

A Devotional Guide to

# FINDING EVE

DISCOVERING TRUE IDENTITY



A 12 week Study through Finding Eve



## THE WORTH OF A LIFE

In this 12-week study we will go through the book Finding Eve chapter by chapter. Each week visit our Facebook page or download via email the next chapter guide that you can print off and use as a tool to journey deeper into Gods heart for you.

As you begin your journey reading Finding Eve, set your heart in prayer for God to speak clearly to you as you read through each chapter. Regardless of your background or circumstance I guarantee that there will be phrases and stories that will hit your heart in deep ways that provoke a response. We are not all so different from each other. Everyone has a story and everyone has a life that is pressing through situations and scenarios of everyday living. I have challenged myself to always be one that progresses with God in relationship. To be a friend of God one must be willing to trust him and risk emotion, heart, hope and even disappointment in order to hear his voice speak peace and passage.

Finding Eve began as a conversation I had with God about my own worth. He began to talk to me through the scriptures and sent me on a treasure hunt. He brought up Eve and when he spoke about her there was no condemnation or disappointment in his voice. I was listening to him speak of someone he created with great intention and destiny. I was stunned. I was even more undone when he began to tell me that the hope he created her with was the same hope he put deep in me. That had me curious and my curiosity led to the crafting of the book itself. I happen to have a very poetic and creative approach to life in general so I knew that in order to write about such an obsolete and vacant character as Eve, I would have to continue asking God his thoughts on her. Are we not to imagine that she too had emotions and pain? Why is it I had classified the first of women as an easy discard? I began to feel the likeness of her to me and me to her. So my journey began and in finding Eve, I stumbled upon my own heart.

As you prepare to read this book I encourage you to write in a journal. Begin to use that journal as a sort of script in this venture between you and God. Have a red pen handy along with a blue or black one. When you are asking God certain questions in the devotional have that red pen handy and when you hear his voice, write his words in red letters only. You can do this on a computer highlighting his words in red. Do not allow yourself to think he will not talk. I am here to tell you, he has much to say, especially about you.

## The Beginning – Prepare Your Heart

When we start each week, the devotional will come as a 5-day session. Each day will pull something from that chapter to process and digest using 5-days out of a 7-day week to work as the devotional. I will write out questions that you can answer on your own that will hopefully cause conversation with God and others. You do not have to start any particular day, as that will be your own choice in how you walk the devotional out.

Before you begin Chapter 1 Take 5-10 minutes to prepare your heart. I love to pray before I read. It allows God to come and share any thoughts he has on what I am gleaning. You can pray something like this:

*Father God, as I begin to read this book I ask that your voice would sing over my heart. In every word I take in I ask that you open doors to my own soul and my own worth or lack there-of. Cause me to come into an understanding of how fearfully and wonderfully made I am. I am here to find you God and as I seek you, I am promised that I WILL find you. Prepare me to engage the very library of thoughts you have for me. I am ready to hear from you. Amen*

In your journal, (or even here) write out up to 3 characteristics you have felt about Eve's life based on your own personal opinion. We do not know much about her in scripture but you have an opinion about her based on what you know and what you have heard. It is important as we begin that you take note of how you have viewed Eve. You may have never thought about it but think upon it now. Whether they are positive or negative opinions write down at least three here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

After you have written those 3 opinions think about how you have come to believe that about Eve. Some of you may have thought nothing about her except that her sin was cause for the fall of man. Look at that list of negatives or positives (or even your lack of thought or opinion) about her and ponder them. Why/How did you come to those opinions? Have you arrived at them as a result of someone else's teachings or writings? Have you arrived at them because it's just what everyone else has thought or said? For most of you I doubt that whatever you have written down, you wrote because they were Gods truths about her.

It is important here that as we begin to explore the findings of Eve that we stand in front of a mirror and see our own faces staring back at us. Look again at those opinions you have had and ask yourself if any of them you might find in yourself? All of mine were negative. I had deemed her weak, insecure, and immature. As I listened to God declare her worth I was faced with all I found her guilty of. God designed Eve with destiny in mind and he used her to turn me inward to recognize my own destiny and lay down my own failings.

List now 3 things you dislike about your own character:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List 3 positive characteristics you have about yourself.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which of those things takes longer to come up with?

