

Relationship Over Religion Field Manual

IMPORTANT: Deeper relationship with God happens when you practice and experience the tool. Complete the **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD & REFLECTION WITH GOD**

Consider: If this resource helps you, please consider a thank-you gift. It will help keep the Why Live Today Channel and the GodFocus app going and growing! ([2 Cor. 9:7](#))

Click to give



I've collected the tools that have helped me and others over the past 18 years of biblical counseling and discipleship. I recommend practicing and experiencing every tool. Some you'll use for a chapter/season, and others for a lifetime.

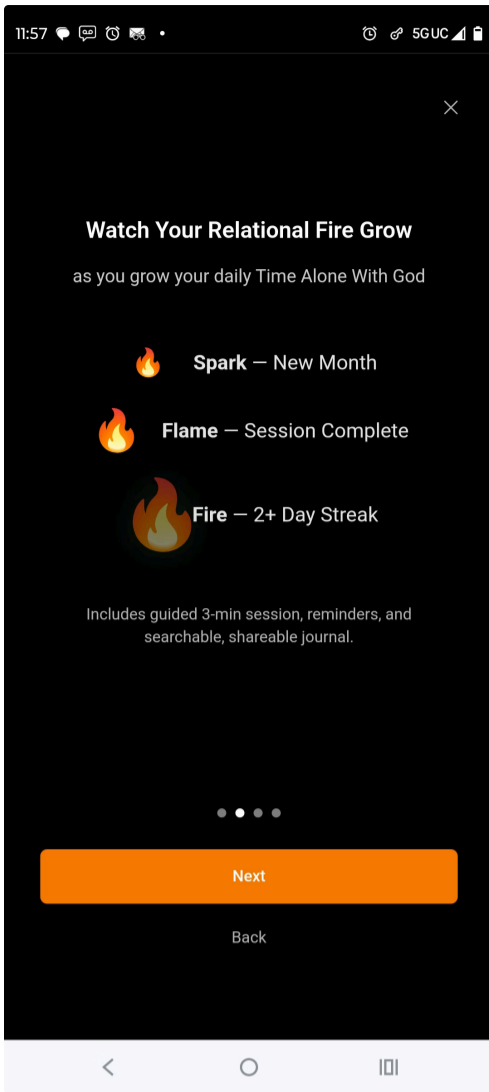
"Now this is eternal life: that they KNOW YOU (experiential and growing relationship), the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." – Jesus (John 17:3)

Your Relational Journey with God

This roadmap offers you the biblical tools and practices that can help you deepen your relationship with God. Mark each tool as experienced once you've completed the **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD** and **REFLECT WITH GOD** steps.

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Try the GodFocus App (Mobile & Desktop)

Don't get distracted! **Fan the flame of your relational, daily Time Alone With God (TAWG)** with the GodFocus app! If we have a shallow relationship with God, it's no wonder that the pull of everything else is stronger. I created the GodFocus app to help you deepen and defend your daily time alone with God. This was the #1 habit of Jesus. (**[Mark 1:35](#)**; **[Luke 6:12](#)**; **[Mark 14:32](#)**). We should do it too!

IMPORTANT: Sign up for an account (name, email, and password) to access the following features:



Growing Flame & Stats

As you grow in your Daily Time Alone With God, your flame will grow. Also, keep track of your minutes, sessions, and streaks. You can share them as well.



Daily Reminders

Click the bell or go to Settings in the menu to schedule a daily reminder to do your Time Alone With God. If you already did it that day, it will remind you what God showed you.



Private GF Journal

You can easily encourage and share the app and your Time Alone With God sessions with friends. You can also easily search your journal sessions using customizable tags. All session entries are privately archived.

[Get GodFocus Mobile App](#)

[Become a Supporter \(Lifetime Access\)](#)

Become a Firekeeper or Flamekeeper (supporter). Your support helps the app grow and help more people, and you receive lifetime access to all current and future features (never pay anything).

🕒 **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:** For 30 days, use the app at least once daily for a 3-minute guided, relational Time Alone With God session (Share, Silence, Seek) and then record what happened in the GF app journal. OR turn off your phone and go somewhere to be alone with God for at least 3 minutes every day for 30 days (take Bible and notebook).

❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Daily Guided Time Alone With God Videos



Daily Guided Time Alone With God

Why Live Today YouTube Channel

Click on the button below to join me for a daily, 3-minute guided, relational **Time Alone With God (TAWG)**.

[WLT Daily TAWG Videos](#)

- ① **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:** Click link above or go to Why Live Today YouTube and search for @whylivetoday, which is my YouTube Channel. Subscribe and sign up for all notifications (click the bell icon) to be notified daily. Do this for at least seven days, until you get momentum to do it on your own, or just keep going with me! It can also help you get started again if you have been struggling to be consistent.

- ② **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Telescope & Microscope Bible Study

Get to know God and listen for God's Voice through an overview of the 66 books of the Bible and in-depth study of the Bible



"You **study** the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." – Jesus [[Jhn 5:39–40 NIV](#)]

RELATIONAL TELESCOPE (Topical)


It's good to have general knowledge of the Bible and what each book is about so you know where to go, and you can tell others where to go to grow your relationship through the season/chapters of life. One of the best is **Ray Stedman's Bible Overview and his 66 messages** summarizing the 66 books of the Bible.

[Ray Stedman – Overview of the Bible](#)

RELATIONAL MICROSCOPE (In-Depth)

Learn to use the **Blue Letter Bible Study App** to experience the different ways God can communicate with you through...

- Reading plans
- Listening to the Bible
- Translation comparison
- In-depth written / audio / video commentaries
- Topic studies
- Cross-references
- Hebrew and Greek lexicon (definitions)
- Maps and more!



THE BLB IN 5:00 FIVE MINUTES

▶ 05:17

YouTube [The BLB in 5 Minutes](#)

This video walks you through the Blue Letter Bible in only 5 minutes, showcasing the various study tools that are available to all of our users—as always,...

Click to download Blue Letter Bible onto your device...

[Web Version \(Computer\)](#)

[iOS Version \(Apple Phone\)](#)

[Android Version \(Phone\)](#)

One of my favorite in-depth Bible commentaries is by David Guzik. We must learn to hear God's voice through others, especially people who have the gift of teaching. David's teaching/commentaries have consistently been the most helpful because it's not just David! He often references other well-known Bible teachers (Spurgeon, Matthew Henry, G. Campbell Morgan, etc.).

“
Proverbs 11:14
Where [there is] no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors [there is] safety.
”

David has been in Christian service for more than 35 years, including two church plants and more than seven years as a missionary in Germany, as director and teacher for an international Bible college. It's also offered in Spanish.

[Guzik – English Commentary](#)

[Guzik – SPANISH Commentary](#)

🕒 **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:** Watch the [blueletterbible.org](#) instructional video above. Ask God to communicate with you as you go through the exercise below. Don't just listen or read for information. You are reading or listening for God to speak something to you.

In-Depth Exercise: For seven days, pick a Bible chapter in the [blueletterbible.org](#) app and read or listen to it. Choose a verse that stands out (connects to a personal issue or circumstance in your life, repeatedly comes up in your mind, or causes strong feelings or thoughts). Click on and try out each feature (**Interlinear, Bibles, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries, Misc.**). Expect God to lead and communicate with you as you explore. When you select "Commentaries," read through David Guzik's commentary.

