



Entree

Journal 1

A ONE-ON-ONE
FOUNDATIONAL JOURNEY
FOR NEW BELIEVERS

Entree – Introduction

Welcome to the ENTREE experience, a few weeks of personal attention focused on helping you to step into a whole new quality of life. The purpose of this journey is to introduce you to the basic building blocks of ***living in relationship with God***. As with every building or large construction, time and care must be taken to settle its *foundations* as they have a direct influence on the building's ability to stand up to the stresses and challenges of the environment in which it is positioned. So it is with every person's life. The things that we believe about God, ourselves and life are at the *core* of who we are, foundational to how we function every day. It is important that these things be settled.

In this season, you will be encouraged to explore your day-to-day functioning from the vantage point of a new identity ... and you will be assisted by a personal *coach* who will meet regularly with you for insight, support and encouragement. Many of the questions you have been asking about living a meaningful life will surface again in these next few weeks and will hopefully be answered. Your coach will empower you to step beyond the boundaries that these unanswered questions may have set up in your life ... or point you in the right direction for you to discover the answers for yourself.

We will be spending time on three *foundational* issues in the weeks to come:

- embracing the things God is *saying about me*
- embracing the way God has chosen to *communicate with me*
- embracing the way God has invited me to *communicate with Him*

This Journal has been prepared for you to use as a guideline, a *starting point* or a *stepping stone* into the issues your coach will be discussing with you in the next few weeks. It has been set up to address certain issues and concepts (or misconceptions) on a daily basis and the questions have been designed to take you beyond shallow cultural clichés. Use this journal to make notes of the things you hear from God and to formulate the questions you want to ask your coach; use it as a day-by-day personal growth journal for this season of your life.

We want to encourage you in this way to develop the habit of journaling:

- embrace the *discipline* of *regularly* reading Scripture
- engage *cognitively* with the *content* of Scripture (ask questions and make notes of the answers you receive from the Holy Spirit)
- engage *spiritually* with the *intent* of Scripture (pray for greater revelation each time you read the Bible; make notes of how God chooses to reveal Himself to you)

You will be wise to set 20 to 30 minutes of your time aside each day to focus on the journal's content, preparing yourself for your weekly meeting with your coach. Please see this in the light of our desire to assist rather than prescribe to you, helping you in establishing vocabulary for meaningful conversation between you and your coach (as well as those who share your everyday life) about the deeper issues of this life.

As in Galileo's case, you may discover that you are in the minority in acknowledging that the Son is at the centre of all of life¹. Together with those who throughout the centuries have lived by this truth, we encourage you to remain firm in that belief and honest with its implications on your daily living. As with Shackleton's advertisement², it will take courage to respond to God's call to venture into things that – at times – may be unfamiliar and unknown. And it also takes courage to acknowledge your own 'blind spots' ... *To live unchallenged is to live unchanged.*

Finally, human nature seems to be designed in such a way that whatever we experience, we tend to want to share it with others. The joy of the discovery is incomplete until that discovery is shared, until someone else shares that joy. That's exactly what we want you to do on this journey ... share it!

So, start by finding a quiet spot each day where you will be uninterrupted for at least 30 minutes ... pull out your Bible and pen (or pencil) ... and start making notes. Respond to what is stirred in your heart and mind by what you see in the Scriptures (it's more than likely the Holy Spirit Who is doing the stirring), the questions and comments in your journal and the input of your coach as you ENTER this new season.

Jesus said:

⁹***I am the Door***; anyone who enters in through Me will be saved (will live). He will come in and he will go out [freely], and will find pasture.

¹⁰The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). **John 10:9-10 (Amplified Bible)**

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. **John 14:6 (Amplified Bible)**

⁴***Live in me***. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

⁵***I am the Vine, you are the branches***. When you're joined with me and I with you, ***the relation intimate and organic***, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. **John 15:4-5 (The Message)**

Thank you for knocking on this door ...

... we would love you to ENTER ...

... come on in and enjoy the conversation!

Entree - Week 1 ... 'Identifying Yourself'

Introductory Comments to Week 1:

Whenever we deal with a parable in the Bible (a story about everyday things that teaches us a spiritual lesson), we need to ask some basic questions. The first would be something along these lines: 'what character, event, principle or process is telling me something about **who God is** and what He's busy doing?' The second would be quite similar: 'what character, event, principle or process is telling me something about **who Man is (who I am)**, his nature, character and function?'

