

Chapter 9:

MADE FOR MORE:

STEPPING INTO THE NEW LIFE GOD HAS FOR YOU



A NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM SERIES



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Chapter 9:
**MADE FOR MORE:
STEPPING INTO THE NEW LIFE
GOD HAS FOR YOU**

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Chapter 9:

Made for More: Stepping into the New Life God Has for You

*“Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.”*

—C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*



Have you ever stopped to consider that your struggles with addiction were never part of God's original design for your life? That the chains that have bound you were never meant to be your story? The truth is, you were created for so much more. As Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us, God's plans for you are plans for good, not for harm—plans to give you hope and a future.

As Francesca Block so powerfully said:

“Think about the word destroy. Do you know what it is? De-story. Destroy. De-story. You see. And restore. That's re-story. Do you know that only two things have been proven to help survivors of the Holocaust? Massage is one. Telling their story is another. Being touched and touching. Telling your story is touching. It sets you free.”

The devil has tried to de-story your life through addiction and brokenness, robbing you of hope and covering your life with shame and pain. But just as Holocaust survivors found healing through sharing their stories, God invites you to step into restoration—re-storying your life through His love, grace, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes, in the depths of addiction and brokenness, it's hard to believe we could be meant for anything else. The weight of shame, failure, and repeated attempts at change can leave us feeling permanently marked by our past. But God sees beyond our current circumstances to who He created us to be. When we bring our stories to Him, He restores what has been destroyed and writes a new story of hope, healing, and purpose.

Seeing Through Heaven's Eyes

When God looks at you, He doesn't see an addict, a failure, or someone beyond hope. He sees His beloved child, uniquely created in His image. Psalm 139:13-14 tells us that you are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Before addiction entered the picture, before the struggles began, God knit you together with purpose and intention.

The journey of transformation begins with accepting this truth: your identity is not found in your struggles but in your Creator. As emphasized in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” This grace empowers us to claim our true identity as God's children without the weight of comparison or shame.

Consider this story about an unexpected midnight encounter:

There was a father whose peaceful sleep was interrupted one night by his four-year-old and two-year-old children, who had decided their beds were no longer suitable compared to Dad's cozy one. Like most of us, when awakened at 2:38 a.m., he wasn't exactly bursting with joy or ready for negotiations about sleeping arrangements. After several failed attempts to convince these determined little ones that their beds were perfectly fine, he surrendered to their presence. They crawled in beside him—close to Dad, safe, protected, sheltered.

The next morning, looking at his sleeping children, he captured a photo that took his breath away. It was more than just a picture; it was a moment of pure love frozen in time. Through this “interruption,” he glimpsed something profound about God's goodness: Sometimes, what we view as unwanted disruptions in our lives are actually windows through which we can see God's heart.

Just as those children found safety and belonging in their father's presence, God invites us to find our true identity and purpose in His embrace. The journey may not be what we expected, but His goodness awaits us at every step—even the unexpected ones.



Think about it: Those children weren't concerned about whether they deserved to be in their father's bed. They didn't worry about their past behavior that day, whether they'd eaten all their vegetables at dinner or if they'd cleaned their room correctly. They knew they needed their father, and they trusted his love enough to come to him, even at an inconvenient hour. This is exactly how our Heavenly Father invites us to approach Him. As Jesus reminds us in Matthew 11:28,

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

What appeared to be an interruption to the father's sleep became a precious moment of connection and love. What we often view as disruptions to our plans can become sacred spaces where we encounter God's heart in unexpected ways. The father in our story didn't require his children to prove themselves worthy of his presence; he opened his arms and made room for them. In the same way, God doesn't wait for us to get everything right before welcoming us. **He meets us in our messy midnight moments, our desperate searches for comfort, and our stumbling attempts to find our way home.**

Just like that father taking a photo the next morning, seeing the beauty in what began as an interruption, God sees the potential for beauty in every broken piece of our lives. He's not just waiting at the end of our journey; He's present in every step, turning our interruptions into invitations, our disruptions into discoveries of His grace.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions:



- How does seeing yourself as fearfully and wonderfully made challenge your current view of yourself?
- When have you experienced an “interruption” that later revealed God's goodness?
- What lies about your identity have you believed because of addiction?



