

# Cultivating a life without

FEAR  
HURT  
WORRY  
JUDGMENT  
ENVY  
SHAME



## CULTIVATING A LIFE WITHOUT FEAR, HURT, WORRY, JUDGMENT, ENVY, & SHAME

On a basic level, most people *want* to GROW. Most people *want* to grow smarter, learning more about the world in which we live. Most people *want* to grow emotionally, learning how to more effectively communicate with others and experience lasting contentment. Most people *want* to grow spiritually, learning about their purpose in life and actively fulfilling that purpose.

Unfortunately, the first thought that comes to mind about *how* to grow is, “Just tell me what I need to do to experience growth, and I’ll do it.” But this isn’t working. As an example, most people *know* what to do to experience growth, but they’re still not experiencing real growth or lasting contentment.

The solution is difficult, but necessary. To experience growth, one must first identify what is *preventing* real growth from occurring. Fear. Hurt. Worry. Judgment. Envy. Shame. These are a handful of the things that *prevent* real growth, and are often the most difficult to weed out of our lives.

This Devotional / Scripture Reading Guide will be a supplement to the *Cultivating Growth* message series. May it help you identify the things that may be preventing you from experiencing emotional and spiritual growth. And may you begin to take the necessary steps to weed them out, and *experience* lasting growth.

## DAILY READING EXAMPLE:

### DAY 1: DON'T BE AFRAID

The left-side of each daily reading will contain a brief devotional and question for reflection.

### READING:

The right-side of each daily reading will contain a few Scripture verses to read, and additional questions for reflection. You will most benefit from this study by writing out answers to all of the questions in a notebook. This will help you to pause and reflect on the Scriptures and topics for each reading.

### PRAYER:

The right-side of each daily reading will also contain a brief prayer to read and reflect on.

### A NOTE FROM PASTOR JUSTIN:

As I was preparing this Reading Guide, I took the opportunity to think about the way Jesus communicated with others. I quickly realized that whoever He communicated with — whether it was His disciples, drunkards, prostitutes, or religious leaders — He did so with the desire for them to experience *heart change*.

Another way to think about *heart change* is to think about *growing* in emotional & spiritual health. So I skimmed through the Gospels, looking for examples of Jesus clearly communicating what heart change — or growing in emotional and spiritual health — really looks like. One moment in Jesus' ministry really stuck out to me.

Basically, a young man comes to Jesus and asks Him, "*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*" After some quick conversation, Jesus tells the man, "*If you want to be perfect, sell all of your possessions and give the money to the poor. Then, come and follow Me.*" The young man walked away sad, because he was wealthy.

Most biblical scholars are quick to note that Jesus' response was intended for this man alone. Jesus knew that the *one thing* that was *most* preventing him from placing his faith in Jesus Christ and fully trusting God was his wealth.

But here's the thing — *most* of us have something in common with this man. Some may struggle to put their faith in Jesus Christ because they've put their trust in something else. And many who *have* placed their faith in Christ still have at least one thing that discourages or distracts us from fully trusting God.

Maybe it's wealth...

Maybe it's fear...fear that we don't really belong, or we'll never be good enough.

Maybe it's shame...believing that we're *nothing* and our lives are insignificant.

Maybe it's envy...believing that if we just had what some other people have, then we'd be happy.

Maybe it's anger...being frustrated over what other people may say or think about us.

Maybe it's judgment...and we have too many judgmental thoughts towards others.

Maybe it's control...and giving up control to God is a serious challenge.

Maybe it's pride...thinking we're better than others...

Maybe it's doubt...refusing to trust God because we question if He really is *good*.

Truth is, it's quite likely that many of us have *more* than one thing that may be preventing us from fully trusting God, and being all-in.

As we go through this series, and as you go through this Devotional / Reading Guide, it's my prayer that you will not only *identify* some of the things that may be preventing you from being all-in, but that you will allow God to root them out, and by doing so *experience* emotional and spiritual growth.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, by Pete Scazzero

How People Grow, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

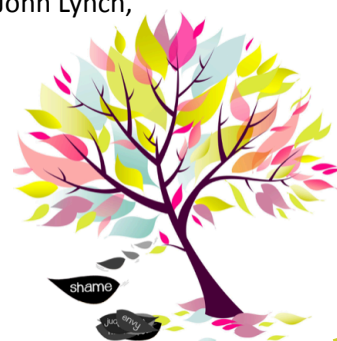
The Cure: What if God Isn't Who You Think He Is And Neither Are You, by John Lynch, Bruce McNicol, and Bill Thrall

Spiritual Direction, by Henry Nouwen

Spiritual Formation, by Henry Nouwen

Discernment, by Henry Nouwen

The Gifts of Imperfection, by Brené Brown



## WEEK 1

# Cultivating a life without FEAR



### DAY 1: THE RICH YOUNG RULER

A man once approached Jesus and asked a very simple question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” But the answer he received left him dejected. Jesus told him to sell all of his possessions and give all of his money to the poor. For this man, it was the *one thing* he didn’t want to give up. He was willing to follow every other commandment.

In the end, the rich young ruler made two great mistakes. First, he was convinced that he could inherit eternal life based on his good works and good deeds. It seems that he would gladly follow the commands of God, without actually trusting God in the process. And this leads directly to his second mistake: he clearly trusts his wealth. In fact, he was so attached to his wealth that the thought of not having it led to tremendous fear. He was afraid of what may happen throughout the rest of life without his wealth.

Chances are high that you have *something* in common with the rich young ruler. There’s *at least* one thing, perhaps more, that discourages or distracts you from fully following Jesus. It could be wealth, or control, or some other stronghold.

As you read today, consider this: What most discourages or distracts you from growing in emotional and spiritual health?

### READING:

**LUKE 18:9-14 and LUKE 18:18-30**

After reading through the above passages, re-read the opening note from Pastor Justin (located on the previous page).

What would you say most discourages or distracts you from growing in emotional and spiritual health?

Take at least two minutes to think through and write down your answer to this next question: What do today’s readings reveal about the nature and character of God?

