baby, sometimes I get much more undignified in my passion when I'm in public before crowds and in ministry than I do when I'm with you and the Lord. I feel that I may even be addicted to the adrenaline of being a "warrior-king". Please be careful not to shame me for the way I worship. I want to be a husband you celebrate WITH and not a husband you mock.

I'm no expert here and I'm not at all blaming David's wife for David's adultery—but I am saying that I believe a deeper bitter root took place in David's heart during his wife's rejection of him. I believe it most likely triggered shame and led David to even greater shame. Don't play around with shame.

PRAYER: Father, reveal the quiet places where shame has shaped me. Lift the weight I have carried. Restore my confidence in Your love. Help me bring everything into Your light. Heal what I hid.

DECLARE: GOD IS LIFTING SHAME FROM MY LIFE. I'M COVERED IN HIS GRACE.

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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A - APPLICATION

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

THE BURDEN OF SECRET SIN

MAIN FOCUS: **SHAME GROWS STRONGEST IN PLACES WE TRY TO MANAGE ALONE.**
David tried to hide his failure with Bathsheba. I'm sure each of us would have done the same in our own ways. Shame convinced him to cover what He needed to confess. God works in many ways to help us come into the light and out of hiding. When we bring secrets into the light of His presence.

KEY VERSE: *"For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD. And you forgave the guilt of my sin.'"*
Psalm 32:4-5

CONSIDER: The message of shame isn't, "I did something wrong." The message of shame is, *"I am wrong, unworthy, contaminated, unlovable and unsafe. I will never change. I will always be like this."*

Think of it this way: shame pulls us inward, downward and backward. It's a forceful pull away from community and away from God. David had a well-fortified system that was built to protect him from years of family neglect, origin wounds, rejection from his brothers and years of betrayal. He was a master at protecting himself from humiliation.

His shame likely whispered, "You're not really wanted. You forced that and you're not really wanted or loveable." Then his "warrior king" mentality kicked in and fought to protect his public honor, reputation and power. Other parts of Him spiraled into a frantic cover up full of deception, manipulation and murder.

David didn't hide his sin because he was lustful and weak. He hid his sin because he was terrified of being exposed as a man who used a woman, the wife of one his most loyal warriors to drown out his own bitter shame.

Nathan confronted him. David broke. He confessed everything. His honesty became the doorway to one of the most powerful moments of restoration in Scripture. Psalm 32 and Psalm 51 show what happens when shame meets the mercy of God. The burden lifts. The soul breathes again. Joy returns.

PRAYER: Lord, meet me in the places I have hidden. Give me courage to be honest. Break the power of shame. Cleanse my heart. Restore the joy that shame has taken from me.

DECLARE: **I BRING MY WHOLE HEART INTO THE LIGHT. GOD RESTORES ME.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY THREE

SHAME AND FEAR OF BEING FOUND OUT

MAIN FOCUS: **SHAME CREATES FEAR AROUND EXPOSURE, BUT GOD BRINGS FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH.**

Image management is a survival skill we develop very early on. We work hard to maintain a well-crafted persona so that no one sees the flaws of our hearts. All people work hard to manage the impressions they make on others. It's called covering. Shame convinced David that truth would destroy him. God shows that truth heals what fear tries to protect.

KEY VERSE: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."*
Psalm 51:10

CONSIDER: I had a friend growing up who did so many shameful things. I won't name them but I remember times when I wouldn't be able to find him. He would come over to my house and we'd play outside and suddenly, he'd disappear. Hours later I'd find him hiding in my closet or under my bed.

Later on in life my parents told me that he'd do that when he had an "accident" due to not making it to the bathroom. He was ashamed and so he hid.

Adam and Eve did this. Five-thousand-plus years later, you and I do the same thing. We hide what we're ashamed of. Hiding in our shame actually deepens the grip of shame on our hearts and affects every other area of our lives.

David lived in this tension. After his failure, he feared exposure. He feared losing everything. Shame made him believe that hiding was safer than truth. But hiding never heals the heart. It drains it. David finally realized that freedom comes through truth. When he cried out in Psalm 51, he opened his life fully to God. He asked for a pure heart. He asked for a steadfast spirit. He trusted God with the most vulnerable parts of his story.

This is the turning point God offers you. Truth sets you free. You do not have to fear being found out when God is the One doing the restoring. He covers you with mercy. He heals the places you are afraid to reveal. He builds something stronger in you than shame ever could.

PRAYER: Father, remove the fear of exposure from my heart. Help me trust You with every part of my story. Cleanse my mind. Purify my motives. Restore my confidence in Your love.

DECLARE: **I LOVE TRUTH. I WALK IN TRUTH. SHAME HAS NO HOLD ON ME.**

NOTES

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DAY FOUR

SHAME'S VOICE, GOD'S VOICE

MAIN FOCUS: **SHAME SHOUTS LIES. GOD WHISPERS IDENTITY.**
Shame tells you who you are not. God tells you who you are. David learned to listen to God's voice over the loudness of his regret and the messages related to it.

KEY VERSES: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
Romans 8:1

*"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away...then I acknowledged my sin...
and you forgave the guilt of my sin."*
Psalms 32:3-5

CONSIDER: **Proverbs 28:13** says, "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

David battled voices in his head just like you do. These voices are the power of any stronghold. You hear it in his psalms. He wrestled with regret. He felt the weight of his decisions. He asked God why his soul was downcast. He questioned his value and purpose. Shame always speaks in accusations. It tells you that you are your worst moment. It convinces you that failure defines you.

But David learned to return to God's voice. When he reminded himself of God's character, shame's volume decreased. He remembered that God is gracious and compassionate. He remembered that God lifts the brokenhearted. He remembered that God forgives and restores. This truth shaped his identity more than his failure.

I John 1:8-10 tells us there's a powerful illusion woven into the phrase, "I'm fine; really, I'm fine." It says, "if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves...". Self-deception is in every negative stronghold. Hear God's voice of truth and let truth win today.

Self-management feels wise but it kills your soul. Read **Proverbs 14:12**. It says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Truth is in the fortress of God. Run into it and be saved.

PRAYER: Lord, silence the voice of shame in my life. Help me hear Your voice clearly. Fill my heart with Your truth. Remind me of who I am in Your love. Strengthen my identity in You.

DECLARE: **I AM WHO GOD SAYS I AM. SHAME DOES NOT SPEAK FOR ME.**

NOTES

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DAY FIVE

STEPPING INTO FREEDOM

MAIN FOCUS: **SHAME LOSES IT'S POWER WHEN YOU STEP INTO GOD'S GRACE.**
Hebrews 4:13 says, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight." He knows you and you know He does. David knew God knew all things. When he admitted this and submitted his broken ways to God's light—he entered the good stronghold of God. David walked into freedom through genuine confession and worship. You can walk into the same freedom today. God heals shame with grace and truth.

KEY VERSES: *"Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against Him."*
Psalm 32:1-2

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."
Psalm 38:4

CONSIDER: Say this out loud: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
II Corinthians 3:17.

David understood this. Psalm 32 is the voice of a man who experienced the restoration of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life. He knew His presence and He knew the deep dark feeling of being without Him.

David walked out of the shame of his miserable sin by walking into God's mercy. Joy is in the stronghold of the Lord. He describes the relief that came with confession. He talks about the heaviness that lifted when he stopped hiding. He celebrates the forgiveness that restored his strength. David learned that God does not shame His children.

God loves to heal His children. This is the promise we see fulfilled in Jesus. He carried your shame to the cross. He broke its power. He covers you with righteousness. You do not have to live under the weight of what you did or what happened to you. God is inviting you into freedom.

Step into that grace today. Let go of the past. Release the fears. Receive the joy of being forgiven and clean. God delights in restoring you.

PRAYER: Father, thank You for the freedom You give. Heal every place shaped by shame. Restore my joy. Strengthen my heart. Help me walk in the grace You provide. Make my life a testimony of Your mercy.

DECLARE: **I AM FREE. GOD'S GRACE COVERS ME AND STRENGTHENS ME.**

NOTES

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What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

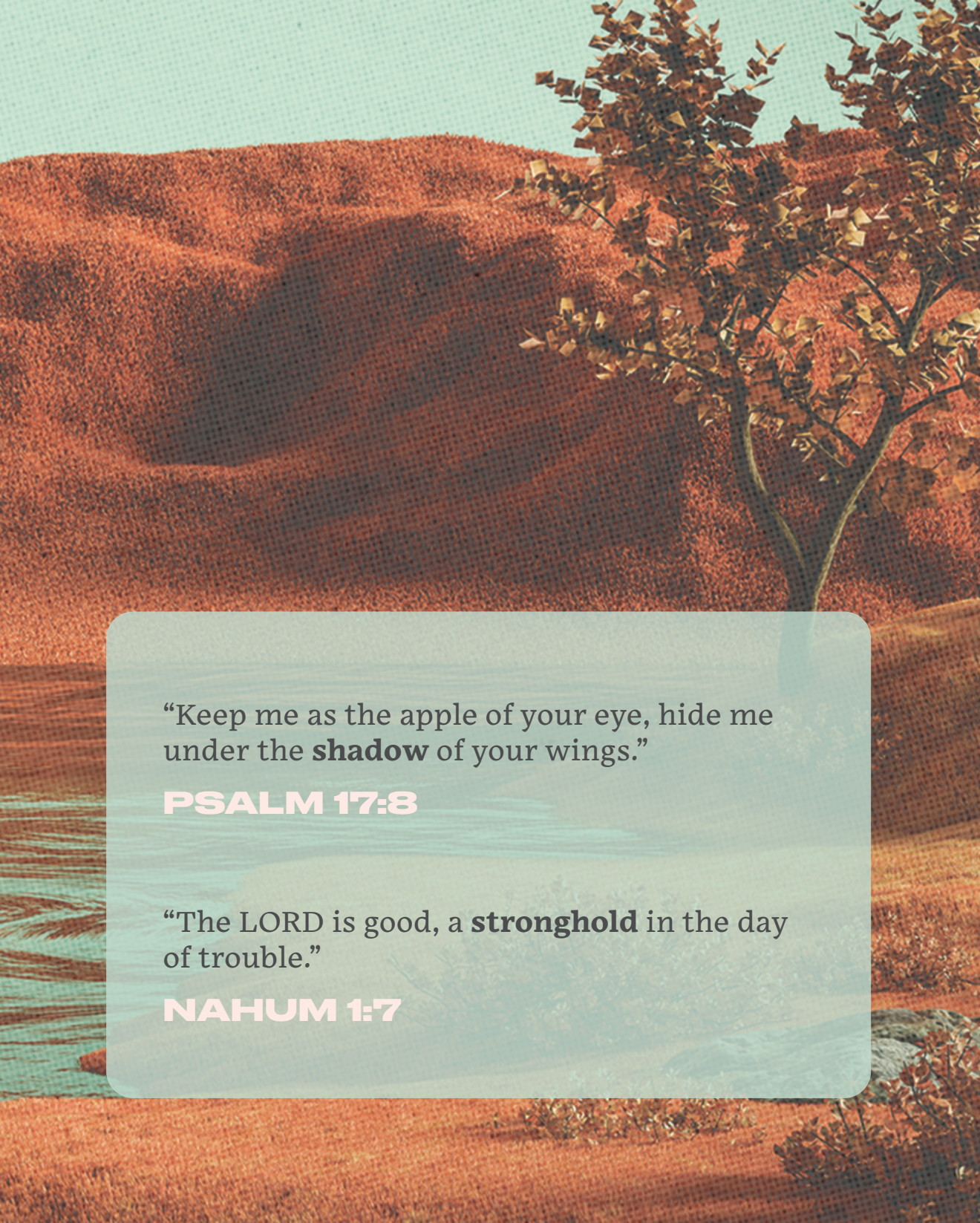
What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