Topical Overview Exercise: Listen to Ray Stedman's teaching on each of the 66 books. Each one is under one hour long.

🕒 **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

YouVersion Bible Mobile App

Relationship with God through community and creativity



FEATURES...

Available in more than 60 languages

Read the Bible or let audio versions read the Bible to you.

Subscribe to Bible Reading and Topic Plans

Daily portions of Scripture paired with devotional, audio, or video selections.

Prayers you can keep private, or invite friends

Add bookmarks, highlights, and private/public notes to any verse.

Easily share Bible passages

On social media, text, or email.

Bible Reading and Topic Plans

Go through a Bible or topic plan on your own, with a friend, or in a group.

Create verse images

Shareable Bible art that uses your own.

www.youversion.com (explanation of mobile app)

Download to your mobile device...

iOS Version (Apple Phone)

Android Version (Phone)

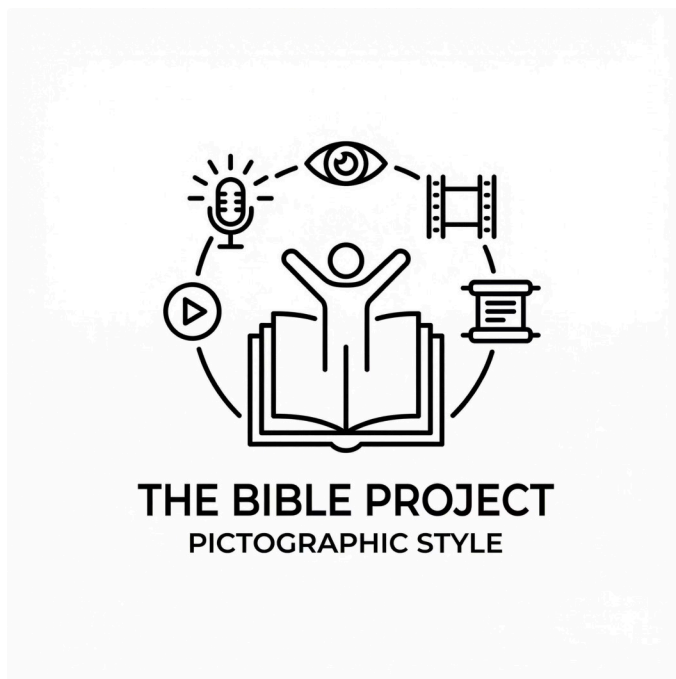
✔ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

Option 1 – For one week, every day, go to the YouVersion front page on your phone and go through the Guided Prayer and/or the Guided Scripture.

Option 2 – Start and complete a Bible Reading Plan on an area where you'd like to grow and expect God to communicate with you every day as you go through it (e.g., The Gospels, Fear, Addiction). Invite someone else, a few people, or a large group to join you in the plan on a daily basis. Expect God to speak through others too!

❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

The Bible Project



Visual and audio teaching that helps us get to know God so we are better able to recognize His presence and trust His voice. We can share our hearts more easily if we know God is compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love for us.

Click to get the Bible Project on...

Desktop

Mobile

✔ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

1. Learn how listening is connected to doing, which leads to experiencing relationship with God: Doing things with and for God is a critical part of relationship. Watch [Shema – Listen](#)
2. Recognize the voice of God by knowing what God is like: Watch the [Character of God Series](#)

- ❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

My Relational Freedom Verses

Leading to greater connection to God and then freedom from Functional Addiction (bad habits) and Loneliness.

John 3:16 (NIV) - God's Love

God's love for you and me can't be measured, because He gave everything! There's always more love to experience and receive through sincere belief/faith in Jesus.

Psalms 62:8 (NIV) - Pour

We must not be afraid to share our heart with God (the good, the bad, and the ugly) who already knows it but wants us to acknowledge it and dump the truck with Him.

John 17:3 (NIV) - Relational God

From the moment we believe and place our trust in Jesus, we receive eternal life as a gift. Eternal life is an ever-deepening, interactive relationship with God in this life and into eternity.

John 10:27 (NIV) - Pitch

Hearing God means recognizing and following the voice of Jesus (see Listening Prayer Guidelines).

Genesis 28:16 (NIV) - Presence

God is always present no matter where we are. It's up to us to believe, include, and surrender to God at any given moment.

John 14:6 (NIV) - Path

Returning to and continuing to believe that Jesus is the ultimate meaning of life (i.e., Getting to know Jesus is how I discover God's will for my life, who God really is, and ultimate freedom and fulfillment).

Personal Note: My life verse (John 17:3) reminds me that eternal life is about growing my relationship with God and helping others to do the same.

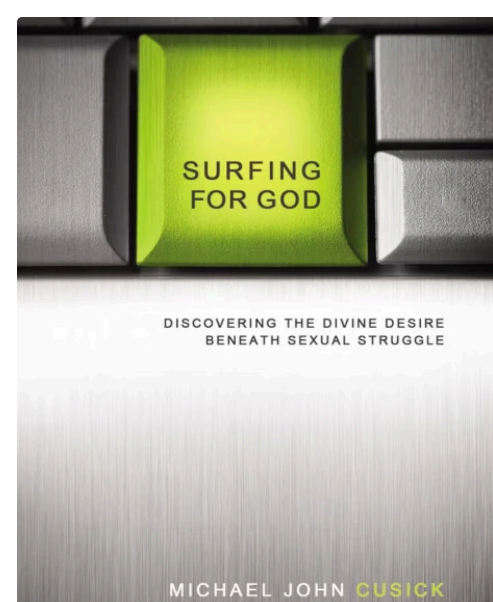
- ✓ **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:** Ask God for your own life verse (a Word from God for life that you remember and act on every day) or an anchor verse to help you through the current season or storm you are going through.

Every day, sit for at least three minutes quietly listening for God to show you where to look in the Bible (tip: you can use the GodFocus app to structure and guide your time). As you listen, wait for God to bring to mind a topic, theme, book of the Bible, chapter, verse, character, story, etc. See the listening prayer guidelines if you want help with listening. Sometimes God gives a life verse as you read through a book of the Bible, but other times it's when you are listening to a sermon or experiencing some life event. Once God gives it to you, I strongly recommend putting this verse in a prominent place where you will see it every day (bathroom mirror, fridge, office desk, etc.). Memorize it, meditate on it, and ask God to help you act upon it every day!

- ❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Books

God spoke to me powerfully through these... I pray God speaks to you too!

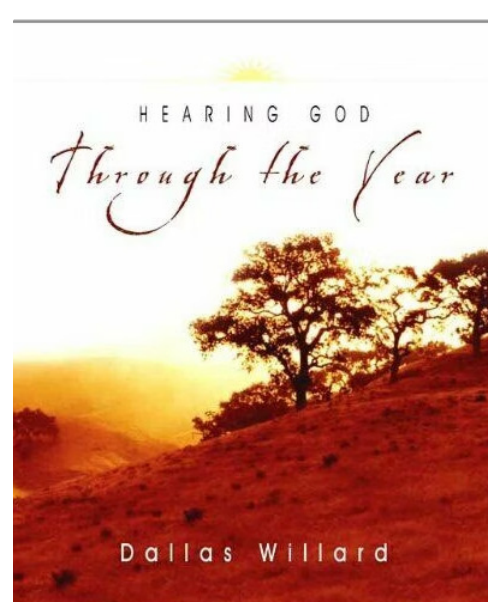


Surfing for God

by Michael Cusick

My favorite book and study guide for addressing sexual addiction (or just bad habits) with a focus on pursuing the greater desire: relationship with God. Go through the guide slowly alone with God (or with a friend/group), and honestly share your heart and listen for God's voice and follow Him.