How can you better reflect this attribute of God today?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I simply acknowledge that there are things in my life that discourage or distract me from growing closer to You and from experiencing lasting contentment. I pray that as I continue through this Reading Guide, Your Word will bring to light some things that I have tried to hide from You and others. I also pray that as my fears, hurts and other anxieties are brought to light, that I will better understand Your grace, that I will receive it with gladness, and that I will *grow* as a result. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 2: DON’T BE AFRAID

Throughout the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John, Jesus offered 125 commands. Of these, only eight are a command to love God and neighbor. But twenty-one times Jesus encouraged others to “not be afraid,” “not fear,” “have courage,” “take heart,” or “be of good cheer.” In fact, if you would take the time to analyze every statement Jesus made, you would discover that the one phrase Jesus spoke *more* than any other is...“don’t be afraid.”

Does this surprise you?

In his book titled *Fearless*, pastor and author Max Lucado writes, “When fear shapes our lives, safety becomes our god. When safety becomes our god, we worship the risk-free life.” He goes on to note, “The fear-filled cannot love deeply. The fear filled cannot dream wildly...If we medicate fear with angry outbursts, drinking binges, sullen withdrawals, self-starvation, or viselike control, we exclude God from the solution and exacerbate the problem. We subject ourselves to a position of fear, allowing anxiety to dominate and define our lives. Joy-sapping worries. Day-numbing dread.”

As you read today, consider this: Why do you think Jesus taught so much about *fear* and *worry*?

### READING:

**MATTHEW 6:25 & 24:6; JOHN 14:27; 2 TIMOTHY 1:7; EXODUS 14:14**

Why do you think Jesus taught so much about fear and worry?

What do you think *most* people are afraid of in today’s culture?

Which of Max Lucado’s thoughts on the topic of *fear* stuck out to the most? Why do you think that is?

What would you say is your greatest fear in life?

### COMITTMENT:

Take the opportunity to write down one of the scripture verses from today’s reading on a small post-it note or index card. This week, memorize this verse.

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word and the many examples where You encourage joy and gladness, and discourage fear. I grateful for the lesson that fear can lead to the inability to love others deeply or to dream wildly. My desire is to be somebody who *regularly* loves others deeply, so I pray that you would continue to reveal anything in my life that discourages or distracts me from real growth. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 3: OUR GREATEST FEARS

Many scholars have set out to identify our greatest fears. Most lists of fears include things such as *Glossophobia*, the fear of public speaking, and *Arachnophobia*, the fear of spiders. While fears such as these are the ones most often talked about, they're not necessarily our greatest fears.

Instead, one of the greatest fears that people have is the fear of *not belonging*. Students, young adults, and even the elderly will often walk into a new environment (classroom, work, church, other) and will immediately ask themselves, "*Do I belong here?*" Or, "*Is there a place for me here?*" And the sad reality is, many will change their appearance, or even the way they talk if they think it'll help them to fit-in and feel like they belong.

Another common fear for many is wondering if they're enough. "*Am I good enough? Am I pretty enough? Am I thin enough? Am I smart enough? Am I strong enough? Am I worthy enough? Am I \_\_\_\_\_ enough?*" Within our culture, questions like these are regularly on our minds. And far too often, we give-in to believing we don't belong and/or we're not enough.

As you read today, consider this: Which of these fears resonates most for you?

#### READING:

**EPHESIANS 3:16-21; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18;  
1 CORINTHIANS 6:11; PHILIPPIANS 1:6**

Which of these two fears have you struggled with more often:

- Do I belong here?
- Am I \_\_\_\_\_ enough?

Think about a time when you felt like you didn't belong. What happened that made you feel that way? What emotions did you have?

What word would you use to fill-in-the-blank in the question above? Why do you think you have questioned (or are currently questioning) whether you are \_\_\_\_\_ enough? In other words, what may be at the root of this fear?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today's reading led me to realize how often I think negative thoughts about not belonging, or believing the lie that I'm not enough. I'm reminded that Jesus came from heaven to earth and died because of the exact opposite. He *wants* me to belong to Him, and He *sees me* as somebody who has tremendous value — so much so that He would choose to die for me. Thank You for this wonderful reminder! In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: WHAT'S PREVENTING YOUR GROWTH?

Take just a moment to think about your upbringing. As you were growing up, when did your parents or teachers most acknowledge their love and appreciation for you? Was it when you behaved well? Received good grades? Did something else that they considered to be "*good?*" This is likely the normal experience for most of us. But sadly, it leads to a negative and/or incorrect view of God.

In their book titled *How People Grow*, Henry Cloud and John Townsend write that *our view of God is **the** greatest obstacle to our growth*. They acknowledge that most people see God as a God of LAWS or a God of RULES. If we behave correctly, or do something "good" then God will reward us for it. And just as we did during our childhood, we strive to do just that, and earn a reward. But when our circumstances don't change, we feel like we must not be behaving correctly, so we try harder and harder. But it never works.

The first *real* step to growth is to acknowledge that God isn't a God of RULES...He is a God of GRACE. And GRACE is unmerited favor. It cannot be earned. It's freely given. And must be freely received.

As you read today, consider this: Do you see God as a God of RULES or as a God of GRACE?

#### READING:

**ROMANS 6:14; HEBREWS 4:16; JAMES 4:6;  
1 CORINTHIANS 16:10**

When you were growing up, when did your parents or teachers most acknowledge their love and appreciation for you? In what ways do you think this may have impacted your view of God?

Be honest: Do you see God as a God of RULES or as a God of GRACE?

In what ways have you tried to *earn* God's favor? What was the result?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that when I think about the things that *prevent* me from growing, my view of who You are hasn't been at the top of the list. Instead, I've thought of You as a God of RULES, and that if I would just behave better, or do *good* things, I would grow. Moving forward, my greatest desire is to accept Your grace, acknowledging that there's *nothing* I have done or will ever do to earn it. By moving forward in this way, I can live more freely from the burden of always trying to prove myself. Grant me wisdom as I live in the light of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 1

- According to Psalm 1, what are some things that may prevent somebody from growing emotional and spiritual health?
- What are some things that lead somebody to growing in emotional and spiritual health?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week?





