



Chapter 1

THE DREAM



DAY 1

He made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

—*Isaiah 49:2*

My mentor's face reflected the quiet strength of Jesus. Her nurturing soul filled her living room with an atmosphere of trust, inviting me to stop pretending. I was relieved. My body relaxed. Tears began.

“What’s wrong, Aliene?”

Pretending is exhausting and prevents healing. Honesty before God and healing always walk hand in hand. However, I had tried so hard to keep those painful feelings at bay by pretending everything was OK. But everything was not OK. I was not OK.

I was mourning the loss of a dream. When that dream shriveled and fell to the ground, I felt as if a part of me had died. I felt like a total failure, as if God had abandoned me. But pride wouldn't let me admit to others or myself how much this loss had impacted my identity. And so I pretended.

But not today. Today, an avalanche of emotions that I had been shoving down began to flow with such force that they pushed right through my self-protective barrier of denial. My mentor held my hands and let me cry. Her authenticity allowed me to remove my mask and open up a door to my soul. I began to answer her questions about the hurtful details of the past year, including how God had made it clear to me that I was to walk away from the large women's Bible study I led.

One of the greatest privileges in my life at that time was building, teaching, and leading this group of women. Over time, though, that dream had become larger in my life than the Dream Builder, more important to me than God, and had assumed such a large position in my life that it was robbing me of my relationship with God and creating confusion and failure.

My work for God had become greater than my worship of God.

My pot—my purpose—had become greater than the Potter.

My identity had shifted its source from Jesus to ministry success.

My ministry to my church had taken priority over my ministry to my family.

My misplaced priorities had created wrong choices.

I shared this story with my mentor that day, although my uncontrollable sobs interrupted my sentences. Was I making sense at all? But in her eyes, I could see that my mentor understood completely and that she had been there too. She understood my pain in feeling that, having given up my Bible-teaching ministry, I was now living without purpose. Her validation of my feelings gave me permission to begin processing my emotions so I could start a journey toward truth.

Where did the steady wisdom built into her instruction come from? From years of living and from love of God's Word. She always held both love and truth in her hands in such a way that you couldn't tell where one began and the other ended. Today was no exception.

After listening to my story intently, she spoke truth as one who had fought this battle before. "Giving your heart to Jesus is a costly choice, but it's one he created you for, Aliene. Jesus wants to be more than your Savior—he also wants to be Lord of your heart and of your future. He wants to build a dream through you, but when the dream becomes larger than the Dream Builder, your heart cannot be fully his, and the dream cannot be all that God has designed it to be. The Lord prunes those he loves to create a greater harvest for his glory."

The tattered pages of her well-worn Bible turned effortlessly to Isaiah 49:1–4:

Listen to me, you islands;
hear this, you distant nations:
Before I was born the LORD called me;
from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.
He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.
He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."
But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing at all.
Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand,
and my reward is with my God."

“Do you know what’s happening in your life now, what’s causing all of this discomfort?” she asked. “He’s putting you back into his quiver, close to his heart, where you can heal and your heart can become fully his. An expert archer keeps his arrows in his quiver, close to him, so that he can sharpen and polish them, releasing them again and again with power, purpose, and precision. Like the expert archer, God is calling you to retreat into his presence so he can prepare and position your heart to be released for his glory.”

She reached into her drawer, pulled out a copy of *Streams in the Desert*, and gave it to me. In the days to come, as I prayerfully read through it, I would learn that the hearts of believers who had walked before me had all been broken at some time in their lives. Their stories let me know that I was not alone.

Dreams and Joseph

In this book, we’ll be looking at the story of Joseph, one of the Bible’s most indelible characters. My prayer is that as we look at his story, you too will find hope. His life was full of trials, but God’s dream for his life prevailed. Indeed, many of his trials became stepping stones that the Dream Builder used to accomplish his will in Joseph’s life.

To every woman out there who has lost her ability to hope, to dream: I have been there. This study is just for you.

A God-ordained dream never truly dies. God’s dreams were designed before we were born, to bring him glory (Ephesians 2:10). God places those desires in our hearts as seeds to stir our hearts for a harvest. Often it is the adversity in our lives that tills the soil of our hearts in such a way as to provide a greater harvest, as we are pushed to depend solely on Jesus.

However, it is this very adversity that the enemy of our souls uses to capsizize the dream. The enemy’s lies are not merely an attack on the dream, they are an attack on our very identity as a child of God designed for a purpose. Satan capitalizes on our catastrophe by feeding us lies about the goodness of God, about ourselves, and about the dream.

Sometimes we stop dreaming. Hope fades. God becomes smaller. The fear of stepping out again masquerades as humility.

And when this happens, we all lose out, because every woman’s purpose is a part of God’s plan. She was created and designed to bring value to this world and to bring glory to God as she walks in her purpose.

Like God, we too have dreams. Not all of those dreams become reality, but a dream that dies may not be lost. It can also be the birthing ground for God to build his dream through us.