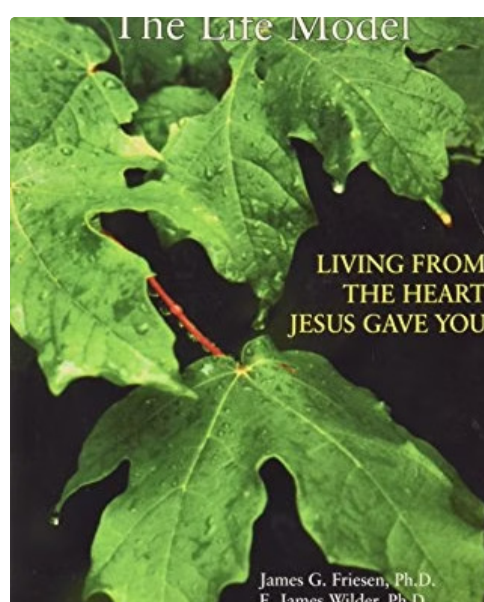
[Surfing for God Chapter Study Guide](#)



Hearing God Through the Year

by Dallas Willard

Helpful daily teachings and reminders about why and how we listen to God. This book was part of a profound experience for me when I began to hear God's voice (through other believers and circumstances) while living in Santa Barbara, CA.

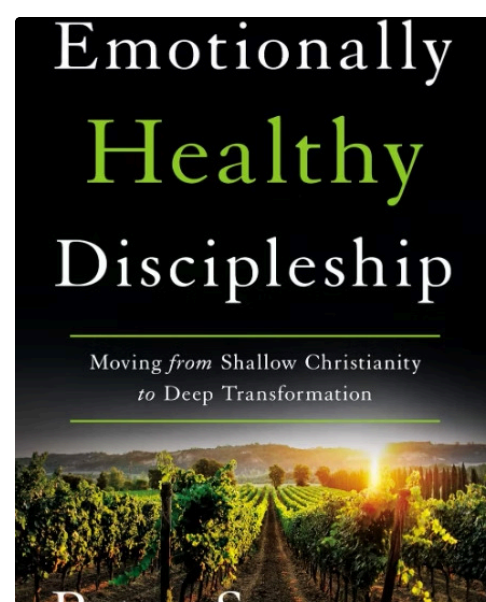


The Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You

by group of authors

This book highlights four failures of discipleship and the seven marks of a spiritually mature disciple.

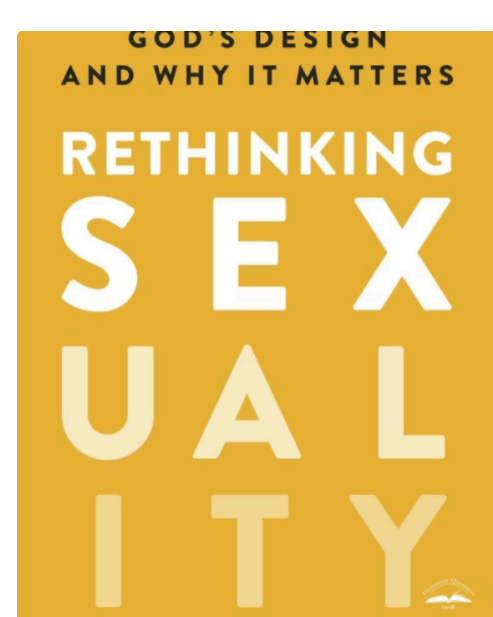
God spoke profoundly to me through the maturity indicators chart (pg. 52-55).



Emotionally Healthy Discipleship

by Peter Scazzero

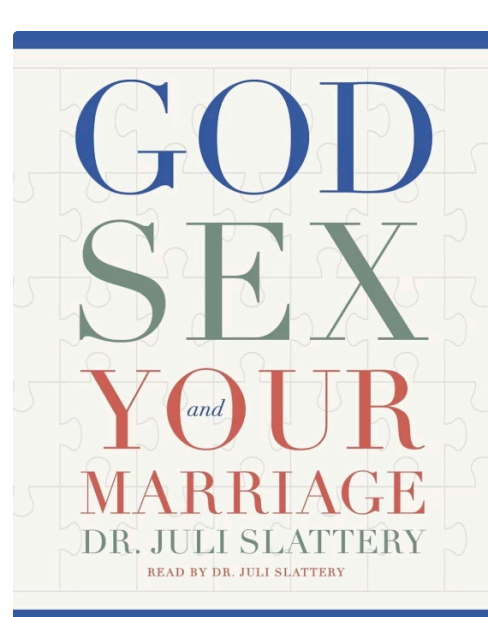
This book highlights four failures of discipleship and the seven marks of a spiritually mature disciple. It's difficult to connect with God relationally if you are blocking or immature in your emotional life. *"It's impossible to be spiritually mature if you are emotionally immature."* - Scazzero



Rethinking Sexuality

by Dr. Juli Slattery

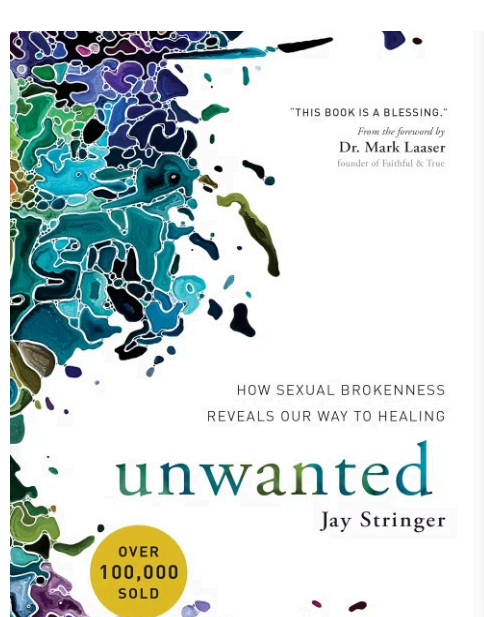
This book helps open our eyes to a paradigm-shifting reality. Our sexuality is not only a gift from God, but it's also a signpost that should remind and lead us into what our heart truly longs for: an ever-deepening relationship with the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ (John 17:3).