Apply these questions to each day's Bible Reading for the rest of this week, and use this as a basic point of departure whenever you read the Bible.

Week 1/Day 1

Ever been lost ...?

Luke 15:1-7 (Taken from **The Message)**

Now all the tax collectors and sinners kept coming to listen to Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the scribes kept complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³*So he told them this parable:*

⁴*"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. He leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and looks for the one that is lost until he finds it, doesn't he? ⁵When he finds it, he puts it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶Then he goes home, calls his friends and neighbours together, and says to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!'*

⁷*In the same way, I tell you that there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance."*

Sheep, without adequate guidance, *will* tend to get lost. Not because they are rebellious; they just happen to be naïve. Sheep tend to get ‘wrapped up’ in their own petty agendas, following their own curiosity ... to the point where they can no longer find their way back to where they belong.

The prophet Isaiah points this out as being a universal trait for humanity as well¹. It is because we tend to focus on ourselves, our own preferences and agendas, that we – like sheep – lose the plot ... we get ‘lost’. Then, in our lost condition, we assume God is no longer interested in us, that we are no longer His property, His responsibility ... we have to find our own way in life, doing the best we can.

Jesus tells us this parable to point out that *God wants to engage with us* in spite of our ‘lost’ condition. He makes Himself known to us as the ‘Good Shepherd’ ... precisely *because* of this tendency that we have of getting ‘lost’². No matter where we have been or what we have been up to, He still considers us worth pursuing, worth redeeming, worth restoring. He sees every man, woman and child as belonging to Him ... the sheep of His own flock³.

God is not put off by about your natural tendency to be self-focused and agenda-driven to the point of excluding Him from your life, becoming ‘lost’. He is committed to restoring you to His ‘flock’, *actively pursuing quality relationship with you*. There is no shame in acknowledging that you need help, guidance, perspective, assistance ... there is no embarrassment involved when you turn to Him, acknowledging the need for His help to get your life ‘on track’ as He intended. So shift your focus – let Him become the One that is *at the heart of your life*, the ‘Sun’ at *the centre* of your ‘solar system’. Let His heart, His passion, His agenda become the guiding factor in your choices and behaviour.

Questions for thought & discussion

i) With which group of people are you most likely to identify – the ‘99’ who are ‘righteous’ or the ‘one’ that is in need of rescue (*Luke 15:4*)?

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What makes you feel this way?

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ii) What is it that stirs the Good Shepherd into going out to rescue the sheep?

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iii) Do you consider yourself worth rescuing?

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Week 1/Day 2

Priceless Jewel ...

Luke 15:8-10 (Taken from the **Amplified Bible**)

Or what woman, having ten [silver] drachmas [each one equal to a day's wages], if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and look carefully and diligently until she finds it?

⁹*And when she has found it, she summons her [women] friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the silver coin which I had lost.*

¹⁰*Even so, I tell you, there is joy among and in the presence of the angels of God over one [especially] wicked person who repents (changes his mind for the better, heartily amending his ways, with abhorrence of his past sins).*

In this sequel to the story of the lost Sheep, Jesus is reinforcing His view of how God values Man by using the metaphor of the coin. Some scholars are of the opinion that the coins referred to here were made up in a jewelled headdress or a diadem - 10 coins on a chain - to adorn the woman's head¹. The lost coin represents – like the sheep in the previous parable – someone who is 'lost', a 'sinner' who has *drifted away from quality relationship with God* (God being represented by the woman who owned the ten coins).

This is not the first and only time Jesus uses a coin to represent a human life. He makes the same comparison in one of His encounters with the Pharisees (a conservative Religious group) and the Herodians (a liberal Political group). Both groups posed the same question - '*is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?*' - in an attempt to manoeuvre Him into an impossible situation. A negative answer (it's *not* legitimate) would have the Herodians up in arms, whilst a positive answer (it *is* legitimate) would have the Pharisees on His back with renewed venom ...

