

RECLAIMING MY DIGNITY

Abuse, Boundaries & Self-Worth



You are worth more
than you know



| Hope for the Heart

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend,

You are worth more than you know.

Do you believe that? Do you believe God sees you as valuable and precious in His sight? It's true. But sometimes the experiences we've had, especially abusive ones, lead us to feel like something was *taken* from us ... like we've *lost* our sense of value, control, and dignity. We can come to think we're *less than* we really are and feel worthless, powerless, or hopeless.

But know this: God sees you. He cares about your pain. No matter what has been said to you or done to you, abuse never has the last word—God does. The Lord can help you regain what was lost, redeem what was taken, and restore you to a place of peace and joy. He can help you reclaim your dignity. The Bible says “*with him is full redemption*” (Psalm 130:7).

This resource is a sample from our *Keys for Living* books on Verbal & Emotional Abuse, Boundaries, and Self-Worth. The *Keys for Living* are short, helpful books with clear answers from God's Word and concise, practical guidance on life's challenges. Over the course of our 35 year ministry, Verbal & Emotional Abuse has consistently been one of our most sought after topics. We wanted to provide a free resource that shows what God says about abuse as well as practical guidance on establishing healthy boundaries and what the Lord says about your immeasurable worth.

We pray that the Lord will use this resource to show you that you are worth more than you know—and that with His help, you can rise above abuse and build healthy boundaries in your life. We hope this resource is a blessing to you and that it equips you to help others as well.

Thank you and God bless,

The Hope for the Heart Team

*“I am the LORD, your God . . .
you are precious to me.
You are honored, and I love you.”*
(ISAIAH 43:3-4 NLT)

You can find more helpful resources on Abuse,
Boundaries, Self-Worth, and many other topics at

hopefortheheart.org

VERBAL & EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Victory over the Power of Abuse

What Is God's Heart on Verbal and Emotional Abuse?

Sadly, some people live with their mind, will, and emotions dominated by a strong, controlling, oppressive person. Nothing in such a relationship resembles the loving, nurturing relationships God intends for us to have with one another. God created each of us in His image, to be a reflection of who He is—loving and compassionate.

Realize that God, who is infinite in power, does not use His power to abuse but rather to love. He always acts in our best interests, always seeks to meet our needs, to heal our wounds, and to conform us to the likeness of Jesus. The Lord does not want you to live in the fear of abuse but rather in the freedom of His powerful love.

*“Power belongs to you, God,
and with you, Lord, is unfailing love.”
(PSALM 62:11–12)*

God cares about your pain.

“You have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul” (PSALM 31:7 NLT).

God understands the pain of abuse.

“He [Jesus] was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain” (ISAIAH 53:3).

God offers healing from the pain of abuse.

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (PSALM 147:3).

God affirms your worth as His special creation.

“You are precious and honored in my sight, and . . . I love you” (ISAIAH 43:4).

God wants to be your refuge and help you process your emotions with Him.

“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge” (PSALM 62:8).

God wants you to understand the power of words.

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (PROVERBS 18:21).

“The Lord does not want you to live in the fear of abuse but rather in the freedom of His powerful love.”

God desires your speech to be encouraging, not abusive.

“Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them” (EPHESIANS 4:29 NLT).

God calls for abusive people to change.

“Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right” (EZEKIEL 45:9).

God will judge and call everyone to account for the words they speak.

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” (MATTHEW 12:36).

God wants you to establish boundaries in your life and in your relationships.

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (PROVERBS 4:23 NLT).

God wants you to help others who have experienced abusive treatment.

“The Father of compassion and the God of all comfort . . . comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–4).

God will one day end all abuse and pain.

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever” (REVELATION 21:4 NLT).

Finding Victory over Abuse: How to Replace Lies with Truth

If you've heard constant, cruel and condemning messages from your parents, spouse, partner, boss, or anyone close to you—it's understandable you may have come to believe those messages over time. Perhaps you've come to believe that you are unworthy or unlovable, incomplete or insignificant. No matter what harsh words you've been told, abuse does not have the final word about you—God does. His Word speaks of His love for you and the life-changing identity you have in Christ.