# Cultivating a life without HURT



## WEEK 2

### DAY 1: UNDERSTANDING HURT

Thomas Jefferson once said, “When angry count to ten before you speak. If very angry, count to one hundred.” There’s tremendous wisdom in that quote! Taking time to pause when experiencing frustration or anger may help you *respond* to a situation and not simply *react* to it. However, counting to ten, or even one hundred won’t always help you get to the root of why you may be angry.

Research has shown that anger is almost always the result of one of two things. First is *fear*, a topic we studied in greater detail last week. A second common cause of anger is hurt. Not just physical pain, but also various forms of emotional distress. Perhaps it’s a death in the family. Or perhaps somebody says something that gets under your skin. Maybe a colleague says something inappropriate about you in a staff meeting. Or maybe a teacher or professor tells your class that your project is an excellent example of what *not* to do. Circumstances like these occur on a near daily basis, and the natural reaction is to feel, or perhaps even lash out in anger.

As you read today, consider this: when you experience frustration or anger, how often do you take time to consider why you’re having such a strong reaction?

### READING:

**MATTHEW 5:43-44; JAMES 1:19; EPHESIANS 4:26-27**

Be honest: How often do you pause to consider *why* you’re feeling frustrated or angry?

Have you ever thought about how to best communicate your frustrations (i.e. hurts/fears) in a way that may prove more effective than lashing out?

Read Matthew 5:43-44. How regularly do you pray for those who have wronged you? (Would you be willing to write out a prayer for them today?)

What have you learned today about the nature and character of God? How will you better reflect His nature and character today?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are times when I don’t pause and consider the reasons as to why I may be experiencing frustration or anger. This week, I pray that You will provide me with opportunities to grow by seeing and understanding the fears and hurts I have, and that You would provide me with wisdom to respond to these situations well. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 2: DIGGING IN: PART I

Think about it: how often do you take opportunities to pause and think about what you’re feeling? Most people in our culture don’t pause. Instead, we’ll numb our lives with work, sports, social media, or anything else to try to escape.

Men, in particular, have a more difficult time talking about their feelings. Pastor Andy Stanley once joked that if you ask a man who has just experienced disappointment what he’s feeling, he’s likely to respond by saying, “I’m frustrated.” Ask why he’s frustrated and he’ll say, “Because I’m angry!” Sometimes, it’s just difficult to know exactly *why* we’re feeling the way we are.

In their study titled Emotionally Healthy Relationships, Pastor Pete Scazzero and his wife Geri provide a simple activity to help people dig-in to what they’re feeling. Let’s try it.

Grab a sheet of paper and give yourself one minute (a full minute!) to answer each of these questions. It will likely be strange to complete this exercise, but it’s an excellent way to help you process through your current emotions.

- What are you mad about?
- What are you sad about?
- What are you anxious about?
- What are you glad about?

### READING:

**PROVERBS 14:29; 16:32; EPHESIANS 4:31-32**

What was it like for you to pause and answer the four questions in today’s devotional? Was there anything about your answers to these questions that was a surprise to you?

Some have argued that it’s better to keep our emotions hidden, as our emotions can deceive us. What do you think: Is it better to know and understand your emotions, or is it better to have or express very little emotion?

Did you grow up in a family that encouraged talking about disappointments, frustrations and other feelings? How much has your upbringing impacted how well you understand your emotions today?

What have you learned today about the nature and character of God? How will you better reflect His nature and character today?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, there are many times when I don’t always recognize the things that may be causing me to feel mad, sad, anxious, or glad. Continue to reveal to me not only *what* I may be feeling, but also the reason *why* I may be feeling it, so that I may respond to difficult situations gracefully. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 3: DIGGING IN: PART II

Take a few moments and think about your average day. How many different people do you see or interact with? Between your home or apartment, classmates, colleagues, and others you may see at the gas station or grocery store, you likely have some form of contact with a few dozen (or more) people every day.

In most of these interactions, you have no idea what may be going on in their lives. You may witness somebody frustrated with a cashier because their credit card was declined. The reality is they're not frustrated because their credit card was declined. Instead, they're hurting because they just put a parent or grandparent in a nursing home. You may see somebody weaving in and out of traffic and think to yourself, "They're driving like a maniac!" But the reality is their son or daughter just experienced a significant injury, and they're trying to get to the hospital.

To put it differently, we sometimes make up stories about what's going on in other people's lives. These *stories* we tell ourselves may be accurate. But on many occasions, we make up false stories that put others in a negative light.

As you read today, consider this: How often do you find yourself making up *stories* about what others may be thinking or doing?

#### READING:

**PROVERBS 19:9; 26:18-19 EXODUS 20:16; MATTHEW 15:18-20**

How often do you find yourself making up *stories* in your mind about what other people may be thinking or doing?

Do you think that making up stories in your mind about what other people are thinking is similar to or different from bearing false witness against them? Explain.

What do you think would be the best steps to take to find out if a story you're telling yourself is accurate or not?

What have you learned today about the nature and character of God? How will you better reflect His nature and character today?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today's reading has revealed to me that there are times when I quickly judge others or their circumstances without taking the time to ask them how they're doing or how I may be in prayer for them. I don't want to be a person who makes up incorrect or inappropriate stories about what others may be thinking or doing. Continue to help me see that others may be experiencing tremendous brokenness, and provide me the heart to help them in their suffering. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: LETTING GO

Within our culture, there's a phrase that is often spoken, but is impossible to live out. That phrase is, "*Forgive and forget.*" The *forgiving* part is a serious challenge in and of itself. The *forget* part, just can't be done. Not only is it an impossible request, but it's not something God speaks to us from His Word.

In 1 Corinthians 13, we read a lengthy definition of love. Love, as it's described in 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV), "*...is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*" If anger truly is the result of hurt or fear, then we could read this passage as, "Love is not easily afraid, or easily hurt." The passage goes on to say that *Love* keeps no record of wrongs. Notice that the passage doesn't say, "Love forgets all the wrong that was done against it." Instead, God simply says that somebody expressing *real love* won't indefinitely hold a grudge. Instead, somebody expressing *real love* will offer forgiveness. They won't *forget* what happened to them. But they will move forward in grace, keeping no record of the wrong that was done against them.