Break in the Journey



A Grace That Leads Us Home

Earlier in our journey together, we discussed how grace enables us to come home to the Father and breaks the power of our past through Christ's blood. But grace isn't just the doorway to salvation—it's the path we walk every day of our recovery journey. As Francis Chan reminds us, "Grace will lead us home."

But what does this grace look like in the midst of addiction? When shame threatens to overwhelm us, when cravings feel unbearable, when past failures loom large—how do we find and hold onto God's grace in these moments? The answer lies in understanding that grace is God's presence actively working in our lives, strengthening and edifying us for what lies ahead.

Every person is uniquely created in God's image, and His grace empowers us to claim our identity as His children without the weight of comparison. We don't have to measure up to others' expectations or even our own standards of worthiness. Knowing that His grace lovingly compels us toward transformation, we can confidently be who we are called to be. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:10,

"By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect."

Grace allows us to embrace the Father more deeply because it removes the barriers we've built through shame and self-condemnation. It releases us from the past not by erasing it but by transforming how we see it—through the lens of God's redemptive love rather than our own failures.

We often think we need to clean ourselves up before coming to God, but grace means God meets us exactly where we are. Consider Mark 9:14-29, where Jesus encounters a father desperate for his son's healing. The disciples had tried and failed to help, much like our own failed attempts at change. The father cries out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" This is how grace meets us in recovery—we don't need perfect faith or complete victory. We need to come as we are, bringing our mix of hope, struggle, and doubt to Jesus. His response to the man is beautifully simple: "Bring him to me." Some challenges in life are beyond human ability to fix—brokenness so deep, wounds so profound, that only the hand of God can bring healing and restoration. The situation in the natural required a supernatural response, and only Jesus had the power to heal the boy and set him free.

This is what grace looks like in the midst of addiction—it's not about mustering up enough strength to overcome on our own. It's about bringing our brokenness to Jesus again and again, knowing His grace is sufficient even in our weakest moments. As 2 Corinthians 12:9 says,