Healing and transformation can occur when you begin to see yourself through God's eyes, believing what He says about you. Therefore, it is important to identify the lies you've been led to believe and replace them with God's truth.

*“Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth.”*

(PSALM 86:11)

Lie: “I am worthless and insignificant.”

Truth: You matter to God. You have God-given worth because God created you, and that worth can never be taken from you.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (PSALM 139:13–14).

Lie: “No one will ever accept me.”

Truth: The Lord chose you, accepts you, and will never reject you.

“I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (ISAIAH 41:9–10).

Lie: “I am unlovable.”

Truth: God loves you, and nothing can separate you from His love.

“Nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (ROMANS 8:38–39 NLT).

Lie: “I deserve to be abused.”

Truth: No one deserves to be abused—no one. Each person should be treated with respect as God's image-bearer.

“Show proper respect to everyone” (1 PETER 2:17).

Lie: “There is no hope for me.”

Truth: No matter how deep the pain, with God, there is always hope.

“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off” (PROVERBS 23:18).

Lie: “I have no control over what happens to me.”

Truth: God has given you free will, and you do have control over the choices you make and the actions you take.

“For we are each responsible for our own conduct” (GALATIANS 6:5 NLT).

Lie: “God doesn’t care about me.”

Truth: God cares deeply about you and wants you to come to Him with your burdens.

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you” (1 PETER 5:7 NLT).

Lie: “God is disappointed in me and wants nothing to do with me.”

Truth: God has compassion for you—He is with you and desires a close relationship with you.

“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. . . . The LORD is near to all who call on him” (PSALM 145:8–9, 18).

You may have been led to believe other lies. As an exercise, write them down and then look in God’s Word to discover a passage or a truth that can speak directly to that lie. God wants you to *“take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5). Over time, as you replace the lies with God’s truth, you will be transformed by His Word.

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—
his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
(ROMANS 12:2)*

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

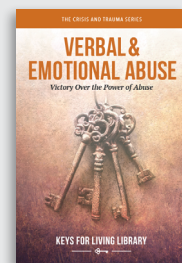
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Topical Video Training

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Abuse Recovery Resources

Below is information for national hotlines to contact in a crisis. These hotlines exist to help and support you. These free and confidential services are available 24/7 to provide emotional support and helpful resources for those in difficult situations and those who are experiencing abuse of any kind. When you contact them, you will be connected with a real person who is trained to provide guidance and support. You are *not* alone.

*“So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*
(ISAIAH 41:10)

Note: If you are ever in immediate danger, call 911.

Crisis Text Line

- Text HOME to 741741 (United States & Canada)
- Text HOME to 85258 (United Kingdom)
- Text HOME to 50808 (Ireland)
- www.CrisisTextLine.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
- Ayuda disponible en Español
- www.thehotline.org (Live chat available)

Don't hesitate to contact these organizations and connect with real people trained to provide guidance, encouragement, and support. Remember, you are not alone and there are many people who want to help you.

“There is surely a future hope for you.”
(PROVERBS 23:18)

BOUNDARIES

How to Set Them—How to Keep Them

What Are Boundaries?

Do people often take advantage of you? Do you say *Yes* to everyone and *No* to no one? Do you think you're supposed to meet everyone else's needs? If so, you need boundaries.

Just as nations have protective boundaries, your relationships need protective boundaries to guard your personal time, emotional energy, and physical strength. We cannot *be everything* or *do everything* for anyone—much less *everyone*.

You need to know where your responsibility ends and someone else's begins. This means at times, you need to say *No* to people so you can say *Yes* to God. Just as the Lord established physical boundaries when He created the world, He also established boundaries for our lives and relationships.

*“I, the LORD, define the ocean’s sandy shoreline
as an everlasting boundary that the waters cannot cross.
The waves may toss and roar,
but they can never pass the boundaries I set.”*
(JEREMIAH 5:22 NLT)

A boundary is an established limit—a line that should not be crossed.