Matthew 22:17-21 (Taken from the **International Standard Version**)

¹⁸*But Jesus recognized their wickedness and said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." They brought him a denarius*.*

²⁰*Then he asked them, "Whose face and name is this?"*

²¹*They said to him, "Caesar's." So he said to them, "Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

Jesus' answer to them took them completely off guard. It was Caesar who had introduced the coins into the Palestinian economy, so Caesar had the right to recall them or use them for whatever purpose he had in mind – he was their owner. Likewise, it was God who introduced the human race into the earth ... He was *their* Owner.

Every human life is 'stamped' with the image of God, the Creator Himself defining the origin and value of every man in terms of *His* own Nature and Being². The lost coin, just like any 'lost' human being, still retained its God-determined value ... even though it was no longer in mint condition, no longer part of its original setting, no longer fulfilling its original purpose.

Jesus' story is again one of hope and restoration. He acknowledges that life often deals us some cruel blows. Traumatic experiences and deep disappointments may jolt us loose from our original place or purpose. But the coin (our life) does not lose its value because of its condition or the depths to which it has fallen. It is the place *from which* it falls, not the place *to which* it falls that determines the value of the coin. And God – the Author of life, from Whom every human life gets its value – rejoices together with the angels, *embracing every individual who returns to his or her original place and purpose.*

*A *Denarius* was a coin that was roughly the equivalent of a standard labourer's daily wage. In some translations a 'denarius' (Latin) is referred to as a 'penny' (English) or 'drachma' (Greek).

Questions for thought & discussion

i) Can you identify with what happened to the fallen coin?.....

If so, can you identify some of the jolts or blows that life has dealt you that were instrumental in shaking you loose from your original setting as image-bearer of God in this world?

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ii) Why would someone who has been violated, victimised and traumatised – who encounters blatant rejection, or who faces constant ridicule – feel guilty about what they have suffered?

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Where do these feelings of ‘shame’, worthlessness or insignificance in victims come from?

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iii) What can we learn from the actions of the woman – the owner of the coin – about God’s heart for people who have been jolted out of their place and become downtrodden by the harsh events of everyday life?

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Week 1/Day 3

Heading Home ...

Luke 15:11-24 (Taken from the **Amplified Bible**)

And He said, There was a certain man who had two sons; ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the part of the property that falls [to me]. And he divided the estate between them.

¹³*And not many days after that, the younger son gathered up all that he had and journeyed into a distant country, and there he wasted his fortune in reckless and loose [from restraint] living.*

¹⁴*And when he had spent all he had, a mighty famine came upon that country, and he began to fall behind and be in want. ¹⁵So he went and forced (glued) himself upon one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed hogs. ¹⁶And he would gladly have fed on and filled his belly with the carob pods that the hogs were eating, but [they could not satisfy his hunger and] nobody gave him anything [better].*

¹⁷*Then when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have enough food, and [even food] to spare, but I am perishing (dying) here of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; [just] make me like one of your hired servants'.*

²⁰*So he got up and came to his [own] father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity and tenderness [for him]; and he ran and embraced him and kissed him [fervently].*

²¹*And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son [I no longer deserve to be recognized as a son of yours]!'*

²²*But the father said to his bond servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe (the festive robe of honor) and put it on him; and give him a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet. ²³And bring out that [wheat-]fatted calf and kill it; and let us revel and feast and be happy and make merry, ²⁴Because this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to revel and feast and make merry.*

As the third of three short stories, this parable adds dimensions to things Jesus wants us to notice about the way God loves people. The key difference between the son, the coin and the sheep is the son's capacity of *choice* ... he *chose* to become 'lost'. The response of the father in dealing with his son also differs from that of the shepherd (who takes the initiative in finding the lost sheep) and the woman (who moves aside every hindrance in looking for the lost coin). Rather than following and searching for him, the father acknowledges and respects his son's own choice and *waits for the son to reverse his decision* ... waits for him *to return* to the place where he belongs. And when he notices the son on his way back home, he runs to meet him, embraces and restores him to his original status as a *son* - his heir and representative in the community.