Before you read Chapter 1 or begin this devotional, sit for a while before the Lord and ask him to tell you 3 things he loves about your Character and three things he wants to change about it. (ouch)

For those of you that find it hard to “hear” from God simply trust the process. Quiet your spirit and pray again allowing him to speak. Wait and practice writing what you hear. It may not come fast, but it will come eventually.

What He loves?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What He wants to change?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Remember, God is always taking us step-by-step and glory-to-glory. You are a process working itself out and a destiny waiting to happen. What you believe about yourself now could be your hindrance or your inheritance. The choice is yours to want to know what Gods thoughts about you are and what his purpose is for your life. God is praying for you to receive his truth. As you read this book and the fictitious journal entries of the first woman in the bible, my hope is that you stop to see the real life heart beating in your own chest. God is for your reception of his grace and his delight. You need only to hold your hands out to receive it!

Here we go.....lets find Eve.

## Chapter One

### Finding Eve Devotional – Finding An Education

### Choices

Psalm 35:1-3

“Contend, Lord, with those who contend with me;  
Fight against those who fight against me.  
Take up shield and armor; arise and come to my aid.  
Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me.  
Say to me, “I am your salvation.”

### DAY ONE

As we begin to meditate over some of the subjects surrounding these coming chapters be encouraged to ponder on the scripture of the week. This week our scripture is Psalm 35:1-3. The word, **CONTEND** is a word I want you to process as well as the word **CHOICE**.

In Chapter One we meet our character Eve. She appears to be an intended part of the plan, prior to her choice to fall for a lie. She surfaces without a college degree and although she arrives on the scene perfect, she makes a choice that changes her outcome. We also meet her having been created with great **INTENTION and PURPOSE**. She was fashioned in **LOVE** for **LOVE** and shortly after being given breath with those things resident in her, she was fed a **LIE**. These are three important memory points to review and search for within our own hearts.

1. Eve was made with **intention and purpose**
2. Eve was made with **love to be loved**
3. Eve believed a **lie**

**READ** - Genesis chapters 1-3. Eve was always in the plan and the only thing different about her is the way she was formed. Adam was formed from dust while Eve was “fashioned” from a bone God purposely lifted from the side of Adam. This first day let us look at Gods intentions in creating Eve and turn back toward the mirror to ask about his intentions creating us. Maybe you have not thought about Gods purpose for your life. I am not talking about what talents you have or gifts you possess. I want you to dig deep and ask for his intentions about you outside of what you feel called too.

**1) Intention and Purpose** – Eve was the intention of God. This means she was in the plan and part of the process. It also means she was not **an afterthought**.

To understand this we should view (if you never have) Eve as very much a main character in a play and a central part of the process God designed. Regardless of how we come into this world we do it by way of intention. It does not matter what circumstance surrounded our conception. We were all knit with deep intention. The enemy will not ever take credit for the knitting of our beings and the delicate construction of our bones. That is Gods alone! Unfortunately, I have yet to meet a woman who does not suffer from some form of rejection surrounding her purpose. Rejection is swallowed and believed when Gods original purpose and intention for you is thought to have been a lie. Keep in mind Eve's perfection she was attacked quickly with lies that would derail the original intent of Gods plan for her life. Has this ever happened to you?

## Questions & Answers

After you read Gen 1-2 ask yourself these questions and respond with honest answers.

1. Was God intentional when he began to create the earth? Describe. How was he purposeful in creating man and woman?

2. Why is choice important to God?

3. Ask Him what his purpose in giving you life was. Wait for his response.

4. Are you willing to contend for and choose to believe that God made room in the Kingdom for you and has a plan for your life? What obstacles stand in the way of you believing that?

## Thoughts To Think About

God took days to create Adam and Eve's surroundings. He took time in making each of them different. He was deep in a creative process with a specific plan. He creates all this wonder and beauty and then places **choice** in the heart of human flesh to be the central focus where our response to him would come from. There is something about CHOICE that is important to God. Think for a moment about all the choices that led you right where you are now at this moment. How many of those choices had God at the center of them? How many choices have you made that have taken you out of Gods purpose or intention for your life? The amount of peace we have is usually due to the amount of right choices we make. Begin Finding Eve by returning to the reason you were fashioned or formed. There is a reason. Return to the truth of why God sees you as important. If you can be led back to a deep truth then you can start to contend against the lies.

Read Psalm 35:1-3 a few times and begin to ask the Lord to contend with you against the lies surrounding your purpose.