- A marked limit of an area, a dividing line
- A limit intended to create necessary space
- A dividing line that separates one entity from another

*“We cannot
be everything or
do everything for
anyone—much
less everyone.”*

Physical boundaries are territorial lines that divide one area from another.

- In the Bible, the first boundary was spoken directly from God to Adam. “The Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die’” (Genesis 2:16–17).
- You have both the right of personal control and the responsibility of setting rules for others regarding what is yours. God, the Creator and owner of the Garden of Eden, had the right to set the rules for everything and everyone in the garden.
- “For when you eat from it [the tree] you will certainly die” (Genesis 2:17).

Moral boundaries are ethical lines that divide right from wrong.

- When a boundary is respected, the result is a reward. God set up a moral boundary for Adam and Eve—what was right and what was wrong; what led to life and what led to death. When God’s boundary was honored, the couple enjoyed a reward—the abundance of the garden and unbroken fellowship with God.
- When a boundary is rejected, the result is a repercussion. When God’s boundary was violated, the couple experienced a repercussion—sin entered the world, which disqualified Adam and Eve from staying within the bounds of the garden.
- When you communicate a clear, rightful boundary—with a reward and a repercussion—and someone violates that boundary, the repercussion is inevitable and, if possible, instantaneous. In choosing to violate a boundary, the violator, not the boundary-setter, is choosing the repercussion.

The principle of rewards and repercussions was clearly demonstrated when God set a boundary with Adam and Eve. By choosing to violate that boundary, they chose the repercussion that God stated.

*“To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife
and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you,
“You must not eat from it,” Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.’”*

(GENESIS 3:17)

What Is the Purpose and Benefit of Personal Boundaries?

Personal boundaries are like fences, protecting you from wrong people, wrong places, and wrong priorities. Personal boundaries also guard you from giving more time, talent, and tolerance than you should, protecting you from people taking more than they should.

Personal boundaries are the healthy by-product of realizing we are uniquely separate from one another and personally responsible for our own actions and responses. Boundaries are necessary to protect you from those who might attempt to take advantage of you. The Bible reveals the treasure within you that is to be guarded above everything else.

*“Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.”*
(PROVERBS 4:23)

Personal boundaries convey:

- What you are—and what you aren’t
- What you value—and what you don’t
- What you believe—and what you don’t
- What you’ll endure—and what you won’t
- What you’ll accept—and what you won’t

Personal boundaries allow you to:

- Determine what belongs to you and what belongs to another
- Decide who and what you will prioritize in your life
- Demonstrate how you will maintain control over your body, soul, and spirit
- Declare limits in your relationships—and your right to enforce them
- Determine how you will maintain your moral convictions, not violating your conscience

Relational boundaries enable you to:

- Stand up for yourself and share your relationship restrictions appropriately
- Feel comfortable in giving honest feedback without fear
- Be firm with others, thoughtfully and unapologetically
- Respect the rules of others and act in their best interest
- Establish and maintain healthy give-and-take relationships

Emotional and mental boundaries equip you to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of your thoughts and emotions in light of God’s Word
- Guard against letting your own emotions (or someone else’s) control you
- Feel the freedom to agree or disagree with others without fear or guilt
- Communicate your own thoughts and emotions in a Christlike way
- Disengage from those who try to manipulate, hurt, or lie to you

“For we are each responsible for our own conduct.”
(GALATIANS 6:5 NLT)

How to Establish Boundaries in a Verbally Abusive Relationship

You can curtail verbal and emotional abuse by developing a plan to prevent yourself from being controlled. You cannot change another person, but you can change yourself so that the abusive tactics previously used on you are no longer effective and cease to ensnare you. As you determine the appropriate boundaries, realize that these boundaries are designed to guard your heard, mind, and emotions.