The background image is a landscape with rolling hills covered in dense, reddish-brown vegetation. A tree with similar foliage stands on the right side. A semi-transparent, light blue-grey rectangular box is positioned in the lower half of the image, containing text. The text is in a serif font, with some words in bold. The overall color palette is dominated by the warm tones of the landscape and the cool tones of the text box.

“Keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me
under the **shadow** of your wings.”

PSALM 17:8

“The LORD is good, a **stronghold** in the day
of trouble.”

NAHUM 1:7

WEEK FOUR

HEALING PASSIVITY IN PARENTING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Passivity grows out of pain. It shows up when conflict feels unsafe or when old wounds make responsibility feel heavy. David loved deeply but avoided difficult conversations with his sons. That passivity produced heartbreak in his home. God teaches us to lead with courage, speak with grace, and step into relationships with wisdom and strength. Healing begins when we face what we used to avoid.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

JAMES 1:5

PROVERBS 27:6

EPHESIANS 4:15

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

[illegible]

[illegible]

DAY ONE

WHEN AVOIDANCE FEELS SAFER

MAIN FOCUS: **PASSIVITY GROWS OUT OF FEAR THAT CONFLICT IS TOO COSTLY.**
Parents who have not truly dealt with their shame either over-correct their children in fear . . . or they avoid correcting their children in fear. Conflict avoidance is a learned response. It often feels like peace, but it creates distance. David avoided conflict with his children and carried significant regret. This is evidence of a negative stronghold in David's life.

KEY VERSE: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault."*
James 1:5

CONSIDER: Sometimes, parents just freeze in disbelief, shame and powerlessness when they witness destructive patterns in their children. Parents tend to shame their kids by saying, "How could you?" Parents virtue-signal in front of other parents by correcting their kids in public with phrases like this, "Now, what do I always tell you about interrupting me when I'm talking!!!"

The underlying message to other parents is, "My kid is a fool and it's not a reflection of my parenting!" We all roll our eyes.

II Samuel 13 is a very dark chapter in the Bible. One of David's sons, Amnon raped his sister, Tamar. After he raped her, he hated her. This all happened just days after David forced himself onto Bathsheba, she conceived a child and the child died. That's a lot of brokenness and shame in the most powerful family in the land.

David walked through this tension. After the situation with Amnon and Tamar, David was furious, yet he did nothing. He did not speak. He did not comfort. He did not correct. His silence created pain in his home. Absalom carried anger for two years. Tamar lived in shame with no support. Passivity may feel safe in the moment, but it creates generational wounds.

God invites us to ask for wisdom. This is the turning point. Wisdom gives you the courage to speak with grace and strength. Wisdom helps you move toward the people you love, not away from them. Wisdom teaches you how to restore what silence has damaged.

PRAYER: Father, show me where fear has made me passive. Give me courage to move toward the people I love. Fill me with wisdom for difficult conversations. Heal the places where silence has caused distance.

DECLARE: **I ACT WITH COURAGE AND WISDOM.**
I DO NOT AVOID WHAT GOD CALLS ME TO FACE.

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

THE COST OF SILENCE

MAIN FOCUS: **PASSIVITY CREATES RESENTMENT AND PAIN WHEN RESPONSIBILITY IS IGNORED.**

David's silence after Tamar's trauma created deep fractures in his family. God heals when we step into responsibility with compassion and truth.

KEY VERSE: *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend."*
Proverbs 27:6

CONSIDER: If you live for the approval of man or if you have a terrible fear of rejection, then you will seek the friendship, approval and acceptance of others, **ESPECIALLY** your children.

This is the hardest part of parenting, leadership and pastoring. If you have a stronghold of shame in your life, you will probably carry a very sensitive fear of rejection and lack power in times when you need to be strong, bold and courageous in authority.

Shame whispers, "Pssshh, you have no business correcting Amnon. Look at what you did to Bathsheba. Who are you to correct anyone? He probably did it because of generational iniquity passed on from you." I don't know if David thought this, but if He's like me—He probably heard something like that in his heart.

David experienced this on a larger scale. His silence after Tamar's assault broke something in his home. Tamar needed comfort. She needed someone to stand up for her. David did nothing. Absalom waited for justice. When none came, bitterness took root. Silence gave space for resentment to grow. Passivity has consequences.

Yet God meets us in these places. He teaches us how to heal what we ignored. He gives us courage to speak truth with love. He shows us how to move toward the people we have avoided. Healing begins with honesty and compassion.

The Spirit of God empowers us to speak the truth in love. Truth is necessary for healing. Love shapes the way we deliver it. God will give you the wisdom to repair what silence created. It is not too late for restoration.

PRAYER: Lord, help me face the areas where silence created pain. Give me courage to speak with honesty and compassion. Heal the wounds that grew in my absence. Restore what needs to be restored.

DECLARE: **GOD GIVES ME COURAGE AND WISDOM TO SPEAK TRUTH IN LOVE.**

NOTES

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DAY THREE

WHEN LOVE NEEDS BOUNDARIES

MAIN FOCUS: PASSIVITY IS NOT LOVE.

LOVE SETS BOUNDARIES THAT PROTECT RELATIONSHIPS.

David's passivity with Amnon led his brother Absalom to deep bitterness and He eventually tried to topple his Father's throne. David loved Absalom deeply but avoided setting boundaries with him. Real love always speaks directly, decisively, honestly, clearly, forgives fully, and leads with wisdom.

KEY VERSE: *"Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."*

Ephesians 4:15

CONSIDER: Read **II Samuel 18-19**. This is a terrible time in David's life.

The absolute worst moments in my parenting were when I was trying to either set a boundary that may have been too firm or I was resetting a boundary that wasn't managed well for one reason or another. David loved Absalom but did not seek the Lord for wisdom in relating to Amnon and Absalom. He parented in fear and avoidance. That's how it appears to me.

We all make fools out of ourselves in some of our parenting choices. All of us have a temptation to keep the peace by avoiding boundaries. I have felt that pressure. You love people. You want harmony. You do not want to be the source of tension. But love without boundaries becomes fragile. It breaks easily. Love needs clarity to grow strong.

David struggled with this. He loved Absalom, but he avoided the hard work of reconciliation. When Absalom returned from exile, David refused to see him. Later, David brought him home but still kept his distance. Absalom interpreted the silence as rejection. The lack of clarity created deeper resentment. Passivity in leadership and parenting often comes from a soft heart and a fearful spirit.

God offers a different path. Love speaks the truth. Love sets boundaries. Love guides with firmness and grace. Love does not avoid. It leans in with courage. Boundaries protect both the relationship and the future.

You can learn to lead the same way Jesus did. Ask God for wisdom. Ask Him for courage. Ask Him for grace to love well and lead clearly.

PRAYER: Father, teach me to love with clarity. Help me set healthy boundaries. Give me courage to speak truth and grace together. Strengthen my relationships through wisdom and compassion. Heal what passivity has harmed.

DECLARE: **I LEAD WITH CLARITY. LOVE AND WISDOM GUIDE ME.**

NOTES

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DAY FOUR

FACING WHAT YOU'D RATHER AVOID

MAIN FOCUS: **HEALING BEGINS WHEN YOU CONFRONT WHAT YOU USED TO AVOID.**
Most people do not change until they hurt enough that they have to change. Likewise, many people do not address difficult situations until they're at a point of explosion or absolute meltdown. David avoided conflict with Absalom until the situation exploded. This is a glaring sign of a negative stronghold in David's heart. God invites you to face difficult moments with courage and humility.

KEY VERSE: *"Better is an open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*
Proverbs 27:5-6

CONSIDER: There are two major traits of a pastor or employee that I tend to value most: Teachability is one. Submission is the other. If a person is defensive, anxious, hyper-likely to gaslight a situation . . . I get major red flags.

I Timothy 5:20 says, "Those who are sinning, rebuke in the presence of all, that others may fear." That's what many call "tough love".

It's not just tough . . . it's essential for you and others.

There have been moments where I avoided conversations because the emotions felt too heavy. I did not know what the other person would say. I did not know how they would respond. Sometimes I simply felt tired. Avoidance can feel like relief for a moment, but it always returns as pressure.

David reached this point with Absalom. His silence created confusion. His distance created pain. His avoidance created chaos. Absalom's rebellion was not sudden. It was the result of years without clarity. Passivity allowed resentment to grow. The situation became far more painful than any conversation would have been.

God meets us in these moments. He gives wisdom. He strengthens our resolve. He teaches us to move toward people with compassion and truth. Healing rarely happens by itself. It happens when we step into difficult places with God's help.

PRAYER: Lord, I ask for courage to face the conversations I have avoided. Give me wisdom. Give me peace. Help me move with compassion and truth. Heal the broken places and guide my steps.

DECLARE: **I FACE DIFFICULT MOMENTS WITH GOD'S FAVOR.**

NOTES

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DAY FIVE

LEADING WITH A RESTORED HEART

MAIN FOCUS: **HEALING PASSIVITY BEGINS WITH A HEART STRENGTHENED BY GOD.**
David became a wiser leader after grief and restoration. God heals your heart and gives you strength to lead with love and courage.