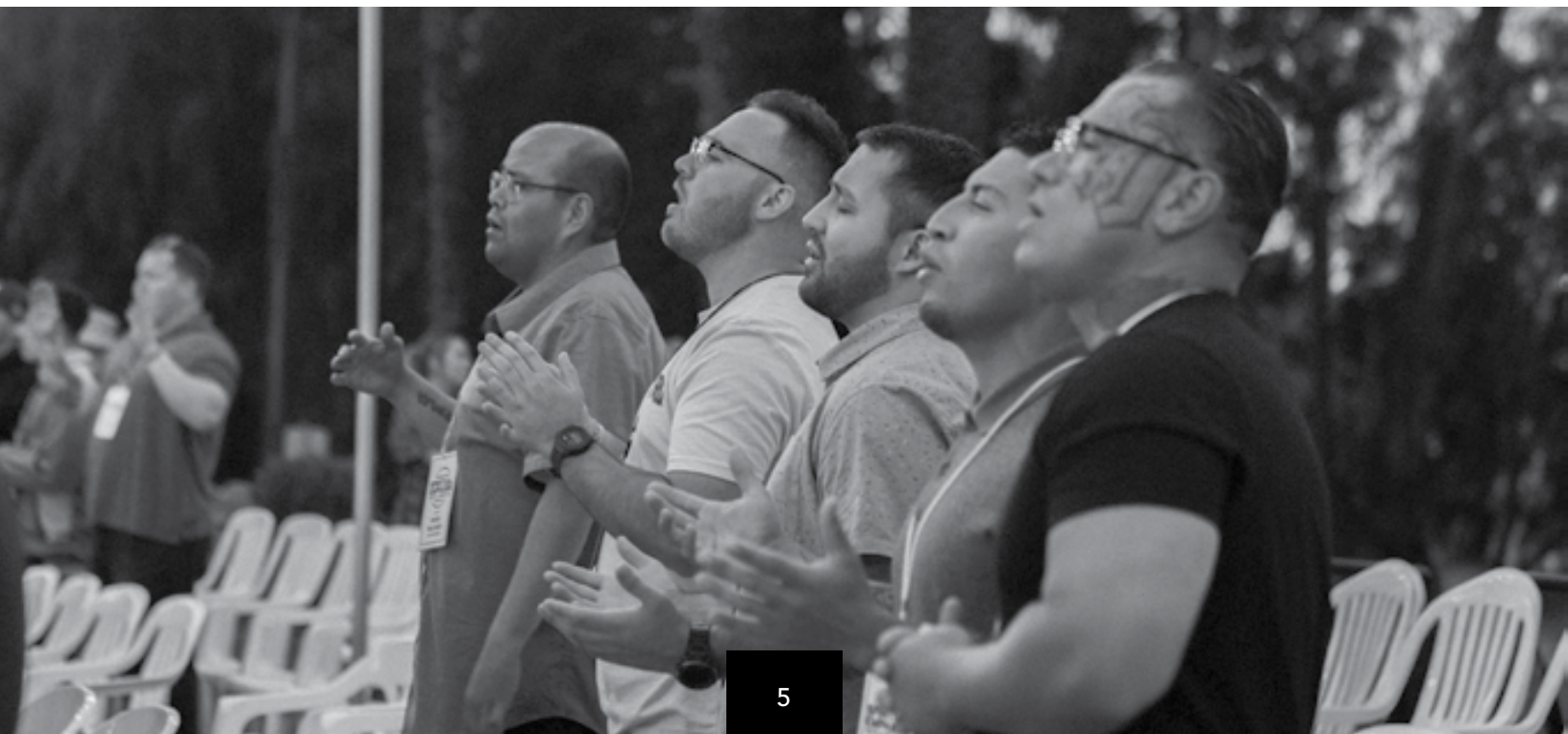
“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Grace works in our lives in several powerful ways:

1. **Grace Initiates** - Even before we recognized our need for help, God was moving toward us with love. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). His grace takes the first step.
2. **Grace Empowers** - We receive strength beyond our own capabilities. This is about God's power working in us, not our own willpower. “And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).
3. **Grace Transforms** - Rather than managing our behavior, grace changes us from the inside out. “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9).
4. **Grace Sustains** - Even when we stumble, His grace carries us through. “Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Brennan Manning writes, “For those who feel their lives are a grave disappointment to God, it requires enormous trust and reckless, raging confidence to accept that the love of Jesus Christ knows no shadow of alteration or change.” This is especially true in recovery, where we often feel we've disappointed God too many times. But grace means His love remains constant, His help remains available, and His transformation continues even when we can't see it.

Grace is about receiving God's unearned favor and letting it work deeply in our lives. **Don't become lost in “doing things” for God at the expense of simply “being” his beloved child.** This is the heart of grace: not that we must first become worthy, but that we can come to Jesus just as we are, and His grace will do the work of transformation in us.





Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions:

- How has your understanding of grace changed through your recovery journey?
- What areas of your life do you still struggle to believe God's grace can transform?
- How can you practically rest in God's grace today instead of striving in your own strength?



Break in the Journey

When God Lets You Die

Sometimes, transformation requires a death before new life can emerge. We can see this in John chapter 11, where we find the story of a family Jesus deeply loved—Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. These weren't strangers to Jesus; they were close friends. Their home in Bethany had been a place of rest and fellowship for Him. Mary was the same woman who would later anoint Jesus' feet with expensive perfume (John 12:3). These people knew Jesus personally and witnessed His power firsthand.