*“My child, listen and be wise:
Keep your heart on the right course.”*
(PROVERBS 23:19 NLT)

1. State clearly, in a conversation or a letter, what you are willing to accept and not accept from the abuser.

- Communicate your position in a positive way. (Practice what you will say in advance.)
- Do not justify yourself. Do not be apologetic, just state the boundary:
- “I want our relationship to continue, but . . .
 - “I’m not willing to listen to your name-calling.”
 - “I’m not willing to hear your accusations about (name) any longer.”
 - “Talking negatively about the past, about you or me, or anyone else is counterproductive.”
 - “I’m not willing to be controlled by your silent treatment any longer.”
- Keep what you say short and succinct.

*“A truly wise person uses few words;
a person with understanding is even-tempered.”*
(PROVERBS 17:27 NLT)

2. Announce the consequence you will enforce if the abuser violates your requests.

- Your response should be a matter of separating yourself from the abuser.
- You cannot change the abuser’s behavior, but you can remove yourself from frequent exposure to unacceptable behavior.
- “I want to visit with you, but . . .
 - “If you call me a bad name again, I will leave for a period of time.”
 - “If you persist in making that accusation, I will immediately end our conversation.”
 - “If you give me the silent treatment, I will go and find someone else to talk with.”
- Consequences are part of God’s plan.

“A man reaps what he sows.”
(GALATIANS 6:7)

3. Enforce the consequence every single time abuse occurs.

- Do not bluff! The abuser needs to know that you are going to act consistently on your words.
- Plan on being tested multiple times.
- In your mind and heart . . .
 - Say *No* to manipulation.
 - Say *No* to pressure.
 - Say *No* to control.
- You need to show that the abusive tactics are no longer effective on you.

“Let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no.”

(JAMES 5:12 ESV)

4. Hold your ground and absolutely do not negotiate.

- Since verbal abusers do not use words fairly, negotiation will not work.
- Instead of “talking out” the problem, your abuser will seek to wear you out.
- Simply state that when the behavior stops, you look forward to a renewed relationship.
 - “I am not willing to discuss this topic any longer.”
 - “I have stated clearly what I will not accept.”
 - “When you are ready to respect my requests, let me know. I look forward to enjoying being together at that time.”
- Keep your words brief and to the point.

*“Sin is not ended by multiplying words,
but the prudent hold their tongues.”*

(PROVERBS 10:19)

5. Respond when your boundary is violated—never react out of instinct or out of anger.

- Expect your boundary to be violated . . . but don’t react.
- Expect your boundary to be violated again . . . and again. But don’t react.
- If you react, you will find yourself back under the control of the abuser.
- Respond by detaching yourself from the abuser and enforcing your repercussions.

*“The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.*

Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit.”

(ECCLESIASTES 7:8–9)

6. Ask for support from one or two wise, objective people to help you through this process.

- Include supporters as you analyze and identify the problem.
- Include supporters as you determine how to articulate your plan.
- Include supporters as you enforce the repercussions.
- Include supporters—friend, mentor, counselor—to help you through this critical period.
 - Discuss the situation with your supporters.
 - Discuss the tactics used on you.
 - Discuss the plan of action.

“in abundance of counselors there is victory.”
(PROVERBS 24:6 ESV)

7. Expect manipulative maneuvers and emotional ups and downs.

- Assume that your actions will make the abuser angry.
- Allow your abuser to react without reacting yourself.
- Do not seek to placate and appease this person—it won’t work.
- Think of this time period as comparable to having surgery. It is a painful experience, but it provides hope for healing and having a new, healthy relationship.
- Remember God is with you each step of the way.

*“For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”*
(ISAIAH 41:13)

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

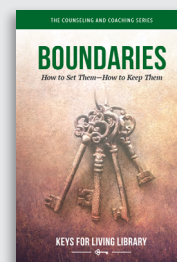
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SELF-WORTH

Discover Your God-Given Value

What Is God's Heart on Self-Worth?

The religious leaders of Jesus' day try to trap Him. They want to get Jesus to say something so they have grounds for arresting Him. After some flattery and compliments, they try to bait Him. *"Teacher,' they said, 'we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don't play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them, or shouldn't we?"* (Mark 12:14–15 NLT).

