

**LIES I BELIEVE: God Just Wants Me to be Happy**  
**READ plan week 1**  
**January 2, 2022**

DAY 1 THE FATHER OF LIES

Scripture: [John 8:42-47](#); [John 10:10](#); [John 14:6](#)

Reflection:

*"...there is no truth in him..."* (John 8:44)

Jesus is teaching at the Temple, specifically challenging the Pharisees and their lack of belief, their lack of truth. Rather than accept that Jesus is who He says that He is, they defend their position and their power, believing a lie. And Jesus calls them out, telling them that their true father is not Abraham, but Satan, the "father of lies." God is truth. God's word is truth. Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1). Jesus is truth. Satan, however, has no truth in him. He cannot tell the truth. He can only lie.

*"... [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy..."* (John 10:10a)

Satan's goal is not our happiness, nor is our well-being, nor is it freedom or peace or health or joy or a good life. His goal always has been and always will be to undermine God's good work in creation. In Genesis 1 God created the world and said, "it is good." Satan decided to undo the good. So he came to Eve and told a lie. *"Did God really say...?"* Satan twisted what God had said and led Eve to doubt God's goodness and good intentions. He has been playing the same game with humanity ever since. Satan wants to steal joy, kill relationships, destroy what God made. And that includes me and you.

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."* (John 10:10b)

Jesus came to restore what Satan had broken. Jesus came to reveal the truth of God to a world deceived by the father of lies. Jesus came to show us a better way to live. To do that, we must listen to the truth. We must find answers in the words of Jesus. We must learn to recognize the lies of Satan.

Ask Yourself:

How well do you think you can discern truth and lies?

How do Jesus's words, *"I am the way and the truth and the life"* challenge the messages you hear in the world around you (family, friends, news, social media, politicians, etc.)?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, I know that I need truth, real truth, in my life. Teach me to know and to recognize your truth. Teach me to resist Satan's lies. Teach me to trust that your truth leads to abundant life.

Take a Next Step:

Choose a scripture from today and create a lock screen for your phone, write it on a notecard, or set an alarm to pause and meditate on it sometime later today.

## DAY 2 THE LIE

Scripture: [Genesis 3:1-6](#); [Psalm 139:23-24](#); [1 John 2:15-17](#)

### Reflection:

When we fall prey to one of Satan's lies, we're not just believing that lie, we're actually believing a deeper lie about the character of God and about who He created us to be. When Satan lied to Eve in Genesis 3, he used the question of eating fruit to target a deeper belief in her heart. It wasn't the fruit that Satan cared about. It was her belief in who God was. He made her doubt God's goodness. He planted the seed of a lie that God alone wasn't enough for her. She needed something more. She needed to be something more. God had already made her in His image- and He said that she was "very good"! Satan's lie whispered that she was not good enough. She would be better (happier!) if she ate that fruit.

We tend to think that we would have seen through Satan's lie. That we wouldn't have chosen fruit over peace with God. That we wouldn't have listened to the voice of a snake over the words of our Creator as He walked with us in the Garden. But Eve did. Adam did. And we do too.

In the choices we make, in the priorities of our lives, in our scheduling and financial planning, our lives reveal a lie. And underneath that lie are more lies. Lies about who God is and about who He made us to be.

### **The Lie: God just wants me to be happy**

Lie about me: My needs are the most important thing

Lie about God: God exists to serve me, to meet my needs

As you read those lies, you're likely insisting that you don't actually believe them. But before you move on with your day, pause and invite God to reveal your blind spots.

### Ask Yourself:

How do your daily habits and activities reveal this lie in your life?

### Pause to Pray:

Jesus, I don't want to live in a lie...

### Take a Next Step:

Consider pausing for a few minutes at the end of your morning, the end of your afternoon, and before going to bed. How did you put your happiness above God, above others above truth?

## DAY 3 THE TRUTH

Scripture: [John 8:32](#); [Job 1:1-22](#); [Isaiah 41:10](#)

### Reflection:

Remember, Satan's goal is to distort God's truth, to destroy what God made good. And his false doctrine of happiness has left a trail of despair and brokenness through every era of human existence. This false doctrine says that whatever makes me happy must be right and whatever makes me unhappy must be wrong. All discomfort, delay, risk, suffering, inconvenience, and obstacles must not be from God. The pursuit of happiness means the pursuit of personal comfort, wealth, pleasure, status, and the accumulation of things.

The tragedy- the genius of Satan- is that so many people end up walking away from God and walking away from the Christian faith because of this false belief. They say, "I tried God, I tried Christianity, I tried church and it just didn't work for me." Why didn't it "work?" Because God didn't give me what I wanted. He didn't make me happy.

The Truth is that God doesn't promise comfort, ease, wealth, status, or stuff. No one in the Old or New Testament, no one in Church history got all of that. In fact, for most, their lives were marked by hardship, by pain, or by suffering. God doesn't promise His people happiness.