KEY VERSES: *"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power."*
Ephesians 6:10

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock. . . even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."
Acts 20:28-30

CONSIDER: There's a title people use to describe a person who tears you down in the eyes of others in order to steal their hearts away from you and draw their hearts to themselves. The title is, "An Absalom Spirit".

Have you ever done this or experienced someone do this to you? Have you ever had one of your children do this to you? Have you ever shrunk back and lost your voice in your family, your workplace or your ministry? Has fear ever gripped you so deeply you could not see the right thing to do, and wisdom was nowhere in sight?

I've been there. There were seasons where I felt worn down by responsibility and the weight of "doing the right thing". When my heart is tired, passivity feels easier than engagement. I always want to love well, but my strength feels thin. I learned that leadership begins with the heart. When God restores my heart, courage follows.

David carried deep grief after Absalom's death. His sorrow nearly shut him down. Joab confronted him. David then did something important. **He rose and sat at the gate.** This was more than a physical action. It was a spiritual one. He stepped back into his role. His heart was wounded, but God strengthened him to lead again. This was a move to the good stronghold of God.

When God heals the wounds that made you passive, you find the strength to engage again. You speak with clarity and lead with wisdom and love. You step forward with confidence because your heart is rooted in God.

PRAYER: Father, restore my heart and renew my strength. Heal every place shaped by passivity. Fill me with courage to love well and lead with wisdom. Help me rise in the strength of Your presence.

DECLARE: **GOD RESTORES MY HEART. I LEAD WITH GOD'S FAVOR.**

NOTES

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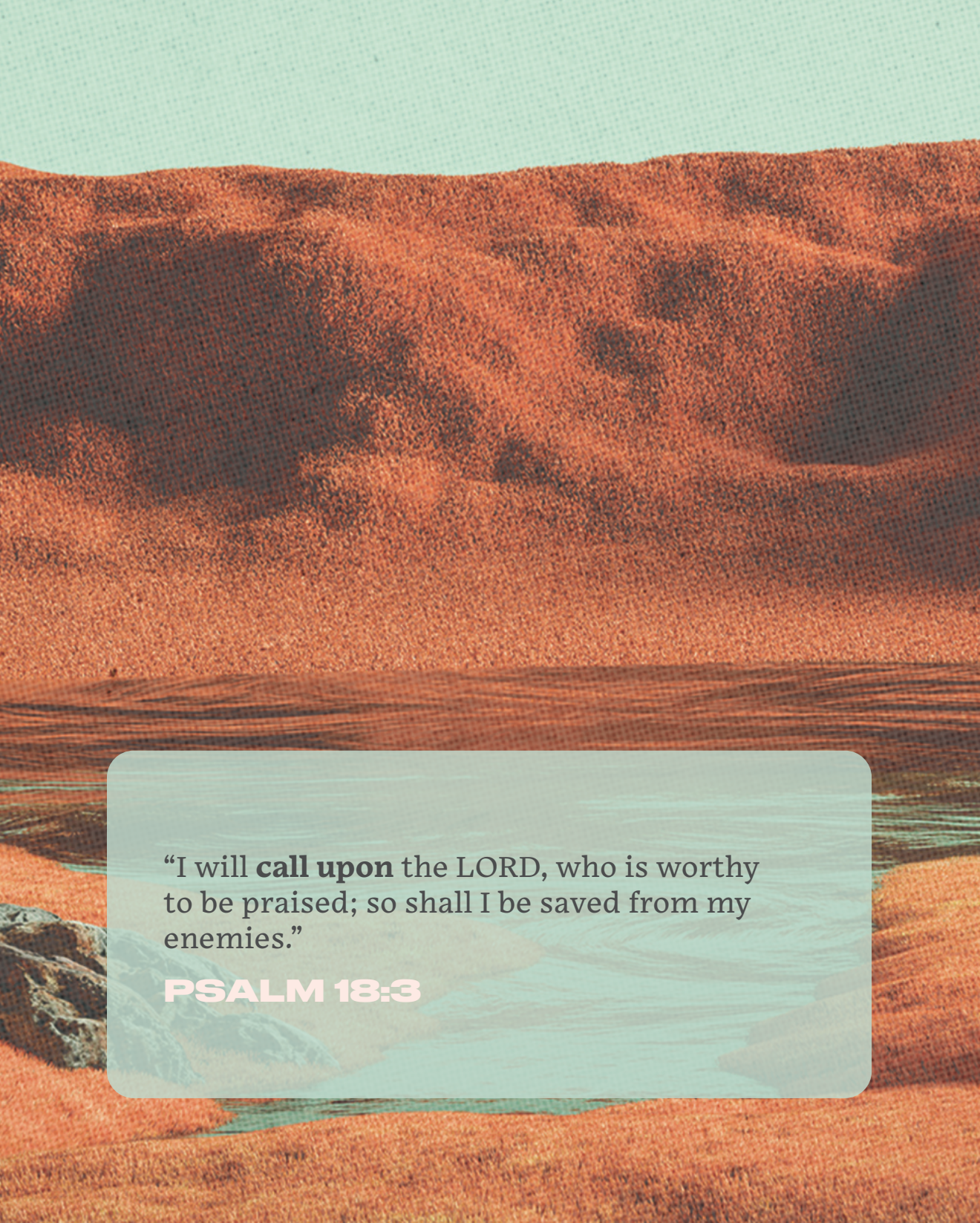
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The background image is a landscape. In the foreground, there is a body of water with gentle ripples. To the left, a dark, rocky shoreline is visible. In the background, a large, rolling hill or mountain dominates the scene. The hill is covered in a dense, textured layer of reddish-brown vegetation, possibly grass or low shrubs, giving it a stippled or pointillist appearance. The sky above the hill is a pale, solid teal color.

“I will **call upon** the LORD, who is worthy
to be praised; so shall I be saved from my
enemies.”

PSALM 18:3

WEEK FIVE

SURRENDERING THE WEIGHT OF INJUSTICE

Slander. Attack. Betrayal. Adultery. Abuse. Neglect. Torment.

All injustice leaves a deep mark on the soul. They wronged you. You can't defend yourself. They go unpunished. It stirs anger, disappointment, and the desire to make things right on our own terms. David lived through betrayal, unfair treatment, and moments that tested his restraint. God met him in these struggles and taught him how to trust divine justice. This week will help you release the weight you were never meant to carry.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

ROMANS 12:19

PSALM 37:7

I PETER 2:23

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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DAY ONE

THE WOUND OF BEING WRONGED

MAIN FOCUS: **INJUSTICE AWAKENS A DEEP ACHE THAT GOD UNDERSTANDS.**

Life is not fair. Weak people live their life expecting things to be fair. Immature people are quick to call out, “unfair!” Everyone experiences unfair moments that feel personal and painful. David lived through betrayal and mistreatment. God empowered David to model for us great faith in moments that are just unfair.

KEY VERSES: *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”* **Psalm 37:7**

“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me in.”
Psalm 27:10

CONSIDER: When I feel misunderstood, I feel it deeply. When someone twists the story and lies about me, I feel it even more deeply. I have joked at times about how good it feels to outlast my critics . . . but at some point after saying things like this, I melt in repentance. These are battle wounds of being wronged and failing to see justice unfold.

When you feel embarrassed and frustrated, it can stay stirring in you for weeks and even months. Injustice creates an ache that feels hard to explain. It touches something deep that desires fairness and truth.

David carried many of these wounds. Saul turned against him without cause. Friends betrayed him. People he helped turned on him. Each moment of injustice reached into sensitive places of his heart. These were not small things. They shaped his life for years.

Yet David returned to God with his pain. He did not pretend he was fine. He brought his frustration, his anger, and his confusion into prayer. Psalm 37 teaches us to wait on God, not on our own strength. David discovered that justice is safest in God’s hands.

Read **Psalm 131**. David says, “I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.”

Contentment in the Lord is the key to overcoming injustice. Trust God.

PRAYER: Lord, heal the places where I have been wounded by injustice. Give me peace when my heart feels unsettled. Teach me to trust You with the pain I carry. Restore my strength.

DECLARE: **GOD SEES MY PAIN. GOD IS JUST.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

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A - APPLICATION

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

SHAME-RAGE: WHEN ANGER FEELS JUSTIFIED

MAIN FOCUS: **ANGER IS NATURAL, BUT ALLOWING IT TO
RULE THE HEART BRINGS DAMAGE.**

When anger feels righteous or justified. . . watch out. There's almost always the working of a deadly stronghold lurking. David nearly destroyed Nabal out of anger. He almost killed every male in Nabal's family. It likely would have been the collapse of the anointing. He stayed sensitive to God and God used Abigail to redirect him. Our anger needs God's wisdom so it does not become a destructive force.

KEY VERSE: *"In your anger do not sin."*
Ephesians 4:26

CONSIDER: David said, "Surely in vain I protected all that this fellow has. . ." **I Samuel 25:21.** That is the language of resentment, rejection and clearly, old wounds are reactivated here. David even said, "Every man strap on his sword!" **I Samuel 25:13.** It's so ON! David is DONE with dishonor. There comes a time in all of us when humiliation, shame and public dishonor have a way of breaking down our resolve to do right.

THIS IS SHAME-RAGE. "You don't talk to me like that." "You dishonor my family, I'll punish you." These are deep cries from buried wounded parts of our hearts in dark strongholds. Ultimately, these inner cries are saying, "You will not make me look weak. You're treating me like my brothers did and my father did and like Saul did . . . and I'm DONE!" These buried parts of our heart can get triggered by our children, co-workers, spouses or anyone else we believe owes us honor.

There have been times when I felt so frustrated that anger and even snapping-rage felt justified. I replayed the situation again and again in my mind. I felt right. I felt wronged. I wanted resolution. Anger is not always sinful, but it becomes dangerous when it leads us instead of God.

David walked into this moment with Nabal. He and his men had protected Nabal's shepherds. They treated them with kindness. When David asked for help in return, Nabal insulted him. Something inside David snapped. God used Abigail to intervene. Her wisdom redirected David's heart. She reminded him of God's calling. She reminded him of the consequences he was about to create. David listened. His anger gave way to humility.

PRAYER: Father, I have wounds from shame and being wronged. I know I have parts of me that cry out for justice and I need healing in my inner parts. Heal the parts of me that want to react quickly. Spirit, form me in wisdom and patience. Protect me from decisions that react without Your love.