Their question is designed to place Jesus in a political and religious dilemma where, depending on His answer, He would upset the Jews or the Romans. Jesus, however, knows their malicious intent . . . *"Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, 'Why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin, and I'll tell you'"* (Mark 12:15 NLT).

After receiving a coin, Jesus asks, *"Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"*

"Caesar's,' they replied." (Mark 12:16).

Jesus concludes, *"Well, then . . . give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God"* (Mark 12:16 NLT).

The Bible says, *"His reply completely amazed them"* (Mark 12:17 NLT). His answer ought to amaze us, too—not because He wisely evades a trap, but because of what Jesus alludes to about our worth. By asking the religious leaders about the coin, "Whose image is this?" . . . He indirectly poses a question: Caesar's image may be on the coin, but whose image is on you?

You are made in *God's* image. Because of that, you have infinite worth—more than any coin or currency this world can afford. You belong to God. The Creator and King of the universe not only created you in His image, but He cares for you. He crowns you with glory and honor, showing your infinite, inherent, unchangeable worth.

*"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor."*

(PSALM 8:3–5)

God wants you to see yourself through His eyes—as His image-bearer with infinite worth.

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (GENESIS 1:26-27, 31).

God wants you to see yourself through His eyes—as precious and honored in His sight.

"You are precious and honored in my sight, and . . . I love you" (ISAIAH 43:4).

God wants you to see yourself through His eyes—as His beloved child.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 JOHN 3:1).

God wants you to know that you are fully accepted in Christ—not due to your performance but due to His grace.

“He made us accepted in the Beloved” (EPHESIANS 1:6 NKJV).

God will not reject His people, His beloved possession.

“The Lord will not reject his people; he will not abandon his special possession” (PSALM 94:14 NLT).

God understands the pain of being devalued and held in low esteem.

“He [Jesus] was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem” (ISAIAH 53:3).

God offers healing from past pain, guilt, and shame.

“Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me” (PSALM 30:2).

God wants you to forgive those who hurt you and led you to feel worthless.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (COLOSSIANS 3:13).

God wants you to show respect to everyone because we all bear His image.

“Show proper respect to everyone” (1 PETER 2:17).

God wants you to encourage others who have low self-worth.

“Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them” (EPHESIANS 4:29 NLT).

God wants you to look to Him and His Word to find your true worth.

“You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope” (PSALM 119:114 NLT).

“You are made in
God’s image.
Because of that,
you have
infinite worth.”

How to Know Your Real Worth

We receive explicit and implicit messages every day from numerous sources—our parents, friends, school, work, culture, and media—about our identity and our worth. Many times, the messages are negative, hurtful, or discouraging. Even worse, the enemy of God, Satan, attacks our identity and worth.

In order to overcome the lies of the enemy and negative messages from the world about your worth, you need to stay grounded in God's Word. Embrace the truth about what *God* says about you.

*“Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.”
(PSALM 25:5)*

Key Passage to Read: Psalm 139

Realize that God knows all about you. (vv. 1–6)

“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”

Remember that God is always with you. (vv. 7–12)

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”

Rejoice in the fact that God created you. (vv. 13–14)

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Recognize that God uniquely designed you. (vv. 15–16)

“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Receive God's loving thoughts toward you. (vv. 17–18)

“How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.”

Renounce God’s enemies as enemies to you. (vv. 19–22)

“If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.”

Respond to God as He changes you. (vv. 23–24)

“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.”

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

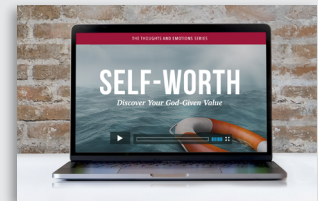
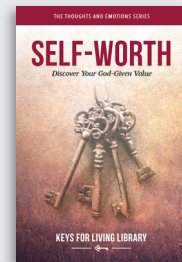
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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin, change, or stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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