The pivotal phrase in the story is found in verse 17 ... *he came to himself*. This phrase, in the original Greek language, refers to him 'arriving at' or 'stepping into' or 'gaining access to' his *true identity*... He rediscovered his *original face*¹. All his foolish choices and selfish, irresponsible behaviour had been done 'out of character', out of alignment with who he was born to be. It was this realisation of his *true identity* that finally sparked a thorough repentance and change of attitude towards his father and God's purpose for his life². On returning home, the young man's father affirmed his true identity by publicly declaring him once again '*my son*'³. The shoes, robe and ring and were his way of saying to his son, 'this is who you are; this is what you were born to become; this is where you belong'.

Many of us struggle with identity issues as a result of having accepted a view of ourselves that is based on the inaccurate and inadequate opinions of our culture and the people around us⁴. Believing these opinions leaves us with a low sense of self-worth, and we embrace a way of life that is destructive⁵ and detrimental to our design. But when we choose to believe the opinion of our Father, Designer and Maker, we discover our 'original face'. And when we repent (reversing the decisions that took us away from fellowship with Him) we enter into the freedom of being the person we were born to become, positioned to live the life we were destined to enjoy.

Questions for thought & discussion

i) Can you identify with what happened to the younger son?

If so, can you identify some of the choices that you have made in life that have taken you away from quality relationship with God?

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ii) Do you also struggle with feelings of 'guilt', failure or unworthiness as a result of having made choices that have left you 'stranded', feeling far away from the grace of God?

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Is there anything that is keeping you from getting up out of your current condition and returning to your Father?

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iii) What can we learn from the actions of the father of the wayward son about God's heart for people who long to turn back towards a life of quality relationship with Him?

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Have you 'come to yourself' yet?

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Week 1/Day 4

Divine Exchange

Romans 5:17-19 (Taken from the **International Standard Version**)

¹⁷*For if, through one man, death ruled because of that man's offense, how much more will those who receive such overflowing grace and the gift of righteousness rule in life because of one man, Jesus Christ!*

¹⁸*Consequently, just as one offense resulted in condemnation for everyone, so one act of righteousness results in justification and life for everyone.*

¹⁹*For just as through one man's disobedience many people were made sinners, so also through one man's obedience many people will be made righteous.*

In this portion of his letter to the first century church in the city of Rome, the apostle Paul is highlighting a specific legal principle – the principle of *representation and identification*. This legal principle is still widely practiced in many communities today. One of the clearest examples is found in marriage, where husband and wife are married ‘in community of property’. A woman who marries a wealthy heir instantly gains every advantage that her new husband’s great wealth and influence can bring. Advantages that were built up over many generations, through the efforts of people she never knew, become hers in a moment. It is all hers through the principle of *identification*, by saying ‘I do’, by simply agreeing to be legally bound in marriage to a man who *represents* her in choosing her to be his bride. And in doing so, she literally steps away from the legal implications of being the daughter of the man she knew as father, the man to whom she was bound by birth ... her identity – legally – has changed.

Paul takes the implications of this principle into the arena of timeless truth. In God’s frame of reference, there are two men who represent all of humanity, two men to whom we are all legally bound either by birth or by choice. The first of these was Adam. In Adam, the founder of the human race, every human life has been represented. As the first human being who sinned by choice, he defined EVERY HUMAN BEING since then as a ‘sinner’. As descendants of Adam, fallible human beings legally bound to him by birth, we are incapable of impressing God with our ‘righteousness’. Like sheep, we tend

to get confused and lost; like coins, we fall into dark corners of sin and degradation, becoming mired and marred; like rebellious sons, we miss the mark of our calling and end up losing (or rather wasting) everything we have been graced with. In Adam, we find ourselves burdened with GUILT (a sense of *wrong-doing*), SHAME (a sense of *wrong-being*) and in PAIN, suffering the combined consequences of Adam's choice, our own foolish choices and the destructive choices of people around us who have no concern for others.

In the person of Jesus we find the 'prototype' of Adam, the ORIGINAL BEING on whom Adam was modelled¹. In God's view, the position of Jesus Christ has even greater weight than that of Adam. It is His righteousness and *sinlessness* that God uses as the defining paradigm from which He works with the human race. In Adam, '*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*'. But in God's frame of reference, everyone has been '*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*' (Romans 3:23-24). In Christ, EVERY HUMAN BEING is embraced by God as His child, His heir.