### **\*Selah\***

*Pause, sigh and take a deep breath. Let Gods intentions wash over all the things the years of others opinions, circumstance and trial have caused. Choose to open a gate to re-enter into the opinion God has held in his heart about you. You were made with INTENTION. It's time to wake with intention, walk with intention and believe with great purpose. You were not an after thought! You were made with intention and made for a purpose!*

## Chapter One - DAY TWO

If God fashioned Eve with **intention** he would have created her with **love**. Eve was set down beside Adam as a plus sign to his life. She was the great intentional addition. She was made from a kidnapped bone and placed for the sake of unity and companionship alongside a man. We all are conceived with emotion and sometimes that emotion has little to do with love. It should have everything to do with love but many of us face a truth we are told shakes our ability to see God's purpose for us, leading us to question his love. God's nature is not to create what he does not love. It is our choice to weed through all of what living under human limitations can do to the definition of love and return to the truth of how God loves.

**Jeremiah 31:13** says “**I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with an unfailing kindness.**” We read these black and white words and know this is what God says yet, do we believe it personally? Are we believers that everlasting love means - no matter what? Are we receivers that everlasting kindness applies to those who have made some major wayward choices in the past? Under the banner of salvation we respond to this with acceptance but to carry it as a truth unshaken, is another story. Have you ever stopped to think how your view of love is shaken when you walk through trials? The #1 thing our humanity questions in hardship is the love of God. Love was on-site when God created humanity. Remember, anything with the kind of power love has is a threat to the enemy. It is why he will spend your lifetime lying to you about it!

2) **Made to LOVE and be LOVED** – God creates out of passion and idea. He has placed in us the need to survive and thrive. On Page 8 in Finding Eve we see Eve make her first mistake. It is there in Genesis 3:1 that Eve is asked a question that puts worth and love to the test. Did God really say? In Gen 3:6, Eve partakes in a lie because of a question. Eve was deceived to think she did not have what was already in sight. Provision, beauty and wisdom, were the very things she had around her and yet they became the very things she questioned. How often do we question that we do not have what we already do? When we doubt it, we begin the battle of deception. Watch the patterns though and relate them to your own path. When Eve questioned those things it manifested a root of insecurity and created division between she and Adam, putting love to the test.

## Questions & Answers

1) What Choices have you made in your life that question Gods provision, your beauty and His wisdom?

2) Describe how those choices may be effecting how you love and how you receive love?

3) Review those answers above and ask the Lord to redeem those choices. Then ask the Lord this question. "Jesus, why do you love me?" Write out his response. It may sound silly or hard to hear but I have found this question to come with some powerful truth.

## Thoughts To Think About

Our choice to believe in our purpose and God's love is a powerful tool we can use to fight off the enemy. It is why this week we need to contend with God for what we have been up against. The enemy will not stop trying to persuade you to believe another lie. Choice comes with persuasion. Once we choose right or wrong, good or bad we become persuaded to a belief. We are in a battle and our enemy locates our weaknesses to derail our beliefs. I encourage you to investigate your heart and begin to ask Holy Spirit to reveal where you have believed a lie.

### **\*Selah\***

*Pause, sigh and take a deep breath. Read Ephesians 3:14-19 -*

*“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And 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.”*

## Chapter One – Day Three & Day Four

Like Eve you were made to delight the Lord and he created you to feel love. Your circumstance surrounding your conception and your birth may have had you born into an environment with no understanding of love. Understand this, the enemy has taken that first lie told to Eve and had a field day on you with it. It is his sole purpose to feed you lies just as fast as you would soak in the truth.

For a lie to enter quickly at the beginning of scripture it is obvious that the scheme of the enemy is distraction and deception. By the third chapter in Genesis, right there in the beginning, we watch the dark shadow of evil fall across the landscape of Eden. With Adam right next to his counterpart Eve, a lie becomes the trail she follows as she enters into a conversation with darkness. This conversation changes her perspective of Gods original intention and love she was consumed by prior to that moment. We are fools to think ourselves exempt or deny that much the same thing has already happened in our own lives. Lies imbed themselves like dust and mud on windowpanes impairing us to see past what ahs become blurry.

I was born to parents who were already living with salvation. That does not mean that I was born into a perfect family. I have friends whose testimonies begin being with them being conceived as a result of rape. The enemy's desire is to get you lied too outside of... or while you are still in your mothers womb! It is not enough for him to take out your parents, his goal is to also take you down and anything you give birth too repeating the same lies to every generation! This is the reason he approached Eve first in scripture instead of Adam. She had a womb. She had the ability to reproduce and our enemy is consumed with marking generations with his lies. He is after you because he heard a rumor you were going to change the world and he has been trying everything to stop you!