As you read today, consider this: Have you experienced something hurtful in which you haven't offered forgiveness? What would it look like to move forward, keeping no record of wrongs?

#### READING:

**1 CORINTHIANS 13; EPHESIANS 4:32; MATTHEW 6:15**

Have you experienced something hurtful in which you haven't offered forgiveness? What would it look like for you to offer forgiveness, move forward, and keep no record of wrongs?

Why do you think forgiveness is so hard?

In what ways do you think forgiveness can offer personal healing? Explain.

What have you learned today about the nature and character of God? How will you better reflect His nature and character today?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, of the many virtues within Your Word, offering complete forgiveness is one of the more challenging to fulfill. I have sometimes struggled to forgive others, or have continued to keep a record of the wrongs they've done against me. Admittedly, I have sometimes struggled to forgive myself (or accept Your forgiveness) for foolish decisions I have made. Today I ask that You would lead me on a path of forgiveness. May You guide me to *release* those things I've held onto that have only caused pain, and may I experience the freedom from that pain that only can provide. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 5

- Read Psalm 5. What are some things that may have led the author of this Psalm to be angry or hurt?
- Did the author of this Psalm seek out any judgment or retribution of his own? Why do you think that is?
- What is the most memorable lesson you've learned about the nature and character of God this week?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week?



# Cultivating a life without WORRY



## WEEK 3

### DAY 1: WHY WORRY?

In the movie *Bridge of Spies*, insurance lawyer James Donovan (played by Tom Hanks) is required to defend an accused Russian Spy in court. The evidence against the spy is overwhelming. At various points throughout the movie, James Donovan asks his client, “You’re not worried?” Every time, the defendant responds by saying, “Would it help?”

The Russian Spy, Rudolph Abel, knew that he had been caught. He knew that the evidence against him was strong. He knew that he would likely be convicted, found guilty, and would either spend the rest of his life in prison, or perhaps even be sentenced to death. Despite all of this, every time he was asked if he was worried he responded the same way, “Would it help?”

In the movie *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, character Newt Scamander is quoted as saying, “My philosophy is if you worry, you suffer twice.”

As you read today, consider this: What do you find yourself *most* worried about in life? Would you agree that worrying *doesn’t help* or simply leads to *suffering* twice?

### READING:

**MATTHEW 11:28-30; PSALM 55:22; PROVERBS 12:25**

Would you agree that worrying doesn’t help, or simply leads to suffering twice?

Can you think of any circumstance in which *worrying* about the outcome would be helpful?

Take some time to look up additional Scripture passages about worry or anxiety. Commit to sharing a verse you discover with a family member, friend, or another loved one.

God is inviting you to change the way you think about your worries, depression and anxiety. How will you think differently this week?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I want to move forward in life not being controlled by my fears and worries. Throughout this week, I pray that You would reveal to me the things that I worry about that lead me to unnecessary suffering. Help me to remember the truth Your Word, which says that if I cast my cares upon You, that You will sustain me. May my life *always* be sustained in You and in You alone. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 2: WHAT DOES WORRY LEAD TO?

Some individuals have a natural personality of experiencing ongoing angst. In fact, the most common personality type according to the Enneagram personality profile (type six) regularly struggles with angst.

But *angst* is a little bit different than worry, depression and anxiety. Angst is part of an individual’s normal personality. It’s being cautious and careful, desiring to see the big picture in any decision being made. If somebody cannot see the big picture, they experience some angst about the decision. This kind of angst is natural, and protects us from decisions that may lead to more harm than good.

Worry, however, is often a choice. Somebody may worry when there is no immediate threat, still perceiving that something *bad* or *unfortunate* is going to happen. The longer they stay in this pattern of believing something bad is going to happen, the more likely they are to experience depression or ongoing anxiety.

As you read today, consider this: When you’re making a decision, are you more likely to dwell on the best possible outcome, or the worst? Why do you think that is?

### READING:

**DEUTERONOMY 31:8; 1 PETER 5:6-7; ROMANS 8:38-39**

When you’re making a decision, are you more likely to dwell on the best possible outcome, or the worst? Why do you think that is?

Have you ever considered the difference between angst and worry?

What are some things you have done that have helped lessen your worries, depression, or anxieties? Similarly, what are some things you’ve done that haven’t helped?

God is inviting you to change the way you think about your worries, depression and anxiety. How will you think differently this week?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for inviting me to think differently about my worries and anxieties. Today, I invite You to point out anything in my life that may lead to ongoing anxiety, and to reveal to me the best next step I can take to remove them from my life. I also pray that You would present me opportunities to help ease the worries and anxieties of others by sharing with them the truth of Your Word. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### DAY 3: WHAT CAN YOU CONTROL?

Take just a minute to write down the four biggest stressors you have in life *right now*. Of these four stressors, which ones do you have some control over? (Weight Loss, Diet, How you respond to marriage/family relational challenges, Debt, Time Management, etc.) And which ones do you have no control over? (Other people's attitudes and/or decisions, work schedule, etc.)

Here's how this plays out in our lives: we don't provide the time and attention to the things we *can* control because we stress too much about the things we *can't* control. We think things like, *"Well, I can't really do anything about my work schedule right now, so maybe I'll eat out to feel better."* Or, *"My extended family members are so far from God right now, I'm so worried for them! Maybe I should go shopping so I can stop thinking about it."*

You see? Stressing about those things *outside* of our control hinder our ability to make progress in the areas we *can* control. Perhaps it's time to be different. Write down those things that you *know* you cannot control, and set them aside. Put them someplace where you'll see them often (a jar on a shelf), and every time you see them you can remind yourself that God is in control. Then, you can better partner *with* God and focus your energies on those stressors in which you know you have some control.

### DAY 4: RENEWAL OF THE MIND

Have you ever heard your grandfather say, "Back when I was your age, we weren't afraid of a little snow. In fact, we used to walk to school in 2 feet of snow!" He may have exaggerated the story a little bit more each time. But the main point was the same: *we weren't afraid of a little snow*.