Every human being who chooses to be legally bound to Jesus Christ becomes heir to everything that He possesses, all that He embodies and represents, and every possible favour that God could ever desire to bestow upon the Bride of His Son. By saying 'I do' to the Son of God we receive from His Father '*overflowing GRACE*', '*the gift of RIGHTEOUSNESS*' and the authority to '*RULE in life because of one man, Jesus Christ!*' ... *Faith in Jesus Christ – believing in the reality and embracing the validity of His life, death and resurrection – is the key to the restoration of all we were intended to have and to become.*

In *identifying* with the One who *represents* us before the Father, we are included in everything God intended for human life:

*God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. **We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him ... If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?** Romans 8:29,32^(MSG)*

And he who believes in (has faith in, clings to, relies on) the Son has (now possesses) eternal life. But whoever disobeys (is unbelieving toward, refuses to trust in, disregards, is not subject to) the Son will never see (experience) life, but [instead] the wrath of God abides on him. [God's displeasure remains on him; His indignation hangs over him continually.]

John 3:36 (Amplified Bible)

Questions for thought & discussion

i) How does it make you feel when someone gives you a gift for no apparent reason and on no particular occasion ... do you find it difficult to accept things that you did not work for or feel you do not deserve?

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ii) Do you find it easy to identify yourself as a 'winner' when your favourite sports team achieves victory?

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Can you fully identify with their achievement even though you were merely a spectator at the event?

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Week 1/Day 5

Confession of Faith

Romans 10:9-13 (Taken from the **Amplified Bible**)

⁹... if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation.

¹¹The Scripture says*, No man who believes in Him [who adheres to, relies on, and trusts in Him] will [ever] be put to shame or be disappointed... ¹² He generously bestows His riches upon all who call upon Him [in faith]. ¹³For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord ... will be saved.

* see *Psalm 34:22; Isaiah 28:16; 49:23; Jeremiah 17:7.*

Like the shepherd and the woman in the parables of Jesus (Luke 15), God has done all that is necessary in Christ to provide a way for every man to enjoy quality relationship with Him. Like the father of the prodigal son, He is waiting expectantly for every man to respond. The two things that God is specifically waiting for from us – the things that ‘unlock’ the ‘door’ of Salvation – are mentioned here in Romans 10:10 ... *faith* and *confession*.

In Matthew 16:13-28 we find Jesus asking His disciples about their perception of His identity. Peter *confesses* ‘You are the Christ (Messiah/Lord/Master) the Son of the Living God’. Jesus commends Him, knowing that his confession was not based on the opinions of religious leaders or influential people but on the *revelation* given him by His Father (v17). Jesus immediately begins to discuss His pending crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection with them (v22). Peter adamantly opposes Him, declaring his willingness to defend Jesus should anyone attempt to lay a hand on Him. Instead of being affirmed for his loyalty, Peter gets *rebuked* by Jesus for not embracing God’s purposes (v23).

Although there are a number of symbolic examples and references to ‘resurrection life’ in the Old Testament, there is one passage of Scripture that

clearly points to the *resurrection on the third day*. This is evidently the portion of Scripture that Jesus was referring to in his conversation with them that day¹, preparing His disciples for the events of that Passover weekend in which He was to be crucified, buried and resurrected.

Hosea 6:1-2^(AMP)

*COME AND let us return to the Lord, for He has torn so that He may **heal us**; He has stricken so that He may **bind us up**.² After two days He will **revive us** (quicken us, give us life); on the third day He will **raise us up** that **we may live before Him**.*

It was quite clear to Jesus that He would be representing *the entire human race* in that event; that in God's view **we** would be crucified, **we** would be revived, **we** would be raised to 'live before Him' on the third day. This was the key that Peter missed.

The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are vital elements in the plan of God to restore the human race to its original glory. The virgin-born, Holy Spirit-conceived Son of God represents the untainted, sinless and righteous original nature of the entire human race. Those who from the heart '*believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead*'

- consider themselves *included in Christ's death* (which has ended the reign of sin in their own lives);
- consider their Adamic nature and identity to be *buried together with Christ*;
- consider themselves as having been *raised together with Him* as 'new creatures' in newness of life.

It is this absolute *conviction* – and the *confession* of this conviction – that causes a man to '*be saved*' ...