We will take two days to deal with this issue of the belief of lies as I feel it is important to start locating the roots to where lies attach themselves to our inner man causing any truth in us to be tested. When Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew 4) and was up against Satan, he responded to the deceiver with words of truth only. This is insight for us in how we too, should be combating the enemy's lies. Lies separate us from the truth so now is a great time to start reinstating truth back into your destiny! These next 2 days spend as much time in prayer as you can. You will fight distraction. The moment you decide to unearth a lie, the enemy will try to seal it back up! Deception's job is to distract you from the goodness of God's love and purpose. When you were told your first lie it was a direct hit against Gods truth about you.

## James 1:16-18

**<sup>6</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all he created."**

### **STOP HERE & PRAY!!**

Ask God to reveal His truth about you! I encourage you..... do not rush through this! Take your time. Wait to do it when you have time to just sit and contemplate what God wants to say. When you ask for truth, all the lies you have believed start to get irritated. Ask for Gods truth to be supernaturally revealed!

3) **Eve believed a LIE** – Eve wasn't born into a lie. She was born only knowing truth. She was standing in her calling, walking in direction and intention, destiny and fully formed in love to be loved. She began a conversation with the enemy whole. In a moment one lie let loose on her heart and the first two blessings she came into the world (purpose and love) were put into question. Intention and Love are strong contenders of the Heart, until doubt asks to dance with love and being intentional loses its position.

**I want you to spend the remaining time today you have set aside sitting with the Lord and writing down what you sense and hear him saying about you. Write down images or pictures you get. Ask him for scriptures and risk reading them and seeking how they speak to you. Ask most that your heart be softened to his voice.**

### **Job 40:1-2**

**"I'm speechless, in awe – words fail me. I talk to much, I am ready to shut up and listen."**

*The message*

## Day Four (continued)

### **Questions & Answers**

1. Jesus, will you reveal to me what lies I listened to Satan tell me that I have chosen believe? (Wait and write out what you hear or read in scripture)

2. Lord would you also reveal what I have believed as truth that has actually been another lie from the enemy?

3. Lord, I give you permission to speak into my heart and tell me now, what is your truth?

4. Lord forgive me for believing these things about myself:

a.

b.

c.

d.

Lord, I choose now to believe the opposite of those lies. I commit to you today that I am willing to believe in your purpose for my life. I choose the opposite of what all these lies have spoken. I choose to believe:

a.

b.

c.

d.

**\* Selah\***

Write down a promised scripture you are familiar with or ask God to give you a fresh new promise!

## Chapter One

### Day Five

Exodus 14:13

“Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

What do you suppose is the reason we do not allow God to fight our battles? It is ridiculous of me to take on the theology that I am supposed to always be fighting the devil off. Our reality in scripture is that God does the fighting when we do the obeying. I have spent years in trials and circumstances that cut off my lack of oxygen at times and it had me feeling as if I would never get out of the valley of shadows! I learned to stop myself and erase bad theology that had me putting my dukes up fighting off the enemy at all times. I love the story of David in 1 Samuel 17 describing him as a young man bringing food to his brothers on the front lines of the war with the Philistine's. This young love-inspired man has spent so many hours in personal devotion with his God and is stunned by the sheer obnoxious behavior of a Philistine giant who is basically cussing David's Israelites God out! David at this point is no soldier and he is no king but he is devoted and committed in his relationship with God and has had to rely on the deliverance of God when bears and lions came after what was his to guard in a field for his father. Goliath's rage and defiance to David was no different then when a bear came prowling for one of David's sheep. The battle between David and Goliath was over before it began because it was Gods battle to begin with. All that David had to do was show up and shut the mouth of his enemy.

Can our relationship with God equip us to be prepared for a war and be certain of whom the battle will belong too? We are people who believe it's possible but don't live it's reality. Instead we take on lies and live weak and ruined by the raging scene of life crashing around us. We fight battles ourselves and wonder why we are loosing! The reason? It was never your battle to fight in the first place! Satan picked a fight with God. God just looked over and basically said to the devil, “Ya, well you will loose and that is a promise!” So if your battle is the Lords, why don't you let him fight for you?