What does God promise? He promises that through the good times and the hardest times He will never leave us. God promises an incomprehensible peace. God promises an unfailing love. God promises His provision for our (real) needs. God promises a future restoration of all things. He made those promises centuries ago and He has never broken them.

Satan lies. God's speaks truth. He is a promise-keeper.

Ask Yourself:

How much of your daily life is oriented around your comfort, your status, your wealth or your pleasure?

How has God provided for your peace, your hope, your joy, or your needs in the past?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, teach me how to live in your abundant life...

Take a Next Step:

Take your eyes off yourself today. Intentionally seek to meet a need for someone else. Does someone need a word of encouragement? Do they need to go before you in the check-out line? Do they need a conversation? A meal? A hug or high five?

#### DAY 4 BELIEVING TRUTH

Scripture: [Proverbs 16:25](#); [Matthew 7:13-14](#); [John 10:10](#); [1 John 2:21-25](#);

Reflection:

Since the day in the garden when sin broke our relationship with God, broke our relationship with one another, and broke our relationship with the world God made, we have been destined to die. There is no escaping it. The all-consuming desire within humanity is to live, to live happy, to live satisfied, to live life to the fullest while we still can. Our sin and Satan's lies twist those pursuits and focus us on all the wrong things. What we think makes us happy is not always what's best. Often the words "God just wants me to be happy" are used to justify doing things outside of God's will. But because God loves us, He has set up limits and boundaries for us to live within.

God alone can satisfy our deepest desires. And He relentlessly pursues His people with faithful love, mercy, and grace. Through Jesus Christ, there is a way that leads to abundant life. A life full of purpose and meaning. A life full of love and gratitude. A life filled with the presence of God. The truth is that God's way is best. It is hard, though! It requires us to surrender control, surrender comfort, surrender

sin. No where in the Bible does it promise that God's way is easier. In fact, it tells us that the way is narrow and hard. But we're promised it leads to abundance.

Ask Yourself:

To what degree are you willing to surrender control and comfort now in order to follow Jesus to an abundant life?

What truths do you find in today's scripture passages?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, help me to see the truth in your Word...

Take a Next Step:

What decision do you need to make this week? Instead of a pro/con list, consider what will be easier or harder. Then, ask God to help you choose what is best.

#### DAY 5 LIVING IN TRUTH

Scripture: [Romans 5:1-5](#); [James 1:12-17](#)

Reflection:

The by-product of walking the narrow way of God is a holiness that leads to intimacy with God and to enjoying his many gifts and blessings. Our greatest good is that we grow in holiness to glorify him. When we choose to pursue God instead of our own personal happiness we actually experience a permanent happiness called joy. Joy is a deep contentment, confidence and hope that is based not on our temporary circumstances, but on the permanence of God's character. This lasting joy comes from a right relationship with God. Romans 3 says that because of this – we can rejoice in our sufferings. That even the pain points to healing when we're in right relationship with God.

You have a God-shaped void – it expresses itself as a longing for happiness. You've tried everything you can, and there's still a void. That's because there aren't enough things in this whole world that will fill that void. Living in pursuit of happiness is aiming too low. Nothing in this world can promise happiness. A perfect God promises to love you, comfort you, forgive you, strengthen you, and walk with you through ever high and every low. He will be enough.

Ask Yourself:

In what ways are you actively pursuing God?

What are the good gifts that God has given you? How can these gifts help you say no to temptation?

Pause to Pray:

Thank you, Jesus, for pursuing me. I want to know You and to follow You...

Take a Next Step:

Consider all the ways you pursue a "happy" life. Ask God to help you edit your list- crossing off what dishonors Him and adding a new habit that helps you pursue Him.

**\*Want to try the YouVersion plan? Search "whoisgrace" and look for "Lies I Believe Parts 1-5"**

**LIES I BELIEVE: I Can Do It On My Own**  
**READ plan week 2**  
**January 9, 2022**

DAY 1

Scripture: [John 15:1-17](#)

Reflection:

The lie we're focusing on here in Week 2 is *I can do it on my own*. So, let's clarify something: what is "it"? Millions of people have chosen to live their lives without God, and they are still able to accomplish their goals, create meaningful relationships, and enjoy the good things around them. They seem to make it through just fine on their own. So, what does Jesus mean in John 15 when he says, "apart from me you can do nothing"? In this passage, Jesus is talking about *bearing fruit*.

Let's consider the broader context. Jesus is talking to his disciples right before he is arrested and crucified. He is telling them what it really means to follow him—how to live, what to expect, and how to know they will go to heaven when they die. He tells them that the key to living the life he's asking of them is staying connected to him. And when they stay connected to him, they will bear the fruit (that is, experience the promised results) of abiding in him. So, the "it" is the life Jesus asks of us. And that life always bears fruit.