God, Sex and Your Marriage

by Dr. Juli Slattery

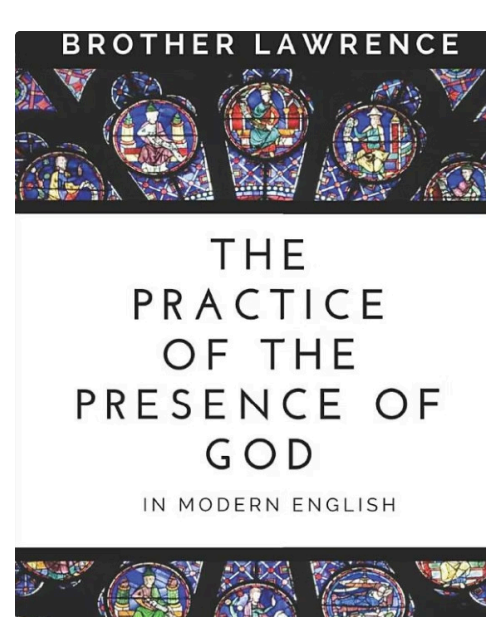
The four pillars of biblical truth are critical for deepening our relationship with God, our marriage, and any relationship for that matter.



Unwanted

by Jay Stringer

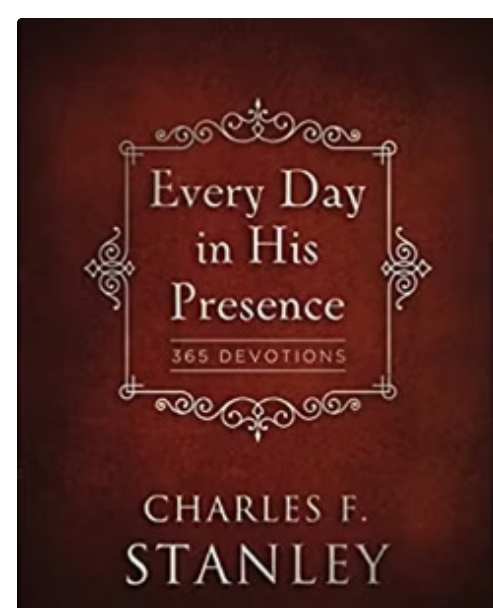
Instead of trying to avoid, block, or run away from parts of our life story, this book takes a deep dive into understanding the "why?" of our sexual sin. It builds bridges of understanding and redemption, leading us into, through, and out of unwanted sexual sin.



Practicing the Presence of God

by Brother Lawrence

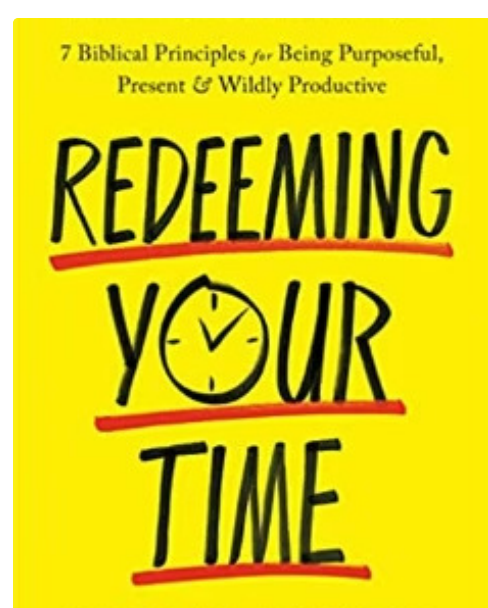
The Practice of the Presence of God in Modern English is a modern translation of the timeless spiritual classic.



Everyday in His Presence

by Dr. Charles Stanley

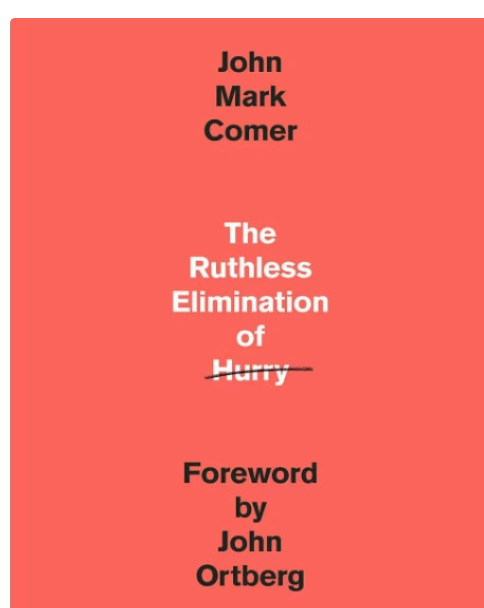
My wife's and my favorite devotional because it facilitates God's presence and connection to our everyday lives and to each other.



Redeeming Your Time

by Jordan Raynor

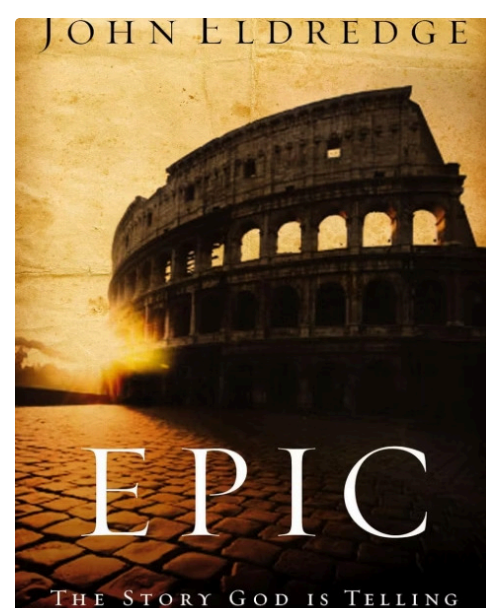
As someone who struggles with structure and planning on a daily basis, this book has been invaluable. It's given me a meaningful, practical roadmap for my daily relationship with God based on 7 principles and practices of Jesus Christ.



Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

by John Mark Comer

We all face a fast-paced, attention-deficit culture. This was a major factor that hindered the depth of relationship with God and my functional loneliness and addiction (bad habits).

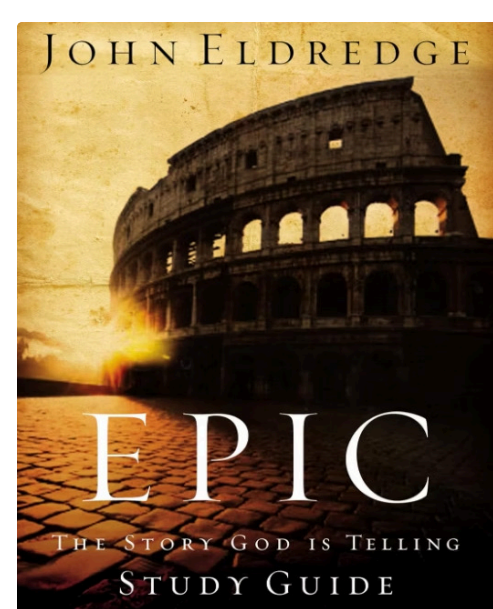


Epic - The Story God is Telling

by John Eldredge

"I had always felt life first as a story - and if there is a story, there is a storyteller." - G.K. Chesterton

Our relationship with God is transformed when you realize you and God are part of an epic adventure story.