But today, we do *worry* more than we used to. We worry about allowing our kids to roam the neighborhood and play, concerned that something bad may happen. We worry about preparing a Holiday meal for the extended family, concerned that there won't be enough or that it won't be prepared well. We worry about what they'll think of the house. We worry about what they may say. We worry about...far too much.

Statistically, our kids are safer now than ever. We just worry more because we see news media that regularly shows bad things happening. As for the Holiday dinner...we worry because we care too much about what others think. In fact, some of us spend too much time worrying about what we think others are thinking!

Bottom line: We need to change the way we think. As you read today, consider this: What steps do you need to go through to experience a renewal of the mind?

#### READING:

**ISAIAH 35:4; 41:10; 1 JOHN 4:18; PSALM 23:4**

What are the biggest stressors in your life in which you have *no* control over? Do you think that physically writing them down and setting them aside may help you remember that God is in control?

Read 1 John 4:18. What do you think it means that there is no fear in love? How would you explain this verse to a friend or relative who struggles with fear and worry?

Have you ever found yourself failing to overcome the things in which you *do* have some control over because you gave in to worrying about the things in which you have *no* control over?

God is inviting you to change the way you think about your worries, depression and anxiety. How will you think differently this week?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I'm grateful for the reminder that there are challenges in my life which I can control, but there are others that are fully outside of my control. Help me to grow by rooting out all of the weeds (things in which I have no control) so that even though I walk in darkness, I will fear *no* evil. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### READING:

**ROMANS 12:2; PHILIPPIANS 4:8; EPHESIANS 4:21-24**

Some scholars have noted that a renewal of the mind isn't something that happens overnight. Instead it takes time, and a lot of practice. Given your life schedule, what steps can you take to regularly practice and experience a renewal of the mind?

Of the three scripture passages you read today, which one resonates with you most? Why do you think that is?

What are 2 - 3 things in your everyday life you can limit or completely remove that may help you to worry less?

God is inviting you to change the way you think about your worries, depression and anxiety. How will you think differently this week?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You once again for the truths communicated in Your Word. I'm grateful that there can be a renewing of the mind, and it's my desire to commit to trusting You to help me get there. Continue to reveal to me Your good, pleasing, and perfect will, and may I reflect the essence of who You are as I interact with others today. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 55

- Read Psalm 55. What are some things that may have led the author of this Psalm to be worried or afraid?
- What steps did he take to experience growth and healing from his worries? (see v.22)
- How will you continue to think differently about your worries, depression & anxieties in the weeks ahead?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week? About God? Other?





# Cultivating a life without JUDGMENT



## DAY 1: JUDGING OTHERS

Let's be honest: it's *easy* to judge others. It's easy to judge how they drive. It's easy to judge how they parent. It's easy to judge how they work. It's easy to judge how they dress. It's just...easy to judge.

But have you ever stopped to think about why we judge others? Some researchers have learned that the primary reason we judge others is because we think lowly of ourselves. In other words, research has shown that if we think we can convince ourselves that others have a more pathetic life than we do, then we'll feel better about who we are. But guess what? It doesn't work...EVER!

What does work, is coming to the realization that we cannot grow if we regularly judge others. Why? Because we cannot grow if we think lowly of ourselves. And if we judge others primarily because we think lowly of ourselves, we just get caught in this vicious cycle.

While the solution sounds simple, it's quite difficult to put into practice on a regular basis. Our culture has basically *trained* us to be judgmental towards others. Doing the opposite takes diligence, and a willingness to allow others to hold us accountable.

As you read today, consider this: Are you willing to give others permission to hold you accountable to being less judgmental?

## READING:

**MATTHEW 7:1-5; JOHN 8:1-8; JAMES 4:11-12; PROVERBS 27:17**

Are you willing to give others permission to hold you accountable to being less judgmental. (Proverbs 27:17)

What do you think is the difference between judging others vs holding others accountable for their actions? In other words, when is it OK to hold somebody accountable, and when does it cross a line to judging them?

Would you agree that we often judge others as a way to try to feel better about ourselves? Why doesn't this work?

God is inviting you to change the way you see yourself. How will you think differently about yourself this week?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are times in my life when I judge others and that I have done so just to try to feel better about myself. This week, I pray that You will continue to lead and guide me to see myself in the same way You see me. Not as someone who is of little value, but as someone who You valued so much that You sent Jesus to give His life for me. May this truth resonate deep within me! I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: JUDGING YOURSELF

Take just a moment to look back to the first week of this study. What is *one thing* that discourages or distracts you from growing in emotional and spiritual health? It's possible your answer to that question has changed over the past few weeks. It's also possible that your answer to that question — is you. In other words, it's possible that you have such a low opinion of yourself, that you're not even sure you *can* grow.

Recent surveys have indicated that one of the most common things that prevents people from experiencing emotional and spiritual growth is Negative Self-Talk. And while women are generally more open to admitting they struggle with negative self-talk, men struggle with it just as much.

*I'm such an idiot. I can't believe I forgot to put the garage door down after I got home.*

*I can't believe I forgot about that meeting today. I'm such a loser. 12,000 miles since the last oil change? Wow, I'm a moron.*

*I knew we were out of groceries and I still didn't go shopping, because I'm lazy.*

As you read today, consider this: How often do you have negative self-talk? Has anything *good* ever come from it?

## READING:

**EPHESIANS 5:29; GALATIANS 2:20; PSALM 139:14; JEREMIAH 29:11**

How often do you have negative self-talk? Has anything good ever come from it?

Case Study: You miss an important deadline because you're overslept after being out too late the night before. How would you respond:

- *"I'm such an idiot!"*
- *"That was a foolish thing to do. And here are some steps I will take so that I don't make that mistake again later in life."*

God is inviting you to change the way you see yourself. How will you think differently about yourself this week?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there are days when I think negative thoughts about myself. Continue to lead and guide me this week to see myself in the same way that You see me. Remove from me everything that may distract or discourage me to grow - Fear, Hurt, Worry, Judgment, Envy & Shame - so that I may continue to grow into the person You have created me to be. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: RECEIVING JUDGMENT FROM OTHERS

It's hard to receive negative criticism from others. And when we do receive it, there are usually about three options in how we respond:

- Get angry and offer excuses or blame shift
- Throw our hands in the air and say, *"I don't really care what anybody else thinks."*
- Receive the criticism well, and grow as a result.