As we talked about in Week 1, the life Jesus asks of us is an abundant life. It's a life with eternal purpose; a life rooted in truth; a life that leads to a contented peace (shalom). If that's the kind of life you want, then here's the first truth to start with: You can't do it on your own.

Ask Yourself: What kind of life am I pursuing? Does my answer bring me peace when I think about my life inevitably ending? What gets in the way of living out (or even desiring) the life Jesus wants to give me?

Pause to Pray: God, I can't do this on my own...

Take a Next Step: Confess your idols, selfish ambitions, fear, and indifference to God. Pray Psalm 51:12: "*Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you*" (NLT).

DAY 2

Scripture: [Galatians 5:22-25](#), [John 15:4-5](#)

Reflection:

From poison ivy to Tarzan, the word vine can evoke many images in our minds. But a grapevine is a very different kind of vine. The vine part of a grapevine is like a tree trunk coming up from the ground, and the branches are thin off-shoots that grow leaves and grapes. The vine delivers all the water and nutrients that the branches need to bear fruit. That's the kind of relationship we are supposed to have with Jesus: "*I am the vine; you are the branches.*"

It's truly mind-blowing that the Creator of all things wants to have a personal relationship with us. When you abide in Christ like a branch abides in the vine, the good things that you should be doing start to

happen. Fruit is inevitable for a branch connected to a vine, but it's impossible for a branch severed from the vine. In other words, *we can't do it on our own*. The job of a branch is painfully simple: stay connected to the vine.

Paul tells us in Galatians 5 what kind of fruit we will bear when we follow Jesus. The list starts with love—just like Jesus describes in John 15. After love, Paul tells us that the fruit of abiding in Christ is joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This list can help us measure how well-connected we are to the vine.

Ask Yourself: What does it look like to stay connected to Jesus? Is my life marked by the fruit listed in Galatians 5?

Pause to Pray: Jesus, I want to stay connected to you...

Take a Next Step: Choose one thing you can do that will help you stay connected to Jesus and make a plan to put it into practice- start today! And consider asking a friend to do it with you!

### DAY 3

Scripture: [John 13:34-35](#), [John 15:10-13](#), [2 Cor 5:14-17](#)

#### Reflection:

Jesus tells us in John 15 that when we stay connected to him, we will obey him—and obeying him means loving one another in the same way he loved us. This is the second time Jesus gives this command to his disciples. Two chapters earlier in John 13, Jesus says, *“just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (ESV). This doesn't mean that we just tolerate one another—it means that we are willing to lay down our very lives for one another.

If you love someone so much that you'd be willing to die for them, you should also love them enough to be willing to do *everything up to* death for them. You should be willing to sacrifice your free time, your preferences, your sleep, your finances, your control, and your reputation. Love doesn't typically call you to actually die for someone, but love will almost always call you to die to yourself.

The only way we could ever love others in such a sacrificial way is to have the love of Christ flowing through us. We love by abiding in his love first. We give freely to others because we receive everything we need from him. Without the hope of eternity guiding our hearts, we won't be able to give up our lives in the way Jesus requests. We can't do it on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Trinity to transform us.

Ask Yourself: Is my love for others so evident that people would be able to identify me as a disciple of Jesus? If I have been commanded to love others to the point of death, why can it feel so hard to love them in the smallest ways?

Pause to Pray: God, I want to be transformed by your love...

Take a Next Step: Identify three people in your life who could use more of your sacrificial love and determine one tangible way that you can show your love to each of them.

#### DAY 4

Scripture: [Psalm 46:10](#), [Psalm 139](#), [Jeremiah 29:13](#), [Philippians 3:14](#)

#### Reflection:

“God is distant and uninvolved in my life” is another lie that keeps us trying to do life on our own. Or maybe it sounds more like, “Whether or not I spend time with God doesn’t seem to make any real impact on my day-to-day life. So, why bother?” When we can’t feel God’s presence, we’re tempted to believe He isn’t near or doesn’t care. And that leads us to believe we’ve got to live life on our own strength. But the author of Psalm 139 paints a quite different picture. It is a beautiful poem teaching us that God knows us intimately and loves us extravagantly. So what do we do when it doesn’t feel that way? We have two choices- press on, seeking God or give up and live without Him. Let’s explore the first option in 3 postures:

*Be still and know that I am God...* (Psalm 46:10) Press pause on the striving, the hustle, the questions, and just be still. Take a few deep breaths. Pray these simple words: God, I want to know you...

*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.* (Jeremiah 29:13) The Biblical idea of “heart” is that it is the center of will and desire. Take an honest inventory- what do you most desire in life? What are your desires for your relationship with God?

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 3:14) Paul’s journey with Jesus Christ was not all roses and sunshine. Yet, he committed himself to a hard journey, for he trusted that his calling and his future were sure and certain.

Ask Yourself: What am I expecting from God? What have I learned about Him in the Bible? How is God revealing himself to me right where I am today?