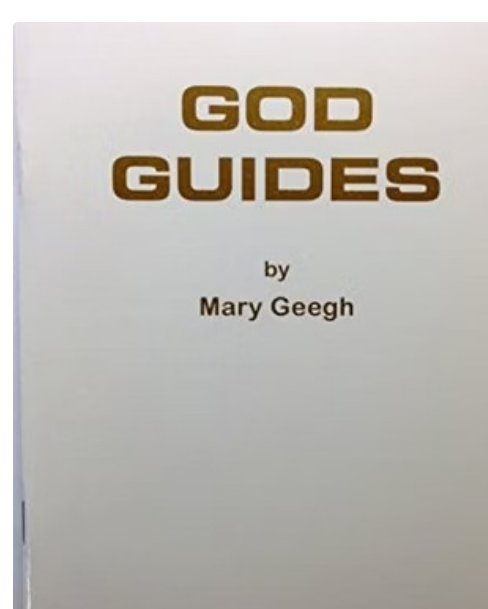


Epic - Study Guide

by John Eldredge

Here are some great questions to personally consider and/or discuss in a group.

Our relationship with God is transformed when you realize you and God are part of an epic adventure story.



God Guides

by Mary Geegh

A 38-year missionary to India intentionally created space for God, listened for God's voice, and then obeyed it. God did miraculous things through this! This relational practice with God has been the most important factor in my freedom from functional loneliness and addiction (bad habits) and a deeper relationship!

✔ **TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:** Choose at least one book to go through slowly with a focus on hearing God's voice as you read or listen to it. Make a plan—for example, for an hour every Saturday morning. Place marks in the margin of the book where a sentence or passage stands out: strongly applies to you or your situation, or resonates strongly with your soul (keeps coming to mind or brings up strong feelings). Write down the page numbers and topics in your personal journal, on an email you send to yourself, or in the back of the book. Keep it somewhere where you can reflect on and review it later, because it's likely God is speaking to you!

❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Music



Does God feel more present when you sing to Him, or with Him, or just when you listen to the words and think about His presence? What about when you listen to instrumental songs vs. songs with lyrics? Different genres?

Personal Note: For the longest time, I didn't sing in church. But when I finally broke free and stopped caring about what others thought of me or my self-consciousness, I really connected more deeply with God's presence.

Below are some of the songs that help me connect most deeply with God.

[\(Click here to get the following songs and more on the WLT Freedom Songs Playlist on Spotify\).](#)



✓ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

1. Consider the relational connecting principles of presence, pour, and pitch. Listen through my WLT Freedom Songs Playlist on Spotify (or your own playlist) while practicing God's PRESENCE and enjoying the music with God (try singing with and/or for God, or listen to the song as God singing over you). Remember, God is real and He communicates through music (Genesis 28:16).
2. As you listen through the music playlist a second time, ask God to help you express (POUR) how you feel as you listen to the songs. Pick songs that fit how you are feeling (try singing with that feeling: mad, glad, sad, frustrated, thankful, etc.). Be real with God (Psalm 62:8).
3. A third time through, don't sing. Ask God to speak to you (PITCH) through these songs and pay attention to the lyrics, your thoughts, or images that come to mind as you listen. Remember, you will recognize His voice (John 10:27).

❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

10 Ways to Practice God's Presence



1

Practice 1: Just Jesus

What better way to get to know someone than to read or listen to their biography from four different perspectives: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Every day re-engage, read, remember, reconsider, and reimagine the life of Jesus while rooted somewhere in these four Gospel books of the Bible. There are all sorts of ideas regarding Jesus. If you are at all open to the idea of Jesus being God, then I encourage you to still get to know Jesus for yourself and make an informed decision. Set aside what others say and get to know Him personally for yourself based on eyewitness accounts. Returning to Jesus is a foundational practice that will keep you dug in and engaging with the presence and identity of God.

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: One-Thing Focus (8 Days of Beatitudes)

Today, slowly re-read and think about just one of the eight qualities that are blessed by God. Notice that each quality (also known as Beatitudes) is fulfilled and satisfied by God's presence. For example, the first is found in Matt. 5:3. Accepting our poverty of spirit (inadequacy without God) is critical in experiencing God's merciful, loving presence and help in our lives! Work your way through each of the eight qualities in Matt. 5:3-12 over eight days. Feel free to spend longer or shorter on each quality with a focus on God's presence filling, surrounding, guiding, and protecting you in that moment.

2

Practice 2: Physical Presence

The body is often forgotten and minimized in much of Christian culture. Contrast that with the secular obsession with fitness, health, and looks, and well, it's confusing. We are mind, soul, and body. In the following passage, Jesus looked up to heaven, with His eyes open, and talked to God out loud.

After saying all these things, Jesus **looked up** to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son so He can give glory back to You." - [John 17:1 NLT]

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Involve Your Body

At least once each day this week, talk to Jesus out loud with your eyes looking up. Or try a different physical position, like on your knees. Sometimes I get on my knees and face the wall in my office, like Hezekiah did when his city was under siege. The wall is a great reminder of just how powerless we are to overcome problems, or do good without believing in God's powerful presence in our lives.

Here are some other ideas. Simply acknowledge God's presence with a movement when you are involved with a physical activity like lifting weights (a slower, thankful rep), shooting a basket (look up before the shot), putting dishes away (set it down slower), or running (point up before, during, or after). When I surfed, I would paddle for a wave and pull back to give God the wave.

3

Practice 3: God's Delight in You!

If we've placed our trust in Jesus, we can rest in, enjoy, and celebrate as we rest and receive God's delight over us. You are enjoyed, accepted, adopted, secure, significant, satisfied...the list goes on and on, because of the work of Jesus through the cross and with His Spirit. Repeat, meditate, reflect, and personalize a meaningful Bible passage. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you and will bring it back to mind at the right time. It's a personal Word from God.

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Personalize Something God Says

Take Zephaniah 3:17 as an example:

For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs." - [Zep 3:17 NLT]

Just take one small part of this passage and change it to something like this: "[Your name], I rejoice over you with joyful songs." Take a moment to repeat this truth out loud to yourself and/or just think about it at least three different times of the day (e.g., wake up, ride to work, before you go to sleep). Put it somewhere where you will see it: a bathroom mirror, end table near your bed, your car dashboard, or office desk. Work this into your weekly routine.

4

Practice 4: Mid-Conversation Prayer

Talk with God mid-conversation as you speak to someone at an event or during an activity. I used to play golf and not give a moment's thought about God, especially if I was playing really well (rare) or stinking it up (often). Nehemiah does this in the Bible (an arrow prayer).

Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" **So I prayed to the God of heaven.** And I said to the king... [Neh 2:4 NKJV]

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Practice at least once a day for a week

Practice praying the mid-conversation prayer for one week, at least once each day, when you are talking to someone or in the middle of an activity like checking out at the grocery store, speaking to a coworker, or working out at the gym. It will be awkward and take effort at first. Watch how this transforms your interactions because you are drawing near to God.

5

Practice 5: Title Change

I'm not talking about the DMV. For a long time, I would pray beginning with, "God, Lord, or Father," which would be an abstract idea of God at best, or at worst, a negative association from my past because of baggage related to those titles. I had a great Dad, but Father sounds so foreign and formal.

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Practice at least once a day for a week.

Every day for one week, try talking to God by saying the name of Jesus out loud, or something more personal like Daddy, or Abba. Picture Jesus in your mind based on a representation from a Gospel story that is especially meaningful to you. For example, in John 10, He calls Himself the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for His sheep. Imagine Him leading you, carrying you, holding you close, and standing between you and some threat, like a cliff, a wild animal, or another person.