DECLARE: **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY.**

NOTES

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DAY THREE

RESISTING THE URGE TO RETALIATE

MAIN FOCUS: **RETALIATION FEELS POWERFUL, BUT IT STEALS PEACE.**
David felt so justified, he was even invoking God's name. He spiritualized his vengeance. This is what makes a stronghold hidden. When Anger FEELS holy, you're in trouble. David had opportunities to strike Nabal, Saul, and many others, yet he held back. His restraint teaches us how to trust God with our desire for justice.

KEY VERSES: *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil.
Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone."*
Romans 12:17

"The Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt...The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because you fight the Lord's battles."
I Samuel 25:26, 28

CONSIDER: The first time I remember wanting to physically destroy someone was during a series of weeks where I was being very seriously wronged. Multiple people who were very close to me betrayed me. I saw the physical evidence of their discussions about me. I knew they were betraying me and lying to my face and I wanted the absolute worst for them. It was bad. I was beyond angry.

I had multiple other people in my ear saying the things Abigail said to David when He was torn between strongholds of the flesh and the stronghold of God. Really wise men and women said to me, "Jeff, this is not who you are. You are the Lord's son and you fight His battles, stay out of personal battles. 10, 15, 20 yrs from now you're going to be at a whole other level. Stay out of this mess."

In the end of the story of Nabal and David, Abigail speaks life into David. She says, "Blessed be the Lord . . . who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discernment." – **I Samuel 25:32-33**

The greatest work you do when it comes to strongholds is the work of discernment. You have to know by the Spirit what voices to arrest, take captive and what voices to submit to. That's the power of knowing the heart of God and the Word of Christ

PRAYER: Jesus, You are the key to every victory and battle I face. The only resistance I have to the enemy is You. Your word is everything. My deepest source of power and strength is You. You are my way. Fill me with your might and counsel today in the work of victory and overcoming darkness.

DECLARE: **GOD IS MY GREAT DEFENDER.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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DAY FOUR

WHEN BITTERNESS BEGINS TO GROW

MAIN FOCUS: **BITTERNESS GROWS WHERE INJUSTICE REMAINS UNHEALED.**
Keilah was a fortified town in Judah near the Philistine border. It was raided many times during harvest season. These were David's own people and David faced their cry for help as they were robbed. David inquired of God and God told him to go save Keilah. THEN the people he was protecting were ready to betray him. That's deep.

KEY VERSE: *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."* **Ephesians 4:31**

CONSIDER: David was already anointed king. He was already hunted and rejected by Saul. He was already isolated and living in caves. He was already carrying unresolved grief after losing Michael, Samuel and Jonathan's presence. He was already mistreated by Nabal and more pain was coming. **The Keilah betrayal felt like a real breaking point.**

Bitterness grows slowly. It rarely announces itself. It starts with a moment of pain, then settles quietly. I have walked through seasons where I did not realize bitterness was forming. I felt tightness in my chest when I thought about a person. I felt coldness in conversations. I replayed situations in my mind. That is what bitterness does. It steals joy.

David knew this struggle. He protected the people of Keilah. He risked his life for them. Yet when Saul came looking for him, they were ready to hand him over. That kind of betrayal cuts deep. It creates mistrust. It creates a temptation to pull away from people entirely.

But David brought these moments to God. He asked God what to do. He let the Lord guide his next steps. He did not let bitterness close his heart. This is one reason David remained usable. He let God heal the places where anger could have turned into hardness.

Forgiving your enemies is a true release of toxic poison. You release people from the debt they created. You release the pain into the hands of God. You release yourself from the bitterness that tries to take hold.

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, lead me to see where I'm vulnerable to giving in to bitterness. Reveal any bitterness in my heart. Heal the places shaped by betrayal. Give me grace to forgive. Set my heart free from resentment. Fill me with peace and compassion.

DECLARE: **MY HEART IS FREE. BITTERNESS HAS NO ROOT IN ME.**

NOTES

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DAY FIVE

TRUSTING GOD WITH JUSTICE

MAIN FOCUS: **GOD CARRIES JUSTICE MORE PERFECTLY THAN WE EVER COULD.**
David learned that God's justice is wiser and more complete than anything he could accomplish. You can trust God to make things right.

KEY VERSES: *"Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath."* **Romans 12:19**

*"Strangers rise up against me...ruthless men seek my life...
Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me."
Psalms 54:3-4*

CONSIDER: In my life, I'm sure there are some people who have had to inquire of God for help in overcoming some wrong I've done to them. I have no idea how many, but I'm sure it's a lot. That humbles me with the reality of overcoming the justice that I entrust to God regarding wrongs done to me.

I know how He's led me and it's been the pattern I see in David and others in Scripture. God continually led David through a **specific pattern**:

Inquire of the Lord > **God Answers** With Wisdom >
Obey exactly what God says > **Walk** in Divine protection in the Ways of God.

David learned this through years of mistreatment. Saul hunted him. People lied about him. Friends betrayed him. Enemies misunderstood him. Yet God handled every situation. God removed Saul. God restored David. God healed broken places. David's part was to surrender the burden.

The Word of God is loaded with personal invitations to trust God with justice. We are not responsible for revenge. We are responsible for faith.

I Peter 2:23 says, "When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when he suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly."

God carries what we cannot. He judges rightly. He brings truth to light. He heals what injustice tried to destroy. This week ends with an invitation. Release the burden. Release the pain. Release the desire to make things right on your own. Trust the Father who sees everything. He will handle the parts of the story you cannot.

PRAYER: Lord, I release my desire for justice into Your hands. Heal the wounds caused by injustice. Protect my heart from bitterness. Strengthen my trust in Your timing and Your wisdom.

DECLARE: **GOD HANDLES JUSTICE. I WALK IN PEACE AND TRUST.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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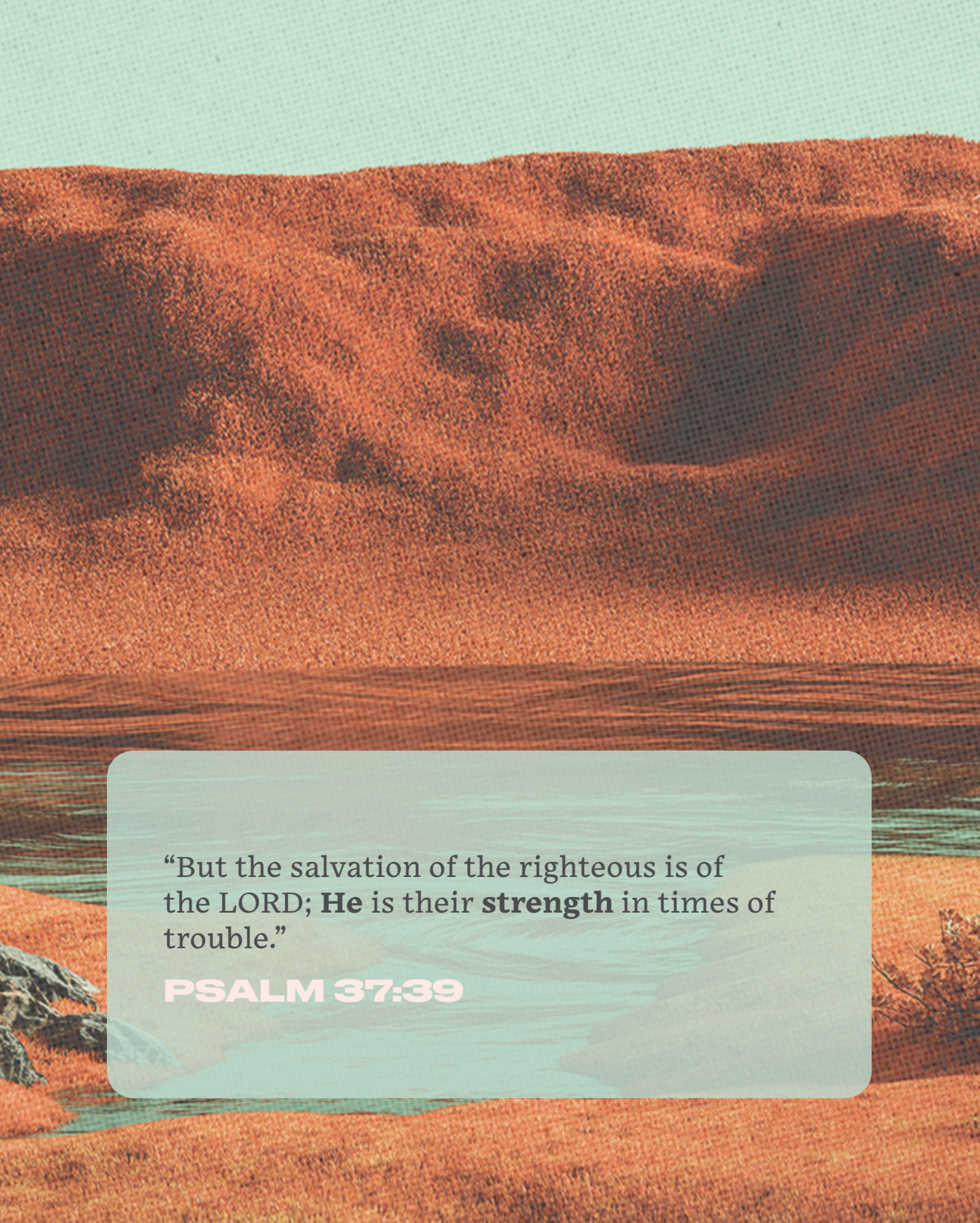
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“But the salvation of the righteous is of
the LORD; **He** is their **strength** in times of
trouble.”

PSALM 37:39

WEEK SIX

RELEASING CONTROL AND FEAR OF LOSS

The fear of failure is most extreme the more deeply you face risk. The fear of failure has a cousin called the fear of loss. It drives us to hold tightly to situations we cannot control. It steals peace and strains relationships. David faced this fear in the wilderness, in leadership, and in his family.

God gently teaches us how to release control and trust His care. This week will help you surrender what exhausts you so you can live in freedom and confidence again.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

PSALM 56:3

MATTHEW 6:34

I PETER 5:7

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

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DAY ONE

OVERCOMING HYPERVIGILANCE

MAIN FOCUS: **CONTROL OFTEN GROWS FROM FEAR, NOT STRENGTH.**
HYPERVIGILANCE is when you fear losing what you have MORE than you desire what you could gain elsewhere. It's truly a form of loss-aversion. It's a compulsive control in your heart. It's disguised as perfectionism or safe-guarding things. You're right to protect and to be vigilant, but you are not right to be a slave to fear of loss. David struggled with this deeply. God meets us in our fear and teaches us to release what is heavy.