Pause to Pray: God, I want to know you...

Take a Next Step: Find another Christian in your life who has been walking in faith longer than you. Invite them to share a cup of tea or coffee and talk about how they experience God in their life, especially when they’re not *feeling* him.

#### DAY 5

Scripture: [Acts 2:42-47](#), [Hebrews 10:24-25](#), [1 Peter 4:8-11](#)

#### Reflection:

We can’t live the life Jesus asks us to without abiding in him, but we also can’t do it without each other! In the same way that we need to learn to depend on God, we need to learn to depend on other believers to strengthen our faith and encourage our sanctification. This was second nature in the collectivist culture of the early church. Nowadays, however, many of us find ourselves lacking the rich community that first-century Christians shared.

Looking across biology, sociology, and psychology, we find that both history and science show that humans fare better when they are surrounded by a good community. The same idea applies to faith. Being connected to an intentional community of Christians will keep the soil of your heart fertile for

God's work. It's going to take more than attending church once a week; it requires "doing life" with one another and praying for, serving, and encouraging each other.

Ask Yourself: How can I generate that kind of intentional community around me? How can I invite accountability into my relationship with God? What prevents me from depending on others when it comes to living the way of Jesus?

Pause to Pray: Jesus, help me surrender control and learn to depend on you and others...

Take a Next Step: If you're not a part of a small group or volunteer team, join one! If you don't have an accountability partner, find one! If you do, brainstorm some ways you can be more intentional with those relationships.

**\*Want to try the YouVersion plan? Search "whoisgrace" and look for "Lies I Believe Parts 1-5"**



## LIES I BELIEVE Part 3: I'll Get to Heaven by Being a Good Person

### Week 3

January 16, 2022

#### DAY 1 NO ONE IS GOOD

Scripture: [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [Romans 3:10-11](#); [Exodus 20:3-17](#)

##### Reflection:

Almost 60% of Americans believe that good works can earn someone a place in heaven (American Worldview Inventory 2021). However, who defines what is "good"? How many of these good works do we need to complete to earn our place? Generally, we define what is good enough to get into heaven by comparing ourselves to those around us. We say, "I'm not as bad as *that* person who does *that* bad thing." Yet the Bible tells us the truth that *none of us* is good enough. This is because the one who defines what is good is God himself. He is good. We don't live up to his standard (see the ten commandments in Exodus 20). The logical conclusion is that we can't earn enough good works to get into heaven. Honestly, it is discouraging and feels hopeless. We need to feel those feelings to be ready for God's plan, the truth, about how to get into heaven which is through Jesus.

##### Ask Yourself:

How close (or far) are you from God's standard of good?

How many of the 10 commandments have you broken?

##### Pause to Pray:

Lord, I fall so short of your standard of what is good. I confess that I have fallen short in these areas....

##### Take a Next Step:

At the end of each day this week, read over the 10 commandments and reflect on how you fall short of God's standard. Confess those areas to him.

#### DAY 2 SIN IS THE PROBLEM part 1

Scripture: [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [Romans 7:14-25](#)

##### Reflection:

Yesterday, we learned that none of us are good. We are going to continue to dismantle the lie that we can be good enough by continuing to look at the bad news, the problem: sin. The Greek word for "sin," *hamartia*, literally means "to miss the mark" as when an archer fails to hit the center of the target. So sin is anytime we act against God's standard, or when we remit to do what He says is right. For example, we sin when we steal candy from a store, but we also sin when we neglect to acknowledge and care for the homeless person in our city. Sin is in our nature. It is something that we can't avoid doing. The apostle Paul, who wrote the book of Romans, describes the struggle with our sin and our desire to live up to God's standard that we all experience in perfect detail! We do what we do not want to do and don't do what we do want to do. Yet again he reminds us of our answer to this dilemma at the end: we are delivered through Jesus Christ!

Ask Yourself:

What are some of the things you know are sinful, and you try to avoid, but you keep going back to?

Pause to Pray:

Lord, help me to see the areas of sin in my life. Remind me that I can't save myself from my sin nature.

Take a Next Step:

Reflect on how not acknowledging sin in your life can make it difficult to grow in your faith.

### DAY 3 SIN IS THE PROBLEM part 2

Scripture: [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [Hebrews 12:1](#); [Numbers 32:23](#); [Isaiah 59:2](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#)

Reflection:

Sin is not just an internal struggle between doing what is good or bad. It also affects our relationships with others and with God. We may think that it is hidden or that it doesn't really affect anyone else, but sin always has an impact. First, it damages our relationship with the one that created us. There is a gap between us. We don't get the benefit of his presence in our lives that gives us hope, peace, and all good things. We have chosen something that will satisfy temporarily instead of turning to God who can satisfy us eternally. Secondly, it impacts our relationships with ourselves and others. We start to become numb to other sins in our lives and continue to perpetuate the lie that we are "good enough". We sin against others and hurt those relationships. Ultimately, sin brings death: death in separation from God, death in lost relationships, physical death, and death to knowing the truth about ourselves and God. The hope that we have is in Jesus to reconcile these relationships and give us life.