When Lazarus fell ill, his sisters sent word to Jesus with a simple message: "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3). They didn't explicitly ask Jesus to come—they didn't have to. Their faith in His love for them was such that they believed simply telling Him would be enough. It's the kind of message you send when you're confident in someone's care for you.

What happens next is striking. Despite His love for this family,

"when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days"
(John 11:6).

Jesus made a deliberate choice to delay. He let Lazarus die.

Imagine being Lazarus in those final hours. You've sent word to Jesus, confident He will come. After all, you've seen Him heal countless others. Perhaps word even returns: "Jesus isn't coming." Questions flood your mind: "He's healed so many people. I've seen it with my own eyes. Why isn't He coming to save me?" As the fever spikes and life slips away, it might seem like the Lord has passed over your affliction.





Or consider the sisters Martha and Mary. They had faith enough to send for Jesus, believing He could help. But instead of their prayers producing immediate relief, they faced further delay. *"I prayed, and nothing happened! In fact, Jesus intentionally didn't show up!"* The silence in their home after Lazarus's last breath must have been deafening. How do you process that the One who could have prevented this chose not to come?

Yet, in this devastating delay, God was working for a greater purpose. As Jesus said in verse 4, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory." Sometimes, a painful crisis arrives in our lives that is destined to bring God glory—not because of the pain itself, but because of the resurrection power that follows.

This is true in recovery as well. There are things in our lives that God allows to "die":

- Old identities rooted in addiction
- Relationships that enable destructive behavior
- Ways of coping that seemed to give life but brought death
- False beliefs about ourselves and God
- Patterns of thinking that keep us bound

We might cry out, *"But Lord, if this is from you, why must it die?"* The answer often lies in this profound truth: For there to be a resurrection, there must first be a death. In the most decisive, crucial, and critical moments of our lives, will we trust His sovereignty and His plan, believing that there will be a resurrection one day?

Jesus was sure of His mission. When He finally arrived, He didn't apologize for the delay. Instead, He made one of His most powerful "I AM" statements: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Then He asked Martha a question that echoes through the centuries to us: "Do you believe this?"

The situation seemed hopeless. The stench of death was undeniable—Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. But Jesus wasn't deterred by the finality of the situation. "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). His specific command, "Lazarus, come out!" demonstrated both His authority over death and His personal care for each of us.

But notice what happens next. Even after the resurrection, Lazarus needed help removing his grave clothes. What a picture of our own transformation! **God brings the resurrection power, but we often need community to help us shed the old grave clothes of addiction and brokenness.**

Sometimes, what looks like God's absence is actually His perfect timing at work. What feels like abandonment might be preparation for a greater demonstration of His power. What appears to be death might be the prelude to resurrection.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions:



- What areas of your life might God be allowing to “die” so He can bring resurrection?
- How do you typically respond when God's timing doesn't match your expectations?
- Who helps you remove your “grave clothes” as you walk in new life?



Break in the Journey

Walking into the Promised Land

The story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt happened thousands of years ago, but today, it still powerfully illustrates God's heart for freedom and restoration.

In Exodus 3:7-8, we find a pivotal moment where God reveals His character to Moses:

“The LORD said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them ... and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.’”

Notice the progression: God sees, God hears, God comes down, and God rescues. This is true for us today. The same God who saw His people's suffering in Egypt sees your struggles with addiction. He hears your cries in the middle of the night. And just as He came down to rescue Israel, He has come down in the person of Jesus Christ to bring freedom to all who are bound.

But God's vision goes beyond the rescue. Did you catch that last part? He doesn't just deliver them from Egypt; He brings them into “a good and spacious land.” **God's plan for your life isn't just freedom from addiction—it's freedom for a purpose.** He wants to bring you into a good land, a place of promise and potential.

In Deuteronomy 1:8, God tells His people, “See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers.” God has given the land, but they still must take possession of it.

Once we've been delivered, God desires that we step into and fully possess the new life He has for us. But this requires action on our part. This doesn't mean we earn God's promises—they're already given to us—but we must exercise faith to walk in them.