6

Practice 6: Fade and Focus

Can you think of another practice that would help you let everything and everyone else fade away so that you are only aware of God? Brother Lawrence gives radical advice in his book: The Practice of the Presence of God.

"I began to practice the presence of God, and I began to live as if there was no one else in the world but God and me." Page 29

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Block out the Noise and Stimulus

Here are a few exercises for Fade and Focus. Do you ever wonder why some of your best thinking happens in the shower? I will close my eyes, let the water run over my head, and just let everything fade away except the awareness of God's presence. Sometimes, I will even tilt my head or lean against the shower wall like I'm leaning on Jesus, just like John did at the Last Supper.

Or invest in some serious noise-canceling headphones (try silence and try with music) that draw you into practicing God's presence (try not to fall asleep ;-). Or find what works for you to Fade and Focus! Experiment!

7

Practice 7: Keep a Record

While we strive to practice God's presence throughout the day, there are particular moments or experiences in God's presence that we need and want to record and remember. This is where a journal, canvas, a camera, or smartphone app come in. It's not so much the medium or method, but what works for you. Sign in to [GodFocus mobile app](#) to access the searchable and shareable journal entries with a bell icon to be reminded of what God said later in the day.

Think of it this way: if Jesus was meeting with you for coffee, or in your hotel room, or hiking up a mountain with you, would you want to write down or record what happened? Things changed for me in an empty Louisville hotel room where I would usually feel lonely and bored and act out sexually when I struggled with sexual sin. But it changed in Louisville when I by faith believed the truth. Jesus was my roommate. I couldn't wait to get into my room, get on my knees, and lay my journal on the bed, ready to record my time with Jesus. I often take my journal with me during my Time Alone With God, road trips, for a Sunday sermon, on a hike, etc., because there's an expectancy and valuing of that time as a real meeting with the Creator of the Universe, best friend, and Lover of my Soul. There isn't always excitement or expectancy. That's when keeping a written record can remind and rekindle the fire of your relationship with God.

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Get away once this week for a few hours, or once this month for a day

At least once this week, get away with your journal, a paintbrush, colored pencils, or headphones (noise-canceling or peaceful sounds) so you can be alone. You may want to shut off your phone completely. For more detail on how to do this, see the Extended Time Alone With God (ETAWG) resource.

8

Practice 8: Quiet Place and Timer Exercise

Every day I use the [GodFocus mobile app](#) and click on the 3-minute guided relational session and then sit back in my office chair, get on my knees, or walk back and forth in my office journaling what God brings to mind. Often I increase the time. I also turn off the lights. I ask God for a Word from the Bible to stay anchored in truth. Remember to only keep thoughts and ideas as a communication from God if it passes the following test ([1Thess. 5:21](#)):

1. Aligns with the sacrificial love of Jesus
2. The Bible and the
3. Body of Christ (mature believers)

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Set a daily timer to just sit with or walk with Jesus.

Once a day for a week, set a timer for at least 3 minutes and just sit with God. A friend of mine said that he can't sit; he has to walk. I remember a season of life when I just didn't want to journal because it felt like another task to check off or a burden. So I stopped. Find what works for you in your current season.

📌 8 Practices Qualifier: One Size Doesn't Fit All

Keep in mind that I am an introverted counselor, English major, with input and connectivity as two of my top qualities (StrengthsFinder Assessment) and mercy as my main spiritual gift ([Romans 12:6-7](#)). Not everything is going to resonate with you. God made you different. You need to get to know yourself. That said, as a way of balancing out the bias of my practices/approaches that I am sharing, you can check out a great article called [Jesus Didn't Journal](#) by the wife of a well-known author and introverted pastor. I especially like it because she pushes back on some of the practices I mentioned, like journaling. Instead, she mentions attending an intense event. As an extrovert, she practices I mentioned with journaling at a big wave surfing event with lots of people all around her :-). On the left sidebar of this article, there are other articles called "Fresh Air" and "Creative Connections" that explore some other potentially helpful practices.

🕒 **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the practices you tried (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Listening to God Guidelines

This is simply a possible starting point and flexible framework to help you connect more deeply with Jesus. You can also reference the teachings of Jesus on prayer (Luke 11:1) and the prayer of Jesus (John 17). Click here for a printable bookmark (coming soon).

IMPORTANT: Always anchor your time in the Bible and test impressions with God's Word (the Bible), His character (the person of Jesus and His sacrificial love), and wise, godly people (with a track record of good decisions). Don't suppress the Spirit or block God's communication, but don't be gullible. Check it out carefully; keep only what passes the test. [1 Thess. 5:19-22](#)

1

Come fully present before God

Fix your attention fully on Jesus and away from distractions. Heb. 12:2

2

Exercise the authority of Jesus Christ over all other voices

Pray similar to, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command all other voices to be quiet." James 4:7 and Acts 16:18

3

Ask God to reveal Himself and His ways to you

especially with His Word (the Bible) – Exodus 33:18, Jeremiah 33:3 & John 1:14

4

Ask God to search your heart

Talk to Him about what He reveals and confess any known sin. Psalm 139:23-24

5

Ask Jesus to communicate with you

especially with His Word (the Bible) – Speak, Lord, I am listening. 1 Sam. 3:10 & John 16:12-14

6

Wait in silence

My soul waits in silence for God only. Psalm 62:1

7

Write down impressions

Usually, this will be thoughts, scripture (Bible books, chapters, verses, characters, stories, etc.), or images that enter your mind. 1 Cor. 2:10-16

8

IMPORTANT: Always anchor your time in the Bible

and test impressions with God's Word (the Bible), His character (the person of Jesus and His sacrificial love), and wise, godly people (with a track record of good decisions). Don't suppress the Spirit or block God's communication, but don't be gullible. Check it out carefully; keep only what passes the test. [1 Thess. 5:19-22](#)

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Give yourself plenty of time (suggest at least 30 minutes to 2 hours) to walk through these steps in a safe, peaceful place. Sometimes it helps to have a mature believer in Jesus walk/pray you through these steps with you and God. Try this once a week for a month. Always ask God to protect the time and silence all other voices except His. As a believer, He's given you authority over evil.

REFLECT WITH GOD and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

Inner-Healing Prayer Guidelines

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed..." Jesus – Luke 4:18

It's Jesus Christ who brings about the healing in His perfect way and timing. There's no formula, but there is a foundation for this in the Bible. The following is a flexible framework that has helped me in my journey toward healing and freedom. You can practice it alone or with a trusted friend who is mature in their relationship with Jesus.

IMPORTANT: Always ask God to protect the time and to hear only His voice. Always anchor your time in the Bible and test impressions with God's Word (the Bible), His character (the person of Jesus and His sacrificial love), and wise, godly people (with a track record of good decisions). Don't suppress the Spirit or block God's communication, but don't be gullible. Check it out carefully; keep only what passes the test. [1 Thes. 5:19-22](#)

Listen to God regarding the following questions...