In Genesis, chapter 1, God stands like a better version of Michael Angelo and paints the sky, clouds, hills and sea. Then he grabs some dust and makes a man, pulls a rib and adds some curves! He sees soldiers in us and he is our General always holding the command. He promises Eve right after the fall that there will be a head that gets crushed in the end and it's not going to be his or hers, or Adams! It will however, be Satan's!

## Questions & Answers

1. What battles are you fighting that are not yours to fight?
2. What does having “enmity” mean to you?
3. What have you gleaned from Chapter One that stands out to you the most?

# Thoughts to Think About

## Chapter One Review

Finding Eve opens up with a fictitious journal entry belonging to Eve. In this journal Eve steps outside of 4 verses in scripture and becomes real to us. She has been waiting for us to find her and ask God questions about her life and her story. As we process this and as we discover her journey it should become easier to actually weave it personally into our own. Similarities will be evident because one woman made choices thousands of years ago that affect us all today. As the book progresses and questions are raised, asked and then answered I encourage you to steer away from the negatives that occurred in the garden and ponder more the deliverance we still can obtain through relationship and freedom in Christ. He is fighting for you, praying for you and believing for your complete freedom.

### **\*Selah\***

*Thank The Lord for how he speaks. Thank him for his presence and how it falls around you with hope and deliverance. Breathe in that hope and reach for that freedom today. Live awake and walk alive in his promise to take you deeper as long as you are willing to go there. Give Him back the lead to fight your battles. Allow the Lord to fight for you and crush the head of your oppressor.*

*If you are in a wrestle for your inheritance and a fight for your belief then be still. Be quiet. Silence yourself and let God speak a word of healing over you today!*

## Chapter Two

### Finding Eve Devotional - Finding the Garden Prison Cells and Palace Courts

#### Proverbs 2:1-5

“My son, if you receive my words  
and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom  
and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for insight  
and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God”

Have you ever made a mistake so great you beat yourself up about it for days? There are mistakes we make that make us cringe at the memory of them years later! For many of us it is stupid, silly stuff but for others it can be life-changing decisions. It is the reckless driver whose night out drinking alcohol with friends costs the life of a mother and her three children in the van he rams into on the highway. There are traumatic outcomes to split-second decisions to turn left instead of the intended right. We read stories and hear about the failings and fractures of others choices and we cannot imagine it! Thank God not us, right? We have prisons across the world where each cell holds someone who started a conversation with a snake and ended up behind a steel cage. You see, sin... Well, it happens to everyone.

In Genesis chapter 3, we read how one choice sprouted on the heart of human flesh and gave birth to sin. That choice wasn't made because of an abusive past, hard circumstance, alcohol or drugs. Adam and Eve were sober and awake when they made what seemed like a small mistake that cost all of us something. Imagine being the person responsible. Imagine being under that kind of attack, where you made a decision that tattoos the world with something that cannot be undone. This is where I had to think more like a grieving God and not like an opinionated human. The impact that first sin had on our God must have been a complete bummer. Yet, He knew. He knows everything.

As we begin this chapter, let us try to get out from under the format of the “blame game.” No finger pointing at Eve or claiming her weak anymore. Adam was not exempt. As scriptures says, he was right there, not off hunting for deer! (Gen3: 6) There was a reason Satan came at Eve even though he knew it would attack **them** both and subsequently now, all of us.

## DAY ONE

Proverbs 2:1 starts off with “If you.” *If* is a powerful word! *If* my father did not die when I was young, I would not have suffered the abandonment I did. *If* I would have married in my twenty’s, I would have had the opportunity to have a different life. *If* this and *if* that... The word *if* goes both ways. *If* you trusted more in God, that particular circumstance would not have affected you as deeply. Are you one who has used “if” to describe your regret?

Eve’s journal begins with the reality and cost of her doubt. Sin starts spinning a web of doubt before it manifests itself as action. When you sin, it is because you have lapsed in doubt and have chosen to trust your own humanity and not Gods divinity in that moment. The first sin in the garden was not adultery or murder. That first sin was simple doubt and momentary unbelief. If up to now you have been weighing sin on a scale of which matters most to God, it doesn’t. Sins may carry different consequences but no sin is greater than another to God. That first sin though, gave way for others that carried greater wounding and deception. So if your sin is gossip but you don’t think that even weighs on the scale of darkness, think again. I am here to tell you if gossip is your sin and you do not deal with it, you are opening the door for the enemy to drown you further in his lies. We all have regrets and some of those regrets are hindering our progression to receive forgiveness and understanding. Be careful as you process this and ask The Lord to reveal where your “*ifs*” are hidden.