KEY VERSES: *"When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you."*
Psalm 56:3

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?"
Psalm 27:1

CONSIDER: Did you have a parent or a teacher who was unpredictable? Did you ever feel abandoned? Did you go through divorce as a child? Did you experience abuse in any way? Did you move frequently?

Did you ever feel like, "If I don't hold it together, everything will certainly fall apart?"

I went through most of this and there have been seasons where I held onto things tighter than I should have. I wanted the outcome to be right. I wanted people to be okay. I wanted the story to work out. The more afraid I felt, the tighter my grip became. That pressure drained me. Control is not strength. It is fear with a mask on.

David lived this tension. He carried fear from his years of multi-faceted pain. He learned to survive through strategy and constant adjustment. Even after God anointed him, those old patterns followed him. In moments of pressure, he leaned on control instead of trust. These decisions made sense in the moment, but they created long term strain in his life.

God invited David into a different rhythm. When fear surfaced, God called him to trust. When pressure built, God called him to surrender. Trust does not remove responsibility. It shifts the weight. It puts the burden back onto the shoulders of the One who can carry it.

PRAYER: Father, show me where fear has made me hold too tightly. Heal the anxious places in my heart. Teach me to trust You with what I cannot control. Strengthen my confidence in Your care.

DECLARE: **LORD YOU ARE MY HIDING PLACE.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

THE PRESSURE TO FIX EVERYTHING

MAIN FOCUS: **CONTROL CREATES EXHAUSTION WHEN YOU TRY TO PLAY A ROLE ONLY GOD CAN FILL.**

A controller micromanages people and environments to prevent failure or loss. They're protecting their image and they believe everything around them represents their image. These same people are pleasers. They want to make sure everyone is happy. This is also to protect their image and sense of safety. David tried to manage outcomes in his own strength. This pressure led him into unhealthy decisions.

KEY VERSE: *"Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth."*
Psalms 46:10

CONSIDER: "If I keep everyone happy, they won't leave." "If everything is right, nothing will collapse." The **fixer** in you takes responsibility for everyone's emotions. The **hypervigilant watchman** part of your heart is constantly scanning for signs of danger or upcoming future rejection, disaster or loss.

Everyone has these protective systems in our lives. Some more extreme than others—but we all have them. You're not crazy. These are called "parts". Paul calls them "thoughts" that need to be taken captive and grown up by the truth of Christ.

I have walked through seasons where I felt responsible for too much. I wanted to help everyone. I wanted every situation to stabilize. I wanted to fix problems faster than they appeared. My intentions were good, but the pressure slowly overwhelmed me. Control always feels noble in the beginning, but it exhausts your soul.

David felt this pressure too. When he aligned with the Philistines at Ziklag, it came from his attempt to manage a dangerous situation. He believed he could protect his men. He believed he could avoid Saul.

The moment Ziklag burned, David reached the end of his strength. His only option was God. Scripture says he strengthened himself in the Lord. It was the first moment in a long time where he stopped trying to fix everything. He looked upward instead of inward. He cast his anxiety on God.

PRAYER: Lord, take the pressure I have carried. Lift the weight I placed on my own shoulders. Help me cast every worry on You. Teach me to trust Your care over my need to control.

DECLARE: **I TRUST GOD, HE CARES FOR ME.**

NOTES

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DAY THREE

THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL

MAIN FOCUS: **CONTROL PROMISES SAFETY BUT CREATES ANXIETY.**

Fear is one emotion that almost always has power to override discipline. You can't build new patterns in your life when your physical nervous system thinks it's in danger. David discovered that control is an illusion when Ziklag burned.

Because David had a history of entering the stronghold of God when his nervous system was in danger, He was able to receive the power of God in a healthy stronghold. God uses these moments to teach us that His leadership brings peace while control drains our strength.

KEY VERSES: *"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* **Matthew 6:34**

"Cast your cares upon the Lord and He will sustain you." **Psalm 55:22**

CONSIDER: These patterns in your life TRAIN your nervous system for new defaults in times of overwhelming chaos:

Prayer rhythms. Healthy eating. Working out. Sleep patterns. Boundaries around your disciplines. Worship. Prayer. Fasting. Silence. Solitude.

There was a solid 2-year season between 2018-2020 where I tried to hold everything together. I planned every detail. I watched every outcome. I believed if I stayed ahead of problems, nothing would collapse. That season taught me something important.

You will create what you're most afraid of. If you fear the Lord, you will rest and establish wholeness. If you fear collapse and chaos, you'll actually create that. Control is an illusion. It gives comfort for a moment, then leaves you anxious and tired.

David lived this lesson. Ziklag represented a controlled solution. He believed it was safer than running. He believed it gave him stability. Yet Ziklag burned. Everything he built collapsed overnight. What David hoped to protect through strategy vanished. This moment broke something in him, but it also opened the door to healing.

PRAYER: Father, help me let go of the illusion of control. Calm my mind. Give me peace about tomorrow. Teach me to trust Your leadership. Strengthen my heart with courage and faith.

DECLARE: **WHEN I LET GO OF CONTROL, GOD GIVES ME PEACE.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

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DAY FOUR

LEARNING TO ASK BEFORE ACTING

MAIN FOCUS: **CONTROL MOVES QUICKLY. TRUST WAITS AND LISTENS.**
David made a massive mistake by choosing to live under the protection of the Philistines rather than live under the protection of the Lord. David moved without asking God and faced loss. When he learned to seek the Lord first, his decisions became wiser. God invites us into this same rhythm of seeking before stepping.

KEY VERSE: *"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this."*
Psalms 37:5

CONSIDER: I Samuel 27:1-7 says, "David said in his heart 'I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape to the land of the Philistines.'"

That's called a deadly stronghold—it's self-protection. Probably worse. It's more like protection under the enemy.

"David said in his heart. . ." is different than inquiring of the Lord. When you get to a point in your pain that you stop inquiring of God, you replace prayer with human wisdom. You replace asking God with asking your gut. You replace using wise counsel with mere instincts.

I have made decisions in my life where I moved too quickly. I relied on logic. I relied on experience. I relied on my own instincts. Later, I realized I had not stopped to ask God. Control rushes. A trusting heart stays connected to God and counsel and does not trust personal understanding alone.

Today, we're all moved by how David rebounded. He failed, but he quickly changed. He strengthened himself in the Lord and stopped relying on his gut. He learned to seek God before moving. He learned to trust God's timing. He learned that waiting is not weakness. It is wisdom.

Jesus prayed before choosing disciples. He sought the Father before major decisions. He balanced action with communion. This is the life God calls you to live. You do not have to rely on old patterns of instinct. You can move with the Spirit's guidance.

PRAYER: Lord, my whole life is rooted in You and I live by Your word. I surround myself with reminders to seek You and You have kept me safe by protecting me and Your calling in me. Lead me, Lord to always run to You first.

DECLARE: **I SEEK GOD FIRST AND HE GUIDES MY STEPS.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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DAY FIVE

SURRENDERING THE OUTCOME

MAIN FOCUS: **TRUST GROWS WHEN YOU SURRENDER OUTCOMES.**

When you learn the difference between your responsibility and God's responsibility, you will have so much more peace in life. You are never responsible for outcomes in life. God is. Governments become controlling deadly machines when they try to play God and control the outcomes of their nation. David became a different leader when he surrendered outcomes to God. You can walk in peace when you release the future into His hands.

KEY VERSE: *"Yes, my soul, find rest in God . . . my hope comes from Him. Truly He is my rock and my salvation."* **Psalm 62:5-6**

CONSIDER: David was only "four chapters" away from the throne, but he abandoned his post. He took 600 men and their families into the enemy's territory. He began raiding different tribes and covering it up with deception.

Don't miss this. This whole season of his leadership was bathed in fear, deception, compromise and living outside of his anointing. He ended up fighting against Israel in the Philistine army.

I Samuel 29 shows David lining up with the enemy to war against Saul. This was a battle David was never authorized by God to fight. This would have destroyed his calling, anointing and destiny . . . maybe permanently. God stepped in and saved David by making the Philistine commanders reject David.

When you hear a voice in your heart that says, "I'm alone. No one is protecting me", watch out. This is a dangerous voice. When you hear, "My calling has been forgotten by God, I've got to figure this out myself..." watch out! You're in a deadly trap.

David reached this place many times. He could not control Saul. He could not control Absalom. He could not control the timing of his kingship. He could not control the politics of the nation. Each moment forced him to decide whether to trust God or carry the weight himself. When David surrendered the outcome, peace always followed and strength returned. His courage returned. He became a leader who relied on God rather than fear.

PRAYER: Father, I surrender the outcomes I cannot control. Take my fear. Take my worry. Lead me in Your peace. Strengthen my trust. Guide me into confidence in Your care.