[Righteousness...] will be granted and credited to us also who believe in (trust in, adhere to, and rely on) God, Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,²⁵ Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God].

Romans 4:24-25 (Amplified Bible)

⁹Your salvation is realised **when your own words agree with God** concerning you, thus you acknowledge the lordship of Jesus (over sin's claim), convinced in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. ¹⁰ **Heart-faith** confirms righteousness (He restored you to blameless innocence), and inspires the kind of conversation consistent with salvation.

¹¹Scripture declares that no one who believes in Him will be ashamed.

¹²Nothing distinguishes the Jew from the Greek when it comes to the generosity of God; He responds with equal benevolence to everyone who sees themselves identified in Him (and not in their nationality). ¹³Salvation is to understand that every man's true identity is revealed in Christ.

Romans 10:9-13 (Ruach Paraphrase of Paul's Letter to the Romans)

Questions for thought & discussion

i) What is 'heart faith'?

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ii) What are the implications of the revelation that Peter embraced (that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God)

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... in terms of your salvation?

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... in terms of your current identity?

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... in terms of the way you now relate to God?

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iii) The Apostle James uses the concept of a 'bridle' when he refers to the way we are to use the capacity of speech (see James 3:2,3). A bridle helps the rider/driver to channel the horse's strength and energy in a constructive way. What is this analogy telling us about the power of a positive confession that is aligned with revelation?

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Week 1/Day 6

Snakes

John 3:14-18 (Taken from **The Amplified Bible**)

¹⁴*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must [so it is necessary that] the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross],* ¹⁵*In order that everyone who believes in Him [who cleaves to Him, trusts Him, and relies on Him] may not perish, but have eternal life and [actually] live forever!*

¹⁶*For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.*

¹⁷*For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him.*

¹⁸*He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation - he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in and trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.]*

In this passage of Scripture (John 3), Jesus is in conversation with a Jewish Teacher, Nicodemus (v1). He is pointing out the difference between ‘seeing’ the fruit of His ministry with *physical* eyes, the eyes of the body and soul (v2) and ‘seeing’ the revelation of God in Christ with *spiritual* eyes, the eyes of faith, the sensory capacity of the human spirit (v3). The conversation moves in the direction of life in the Kingdom, life in the Spirit, and Jesus uses the metaphor of physical sight to explain life in the Spirit. He refers to a well-known event in Israel’s history, recorded in Numbers 21.

In their grumbings, the Israelites expressed a desire to return to their Egyptian captivity rather than to endure their current ‘suffering’. The Cobra

being one of the key emblems of the Egyptian Pharaohs, God sent the Arabian variety of the Cobra among them in response to their complaints. In this way, God was apparently acknowledging their preference, giving them the immediate implications of what they chose. Israel made the connection ... Pharaoh's power poisons the soul, like the fiery poison of the snake in the bloodstream. Those who prefer to remain under his authority will perish.

The Israelites repented of their rebellious attitude, begging Moses to ask God to remove the snakes from their camp. Rather than removing the snakes – a fairly logical solution in preventing further suffering – God chose to provide a remedy for those currently in pain as well as those who were potentially at risk. He instructed Moses to make a bronze snake and set it high on a pole in view of the entire camp. The snake on the pole would provide access to instant physical healing ... all that He required was that those who were bitten would physically, consciously and intentionally, focus their attention on the object of *God's* choice (the brazen serpent) and away from the object of *their* choice (the Cobra).

Jesus points out to Nicodemus (v14) the spiritual parallel to the physical, historical situation described in Numbers 21. Physically, viewing the bronze snake on the pole brought about physical healing, halting and reversing the destructive process that had been activated in the body by the serpent's poison. Spiritually, viewing Christ on the Cross (believing = seeing with the eyes of the spirit, using the sensory capacity of faith) brings about salvation, halting and reversing of the process of perishing that was activated by the poison of the lie of Satan, the original serpent. It is this ability to 'see', and the choice to embrace the *spiritual* perspective as being *the TRUTH* – rather than to rely merely on the physical 'evidence' around us – that brings us into the realities of Kingdom Life, Eternal life, the God-kind-of-life.

Walking 'by faith and not by sight'*... keeping Christ constantly in view¹ ... we can live un-intimidated in the midst of temptation and the threat of evil².