### Questions & Answers

1. How do you view sin? Have you rated sin as if a scale? Have your sins cost others something?

2. Where are your “ifs” of doubt that have led to your regret?

3. What is on repeat in your head when things go wrong?

4. Ask the Lord to show you possible sin hidden in your life. Let him speak.

5. What is the difference between surviving and living? Which one are you doing?

## Thoughts to Think About

Identifying where our regrets are and registering if or how they are active in our lives can help clear a path for us to hear Gods declarations and invitations, while also uncovering the battle plan of the enemy! I encourage you to look for the doorway that regret may have entered into your heart. It is usually there that God starts to uncover root systems that produced behaviors that breed sin. I mentioned gossip earlier because it is what we all are guilty of but rarely view as sin. We can excuse our gossip as “concern” or be accused of gossiping from others who need to survive in shadows of isolation.

Recognizing how we go about it, or why we find ourselves in the middle of it, can be key. Romans 3:23-24 - **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”**

Christ provides a way to change sinful behavior through **repentance and revelation**. We should not be merely surviving in this life; we should be truly LIVING it. There is a difference. We are not sin-free people but simply **set free from sin** people. Jesus provides forgiveness, but also challenges us to change the patterns that lead us to doubt and regret.

Eve stumbled one day in Eden mistaking all she possessed as **not enough**. We read the aftermath of the how that first sin in Eden became a pattern of failure for generations that followed. Can you see that most all sin that followed that first one comes from a root system of “not enough”? We need to combat that by declaring that God is more than enough!

**\*Selah\***

Father, I ask that you speak into the areas of my heart where my regret may be causing the sin of doubt. I ask that you would open my eyes to find the doorway where regret slipped in and may have caused my unbelief. Forgive me, wash me, and set me apart to receive your hope and expectation. I desire to see that you alone are more than enough. Open my heart to believe that you are more than enough.

## Chapter Two – DAY TWO

ISAIAH 55:10-11 “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty.”

There are many places in scripture that relate life to seeds and harvest. God made a covenant of love with us with a desire to see us fulfill his plan for a coming Kingdom. I believe in a God of specifics who is an amazing designer, architect, builder and yes, farmer. Genesis starts off with God taking longer creating our surroundings than he spent time creating the likeness of his image. Why? He is a God of specifics- there must be a reason. He uses His voice to separate, construct and put into place every beautiful and breathtaking landscape of nature that obeys his commands, without ever rebelling. A tree does not choose to stop being a tree, nor does the ocean cease to hold all God put inside it. We are the only created beings that were given a choice. God spent five days vocally declaring the canopy of our environment, and I believe there is a reason for it. God holds the award for best artist, best engineer; He is best everything creative. He surrounds us with live, organic worship. He has everything that has life outside of human form worshiping him regardless of our noticing it.

**Read Psalm 104**

**Read job 38-42**

It is God who finally speaks and when He does,  
He challenges Job's pride with His powerful display of creative genius.

## Questions & Answers

Has the Lord ever used outside surroundings to speak to you personally?  
What did he say?

2. If our hearts metaphorically are gardens, what does your heart look like right now in this season?

## Thoughts to Think About

God is an exceptional gardener. He longs to use his love to prune and shape you. If you want a rose bush to continue coming back strong to produce roses in the spring and summertime, you must cut back their branches just before winter. I challenge you to look inside your heart today and see yourself like a garden. Take notice of what condition you are in and if you need it, ask for his pruning.

**\*Selah\***

### **John 15:1-8**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**

## Chapter Two – DAY THREE

“No more dark, no more hiding, no more caves!  
What is the point of all this? To follow the light!”

-Grug Crood

From the Movie – The Croods

In John 15, Jesus speaks of His Father being like a gardener. God the Father invents the garden and Jesus' words reference his Father as the Gardener when speaking about the vine and the branches, in healthy spirituality. It is even Jesus Himself (in John 20) that is mistaken for a gardener after the crucifixion.

God gave Adam and Eve the role of caring for Eden and letting them govern it. He put them in a place of constant beauty, cushioning them with all they needed to succeed. How can we say that God is not interested in our destinies or cheering us on in ways we have not taken notice of? He is speaking volumes, but are we listening? He is still willing to entrust us even in our present disappointment with more than we deserve.