DECLARE: **GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL AND I TRUST HIM.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

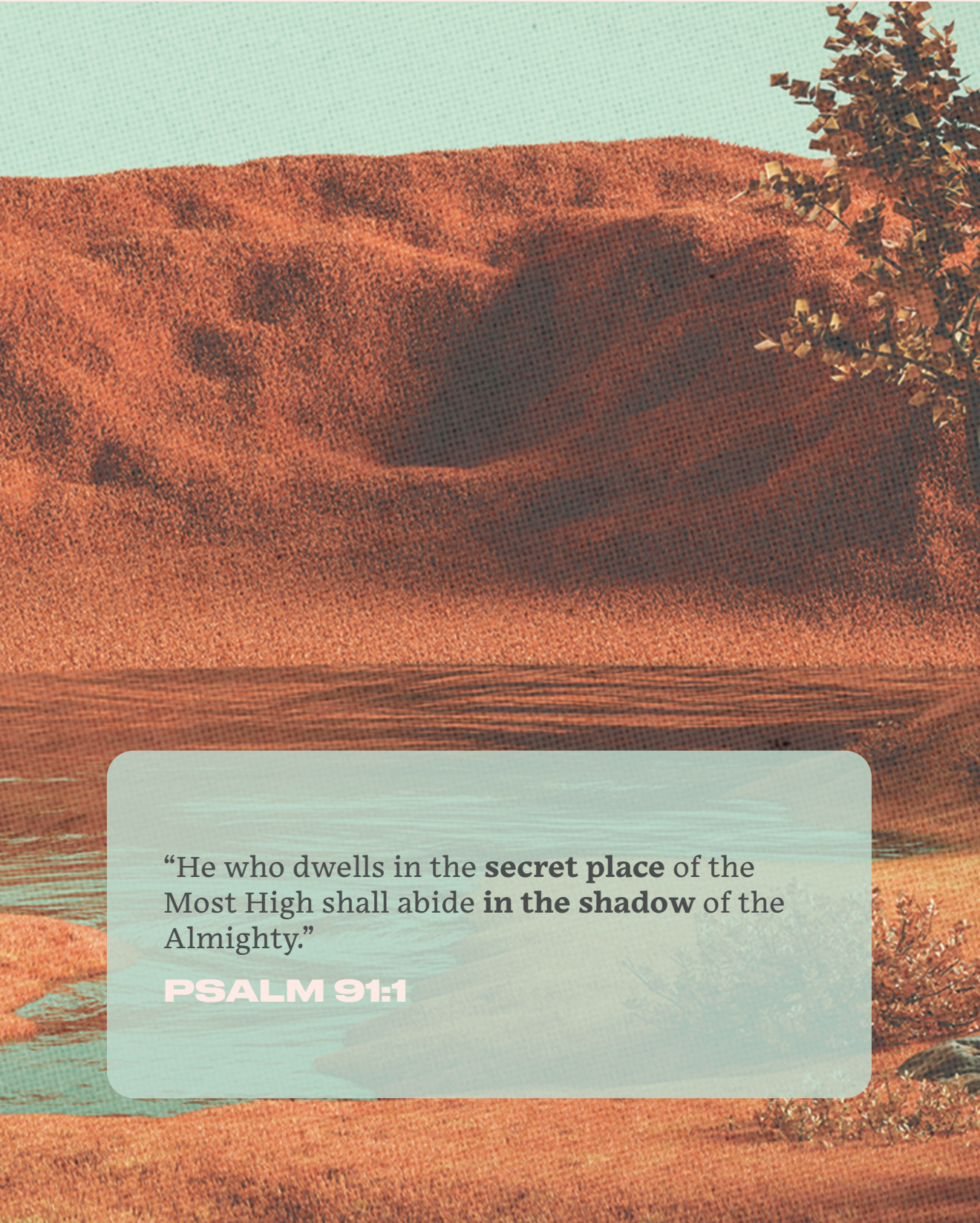
What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

The background is a halftone illustration of a landscape. It features rolling hills covered in dense, reddish-brown foliage. In the foreground, there is a body of water reflecting the sky. On the right side, a tree with autumn-colored leaves (brown and orange) is visible. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, earthy tones like orange, brown, and teal.

“He who dwells in the **secret place** of the
Most High shall abide **in the shadow** of the
Almighty.”

PSALM 91:1

WEEK SEVEN

RESTORING TRUST AND EXPECTATIONS

Trust-related wounds affect the heart in a way few things can. It shakes your confidence and makes trusting again feel risky. David experienced broken trust from friends, leaders, and even his own son. Yet God healed him and taught him to trust wisely and love with strength. This week will help you walk through the pain of broken trust into a restored confidence in God and people.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

PSALM 147:3

GENESIS 50:20

MICAH 7:8

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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DAY ONE

THE STING OF BROKEN TRUST

MAIN FOCUS: **BROKEN TRUST HITS THE DEEPEST PLACES OF THE HEART.**

The reason broken trust hits so deep is because it shakes your sense of safety. Expectations are things you set. Yes, people make promises and enter agreements but you're the one who determines how those things affect your heart and expectations. David knew this pain very well. God met him in the places where trust was shattered and He will for you too. He begins healing work you cannot do on your own.

KEY VERSE: *"Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me."* **Psalms 41:9**

CONSIDER: When you throw a rock into the forehead of a deadly giant and cut the head off of the defeated enemy of God, there are expectations that come with that. Honor. Gratitude. Reward. Favor. Respect.

However, David faced jealousy, violence, manipulation and repeated attacks on his very existence. David's authority, King Saul—failed. He was betrayed by his spiritual authority.

He carried this wound at many points in his life. Leaders betrayed him. Entire towns that he defended betrayed him. Friends he helped betrayed him. Even his own son betrayed him. David understood the shock of realizing someone you trusted is no longer safe.

Psalms 55 gives us a glimpse into David's heart. He describes betrayal as a wound from a close companion. He tells God his fears, his pain, and his disappointment. David teaches us something important. Healing begins when you bring the pain into God's presence. You cast your cares on Him. You let Him sustain you.

"My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me..." As for me, I call to God, and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress and he hears my voice." - **Psalms 55:4-5, 16-17**

PRAYER: Psalms 55:22 says, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be forsaken." I trust You in this. Right now I trust You to never forsake me. Heal the wounds created by betrayal. Strengthen the parts of my heart that feel shaken. I trust in You, God.

DECLARE: **I AM NOT AFRAID TO TRUST. GOD IS MY CONFIDENCE.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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O – OBSERVATION

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A - APPLICATION

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY TWO

LEARNING TO TRUST AGAIN

MAIN FOCUS: **HEALING BEGINS WHEN YOU LET GOD REBUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE IN PEOPLE.**

Disappointment makes trust feel unsafe. Many of you have experienced this lately. Especially in the bloody trail of failed spiritual leaders in the church, government and in other places of authority around us. David had to let God restore his confidence in relationships. You can take the same steps toward healing and connection.

KEY VERSES: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God."* **John 14:1**

"In quietness and trust is your strength."
Isaiah 30:15

CONSIDER: One day I was driving on Interstate 20 around Tyler, TX and I recall saying out loud, "I will NEVER put my life and ministry in the hands of elders again." Thank God, the part of me that said that wasn't in charge of my life. I actually never stopped trusting God THROUGH the oversight and counsel of Godly men and women in my life.

Statements like that are expressed as inner vows but they're born in painful relational moments of life. For a short period of time, I found myself pulling back from people without noticing it. I showed up physically, but I guarded my emotions. My heart felt safer behind distance. Betrayal often creates that reaction. You want to protect yourself. You do not want to be hurt again.

Just months later, I completely laid my whole heart, life and conscience to spiritual leaders seeking help overcoming pain in my life. Even they abandoned me and talked negatively about me. Again, I vowed, "Never again." But still, thank God even that part of me wasn't in charge of me.

David walked through this as well. David lived with suspicion around every corner. Even when people tried to help him, he hesitated. When people prepared to betray him, he pulled back even more. These wounds shaped his relationships for a long time. Yet God kept sending David trusted people. Jonathan loved him well. Samuel counseled him. Faithful warriors gathered around him. God slowly rebuilt David's trust through relationships that reflected loyalty and grace.

PRAYER: Lord help me trust You and to have healthy levels of trust with those around me. Heal the fears and skepticism that grow in the soil of betrayal. Bring the right people in to my life. Restore my confidence in community. Guide me.

DECLARE: **MY HEART LOVES TRUST AND GOD RESTORES WHAT BETRAYAL BREAKS.**

NOTES

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P – PRAYER

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DAY THREE

WHEN GOD RESTORES JOY

MAIN FOCUS: **HEALING BRINGS JOY AND CLARITY ON HOW TO TRUST.**

Joy is not a luxury. Joy is the experience of restoration, salvation, and the presence of God. Joy is the evidence that God has given you vision and hope in how to overcome what is hammering your soul. The first thing to collapse when you're in sin or when you're under attack—is joy. The most powerful thing God can restore is that joy. It's your strength.

KEY VERSES: *"Above all else, guard your heart. For out of it flow the issues of life."* **Proverbs 4:23**

"I will become even more undignified than this..." **II Samuel 6:22**

"The battle is the Lord's". **I Samuel 17:47**

CONSIDER:

Some weekends, I feel a lack of power and anointing. It doesn't mean that the Lord isn't present and it doesn't mean there's sin or something evil happening. Most often it simply means, I'm personally not in a state of joy. Something is robbing my joy in the Lord. Something is distracting joy.

Joy is a settled and peaceful delight in who God is, what God has done, and the deep rich confidence of what God will do. Joy is a fruit or evidence of the Holy Spirit. Joy is rooted in Yeshua, Jesus—our salvation. Joy is deeply tied to God's experienced presence. Joy is the gift of Christ's presence.

Joy is stubborn too. It's powerful. It is loaded with supernatural strength.

From a physical/biological standpoint, joy is based in a peaceful nervous system and is evidence of deeply secure attachment to safety, security and confidence. Joy increases your resilience, trust and sense of hope.

Broken trust tampers with joy. When trust is broken, joy leaks a bit. That leak actually teaches you to slow down . . . not shut down. Joy is so powerful, when it's gone or weak, you see character more clearly. You listen to the Spirit with greater sensitivity. You notice the difference between someone who says all the right things and someone who lives with integrity.

God will restore joy and you'll learn to trust again even more wisely.

PRAYER:

Father, restore the joy of my salvation. Wherever it's lacking today, restore it. I celebrate You and I trust You. Teach me how to trust others with a healed heart. Help me guard what You are healing. Amen.

DECLARE:

I WALK IN JOY AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

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A - APPLICATION

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY FOUR

HOW THE LORD RESTORES JOY

MAIN FOCUS: **RESTORED JOY KEEPS YOUR HEART TIED TO WHOLENESS.**

Joy is always born in the presence of God. It's impossible to truly enter God's presence without the potential of coming away with joy.

KEY VERSES: *"The Lord is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth."* **Psalms 94:1**

"In your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures ever more."
Psalms 16:11

CONSIDER: Joy is a sign of being delivered from shame and control. Joy actually grows to greater fullness when we break the grip of the enemy.

I've learned to expect "something" to work. Something's going to come through. The assignment of God on my life is not going to fail. The fulfillment of His promises in my life are going to come to pass. He has protected me all my life. He has confirmed his presence over and over. He has delivered me from every form of bondage and attack.

Joy has become the natural state of my renewed mind. I am new creation and my true self is full of joy, always. I live in the confidence of the Holy Spirit. Anytime that drifts, I always know the road home. That road is called the road to joy.

David said, "You have made me glad by Your work, O Lord." - **Psalms 92:4.**

Jesus showed us this same strength on the cross. He showed this strength on the road to the cross. Hebrews 12 says, "for the joy set before Him, he endured the cross." Joy is the power of hope, vision and the presence of God ahead of you and through any river of pain.

You do not have to retaliate to get your joy back. Like David and like Jesus, you can entrust everything to the Father right now.