This journey requires courage. God knew His people would deal with fear and discouragement as they faced their enemies, which is why He commanded in verse 21, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Fear and discouragement will absolutely try to keep you from entering into God's purpose for your new life. They'll whisper that you can't really change, that you'll never break free, that you don't deserve a better life.

But here's a necessary caution: As we step into this new life, we must be careful to stay within God's boundaries. If He said, “Go in and possess this land,” but didn't say “that land,” we must respect those limits. There are places and areas in our lives that God has not given us permission to enter. This might mean:

- Relationships He hasn't approved
- Opportunities that look good but aren't His plan
- Old environments that could trigger relapse
- Activities that might compromise our recovery

Just as Israel had specific boundaries for their promised land, we must stay within the boundaries of God's Word and His specific guidance for our lives. True freedom isn't about doing whatever we want but living within the good boundaries God has set for us.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions:



- What “promised land” do you sense God calling you to possess?
- What fears or discouragements try to keep you from moving forward?
- How can you practically exercise courage in your recovery journey today?



On the Road With Jesus

Have you ever felt like you were walking alone on your recovery journey? Like Jesus seemed distant or uninvolved in your daily struggles? The story of the Emmaus Road in Luke 24:13-35 shows us how Jesus walks with us, even when we don't recognize His presence.

Picture the scene: Two disciples are walking home from Jerusalem, their hearts heavy with grief and confusion. Jesus' crucifixion had crushed their hopes, and even reports of His resurrection left them uncertain. As they walked and talked, trying to make sense of everything, a stranger joined them on the road. This "stranger" was Jesus Himself, though they were kept from recognizing Him.

The disciples found themselves sharing their deepest hurts and confusion with this "stranger." He doesn't interrupt or dismiss their pain; He listens, then gently begins to help them see their story within God's bigger story.

Jesus is always walking with us, always talking to us—we just need to learn to recognize His presence. Like these disciples, we often miss Him in the ordinary moments of life. Whether we're driving to work, standing in line at the grocery store, sitting in a recovery meeting, or facing a moment of temptation, He is there. As J.I. Packer reminds us,

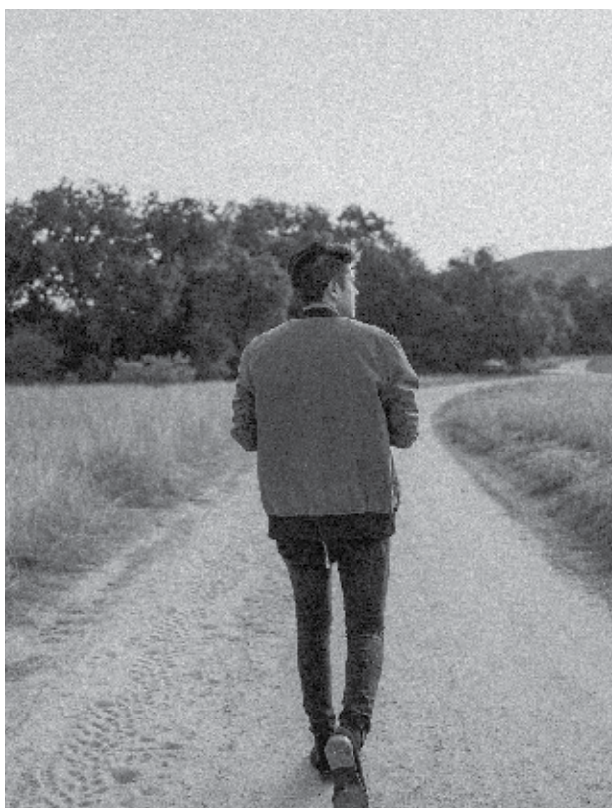
There is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters.