1 Identify and feel the emotion

Jesus, what recurring emotion have I been struggling with? Psalm 6:6; Psalm 139:23-24

Please help me name and feel that emotion with You. Psalm 62:8

2 Discover the root event

God, when was the first time I experienced this emotion? 2 Sam. 12:1

3 Discern the lie believed

Jesus, what did I come to believe? Heb. 4:12; Matt. 22:29

4 Reveal the truth

Lord, what truth, especially from Your Word (the Bible), do You have to communicate with me about the lie? Heb. 4:12; John 14:9; John 21:19

5 Experience His freedom from the bondage

If healing has occurred, you may immediately sense new freedom from the bondage. If bondage remains, ask God, "Is there another lie, Lord?" Steps 6-10 may help.

6 Discovering what Jesus was doing

Jesus, what were You doing and feeling when the wounding event happened? John 11:35

7 Extending and receiving forgiveness

Jesus, have I forgiven the one who hurt me? God, have I forgiven myself? Have I come to peace with You for allowing it? This can hinder my ability to receive Your love (love myself), love God, and love others. Matt. 6:14-15

8 Uncovering and renouncing vows

Lord, is there a vow I made to protect myself from pain? This can hinder my ability to receive Your love, love God, and love others. If so, renounce it and cancel it in Jesus' name. Matt. 5:34-37

9 Breaking any pronouncements

God, did an authority make a pronouncement over me? This can hinder my ability to receive Your love, love God, and love others. If so, break it in Jesus' name. John 8:11

10 Surrendering a burden to Jesus

A burden I was never meant to carry can hinder my ability to receive Your love, love God, and love others. If Jesus would take your burden, would you be willing to surrender it to Him? If you give the burden to Him, what will He give you in return? Gather the burden and lay it at His feet. What does Jesus do with the burden? Matt. 11:28-30

11 IMPORTANT: Always anchor your time in the Bible

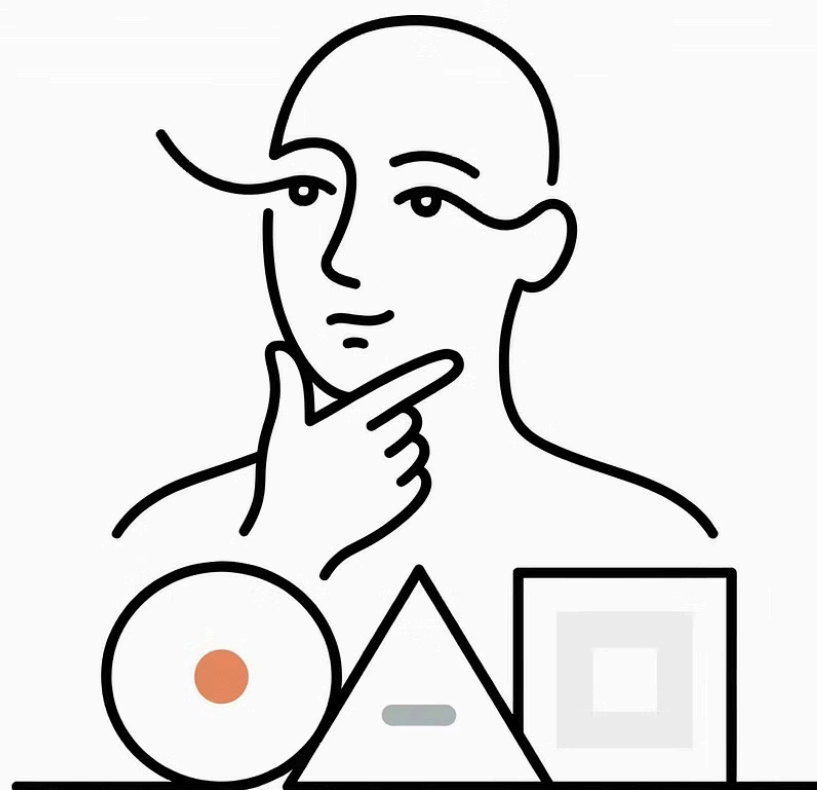
and test impressions with God's Word (the Bible), His character (the person of Jesus and His sacrificial love), and wise, godly people (with a track record of good decisions). Don't suppress the Spirit or block God's communication, but don't be gullible. Check it out carefully; keep only what passes the test. 1 Thes. 5:19-22

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Give yourself plenty of time (suggest at least 30 minutes to 2 hours) to walk through these steps in a safe, peaceful place. Sometimes it helps to have a mature believer in Jesus walk/pray you through these steps with you. Try this once a week for a month. Always ask God to protect the time and to hear only His voice. Always ask God to protect the time and silence all other voices except His. As a believer, He's given you authority over evil.

REFLECT WITH GOD and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

How Emotionally Mature Are You?

"It's impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature." – Peter Scazzero



Personal Note: Emotional immaturity was one of three major reasons I struggled with functional addiction (bad/sin habits) and loneliness. Click on the link below and scroll down the page to find the quiz.



Emotional Health Quiz

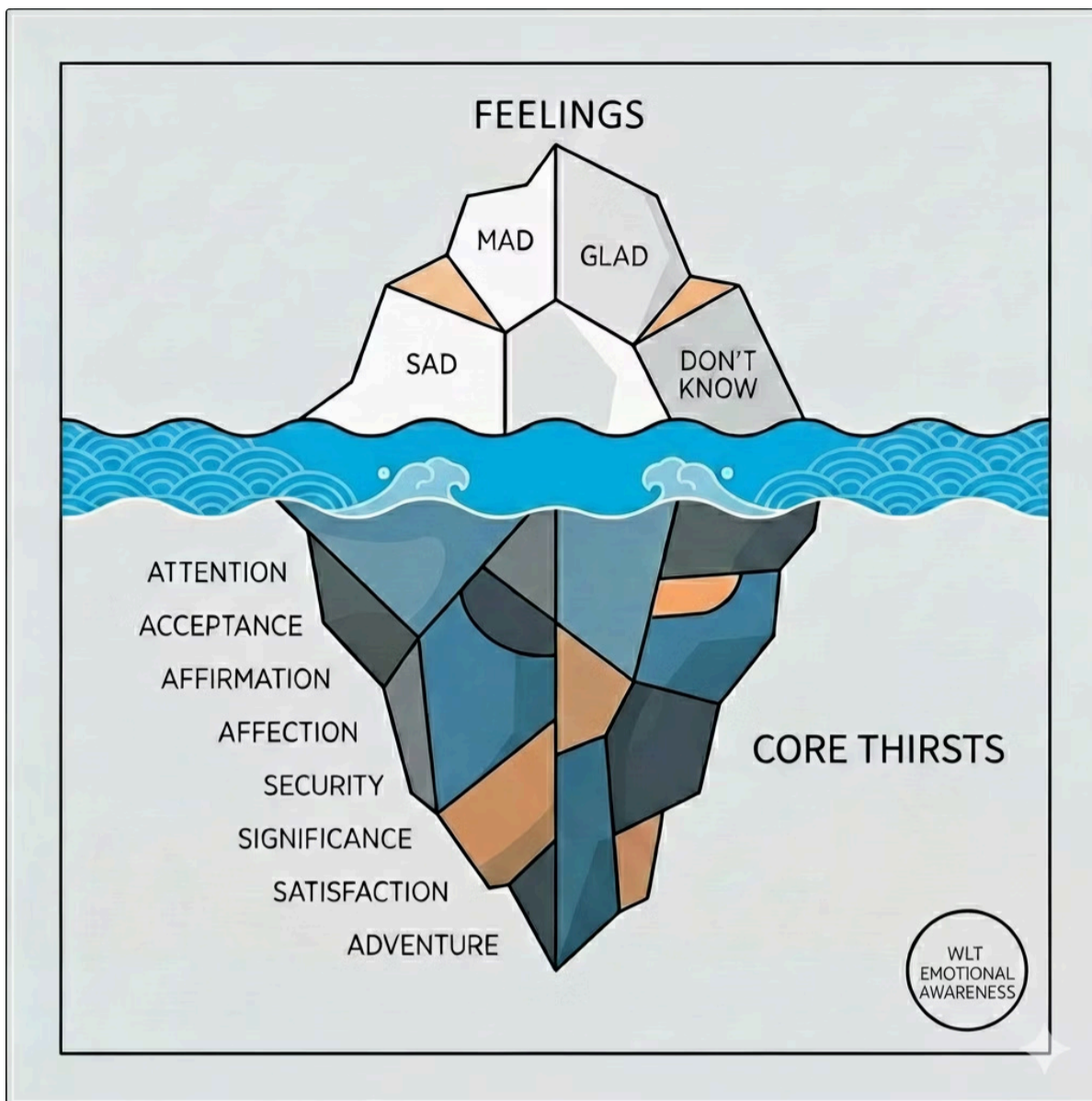
TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: Find out how emotionally mature you are on the Emotionally Healthy website. Click the button and take the quiz. This will be helpful if you choose to experience the emotional vocabulary exercise tool.