God invites you into this same path. When you release revenge, healing begins. When you trust God with justice, your heart becomes free.

PRAYER: Lord, help me release everything that competes with Your joy. Heal the parts of me that feel hopeless, alone, frustrated and incomplete. Teach me to trust You with great joy and power. Give me peace as I surrender distracting pain.

DECLARE: **I RELEASE DISTRACTING PAIN. GOD IS MY HEALER.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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DAY FIVE

DRAWING JOY FROM SALVATION'S WELL

MAIN FOCUS: **RESTORATION COMES WHEN YOU ALLOW
GOD TO WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER.**

Nehemiah told the people of Israel that they have plenty of reason to feel guilt, shame and sorrow over their sin—but guilt, shame and sorrow never reveal the most powerful light of God for the nations. Joy is that light. Nehemiah said, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” That has and always will be true. Why? Because joy is the evidence that your true hope is in God and not your performance or circumstances.

KEY VERSE: *“Why, my soul, are you downcast. Put your hope in God.”*
Psalm 42:5

CONSIDER: **Isaiah 12:3** says, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

Salvation is like many wells of living water. These are wells we draw from over and over for different types of salvation from the Lord. In these wells are deep rivers of joy for you to draw from. Over and over, the joy of God’s salvation is drawn from by your heart.

The wells of salvation are so deep and unquenchable. Drawing joy from the well of salvation is always possible for you.

Every day, I go to these wells and I’m always satisfied and always experience His joy. There have been moments where pain or failure made the future feel uncertain. You begin to wonder if relationships are safe. You question if your heart will ever feel light again. Hope feels distant. Yet God meets you in these moments. He reminds you that your story is not over.

David reached this point many times. After many betrayed him. After entire cities betrayed him. After his son betrayed him. Each moment held the potential to close his heart permanently. Yet God kept calling David forward. God gave him new friends, new strength, and a new path. David found hope again.

He knew the wells of salvation and drew from them in the Stronghold of the Lord over and over and over. Hope was always alive and well.

PRAYER: Father, lead me to the wells of salvation. I draw deep from Your promises and grace. Heal what has been wounded. Strengthen my heart for the future. Lead me into relationships You have for me and new peace. Help me trust Your plan and Your timing.

DECLARE: **GOD RESTORES MY HEART AND LEADS MY FUTURE.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

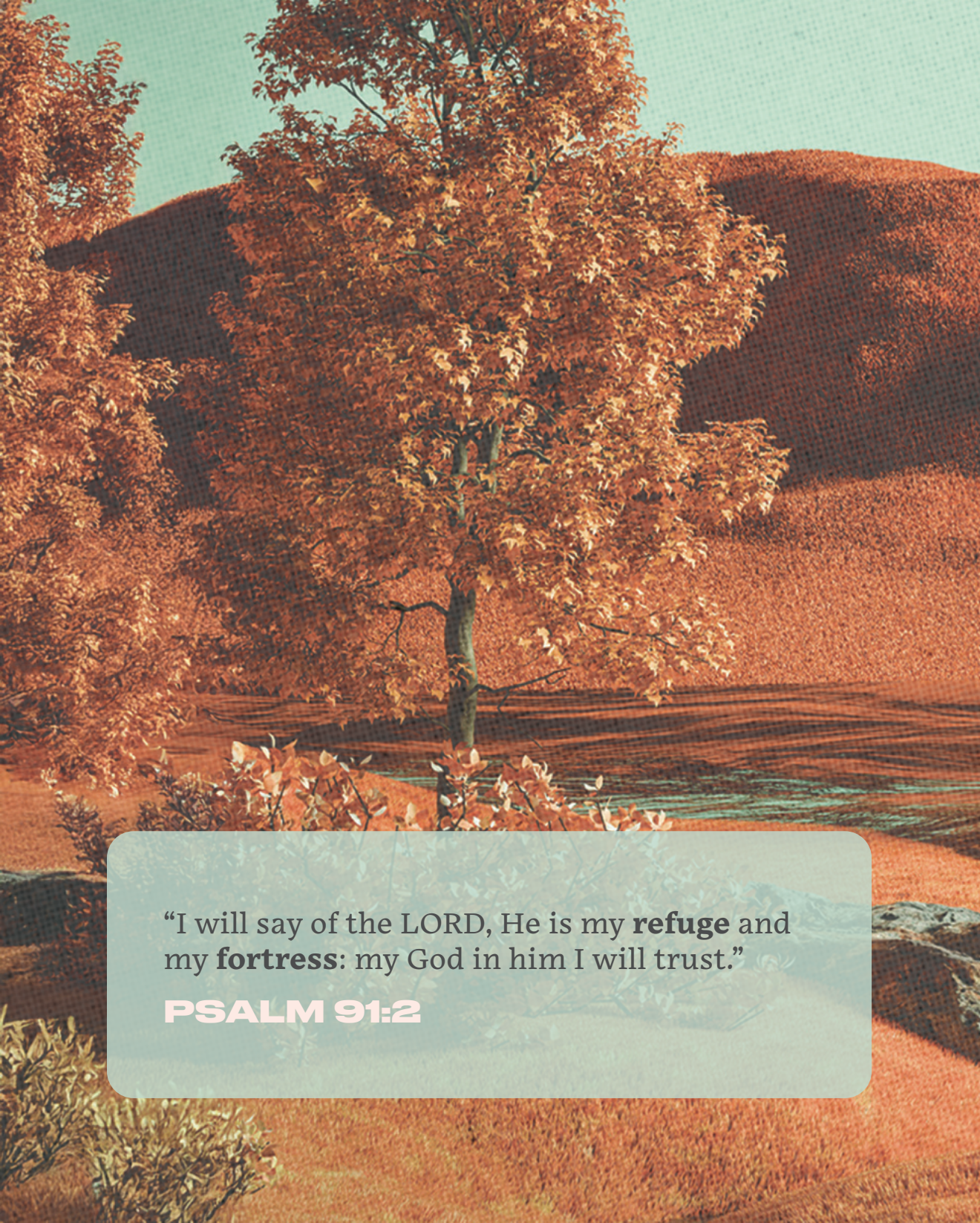
What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

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P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?



“I will say of the LORD, He is my **refuge** and
my **fortress**: my God in him I will trust.”

PSALM 91:2

WEEK EIGHT

STRENGTH FOR DESTINY

David's calling had resurrection parallels to Jesus' destiny. Not equal, but prophetically similar. David was chosen from hiddenness and destined for a throne that he could only see by faith. He lived under great opposition before fulfilling his purpose. He lived out a journey that was loaded with deep worship and joy-filled praise. These were his secret weapons and the key to his durability and victory.

This week will help you face your destiny with great hope.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSES

I SAMUEL 13:13-14

MICAH 7:8

II CORINTHIANS 12:9

SERMON NOTES

DATE: _____

[illegible]

[illegible]

DAY ONE

FAILURE CAN'T RUIN YOUR DESTINY

MAIN FOCUS: **FAILURE BREAKS OUR CONFIDENCE, BUT GOD RESTORES WHAT BREAKS.**
Worship is the power of God keeping your heart tender to Him when you need to keep going. Worship was the secret weapon of David's life. Worship is what happens in any stronghold. In a negative stronghold, you're worshipping a lie. You're bowing down to toxic fear and worry. In the Stronghold of the Lord, you're bowing down to the fullness of life and truth in Christ.

KEY VERSES: *"The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward..."*
I Samuel 16:13

"Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."
Psalms 23:6

CONSIDER: I have been a worshiper all my life. My heart wasn't always pure in it, but I have been drawn to worship. Today, our whole family is. My mom was a worshiper and overcame ridiculous obstacles. My dad is a worshiper and has always been an overcomer.

There have been thousands of moments when I failed in ways that surprised me. Times where I said something too quickly. Times where I acted out of pressure. Times where I disappointed myself. Failure always carries a sting. It makes you question your maturity. It makes you question your strength. It makes you question your calling.

David knew this feeling. But one thing David never stopped doing is returning to worship the Lord. He learned the language of his destiny in the stronghold of the Lord. In the times he was a fugitive, he spoke to God like a secure tower. When he was surrounded by bitterness and distress, he spoke like a fortified man in the fortress of God almighty. His words shaped his destiny and his words were formed in the stronghold of the Lord.

Life and death are in your words. Your present season is not your final destiny, the Lord is your destiny and when you talk like a victor, you will experience walking in great victory.

PRAYER: Father, meet me in the places where I have failed. Restore my confidence in Your love. Cleanse my heart. Renew my joy. Strengthen me for the future You have prepared for me.

DECLARE: **GOD'S MERCY IS NEW EVERY SINGLE MORNING.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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DAY TWO

THE STRONGHOLD IS A SANCTUARY

MAIN FOCUS: **POWER ALWAYS FLOURISHES IN THE SINCEREST HONESTY.**
When you see David in a cave, don't think dark, scary, confinement and fear. See the sanctuary of the Lord. The stronghold of the almighty God. David did not shrink in caves under the weight his fears or his failures. He warred in the heavens with truth with courage. God heals when we stop defending ourselves and begin worshiping Him and speaking His victory with humility.

KEY VERSE: *"I love You, Lord, my strength . . . my fortress . . . my deliverer."*
Psalms 18:1-2

CONSIDER: I have spent hours in the presence of God journaling, crying, praying, singing, writing, repenting, and confessing truth. I have prayed in the Holy Spirit for thousands of hours in my life. I have driven thousands of miles praying, singing, praising, and literally preaching out loud to the highway in front of me.

The places meant to break us can become the places that build us. The pressure that should have crushed us can end up producing songs of deliverance for millions of people.

When the destiny God has for you gets in your vision and in your heart, it shapes your time in the Stronghold of the Lord. When that destiny gets in the heart of a congregation—the whole body of believers becomes a powerful voice of joy and hope in a world of darkness and confusion.

When the assignment of God is clear and the destiny he has for you is deep in your spirit, adversity will become a place of development and not destruction. Strongholds will become sanctuaries and caves of despair will become classrooms where you get trained by the master in the ways of the Spirit. The hiding place of the God's great shelter is the very ground where His Name is your greatest stronghold.

PRAYER: Lord, give me great victory in Your presence today. You are so good. Your ways are higher than anything I know. My joy is full in You and my hope is deep and rich in Your truth. You are my hiding place. You are my strong tower. You are my place of hope. You are my destiny. You are my salvation and in You I trust. Show me the way of Your Spirit and teach me the way of Your wisdom and life. Amen.