It may seem strange that their eyes were still closed to His identity even as Jesus walked with them, teaching them. It wasn't until He broke bread with them that *"their eyes were opened and they recognized him"* (Luke 24:31). It's often in the breaking—whether of bread or of ourselves—that we truly see Jesus. As Mike Conway reflects, *"When you surrender something to God, that releases God to do whatever He would will, and yet that releases me also."*

Looking back on their encounter, the disciples recalled, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road?"* (Luke 24:32). These burning moments—when something stirs in our hearts—are often Jesus trying to get our attention. Maybe it's an unexpected sense of peace in a difficult situation, a scripture that suddenly speaks directly to your circumstance or a "coincidental" encounter that proves providential.

Don't ignore these stirrings. They might be the beginning of a miracle in your life. These disciples' darkness turned to light, their confusion to clarity, their grief to joy—all because they were willing to walk and talk with Jesus, even when they didn't recognize Him at first.

Many of us wish we could bypass the long road of recovery. If only we could snap our fingers and no longer have that craving or temptation. How much easier that would be! But we often forget that transformation happens while we're on that road, walking and talking with Jesus through every heartache, disappointment, celebration, and victory.



Jesus isn't waiting for you to cross the finish line to welcome you home. He doesn't want the perfect "you" — the "you" who pretends like you've got it together—the "you" who doesn't struggle and can't quit and can't do anything right.

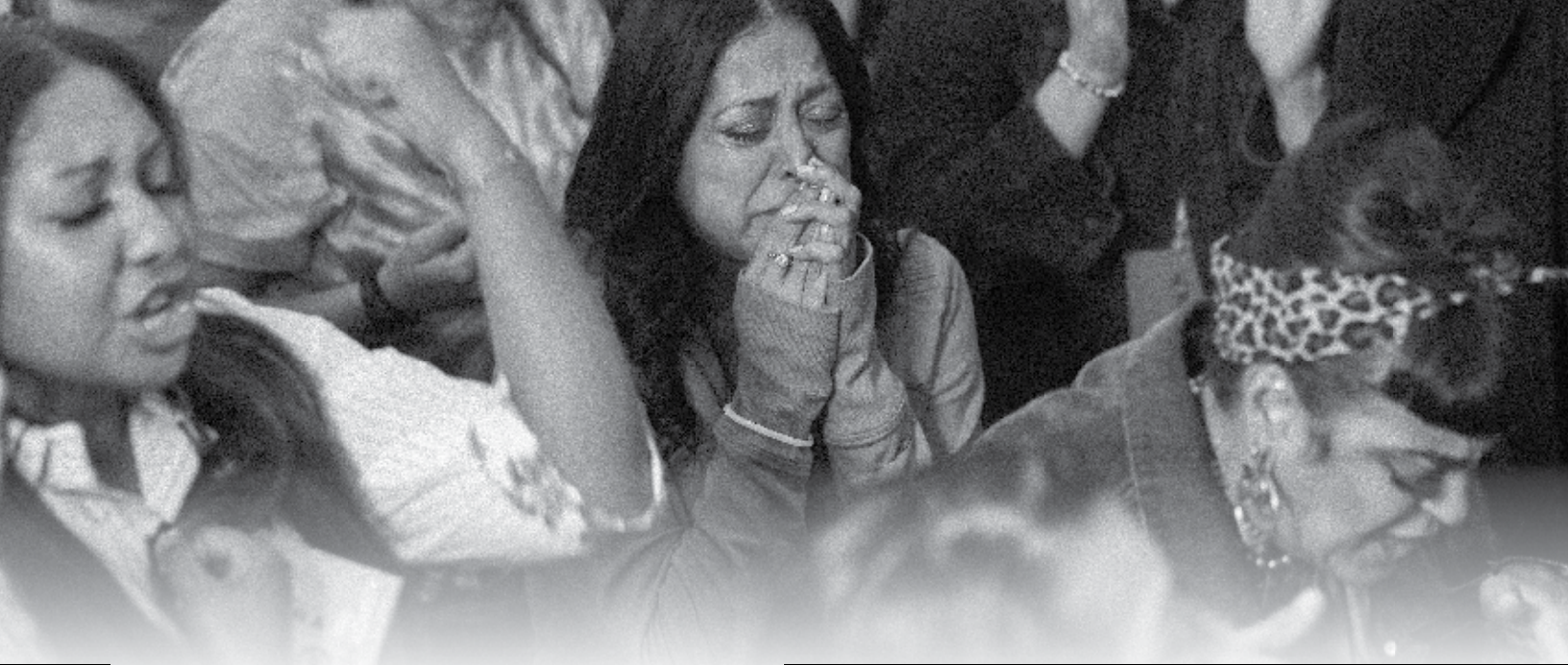
He just wants you. Right now, right where you are, right as you are.