Ask Yourself:

How have you seen the impact of sin in your life and relationships?

Pause to Pray:

Lord, help me to see how my sin impacts the relationships in my life. Give me the courage to work towards reconciliation.

Take a Next Step:

Make an effort to begin to repair a relationship that has been damaged by sin.

### DAY 4 JESUS IS THE ANSWER part 1

Scripture: [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [John 3:16-18](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [Romans 10:9](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

Reflection:

Now let's talk about some good news! We aren't left in our sin, in falling short of God's standard that separates us from him. We have someone who has saved us! This is Jesus! He reconciled our relationship with God. He took our sin upon himself, even though he had never sinned. God planned for this to be the way that we were to be saved from the very beginning. He knew that we couldn't do it on our own, so he sacrificed Jesus in our place! In our world today it can be easy to try to tolerate everyone and say that there are many ways to get to heaven, but the Bible is clear that Jesus is the only way. We

only need to believe that he died for our sins and confess that he is Lord! What a great gift! We don't do anything to earn it, because God loves us and is gracious towards us, he gives it freely.

Ask Yourself:

How does it feel to know that salvation is a gift that you don't deserve?

Do you believe that Jesus came to save you?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, thank you for reconciling me with God. Thank you for taking sin upon yourself and dying for me so that I can have eternal life. Thank you that I don't have to earn it, but receive it as a gift.

Take a Next Step:

Create space in your day to praise Jesus for how he saved you. It could be through a worship song, or reflecting on a passage of the Bible, or anything else that brings you to a heart of praise.

DAY 5 JESUS IS THE ANSWER part 2

Scripture: [Colossians 1:21-23](#); [Exodus 12:5-13](#); [Isaiah 53:5-6](#); [John 1:29](#); [1 Peter 2:21-25](#)

Reflection:

Jesus is the only way to heaven. We can't earn it. We need someone to take our place. This theological concept is called substitutionary atonement. This means that Jesus Christ took the full punishment that we deserved for our sins as a substitute in our place. We see a shadow of this in the Old Testament with the Passover as Israel is waiting for God to free them from slavery in Egypt. They are instructed to kill a perfect lamb and put the blood on their doorposts. Because something without sin was killed in their place, God passed over them during the plague that killed every firstborn. We deserve death for our sin, nothing that we do can ever earn us status in heaven with God. We need Jesus, one without sin, to die in our place. He saves us and gives us his good standing with God so we can be in heaven. Our lives are changed by this gift!

Ask Yourself:

How does it feel to know that someone took your place and died so that you can have life?

What is your response to Jesus' sacrifice?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, thank you for taking my place and giving me your good standing before God. Help me to live for you and to grow in faith.

Take a Next Step:

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)  
Memorize Jesus' words, or make a lock screen for your phone as a reminder that it is through Him you have abundant, eternal life.

**\*Want to try the YouVersion plan? Search "whoisgrace" and look for "Lies I Believe Parts 1-5"**

## LIES I BELIEVE Part 4: God Doesn't Like Me

### Week 4

January 23, 2020

#### DAY 1 WORTHY

Scripture: [Genesis 1:27](#); [Psalm 139:13-18](#); [John 3:16](#); [Romans 5:8](#)

#### Reflection:

There is a desire in all of us to be seen, to be known, to be liked, to be loved. We were made for all of that. But we're broken by a broken world. Other broken people with broken hearts wound us, reject us, abandon us, betray us. And in our hearts we begin to wonder if maybe the way those broken people view us is how God views us. Maybe I'm a mistake. Maybe God doesn't like the me that He made. Maybe I'll never be good enough, lovely enough, smart enough, worthy enough to deserve His love, care, and compassion. But this is a lie. Satan wants you to believe that God's love isn't for everyone, especially you. The truth is... God loves all He had made, even you. Yes, it is true! God made you. God loves you.

"There is no such thing as self-worth. There is only God-worth. And given that God fearfully and wonderfully makes everyone in His image, everyone has the same permanent, never-going-to-be-higher-or-lower worth." (Chris Thurman)

#### Ask Yourself:

-Why do I believe the lie that God doesn't like me, doesn't love me, or that I'm not worthy?

-Do I believe that God's words are true? Why is it hard for me to believe these scriptures that declare His love for me? (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-18; John 3:16; Romans 5:8)

#### Pause to Pray:

God, with my whole heart I want to be worthy of your love, I want to know that you love me. God, lead me away from lies and to your truth...

#### Take a Next Step:

Choose one of today's scriptures and create a lock screen or a notecard, something that you will see often as you move through your day.