Recently I watched the animated movie “The Croods,” with my son. It's a story about a father who used fear to protect his family, as it was all he knew to do to keep them safe. It takes the flickering of fire to push them out of their dark cave and make the journey into a tropical paradise. When we lose our privileges to stay in Eden, we can sometimes allow fear to keep us in our caves. Today let's take inventory of how fear has scattered our dreams and changed our surroundings. Have you settled into a belief that seasons of sadness and sorrow are all you will ever know or walk through? Unfortunately, when we experience trial and hardship, we can find ourselves comfortable in caves of darkness and isolation. We can settle for the mundane and no longer look for hope to fall. If mistakes along the way have rendered you unable to feel like God will give you back a greener pasture, I encourage you to open your eyes and look to see how he has been there the whole time.



## Thoughts to Think About

I encourage you to once again sit with the Lord and just reflect on the garden of your own heart. God gave you soil, rich in mercy and life and it really is up to you to let him prune your branches. Where are your weeds? There is not one of us that doesn't deal with pride, fear or lack of trust at times. Laying down what causes bad patches of weed growth in seasons of shifting can take longer if we have spent years avoiding pulling them up. Isn't it time to pull them up?

**\*Selah\***

### Prayer in a Garden

Today the world seemed cruel, but evening hours  
Were filled with perfume from forgotten flowers.

I saw again familiar filigree Of moonlight through my lacy Lilac tree;  
I heard the robins stirring in their nest; Reflected stars were in my garden  
pool; On my warm face the breeze was kind and cool. The silence seemed to  
speak, my head was bowed, Then ramblers that had grown into a cloud  
Lifted my eyes that, tear-washed, now could see The beauty that today was  
lost to me. Dear god, who is so near to flowers, and birds, Be nearer still, as  
I shall search for words To thank Thee for the blessings night revealed,  
Which through the day discouragement concealed. -*E.T.*

## Chapter Two - DAY FOUR

Recently I was part of a conference in Alabama where one of the pastors spoke in an afternoon workshop about a phenomenal occurrence in Death Valley, California. Death Valley is known as a complete wasteland for plant growth! It is located at the lowest and driest area in North America. Death Valley isn't a tourist first pick for traveling to see great landscapes of color. Nothing grows there but what needs little, to no water. Heat waves there can top over 120 degrees.

The Pastor recounted that in 2005 when winter weather brought mudslides and flooding to Southern California, it dropped 6 inches of water to this parched area of what is also known as the Bad-water Basin! What happened as spring emerged did send tourist scattering to take photographs as Death Valley turned into what appeared to be a garden of wildflowers on display! There were seeds lying dormant under that cracked and crumbling dirt that remained, until a record rainfall had them drinking in enough water they burst forth in spring and bloomed! I read an article online that explained what occurred when that rainfall leaked down into those dormant seeds.

“The flowers have adapted to the desert by developing seeds with coatings so thick or waxy that they can hibernate for decades. Only continued heavy rains will coax them to grow. Then, when there's just the right amount of moisture, sunlight and warmth, "its all systems go," says Pam Muick, executive director of the California Native Plant Society. She says Death Valley hasn't seen such a wide array of flowers in about 50 years — blue pendants of desert lupine and tiny purple chias growing in clumps, golden California poppies scattering all over hillsides. Along roads leading into the park, long rows of bright yellow daisies wave, almost as if they'd been seeded to greet the visitors.”

It is hard for me to read this and not see spiritually metaphoric meanings jumping out at those of us who have felt for years, like those dormant seeds. God created seeds to open exactly when they are supposed to and they know how much water they will need to do so. We do not have the patience of those seeds. What happens to us when we are put through such dire circumstance, that bury us three feet under our issues with no hope of a rescue? God is showing us that if he created seeds that can protect themselves until rainfall, can he not protect you with what you need to see you to your season of blooming?

## Questions & Answers

Do you have dreams or desires that have been in a state of being dormant? If yes, list them.

2. Look at those desires and write where you are at in believing they could still come into fruition.

3. Ask the Lord which of those desires are still his and which ones you have put to death because of the drought of disappointment.

