THE IMPOSSIBLE IS POSSIBLE

As I look at the news, social media, Netflix, Prime, DSTV, movies, and sitcoms, it seems to me that people truly struggle with their identity. Who am I? Movies are often a reflection of our society. Cast Away, Life of Pi, Cinderella Man, Eat Pray Love, A beautiful Mind, The Pursuit of Happiness, Forest Gump, Good Will Hunting and more.

The following poem by Faigie Rabin describes where so many people find themselves in this journey of self-discovery

Who Am I?

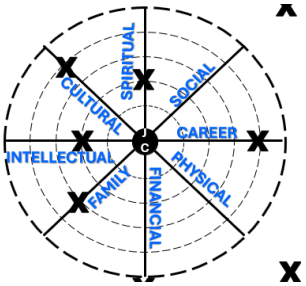
Who am I you may well ask; I really wish I knew; If I am not myself at all; Then maybe I am you; To discover who I really am; Is really quite a task; Maybe I am someone else; Who wears a funny mask; I strive so hard to know myself; To discover the "real me"; My thoughts and feelings all confused; Yet still I cannot see; What makes me tick?; What makes me feel?; So very special and unique; My purpose in this glorious world;
Is what I truly seek.

The reality is that life is more about who we are becoming than what we are doing.

As **John Ortberg in his book**, Soul keepers, says, "Significance is about who we are before it is about what we do. Identity and acceptance need to come before achievement, ministry (and work, (my addition))"

There are different components of being a human being aren't there? As we start off, I want to firstly, lay a foundation of what life is, and secondly, understanding and respecting our full humanity as people of God.

Different Components of Life - Wheel of Life



With Christ as the center; Spiritual, Cultural, Physical, Career, Financial, Intellectual, Family, Social.

God made us as whole people, in his image (Genesis 1:27). Understanding and respecting our full humanity - who we are as people.

There are different parts/components of who we are as people.



This includes physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social components to who we are.

When we ignore any dimension of who we are as men and women made in God's image, it always results in destructive consequences—in our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves.

Living God's Way—A Beautiful Life

One person described it this way, "I was a Christian for twenty-two years. But instead of being a twenty-two-year-old Christian, I was a one-year-old Christian twenty-two times! I just kept doing the same things over and over again."

As a human being, husband, father, follower of Jesus, and leader in his church. I learned that if we do the hard work of living God's way, we can truly experience the wonderful promises God has given us—for our lives. God will make our lives beautiful.

As the apostle Paul wrote:

"What happens when we live [authentically] God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard" **(Galatians 5:22 MSG).**

Using two popular versions of the Bible, let me demonstrate how Paul described these beautiful fruits in Galatians 5:22–23:

NIV	**THE MESSAGE**
Love	Affection for others
Joy	Exuberance about life
Peace	Serenity
Patience	A willingness to stick with things
Kindness	A sense of compassion in the heart
Goodness	A conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people
Faithfulness	Involved in loyal commitments
Gentleness	Not needing to force our way in life
Self-Control	Able to marshal and direct our energies wisely

God promises if you and I will do life His way (even though it feels unnatural and hard to us initially), then our lives will be beautiful.

If we don't do life God's way, here are a few *unhealthy* elements that will continue to wreak havoc in our personal lives

1. Using God to run from God

2. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear

3. Dying to the wrong things

4. Denying the past's impact on the present

5. Dividing our lives into "secular" and "sacred" compartments

6. Doing for God instead of being with God

7. Spiritualizing away conflict

8. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure

9. Living without limits

10. Judging other people's spiritual journey

There is a Revolutionary Antidote

A pathway to unleashing the transformative power of Jesus to heal our lives can be found in the finding emotional and spiritual health, and in applying and living it out in our lives.

Here are some starting points:

• **Attend church** each week for worship, the Word, and, to participate in the Lord's Supper

• **Have quiet times** preferably at the start of each day *(switch off your phone – give this time to being with God)*

• **Participate** in a Discovery Group or Small group for spiritual nourishment, fellowship, and the study of Scripture

• **Trust God** by giving financially to God's work

• **Let Christ inform** the way you behave at work, home, school, and in all other relationships

• **Discover and use** your spiritual gifts inside the church and serve somewhere—as an usher, greeter, small-group leader, tea ministry, children's ministry, worship team or mission team and so much more. **You serve your way to influence and when you do, your gift makes room for you.**

• **Witness** by telling 'not yet believers' who do not know Jesus about Him and inviting them to church events. (Possibly go out of your way to fetch them, sit with visitors)

• **Attend** retreats and conferences, read books, and listen to Podcasts to keep growing. (SOLT & SOKM)

What is also needed is the injection of *emotional* and *spiritual health*. Together these two unleash a revolution in our lives, positioning us so that God can mold us into the men and women he has called us to be.

Os Guiness wrote, "Due to the combination of capitalism, technology, and modern communications, the most powerful civilization ever—a global culture—has been formed."

This global culture is the thing that threatens to swallow us in these days. The core values of the culture in the twenty-first century screams at us from computers, social-media, billboards, televisions, music, schools, newspapers, magazines, and Podcasts.