Option 1 doesn't work very well, and doesn't help us to relationally connect with others well. Option 2 completely removes all capacity for connecting with others. If we never care what others think, we will eventually shut out feedback that may prove quite helpful. Option 3, of course, is the best path to choose. But what does it mean to receive criticism well?

This is a difficult question, but one step is to ask ourselves some tough questions. *Is there any truth to what they said? If so, that doesn't mean I'm a terrible person. It just means I made a mistake and I can grow as a result.* Like yesterday's reading, offering positive self-talk is perhaps the best step we can take.

As you read today, consider this: How well do you receive judgment or criticism from others?

### DAY 4: RECEIVING JUDGMENT FROM GOD

Christians within our culture grow up with many different thoughts and teachings about God. But one of the things in which all denominations agree — whether Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Catholics or others — is that the God of the Bible is a *righteous* God and a *just* God (See Psalm 89:14). As such, He will hold us accountable in this life, and in the next, for our decisions. How can we receive accountability and discipline from God in a way that will ultimately lead to growth?

First, it's essential to understand that God doesn't look at our poor decisions in life and say, *"What in the world is wrong with you?"* Remember, our God is a God of GRACE first, and we must see Him in this light. So when we make a poor decision, God isn't saying, *"I'll love you when you clean up this mess,"* He's saying, *"I love you so much I'm going to help you clean up this mess."* He's not a God observing from far away, but is right next to us, deep in the muck and mire with us.

Second, it's just as important to understand that God wants to see us grow. In the same way a parent wants to see their child do well in life, God is seeking to accomplish the same within our lives.

As you read today, consider this: How well do you receive judgment or discipline from God?

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 40

- Read Psalm 40. What does this Psalm say about God helping us out of the muck and mire of life? (see v.2)
- What is the most memorable lesson you've learned about the nature and character of God this week?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week?
- Take 10 minutes to write out your own prayer to God today.

#### READING:

**GALATIANS 6:1; PROVERBS 27:6; EPHESIANS 4:29; ECCLESIASTES 5:2**

How well do you receive judgment or criticism from others?

What does it mean to restore somebody gently? (Galatians 6:1)

A counselor once said, *"If somebody treats you poorly and you continue to allow them to treat you poorly, you're basically teaching them that it's OK to treat you poorly."* What steps can you take to receive criticism from others, *and* help coach them on how they can share constructive criticism with you in a way that you will receive it well?

God is inviting you to change the way you see yourself. How will you think differently about yourself this week?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, there are some people in my life who I feel comfortable receiving constructive feedback from, but there are others who often share feedback in such a way that leads me to anger. Provide me the wisdom I need to help others share constructive feedback with me in a way that will lead me to growth. This will be difficult, but I will continue to trust You throughout the process. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### READING:

**DEUTERONOMY 8:5-6; JOB 5:17-18; HEBREWS 12:5-9**

How well do you receive judgment or discipline from God?

Be honest: Do you normally think of God as saying, *"I'll love you more when you clean up this mess,"* or a God who says, *"I love you so much I'm going to help you clean up this mess?"* Does this help you to see or think about the nature and character of God any differently?

God is inviting you to change the way you see yourself. How will you think differently about yourself this week?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, once again, today's reading has helped me to see You as a God of GRACE first, and not as a God of RULES. Thank you for Your unmerited favor. Thank You for loving me in ways in which nobody else can. Thank You for being with me, and helping me out of the muck. And thank You for disciplining me in order to help me grow.

Today, may I continue to better reflect and represent the essence of who You are (a God of GRACE) to all I interact with. I pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.



## WEEK 5

# Cultivating a life without ENVY



### DAY 1: WHAT IS ENVY?

Of the many different things that may discourage or distract us from growing in emotional and spiritual health, envy is one that may very well top the list. But what is envy?

In a nutshell, envy is the desire to have somebody else's life. Or in other words, it's resenting somebody else for the life they have.

Some marks of a person who struggles with envy may include:

- Not rejoicing in what others have or get to experience. Instead, resenting them because you don't have what they do.
- Finding fault with a particular person regularly.
- Being comforted or rejoicing when something bad happens to somebody in a position of authority.
- Regularly experiencing self-pity.
- Regularly struggling with comparison-itis. Nothing is good enough. Your job isn't good enough. Your marriage isn't good enough. Your love life isn't good enough. Your body isn't good enough. Most aspects of life aren't good enough, because you compare everything you have against others.

As you read today, consider this: Why do you think it's hard for people to admit they struggle with envy?

### READING:

**EXODUS 20:17; GALATIANS 5:26; HEBREWS 13:5**

Why do you think it's hard for people to admit they struggle with envy?

Think about it: what are at least five possible consequences to a life of envy?

How many of these consequences have you personally experienced?

God is inviting you to root out any and all envy you may be experiencing in your life. Ask God to reveal any envy you may be experiencing in your life.

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I recognize that You are inviting me to root out all envy from my life. I don't *want* to continually struggle with comparison-itis, but our world functions in constant comparison. Lead and guide me to see envy for what it really is. Provide me wisdom to not only recognize it, but to root it out so that I may better rejoice with others, and not constantly condemn them. Lead me into a life of contentment. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 2: THE RESULT OF ENVY: PART I

Have you ever had a friend or loved one tell you that they struggle with envy? The answer for the majority who are reading this right now would be a big fat *no*. This is because it's very difficult for anybody to admit that they have any envy. Similarly, it's even more difficult to confront somebody who may struggle with envy.