## Thoughts to Think About

God is not a dream killer. He is however, a weed killer. Unfortunately, he gets the blame for all those dreams that do not come the way we have pictured they would. He controls the weather, so He controls the water that comes to soak our gardens that provide the harvest. Farmer's will plant in faith, based on predicted weather patterns in certain seasons that bring production to their fields. When the sky shows no rain, or the sky brings too much wind and violence, their faith is tested. They have a choice to give up or plant again the next year.

Have you given up what God did not bring water to? Have you blamed him for your lack? When sin occurred that fateful day in Eden, the first thing brought back to God was the casting of blame. Genesis 3:12 is our first insight into how we use blame as an excuse for our failures. Adam tells God, **"The woman YOU put here with me gave me some fruit from the tree."** Adam blames Eve, yes, but open your eyes to also see that comment is also directed at God in blame. The word "put" has the root indication of "allow" or "allowed." We cannot blame God for our decisions or our delays. There is a reason God waits to come. There is an explanation for his late hour arrival. Any blame is our inability to understand and our pride that keeps us from seeing all that causes delay. Your bloomless dreams are not Gods fault. Laying down blame will allow you to see that God has covered you with a love that has his perfect timing attached to it. The season of record rainfall will come and all that love you have been coated with will cause you to burst forth in spring.

**\*Selah\***

Tomorrow we will be answering questions about where you have put blame on God. Take time today to ask him to soften your heart and reveal what blame you have made God guilty of, or any blame that hides in your defense of yourself.

## Chapter Two – DAY FIVE

In Chapter two of Finding Eve, I tell a story of visiting a women's prison in Louisiana. Honestly, that experience was such an eye opener to gardens and how we chose to see them and care for them. I cannot shake that place and the faces of those women. Every bad choice we make and do not deal with is a step toward hearing prison doors close behind us. Metaphorically speaking for some, but a reality for others.

It's safe to assume that there are a higher percentage of you reading this that were not born in some beautiful Eden like garden! The majority of us are birthed on the scene of situations and tribulations already in motion. We are born under circumstance and surroundings less stunning than Eve's. That being the case, we should no longer then discriminate against others because they did not have "the hard life we did."

Eve did not have an abusive father and wasn't born into an alcoholic family, yet it took no time at all for her to doubt God's love and fail at receiving it. It really boils down to choice. Eve was not given a mountain to climb at birth; she was given a mountain to name. Not so with you and I. We need God's mercy in greater ways. Eden embraced a King and Queen only to watch them be exiled to personal prisons of choice and spend a lifetime searching for a palace of redemption. Where are you in the process? Are your choices setting you up for longer internal prison sentences, or are you searching to reside in God's palace of redemption? The choice is yours.

It is your responsibility to water the garden of your heart. It is your responsibility to choose to remember God has a plan and a purpose. It is up to you to embrace redeeming love and let a Savior release you from what you have been guilty of. If you are waiting for God to make a move, He already has. He climbed up on a cross to be nailed, bleed, and disfigured. He did so to walk out your sentence for you. He was jailed for your crime and your offense. He took the blame when you threw it on Him and then He turned around to unlock your heart and show you love like no other.

## Questions & Answers

1. What areas in your life have you placed blame on God? If you need to, ask God to show you what you have blamed Him for.
2. Are you one who feels the need to defend yourself in situations when accused by others? Do you defend your comments or actions? If so, explain.
3. Metaphorically speaking, if God planted a garden in your heart, based on what is going on right now in your life, what would it look like? What did He plant? Do not answer from what you think you should say to sound right, but how you feel right now with God. Be honest.

## Thoughts to Think About

Even in the best and most beautiful places where rich landscapes cause us to gasp at its perfect beauty, there are small insects that live to feast off of every flower and leaf. His eye is on the sparrow and everything else he created. The enemy will not stop in his attempts to diminish your hopes and dreams. The women behind bars in natural prisons still have a choice from incarceration on to see God as the restorer of broken dreams. We do get a do-over all the time under the mercy of God. He lays a blanket of mercy out for us every morning. He is the Great Gardener and the Great Healer of broken lives. It is your choice to let Him be what He is great at for your life.

**\*Selah\***

Lam 3:22-23

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

*Oh God, I am sorry I have blamed you for my misery. I am sorry I have held you responsible for my dormant dreams and my deep losses. I recognize that it is not your fault I have felt such disappointment and it is your hope that I would hold on to you in the dry desert seasons and believe for rain that will come in your perfect timing. Teach me how to let go of blame and then release me to bloom.*