#### DAY 2 HAGAR

Scripture: [Genesis 16:1-16](#); [Genesis 21:8-20](#)

#### Reflection:

The LIE is that you're not worthy to be loved, that God doesn't even like you. And behind that lie is the "evidence" that the enemy of your heart holds up as proof. But the TRUTH reveals both the lie and the evidence to be false. Let's examine a life that resisted the lie with truth...

In the culture and society where she lived, Hagar's life wasn't worth much. She was a foreigner and a servant. She did as she was told, which in this case was to conceive a child for her master and mistress. Not because she was special, but she was available. And Abraham and Sarah wanted to rush God's

promise along. Their disobedience to God had far-reaching consequences, for themselves, for the children, and for Hagar.

It was culturally acceptable for Hagar to be used and abused by those in a position of power over her, and then to be sent, not once but twice, away into the wilderness. Rejected. Abandoned. Hopeless.

But God saw Hagar. God spoke to Hagar. God cared for Hagar. God loved her and her son. God redirected her eyes from her worthlessness to her worth—a daughter of God. It did not matter what others saw and believed. *EL ROI*, the God who sees, met her in her pain and provided hope for her future.

Ask Yourself:

-Who has hurt me so badly that I feel unworthy of anyone's attention or care?

-What does Hagar's story teach me about *EL ROI*, the God who sees me?

Pause to Pray:

God, I believe You see me, in all my pain and struggle, in my darkness and filth... lift my eyes to see your love for me...

Take a Next Step:

Is there someone in your life experiencing pain, rejection, heartache? How can you extend God's love to them today and make them feel seen?

DAY 3 DAVID

Scripture: [Psalm 22:1-31](#)

Reflection:

The lie is that you're not worthy to be loved, that God doesn't even like you. And behind that lie is the "evidence" that the enemy of your heart holds up as proof. But the truth reveals both the lie and the evidence to be false. Let's examine another life that resisted the lie with truth...

David was anointed King of Israel as a young man. But he didn't immediately begin to reign as King. He didn't wait a few weeks or a few months or even a few years. Scholars believe David wasn't recognized as king over Israel for at least 15-20 years after Samuel anointed him. That's a long wait! And it wasn't a waiting period marked by rest and comfort. It was a daily struggle. King Saul, rejected by God because of his disobedience, was actively pursuing David, trying to kill him.

Imagine being promised something BIG by God, and then having to live a life on the run for almost two decades. Would you be tempted to believe that because life is so hard, God must not like you, much less love you?

Several of David's psalms were written during this period. Like Psalm 22, they each reflect the heart of David—he was struggling, but he was hanging on to God and His promises with all his strength. He refused to give in to the lie that God had abandoned him. He clung to the truth.

Ask Yourself:

-Has a period of struggle or waiting cause me to doubt God's goodness or doubt His love and care for me?

-How does David's song (Psalm 22) give words to both the struggle and the truth?

Pause to Pray:

God, I believe you have not ignored my struggle. You have not turned your back on me. I believe You hear my cries for help...

Take a Next Step:

Write your own prayer song to God. Be honest about how you feel, what you're thinking... pour it all out on the page. And then pause, and allow your heart turn toward God and receive His love and His care. Like David, write truth that will overcome the lies.

DAY 4 PETER

Scripture: [Luke 22:54-62](#); [John 21:15-17](#)

Reflection:

The lie is that you're not worthy to be loved, that God doesn't even like you. And behind that lie is the "evidence" that the enemy of your heart holds up as proof. But the truth reveals both the lie and the evidence to be false. Let's examine a third life that resisted the lie with truth...

Peter was guilty. He who had once sworn he would follow Jesus anywhere had just denied that he even knew Jesus. And not one denial, but three. And Jesus knew Peter had done it—Jesus had predicted it! Oh the shame! Peter had given his whole life to following this rabbi. Jesus had called him "friend." And what had Peter gone and done—he'd thrown it all away out of fear. He'd abandoned Jesus. He must have been tempted to believe the lie that what he had done was too terrible, that Jesus couldn't like him, much less love him, anymore.

But at a fireside meal on a lake, Jesus gently, kindly, purposefully, reveals both Peter's heart and His own heart toward Peter. Love. Peter loved his Savior. And his Savior loved him. Truth overcame the lie. And because Peter believed the truth, God used the rest of his life to launch the Church and take the good news of Jesus to all people.

Ask Yourself:

-What have I done that leads me to believe the lie that I am overwhelmingly guilty, that I must live in shame and not love?

-How does Peter's story speak truth to the lies in your heart?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, I love you! Like Peter, I have messed up so badly, but I believe You love me...

Take a Next Step:

There is a simple child's song, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." Try saying those words out loud: "Jesus loves me." Let that truth speak louder than the lies.

## DAY 5 LOVED

Scripture: [Genesis 1:27](#); [Psalm 139:13-18](#); [John 3:16](#); [Romans 5:8](#); [Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

### Reflection:

After reading of God's love for the rejected Hagar, the struggling David, and the guilty Peter, now read God's word and let it speak to *YOU*.