* *This phrase is found in 2 Corinthians 5:7*

Questions for thought & discussion

i) What is God saying to you through this passage of Scripture about the things that constantly demand your focus?

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ii) What does it mean to 'walk by faith and not by sight'?

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iii) Where do we start if we want God's power to become active in our lives in restoring the things that have been poisoned by the devil or disrupted by his influence?

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ENTREE - Footnotes and References

Footnotes - Introduction

1. Galileo was one of the best-known pioneer astronomers who supported the Copernican view of the cosmos ... the belief that the earth was not the centre of all things, but was – together with the other planets in our Solar system – revolving around the sun. Although unpopular, ridiculed and violently opposed by many of the ‘knowledgeable leaders’ in his day, Galileo’s conviction has now become the irrefutable foundation of astronomy.

2. Ernest Shackleton, legendary British explorer, evidently placed this advertisement in the Media early in 1914 to announce an expedition to the Antarctic.

Men wanted for hazardous journey.

Small wages.

Bitter cold.

Long months of complete darkness.

Constant danger.

Safe return doubtful.

Honour & recognition in case of success.

5 000 men responded ...

Footnotes - Week 1/Day1

1. *Isaiah 53:6*^(MSG)

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And GOD has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.

2. *John 10:11*^(AMP)

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the sheep.

Luke 19:10^(AMP)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

3. *Psalm 95:6-8*^(MKJV)

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our maker. ⁷For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if you will hear His voice, ⁸harden not your heart ...

Footnotes – Week 1 / Day 2

1. This was not an unusual gift for a man to give either his wife (as a wedding or a birthday gift) or his fiancée (with the intention that it be worn on their wedding day).

2. **Genesis 1:26-28^(MSG)**

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

²⁷God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. ²⁸God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

Footnotes – Week 1 / Day 3

1. **James 1:23-25 (Ruach Paraphrase)**

²³The difference between a mere spectator and a performer is that both of them hear the same voice and perceive in its message the face of their own genesis (origin) reflected as in a mirror; ²⁴they realize that they are looking at themselves, but for the one it seems just too good to be true, he departs (back to his old way of seeing himself) never giving another thought to the man he saw there in the mirror.

²⁵The other one is mesmerized by what he sees, he is captivated by the effect of a law that frees man from the obligation to the old written code that restricted him to his own efforts and willpower. No distraction or contradiction can dim the impact of what he sees in that mirror concerning the law of perfect liberty (the law of faith) that now frees him to get on with the act of living the life (of his original design.) He finds a new spontaneous lifestyle; the poetry of practical living. (Understanding the mirror identity of man perfects the law of liberty; look deep enough into the law of liberty that you may see there in its perfection a portrait that so resembles the original that He becomes distinctly visible in the face of every man you behold)

2. See Luke 15:18, 21

3. See Luke 15:24

4. Romans 12:2^(MSG)

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

5. Romans 1:21-32^(MSG)

... ²¹People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives. ²²They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life ... ²⁴It wasn't long before they were living in a pigpen, smeared with filth, filthy inside and out ...

²⁶Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either - women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men.

²⁷Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men - all lust, no love ... emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches ... ²⁹grabbing and grasping, vicious backstabbing. They made life hell on earth with their envy, wanton killing, bickering, and cheating ... mean-spirited, venomous, ³⁰fork-tongued God-bashers. Bullies, swaggerers, insufferable windbags! They keep inventing new ways of wrecking lives. They ditch their parents when they get in the way. ³¹Stupid, slimy, cruel, cold-blooded.

³²And it's not as if they don't know better. They know perfectly well they're spitting in God's face. And they don't care – worse; they hand out prizes to those who do the worst things best!

Footnotes – Week 1 / Day 4

1. Romans 8:29^(MSG)

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.

Footnotes – Week 1 / Day 5

1. See Matthew 16:21;
Mark 9:31; Mark 10:34;
Luke 9:22; Luke 18:32-33; Luke 24:45-48;
John 20:9

Footnotes – Week 1/Day 6

1. See Matthew 17:1-8; Hebrews 12:2

2. See 1 Peter 5:6-9; Luke 10:18-20; 1 Corinthians 10:13