The culture tells us:

• Happiness is found in having things

• You should get all you can for yourself, as quickly as you can

• Security is found in money, power, status, and good health

• Above all, you should seek all the pleasure, convenience, and comfort you can

• God is irrelevant to everyday life

• Christianity is just one of many alternative spiritualities

• There are no moral absolutes; whatever is true for you is what is true

• You're not responsible for anyone but yourself

• This life on earth is all there is

Like goldfish swimming in the middle of the Indian Ocean unaware they are in water, we can also live oblivious to our culture. Like the Christians in the first century, we can be shaped by the culture. We eat, drink, drive, watch television and movies, attend schools, shop, work, raise families, listen to the music, and even participate events and even churches within society shaped by the culture.

What do we see when we look inside ourselves? Many of us are scared to even look. Our most natural prayer is *"My Father in heaven, hallowed be my name, may my kingdom come, may my will be done on earth."* Are we scared of God's will being done because we can't control what he will do, when he will do it, how he will do it, and what the outcome might be.

God's will require surrender and trust, and it's something we're unwilling to offer.

Is it any wonder, then, that our primary question is: "What can Jesus do for me? Can he make me more prosperous, well-adjusted, and peaceful?" The culture has so taken captive the church that many of us act as if God works for us, functioning as our personal assistant when we need him. We use God, squeezing him into our image of what he should be like.

When he allows suffering in our lives, we get angry with him and pout. How dare he?

Do you know that a person can grow emotionally healthy without Christ? In fact, I can think of a number of non-Christian people who are more loving, balanced, and civil than many church members I know (including myself!).

We need to grow emotionally and spiritually!

EMOTIONAL HEALTH IS CONCERNED WITH THINGS LIKE:

- Naming, recognizing, and managing our own feelings
- Identifying with and having active compassion for others
- Initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships
- Breaking free from self-destructive patterns
- Being aware of how our past impacts our present

SPIRITUAL HEALTH IS CONCERNED WITH THINGS LIKE:

- Awakening and surrendering to God's love in any and every situation
- Positioning ourselves to hear God and remember his presence in all we do
- Communing with God, allowing him to fully indwell the depth of our being
- Resting attentively in the presence of God
- Living in committed community that passionately loves Jesus above all else.

Together emotional and spiritual health unleash the Holy Spirit inside us in order that we might know experientially the power of an authentic life in Christ.

Brother Lawrence called it "the pure loving gaze that finds God everywhere."

However, the voices of the surrounding world and our pasts are powerful. They repeat the deeply held negative beliefs we may have learned in our families and cultures growing up:
ANYONE RESONATE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

I am a mistake. I am a burden. I am stupid. I am worthless. I am not allowed to make mistakes. I must be approved of by certain people to feel okay. I don't have the right to experience joy and pleasure. I don't have the right to assert myself and say what I think and feel. I don't have a right to feel. I am valued based on my intelligence, wealth, and what I do, not for who I am.

They are all lies that we begin to believe about ourselves. The reality in Jesus is very different!

Paul encourages us:

"…you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. God can do anything, you know--far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. **Eph 3:18-20 (MSG)**

That small glimpse alone is enough to ground us in our true identity—to know we are deeply loved by God. Because of this, we can have new, more biblical self-understanding:
AS WE DISCOVER OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS AND DISCOVER EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH, WE **BEGIN TO FIND THAT WE BELIEVE THESE STATEMENTS ABOUT OURSELVES**:

I hold myself in high regard despite my imperfections and limits. I am worthy to assert my God-given power in the world. I am entitled to exist. It is good that I exist. I have my own identity from God that is distinct and unique. I am worthy of being valued and paid attention to. I am entitled to joy and pleasure. I am entitled to make mistakes and not be perfect.
Spiritual and emotional health anchors us in the love of God by affirming that we are worthy of feeling, worthy of being alive, and lovable even when we are brutally honest about the good, the bad, and the ugly, which lies deep beneath the surface of our lives.

Today let us break free:

- I break free to live in the truth. I stop pretending to myself, to others, and to God about what is truly taking place inside me.
- I break free by choosing to live the unique life God has given me. I no longer live the lie of someone else's life or journey.
- I break free by acknowledging my brokenness and vulnerabilities rather than trying to cover them over. I rediscover God's mercy and grace.
- I break free from the need to attach myself to accomplishments, things, or people's approval to feel okay about myself. I experience the gift of being Abba's child.
- I break free from the generational patterns of my family and culture that negatively shape how I relate and live today.
- I break free from the illusion that there is something richer, more beautiful, than the gift of loving and being loved
- I break free from selfish desires that consistently move me away from God to do my own will, not his

How do we do this? Well there are three primary elements on offer here today. They will enable us to participate in the enormous transformative power of Jesus Christ today.

1. The element of slowing down
2. The element of anchoring in God's love
3. The element of breaking free from misconceptions

When we come to a place of health with the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social components to who we are, we begin to get a glimmer of who we are and who we can become in Christ.

We are children of God and kingdom agents, called to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God wherever we go. As Paul says in 1Co 2:4, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power…"

Do that, serve Jesus and in this journey of self-discovery you will discover who you are, who you are meant to be. There is no better way!