Read each of today's passages slowly. Read them out loud if you can. Listen to them with your eyes closed.

God's heart for you is revealed in His word. What is He saying to you today?

### Pause to Pray:

Allow Paul's prayer for the church to lead you into prayer for yourself and for others...

*I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)*

### Take a Next Step:

-Symbolically destroy the lie you have been believing with the TRUTH of God. Write down your lie and then tear up the paper. Or paint over it and then replace it with truth. Or take a walk somewhere quiet and declare out loud, "It is a LIE that I am not worthy of love! God made me! Jesus died for me! He loves me!"

**\*Want to try the YouVersion plan? Search "whoisgrace" and look for "Lies I Believe Parts 1-5"**

## LIES I BELIEVE: God Won't Give Me More Than I Can Handle

Week 5

January 30, 2022

DAY 1- THE LIE

Scripture: [1 Corinthians 10: 6-14](#)

Reflection:

Chances are you have heard it said, "God won't give you more than you can handle." We mean it to be a source of comfort during a particularly long or difficult season. We mean it as a word of encouragement to someone who is exhausted and overwhelmed. But the sentiment itself is rarely comforting or encouraging, and even more – it is not Biblical and it is not true. Suggesting that we will only face trials that we can manage on our own tends to sow confusion in and condemnation on those who find themselves in impossible situations. Presenting this as a promise from God plants roots of bitterness toward God when the person inevitably realizes that they cannot handle this thing on his or her own.

So where did this idea come from? It's likely a misapplication of a promise made to believers in 1 Corinthians 10: 13, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." By reading this verse in context, we can see that God promises to provide a way out when we are *tempted to sin*. In 1 Corinthians 10 the apostle Paul directly addressed situations in which believers were being enticed toward the sin of idolatry. It's about temptations, not troubles. It is important to understand that this promise applies to moments of decision where a believer must choose God over the empty promises of sin. In situations of persecution, struggle and pain that are the result of living in a broken world we are not promised the ability to handle things on our own. Over the next few days we will explore reasons why God can and often does allow more than we can handle – for our good and for His glory.

Ask Yourself:

-Have you ever fallen prey to the lie that God will not give you more than you can handle? How did you feel when your best efforts did not seem to help at all?

-Have you ever misapplied a passage of scripture by quoting it out of context (even with the best intentions)?

Pause to Pray:

Father God, I thank you for giving us your Word to lead and guide us. Help me to slow down and seek an ever deepening understanding of all that your Word promises. Please grant me clarity today on....

Take a Next Step:

Meditating on examples of temptations and troubles in the scriptures can help us better recognize how God responds to us in each. Read Matthew 26: 36-45 to get started. How does the temptation of the disciples differ from the cup of Jesus?



## DAY 2- Isn't it Time to Come Back Home?

Scripture: [Jonah 1: 17 – Jonah 2:10](#) and [Isaiah 44: 21-22](#)

### Reflection:

Sometimes God will give you more than you can handle because He wants you to come back to Him.

The book of Jonah relays the story of a prophet who momentarily chose sin over God. He rejected God's leading and literally ran in the opposite direction. The resulting sequence of events led Jonah into an impossible situation – the belly of a fish. Do you think Jonah had more than he could handle deep underwater, inside of that fish? Do you think Jonah felt like he had been abandoned by God? Was he actually abandoned? In that hard place Jonah recognized that his only hope rested in God and he cried out in prayer. Once Jonah turned his heart back toward God, he was delivered from literal and spiritual death.

### Ask Yourself:

-What was God's purpose in allowing Jonah to experience this place of desperation?

-Have you ever known someone who rejected God's leading and found themselves in an overwhelming situation? What do you think God's heart is toward someone in that place?

-Are there any areas of your life that you have turned away from God and He may be trying to draw you back to Him?

-Have you ever found yourself thinking, "I can figure this out on my own?" or "I messed this up so I need to fix it on my own?"

### Pause to Pray:

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you have known me from the beginning and will love me until the end. Forgive me for turning away from you in \_\_\_\_\_. I pray that I would know your true heart for me. I acknowledge that I cannot do this on my own and I receive your help.

### Take a Next Step:

Challenge yourself to memorize [Isaiah 44: 21-22](#) so that you can call this truth to mind when you find yourself tempted to try to fix your mistakes on your own.

## DAY 3- Who Do You Rely On?

Scripture: [2 Corinthians 1: 8-10](#); [Isaiah 40: 27-31](#)

### Reflection:

Sometimes God will give you more than you can handle because He wants to teach you to depend on Him alone.

The book of 2 Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul. As an apostle, he was commissioned by Jesus to travel to many places and share the gospel. Today's reading makes it clear that although Paul was obediently doing the will of God, he still found himself in many impossible situations. Often those situations were even *created* by his obedience in following God's leading. Amazingly, he did not allow

this to stop him. He did not let the presence of hardships cause him to doubt the presence of God. Instead, he became well aware that he could not fulfill his purpose through his own strength and ability - he learned to rely fully on God.