REFLECT WITH GOD and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

How to Mature Emotionally

Practice identifying and expressing your feelings and go deeper with God!



If you've ever been lost or looking for a specific store in a shopping center, there's a good chance you were helped by a display map. Usually, a red dot on the map says this: "You are here." I struggled with emotional awareness and expression for years, and this is a key step in discovering deeper, core thirsts in our soul. There is a reason God asks Adam, "Where are you?" God knows, but Adam doesn't. You can do this on your own, but you ultimately want to share and feel these feelings with God ([Psalm 62:8](#)) and a trusted friend who can listen and process it with you. Remember, feelings are like car dashboard signals and gauges that help you discern what is going on in the deeper places of your engine (mind, heart, and soul). Emotions should not dictate your decisions and actions but they can help discern them and connect us relationally.

Tip: Finding the right [Psalm](#), and reading, listening, or praying through it, is a great way to help you identify, process, and express your feelings with God.



Emotional Vocabulary - Red Dot Green Dot Exercise (PDF)

TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD: For at least seven days, practice the Red Dot and Green Dot Emotional Vocabulary Exercise. I encourage you to do this alone and with a trusted believer friend ([18:20](#)).

1. As you look at the dots, simply ask yourself the question, "Where am I right now, or what am I feeling right now?"
2. Then look over and pick out the Red Dot and/or Green Dot words that seem to fit.
3. Write those feelings down and then ask God, "Why am I feeling this way?" then sit and listen. Or, walk through the Listening Prayer Guidelines or Healing Prayer Guidelines with this emotion in mind to see what the Holy Spirit shows you. **NOTE:** The words below the waterline in the iceberg illustration (above) are examples of universal core thirsts that God has given to us. Often, core thirsts like these cause the emotions we experience because they are unmet or violated in some way.
4. Ask God, "Which of the core thirsts on the iceberg sheet matter most to me?" Rank them from most important to least important. God must be the primary way we fulfill these core thirsts. Ask God to satisfy these core thirsts/desires and ask for forgiveness for trying to have these desires satisfied by people or things.



REFLECT WITH GOD and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a [Bible](#) verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

My Freedom Through Relationship



TESTIMONY JOURNEY: FINDING FREEDOM

☐ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

Option 1 – You can watch a more recent interview where I share my personal story, struggles, and journey to freedom through relationship with God. Here is my interview with Jonathan Daugherty of BeBroken Ministries on three different platforms:

[Apple Podcasts](#)

[Vimeo](#)

[Spotify](#)

Option 2 – Watch each of the videos in my Freedom from Addiction and Loneliness Video Series. These are older, rougher videos (and a little cheesy), but I pray they are helpful to you. ;-)

FREEDOM 1 OF 52

Prelude

Intro - P52 Freedom Videos

YouTube

FIGHTERS – P52 Freedom from Addiction and Loneliness

Do you want to move from struggling to empowerment over addiction and loneliness? I do, after 18 years of loneliness and addiction as a "Christian."...

- ❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

How to Do Extended Time Alone With God



If we have a shallow relationship with God, it's no wonder that we experience functional addiction (bad habits/idols) and loneliness. We can develop a deeper relationship through extended time alone with God (ETAWG). If Jesus went away for extended time alone in prayer (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Mark 14:32), we should too!

IMPORTANT: Don't put pressure on yourself, but make it like a time with your best friend. Even if nothing dramatic seems to happen, remember that you are connecting with God through faith by sacrificing the time to God. Don't worry, God will follow through on his promise to speak to you and guide you, but it may not be in the way you think (Jeremiah 29:13).

Extended Time Alone With God Article

✔ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

1. Read the above article.
2. Put Extended Time Alone With God (ETAWG) on your schedule for at least two hours, but it could be longer (half day, day, weekend, etc.).
3. Plan where you want to go and pack what you need (Bible, journal, pen, jacket, music, etc.).
4. Try at least three of the tools in this Relational Field Manual.

Option: Try the S.O.A.P. method. Ask God to give you a **SCRIPTURE** (Bible passage) that seems to stand out (example: John 3:16), then make an **OBSERVATION** (example: God so loved), then **APPLY** it to your life (example: I will put a post-it note on my bathroom mirror saying "God so loved [your name]"), and finally **PRAY** (example: "Lord, help me put this on my mirror and remember to look at it and believe it every day.").

- ❓ **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with, and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it, and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.

What's Your Mole Focus? (Fun Quiz)



This is fun, but also helpful for figuring out what season of life you are in and the role you need to focus on as you grow in your relationship with God.

[Take the Quiz! \(6 Questions\)](#)

☐ TAKE A FAITH STEP WITH GOD:

1. Take the quiz to discover the role you need to focus on for your current season of life.
2. **Optional:** Click on the related playlist below on the Why Live Today YouTube Channel to watch videos related to your focus. FYI, I haven't done much with the Giver Video Playlist yet. Lord willing, I will get back to it soon. Thanks for your encouragement and support as I keep working to develop these projects!
3. **Optional:** Let me know if you want me to bring my merch store back from the dead so you can buy merch with your focus mole! (sweatshirts, t-shirts, journals, hats, etc.) for your mole focus;-)

- ② **REFLECT WITH GOD** and write about the experience (thoughts, feelings, questions, a prayer, a Bible verse, an experience or activity you did with God, etc.). These are all ways that we can experience, connect with and hear from God. Writing it down can help you realize this, remember it and act on it so the relationship with God grows. Consider sharing your experience or the tool with a friend who might benefit. Loving others by sharing is another way we experience God's presence and love.