Even in moments when we feel most alone, He is there, guiding us toward healing and hope. As Brennan Manning beautifully puts it, *"My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it."* This is the heart of walking with Jesus: Not that we must be perfect, but that we are already perfectly loved.



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- The disciples on the Emmaus road didn't recognize Jesus walking with them. Where in your daily life might Jesus be walking with you in ways you don't always notice?
- The disciples opened up about their grief and confusion, and Jesus listened before speaking. How does it change your view of prayer to know Jesus wants to hear your raw honesty before He gives direction?
- Their eyes were opened when Jesus broke bread with them. How have you seen Jesus most clearly in your own "breaking moments"—times of loss, surrender, or humility?
- The disciples said, "Were not our hearts burning within us?" when Jesus spoke. Have you ever experienced a stirring in your heart that you later realized was God trying to get your attention? What was that like?
- Recovery, like discipleship, happens on the road—not instantly. What has God been teaching you along your journey that you might not have learned if He had just taken away your struggle instantly?
- Jesus doesn't wait for us to "get it all together"—He meets us as we are. What part of your life feels most unworthy right now, and how can you invite Jesus to meet you in that place?
- Brennan Manning wrote, "My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it." How does knowing you are already loved—without having to earn it—change the way you see yourself?
- The disciples' grief turned to joy when they realized Jesus was with them. Where do you need Jesus to turn confusion into clarity or grief into joy in your life today?



Your Story Continues

As we close this chapter and this journey we've been on for the past few months, remember that God isn't finished writing your story. Every new day represents a fresh page and an opportunity for His grace to write something beautiful through your life. The struggles you've faced, the pain you've endured, even the failures you've experienced—God can use all of it. Not because the pain itself was good but because He specializes in bringing beauty from ashes.

Think back over the truths we've explored:

- You were created for more than addiction
- God's grace meets you in your struggles
- Death always comes before the resurrection
- God will grant you the courage you need to enter the Promised Land
- Jesus walks with you every step of the way

These are promises you can build your life upon. When the challenges come—and they will—remember that you're not walking this road alone. The same God who saw Israel's suffering and came down to rescue them sees you. The same Jesus who walked with discouraged disciples on the Emmaus Road walks with you. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead lives in you, empowering you for every step of the journey.

Your story isn't over. In fact, in many ways, it's just beginning. As you continue your journey, may you be encouraged by this ancient blessing that God instructed Aaron to speak over His people. Let these words sink deep into your heart:

*The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26)*



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- What new chapter do you sense God wanting to write in your story??
- Think back to when you first started this program. What changes do you see in yourself—in your thinking, your relationships, your faith?
- How has your understanding of God's love and grace deepened since you began?
- What are some steps you plan to take to stay connected to God and your community?



Verses to Reflect on This Week

- “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)
- “The LORD said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them.’” Exodus 3:7-8 (NIV)
- “See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers.” Deuteronomy 1:8 (NIV)
- “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 1:21 (NIV)
- “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)
- “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 (NIV)
- “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV)
- “By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.” 1 Corinthians 15:10 (NIV)
- “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28 (NIV)
- “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” Luke 24:32 (NIV)
- “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)
- “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NIV)



Everyone who belongs to Christ
will be given *new life*.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:22