Have you ever noticed that we tend to forget about God when things are going really well? We somehow start to believe that 'we've got this.' If you could handle everything yourself, why would you ever need to rely on God?

Ask Yourself:

Are there any areas of your life that you tend to operate on 'auto-pilot', without pausing to pray and ask for God's input and guidance?

Are there any areas of your life that have become too much for you to handle on your own and you find yourself tempted to quit or get discouraged instead of leaning more fully on God?

Pause to Pray:

Jesus, I know that you have good and perfect plans for me and that sometimes I will face hard situations. Let me not grow weary and get discouraged. Even now I ask you to help me rely more fully on you in regards to ...

Take a Next Step:

Seek out and write down three or four scriptures that you find encouraging. Keep them in a convenient place to pull out when find yourself in hard situations. Consider: Isaiah 40: 27-31, Psalm 85: 15, Lamentations 3: 21-23, 1 Corinthians 1: 9, Matthew 11: 28-30, Galatians 6:9, Isaiah 41: 10

DAY 4- Weakness Is Strength

Scripture: [2 Corinthians 12: 7-10](#); [2 Corinthians 4: 6-18](#)

Reflection:

Sometimes God will give you more than you can handle because He wants to show His power through your weakness.

Consider the apostle Paul again. In 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10, he describes an interaction that he has with God about an ongoing 'thorn in his flesh' that really bothered him. We don't know for sure what the specific issue was, but it was frustrating enough that Paul pleaded with the Lord repeatedly to take it away from him. Now Paul had been through a lot during his missionary travels – prison, shipwrecks, floggings, beatings, robbery, hunger... you name it, he had likely endured it. Paul was only human, but in faith he had learned to find his source of strength in God, not himself. Yet here was something so personal and so wearisome that Paul pleaded for its removal. Given Paul's faithfulness, it seems a bit surprising that God did not take it away. Instead He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." At that, Paul understood that if he continued to bear the weakness of the 'thorn', then God would receive the glory for whatever he may accomplish in spite of that weakness.

Looking back at 2 Corinthians 4: 6-18, Paul gave a beautiful illustration of that concept, describing it as "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" shining out of "jars of clay," which are the hearts of

believers. He continued on to explain that this juxtaposition of perfect power to imperfect vessels is intentional so that there can be no mistake where the light and power originate – God alone.

Paul's response to this is an example for everyone who struggles and strives to serve God amidst turmoil and tears. He did not grow discouraged or doubt God's calling, and he did not respond with anger or frustration at the denial of his request. Instead, he embraced his weaknesses and rejoiced in how they amplified God's power to accomplish His purposes.

Ask Yourself:

-Where do your thoughts and emotions tend to go when you are in the middle of something that you know God could change, but He doesn't?

-Can you think of any times that He used one of your 'thorns' (areas of weakness) to really shine His glory?

Pause to Pray:

Open your Bible to [Psalm 139](#) and read through it as a prayer from your heart today.

Take a Next Step:

Make a list of three weaknesses or challenges that often frustrate you. Spend some time talking to God about His purposes in them and asking Him for revelation on how He can be glorified through them.

DAY 5- Good Company

Scripture: [Hebrews 11: 23-40](#)

Reflection:

If God has given you more than you can handle, you are in good company! And it's for your good and His glory.

The scriptures are filled with the stories of men and women who God gave more than they could handle on their own. By faith they set aside their fears and frustrations, and their weaknesses were turned to strength as they let God's power and glory shine through them. Abraham and Sarah welcomed a promised baby Isaac well after their childbearing years; Noah assembled a menagerie of all the earth's creatures, built a big boat and then weathered the worst storm the earth has ever seen; Moses led an entire nation out of slavery and crossed on dry ground through a parted sea... the examples of deliverance and blessing go on and on. So if God has brought you into the middle of an impossible situation you are in good company! This is simply a place where faith is possible. If you will just lean into Him and let Him work, you will be blessed and God will be glorified in the story your life will write.

Ask Yourself:

What would it look like for you to release your most closely guarded struggles into God's hands? Do you believe that He is able AND willing to transform your weaknesses and brokenness into something beautiful?

How do you think your personal story of faith fits into God's ongoing love story? Why might it be important for you to understand how your life overlaps with and connects to the faith journeys of those around you?

Pause to Pray:

God, I am amazed at the intricate design of your kingdom. Please open my eyes so that I can see you in... Please open my heart so that I can receive from you in...

Take a Next Step:

Take a few minutes to read the stories of some men and women of faith and then recount one of your favorites to a friend or family member. It will surely encourage both of you.

**\*Want to try the YouVersion plan? Search “whoisgrace” and look for “Lies I Believe Parts 1-5”**