Secular scholar Joseph Epstein has done years of research on the topic of envy. In an essay discussing why we don't want to confront others who are struggling with envy, Epstein writes, *"Most of us could still sleep decently if accused of anger or pride or lust or even greed, but to be accused of envy would be by far the worst. So clearly does such an accusation go directly to character. The other sins, though all have the disapproval of religion, do not so thoroughly, deeply, demean, diminish or disqualify a person. But you see the distinction of envy is its enormous pettiness."*

In other words, Epstein concludes that we don't like to confess to struggling with envy because it goes directly against our character. We don't like to confess to struggling with envy because it makes us look petty.

As you read today, consider this: How could somebody help you root out any envy you may have in order to grow?

### READING:

**JAMES 3:7-18**

How could somebody help you root out any envy you may have in order to grow in emotional and spiritual health?

Do you agree with Epstein, that envy is one of the greatest character flaws we can have? That envy makes us look petty? Explain.

According to James 3:7-18, how does envy lead us to speak about others?

God is inviting you to root out any and all envy you may be experiencing in your life. Who is somebody you trust who you can talk with about your envy? If possible, schedule a time to talk with them sometime within the next week.

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder that how I see others and speak about them really matters, because You have created *all people* in Your likeness. Continue to provide me with wisdom to see others as You do, and to regularly offer words of encouragement and not condemnation. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: THE RESULT OF ENVY: PART II

Have you ever stopped to consider your level of contentment in life? Perhaps it would be better to ask it this way: On a scale of 1-10, how content are you *right now*?

As you may have guessed, one of the things that leads us away from contentment — is envy. Not only that, but envy is the one thing that has the potential to completely suck the joy out of our lives.

Regarding the seven deadly sins, scholar Joseph Epstein writes that each of these sins may lead to a temporary satisfaction...except for envy. He writes, *"Giving into sloth and laziness, is rather pleasant. Giving into a loss of temper, entails a release that is not without its small delights. And lust, greed, pride, bring quite a bit of pleasure... Only envy is absolutely no fun at all, draining all joy from you from its very first moment. We have all felt envy's desperate deep soul-destroying lacerating stabs."*

From a Christian perspective, all sin leads us away from our ability to fully trust God (Galatians 5:19-21). But in his research, Epstein concludes that *envy* is the one thing that most drains joy from our lives. As you read today, consider this: On a scale of 1-10, how content are you right now?

#### READING:

##### JAMES 4:1-17

On a scale of 1-10, how content are you *right now*? Is it possible that envy is the one thing that is completely sucking the joy out of your life?

Think about a time in your life when you were experiencing the most contentment and joy. What was that season of your life like? Were you experiencing much envy?

What scripture verse in James chapter 4 stuck out to you most in your reading today? How will you apply this verse throughout the rest of the week?

God is inviting you to root out any and all envy you may be experiencing in your life. Have you scheduled a time to meet with a trusted friend to talk with them about your envy?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, while I may not be living in complete discontentment, I realize that I could (and should) have more contentment than I'm currently experiencing. Today, my desire is to simply praise You for all of the good I have in my life, and not disparage others for what they have. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: DEALING WITH ENVY

Imagine for just a moment having a life without envy.

- The guy next doors gets a new truck, and instead of resenting it, you celebrate with them.
- A colleague with three years' less experience gets the promotion you applied for, and instead of criticizing your superiors, you thank them for the time and energy they poured into the process.
- A person with tremendous political authority gets arrested for breaking campaign finance laws and instead of celebrating, you pray for them and for those who will be taking over the office.
- Your favorite sports team loses the championship. Instead of ridiculing the officials or the fans from the other team, you congratulate them for a great season.
- A friend loses twenty pounds and instead of remaining in self-pity, you send a card congratulating them on their diligence.

As you read today, consider this: Imagine a life with no envy. Imagine others rejoicing with you when you rejoice, and mourning with you with you mourn. Imagine doing the same for others. What would that look like?

#### READING:

##### ROMANS 12:1-21

What are three ways your life would be different if you regularly lived without any envy towards others?

How regularly do you rejoice with others when they rejoice, and mourn with them when they mourn?

What steps can you take to hold yourself accountable to having less envy? (Example: I will regularly write down all of the good things that are happening in my life.)

What steps can you take to allow somebody else to hold you accountable to having less envy? (Example: Who can you give permission to speak things like, "I've noticed you seem envious or jealous when \_\_\_\_\_ happens. Can we talk about ways to rejoice in that and not loathe them or experience self-pity?")

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today's reading has helped me to see that there are many times in my life when I do not rejoice with those who rejoice or mourn with those who mourn. But that's the kind of person I want to become. Continue to lead me, guide me, and hold me accountable to being the person You've created me to be. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 73; PROVERBS 23:17-18

Read Psalm 73. What does this Psalm say about the consequences of envy (see vv. 3 and 21-22).

- What is the most memorable lesson you've learned about the dangers of envy this week?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week?
- Take 10 minutes to write out your own prayer to God today.





## WEEK 6

# Cultivating a life without SHAME



### DAY 1: SHAME VS. GUILT

Pause for a minute and think about this: what is the main difference between shame and guilt?

This is a question that both secular scholars as well as christian counselors have wrestled with for a number of years. From a biblical perspective, it's an interesting question as the Bible seemingly has a different way of seeing shame vs guilt.

Shame often leads us to try to hide from God. For example, in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree, they immediately experienced *shame* and they tried to *hide* from God as a result. Guilt, on the other hand, leads us back towards God. Psalm 25:3 notes that those who hope in God will ever be put to shame. The Bible says that we are all *guilty* of sin (Roman 3:23) but we may still experience life by calling on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13).

Another way of thinking about is this: Shame says, *"I'm a terrible person,"* but guilt says, *"I did something terrible."* Shame says, *"I'm such an idiot for forgetting to do that,"* but guilt says, *"I made a mistake, and I'm going to learn from it."*

As you read today, consider this: Have you considered the difference between shame and guilt?

### READING:

#### GENESIS 2:15-3:19

Have you considered the difference between shame and guilt?

Based on the examples in today's reading, would you say that you struggle more with *guilt* or with *shame*?