DECLARE: **I WALK IN PEACE WITH GOD.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

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DAY THREE

GOD'S PURPOSE IS LOUDER THAN PAIN

MAIN FOCUS: **GOD'S MERCY IS ALWAYS GREATER THAN YOUR WORST DECISIONS.**
If you want to know God's great purpose for your life, then look at the areas of His greatest mercy. God hides the depths of his purpose in the depths of his mercy. David discovered that God's grace reaches deeper than his failure. You can let God heal the places you are afraid to revisit.

KEY VERSES: *"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed. . . His mercies are new every morning."*
Lamentations 3:21-23

"God fulfills his purpose for me." Psalm 57:2

CONSIDER: I can think of at least 8 different times when I believed my failure was too big for God's grace. I just always felt disqualified for some reason. That deep feeling of "disqualified" is one that gets buried and is hard to admit out loud. It holds a lot of shame and lies. When you make a painful mistake, it is easy to assume that God is disappointed or distant. But grace always moves toward broken places.

Always.

David's failures could have ended his story. Yet God met him with mercy. God forgave him. God restored him. God continued to use him. David learned that God's grace can reach the deepest wounds and the darkest moments.

David had no idea that his grandmother Ruth would be in the genealogy of the Savior of the World. David had no idea that Rahab, a prostitute would be a part of shaping his destiny. David had no idea that dozens of prophets hundreds of years after his last breath would speak of the future of the world based on how God demonstrated mercy through David's broken story.

David certainly had no idea that in the belly of his own prayers, miraculous prophecies would be in the mouth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ while he actually was dying on the cross for the sins of the world, even David.

David could not out-sin God's mercy; and God's greatest mercy over David was for His own divine Name's sake and eternal purpose in the earth. Whatever you do, don't ignore the deepest places of mercy in your life. They're where the most powerful Stronghold in the Lord is formed. Worship in that place. Life is there.

PRAYER: Father, I have no idea what You're doing in me, but I trust You. Amen.

DECLARE: **GOD IS ALWAYS WORKING FOR HIS GLORY THROUGH ME.**

NOTES

S – SCRIPTURE

What part of God's Word is standing out today?

O – OBSERVATION

What stands out in your reading or thoughts?

A - APPLICATION

What is God calling you to do today?

P – PRAYER

What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

DAY FOUR

DESTINY CALLS YOU TO KEEP RISING

MAIN FOCUS: **FAILURE IS LOADED WITH LESSONS AND TURNING POINTS.**
David rose again after his darkest moment. God helped him stand, lead, and love with humility. You can rise again with God's strength.

KEY VERSES: *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Don't you perceive it?"*
Isaiah 43:18-19

"For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again..."
Proverbs 24:16

CONSIDER: When I was thirteen, someone prophesied over me that I would preach the gospel. I never doubted that, but I always felt disqualified and not a very likely candidate. I didn't even know how to genuinely draw on the relationship of wholeness in the gospel I preached. I couldn't overcome even the simplest of sins. I had no power over my flesh.

But I always had a tender heart—and that was clearly from God. A gift.

When I've wondered if I should stop following Jesus permanently, he never let me go. When the weight felt too heavy, he never let it crush me. When the disappointment felt too deep, his keeping-grace always ran deeper.

God has always reminded me of something simple. Falling is not the same as being finished. He always helped me rise again and keep moving toward the destiny he has for me.

My most sincere cry to the today is *keep me God*. Don't take away Your hand from my life. I learned this most powerfully from David. After his failures, he fasted. He prayed. He repented. He returned to his responsibilities. He did not pretend the pain was gone. He simply trusted that God was still with him.

The same is happening with you. The destiny the Lord has for you is true. He uses it to call you to keep rising. Don't quit. Never let the crushing pain of life tell you it's over. Joy is in the Lord and joy always comes in the morning.

PRAYER: Lord, raise me up over and over today. Keep me steady in Your love. Lift my heart. Restore my confidence. Heal the places that feel weak. Strengthen me with Your presence. Lead me forward with courage.

DECLARE: **I AM ALWAYS RISING UP. GOD'S LOVE KEEPS ME.**

NOTES

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P – PRAYER

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DAY FIVE

A NEW HEART FOR A NEW SEASON

MAIN FOCUS: GOD USES WARFARE TO SHAPE HUMILITY,
WISDOM AND RENEWED PURPOSE.

Spiritual warfare is loaded with powerful weapons including discerning spirits, prophecy, truth, faith declarations, rebuking the enemy by the Name of the Lord and more. The weapons David fought with were spiritual and the spiritual warfare shaped the victories he experienced and his destiny.

KEY VERSES: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."*
II Corinthians 12:9

"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." **Psalms 138:8**

"Your throne will be established forever." **II Samuel 7:16**

CONSIDER: No pressure, David . . . but your throne is going to be established forever. One day God is going to become flesh and his name will be Yeshua. People will call him, "Son of David". Entire books are going to be written in the Bible and thousands of generations are going to sing of God's great power and love; and in the same sentence, they're going to talk about roots, seeds, branches and descendants of you, David. No pressure, though.

David didn't hear those exact words, but there's something about his worship and connection to His destiny that triggered a different heart than anyone who had ever lived before him. He just never stopped entering the stronghold of the Lord no matter how terribly he fell or sinned.

David became a different kind of leader after his failures. His strength softened. His worship deepened. His prayers grew more honest. He ruled with greater compassion. His heart became more like God's heart because he let God shape him through weakness.

This is the gift hidden inside the stronghold of the Lord. As you war in the heav- enlies and as you gently lead your own self and all of the parts of your heart with the love of God and truth of Christ, I want you to know that crippling pride is being broken, compassion for yourself and others is growing. Dependence on God is becoming rich and the Way of the Lord is yours today like never before. Best Ahead.

PRAYER: Jesus, I trust You and Your ways are my ways. I know you're leading me and my strength and great hope is beautifully in You and You alone. I love my life in You. Amen.

DECLARE: **GOD IS RESTORING TO ME THE YEARS I'VE LOST.**

NOTES

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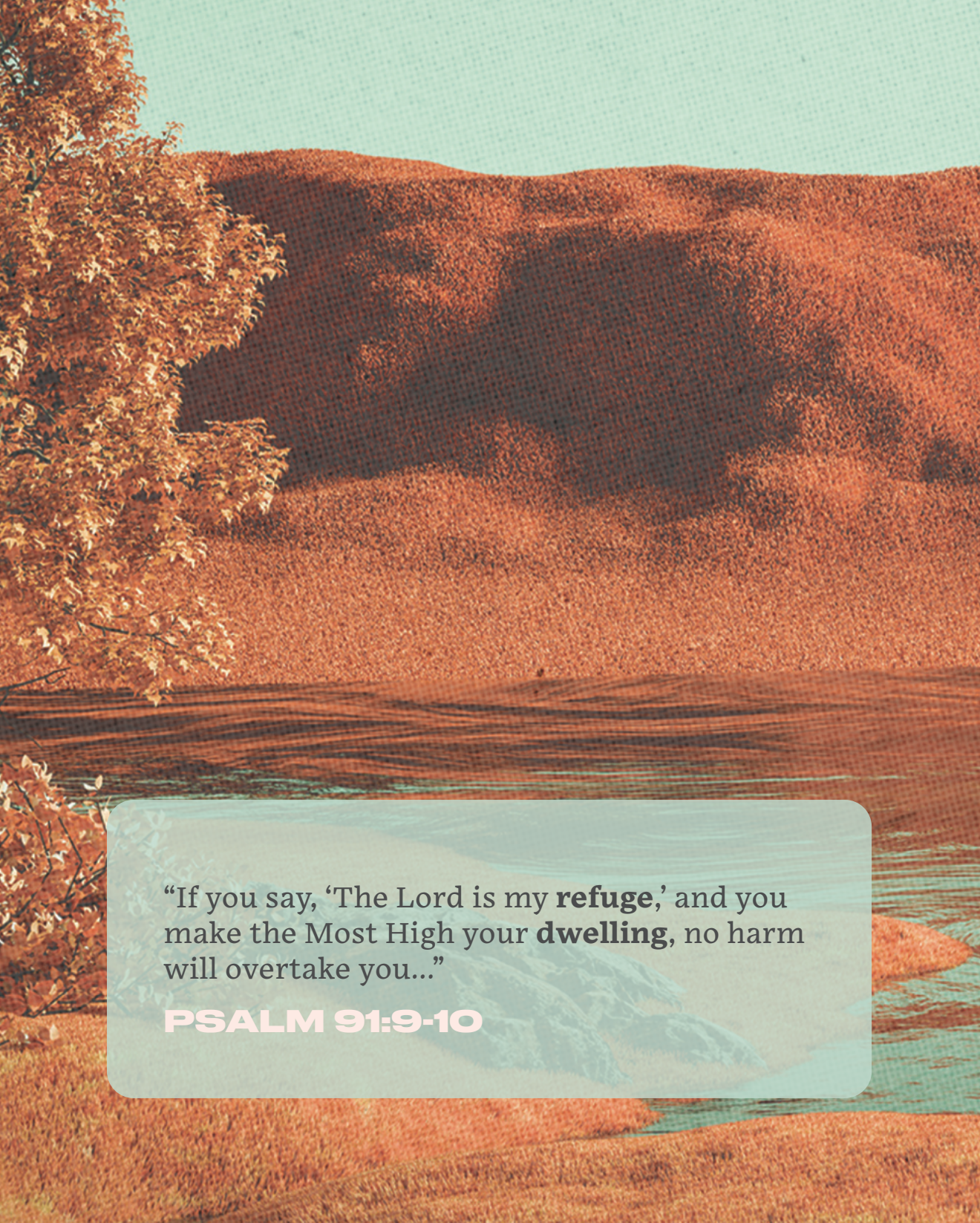
What do you want to say? What do you hear God saying?

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This resource is meant to be used in the context of community so that people can experience the power of living out the ways of Jesus in a way that sharpens life as we practice His ways together.

At Anchor Church, we exist to help you **Know God, Discover Purpose,** and **Change Your World.** Part of knowing God is experiencing Him in the disciplines of your devotion.

This devotion experience is to help you establish the rhythms of Christ's disciplines in your times of devotion and personal worship.



“If you say, ‘The Lord is my **refuge**,’ and you make the Most High your **dwelling**, no harm will overtake you...”

PSALM 91:9-10