Like Adam and Eve, is there anything in your life you're trying to *hide* from God, or are you yourself *hiding* from Him? What do you think would happen if you stopped hiding and entered fully into His presence?

God is inviting you to live a life completely free from shame. What does this reveal to you about His nature and character?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today has helped me to see that I regularly experience more shame in my life than I may have realized. This week, I pray that You will root up any shame in my life that has led me to hide from You. While this process may be painful, I believe that it will help me to better know You, and better know the plans that You have for my life. May I continue to know You more and more each and every day. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 2: THE LIES THAT LEAD TO SHAME: PART I

In Genesis 2:25, sin had not yet entered the world. Regarding Adam and Eve, this verse says, *"Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."* It's an extremely important verse in the Bible because it shows that God created the world in such a way that we would never experience shame.

But after sin enters the world, Adam and Eve recognize their nakedness, and they hide from God. God walks through the Garden of Eden and asks them two important questions. First, He asks, *"Where are you?"* And second, He asks, *"Who told you that you were naked?"* In that moment, God knew that Adam and Eve had experienced shame, and they only experienced it because they believed a lie from the enemy.

Now imagine for a moment that God is asking you the same questions. First, to anybody hiding from Him, He asks, *"Where are you?"* And second, to anybody experiencing shame, He asks, *"Who told you that you were stupid? Who told you that you were fat? Who told you that you were lazy? Who told you that you were ugly? Who told you that you'll never amount to anything? Who told you..."* As you read today, consider this: There are many lies that lead to shame. Which lies do you hear most often?

### READING:

#### JEREMIAH 23:23-24; HEBREWS 4:12-13; PSALM 139:7-12

There are many lies that lead to shame. Which lies do you hear most often? Which *one lie* do you hear most often?

When you hear these lies, how do you find yourself responding to them (eg. hiding from God, believing the lies, shaming others, etc)?

How would you respond to God if you heard Him ask the question, *"Where are you?"*

God is inviting you to live a life completely free from shame. What does this reveal to you about His nature and character?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I have believed many lies that have only brought me shame. By believing these lies, I have not only hidden from you, but have also used these same lies against others, leading them to experience shame. Forgive me for the times I have done this, and forgive me for the times when I haven't fully trusted You. I no longer want to believe any of the lies that the enemy may throw my way. Instead, I simply want to focus on the love and grace that You and You alone can provide me in full. May I continually rejoice in that! I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: THE LIES THAT LEAD TO SHAME: PART II

Have you ever paid close attention to Scripture verses that mention the devil throughout the Bible? As you read passages such as Genesis 3:1 and Matthew 4:1-11, you quickly see a pattern.

The first thing you may notice is that the devil knows the Scriptures really, really well. He may be foolish thinking that he's better than God, but he's not unintelligent. He knows the Bible inside and out.

The second thing you may notice is that the devil challenges the Word of God and what it *really* says. In Genesis 3:1 the serpent asks Eve, *"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"* Then in Matthew 4:1-11, The devil encourages Jesus to throw Himself off the temple, going on to quote an Old Testament passage stating that God would protect Him. Clearly, the devil is cunning, and will try to get us to believe lies that ultimately lead to shame. To combat this, we must replace these lies with the truth.

In John 8:31-32, Jesus says, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* As you read today, consider this: What steps can you take to hold to Jesus' teachings, remind yourself of the truth, and be set free from shame?

#### READING:

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17; EPHESIANS 6:12; JOHN 8:31-32; GENESIS 15:6**

What steps can you take to hold to Jesus' teachings, remind yourself of the truth, and be set free from shame?

If it's true that the devil is real and also knows the Scriptures inside and out, then how important is it for you to know the Bible well?

Moving forward, what are some steps you will take to get to understand and know the Scriptures better?

God is inviting you to live a life completely free from shame. What does this reveal to you about His nature and character?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I simply want to live my life by abiding in Your Word! While there are parts of the Bible that I may not fully know or understand, I still believe that You have provided the Scriptures for my benefit. May Your words regularly be used to teach me, correct me, reprove me, and train me for everything that is righteous, and holy, and good. And may I come to know Your Word so well that I'm able to regularly encourage others. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: SHAME CANNOT DEFINE YOU

Christian author and speaker Christine Caine speaks regularly about the impact that shame can have in our lives. She has noted that she was left nameless on her birth certificate because her mother wasn't sure she would keep her. This pattern continued, as later in life a social worker wrote that her mother wasn't progressing and didn't seem overly attached to her child. Later in life, a professor wrote that Christine should find something she's good at, but that public speaking wouldn't be a career in which she could do well. (Christine shared all of these things during the Passion 2018 conference in front of tens of thousands of college students.)

Her story is important, because it shows that if we experience one moment of shame in our lives it doesn't mean that our entire life story is shameful. Just because we may experience emotional, physical or sexual abuse, it doesn't define who we are. Only God can fully define who we are. Only God can oversee our whole story. Only God can help us identify the areas of shame in our lives and completely uproot them. And when all shame, envy, judgment, worry, hurt, and fear has been uprooted, we can fully grow into the people God has made us to be. As you read today, consider this: Who or what is defining your life story?

#### READING:

**PSALM 57:2; PSALM 138:8; ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14; PROVERBS 19:21; JOHN 15:5**

Who or what is defining your life story?

If somebody asked you if you were fulfilling the purpose God has for your life, how would you respond?

Of all of the topics covered throughout this series, which one had the greatest impact on you? Why do you think that is?

In what ways has this series led you to more fully abide in Christ (see John 15:5)?

God is inviting you to live a life completely free from shame. What does this reveal to you about His nature and character?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I have allowed other things to define my life. There have been moments in my life that have led me to hold onto fear, hurt, worry, judgment, envy or shame that have ultimately led me away from the wonders of who You are. While these memories may never leave me, continue to instill within me that You and You alone will define my life. I will rejoice in You and You alone! I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: COMMIT TO GROWTH

#### READING: PSALM 119

- What does Psalm 119 teach about the greatness of the Word of God?
- What is the most memorable lesson you've learned about the dangers of shame this week?
- What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself this week?
- Take 10 minutes to write out your own prayer to God today.