The Dream Builder is a rebuildder.

Our brokenness becomes beautiful.

Our pain becomes our purpose.

Our mistake becomes our message.

Our rejection becomes God's redirection.

Our failure becomes his foundation to build.

Sometimes our dreams have to fall to the ground to create a greater harvest.

It can be a long time between when a seed falls and when you begin to see the harvest. For me, that time was painful. I questioned my faith. I questioned God's love for me. Life felt hopeless. That dark cloud of depression settled over my soul as the enemy whispered lies in my ear. I thought my dream was over.

But my losing became gaining. God was leading me through the painful process of purifying my heart so that the seed could yield a greater harvest—one for his glory.

My race had only just begun. It was in getting back up that my faith was strengthened and my relationship with God deepened.

Only God can orchestrate the way the brokenness of our lives allows him to build his dream through us. Step by step, God has continued to heal my own wounds so that I am free to live as God intended. And these steps, these journeys and milestones he has led me through, spill over into every word I write for Treasured Ministries—like the words on this page. These words are stones my Dream Builder uses as I write from a surrendered heart.

The Dream Builder is a rebuilder, and he builds on the foundation of a surrendered heart. Brave heart, it is time to dream again.

The Dare

I dare you.

I dare you to move into your God-given dream. I dare you to live the adventure—the adventure you begin by listening to the Holy Spirit. I dare you to lose your life—yourself—and find what is important: loving God with your whole heart and, from that overflow, giving his love to others.

I dare you to believe in the dream again. The dream God whispered into your heart when you became his. The dreams that found their way into those places you pretended as a little girl. The desires he placed in your heart.

I dare you to step out and become the woman God created you to be.

I dare you to redefine success by measuring it in faithfulness.

I dare you to let God build that dream for you by stepping into complete surrender to his will. I dare you to pray dream-sized prayers again. And I dare you to let go of the outcome of those prayers by holding your dream loosely so that God can shape it into what it needs to be.

If you've fallen, I dare you to get back up again and finish your race, armed with a growth mindset that flows from grace and the humility to run your race in complete dependence on God's strength.

I dare you to walk in step with your God-given destiny.

What is your dream? Only when we lay our dreams at the feet of Jesus in complete surrender will we find freedom and the real joy that comes only from trusting Jesus as Lord over our lives. Your Dream Builder will meet your deepest needs at the place of greatest surrender. *Onward*. You matter. Your purpose matters. Don't give up. Instead, give in, and watch God build his dream through you.



Key Treasure

Sometimes our dreams have to fall to the ground to create a greater harvest.

DAY 2

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” —*Isaiah 30:21*

Joseph was a dreamer. He not only *had* dreams—he could interpret them too. He embraced them. By living his dreams—his God-designed dreams—he saved the lives of many.

His story is your story too. Your dream will be different, but just like Joseph, you are here for a purpose greater than yourself.

Joseph is often remembered as one who wore a rainbow. Beautiful, multicolored brilliance cascaded over his shoulders and down his sleeves. His coat of many colors was a generous gift from Jacob, his father. It was also a flagrant display of this father’s favoritism toward his seventeen-year-old son. Putting on that glorious garment each morning must have reminded Joseph of his father’s great love. But the richly ornamented robe was also a thorn in the side of his eleven brothers, a constant reminder that Joseph was the favorite.

One night Joseph had a dream, and then another a few nights later. The dreams showed him in a position of power and greatness. He would become so great that even his brothers and his father would bow down to him. He told his family about the dreams, and the envy brewing in his brothers’ hearts finally spilled over.

They tossed Joseph into a pit.

The brothers’ intent was evil, but the pit would propel Joseph into God’s purpose. His brothers’ betrayal activated his adventure of living the dream God had given him. That dream, after all, was not Joseph’s alone—it was also God’s dream. It was God who had created that dream in Joseph’s mind as he slept. And when God designs a dream, he opens a door that no one can shut (Revelation 3:8; Acts 5:38–39).

Nor was this a brand-new dream. The door leading to Joseph’s dream had actually opened many years before, when God gave a vision and spoke a promise to Joseph’s great-grandfather, Abraham. Joseph’s dream was part of the fulfillment of his great-grandfather’s dream. So before we follow Joseph in this adventure, let’s first trace the roots of his dream. We will meet not only Abraham but also Isaac and Jacob, Joseph’s grandfather and father. These three men are considered the patriarchs of God’s chosen nation.

Tracing Joseph's Roots—and Ours

Abraham was a father to many. Read Galatians 3:6–9. According to verse 7, who are the children of Abraham?

The remarkable truth is that through faith in Christ, you can be grafted into Abraham's family (Romans 11:17). Joseph's roots are not his alone—they also belong to all who believe in Jesus. You have a stake in your family heritage of faith.

Abram (his name until God later changed it to Abraham) began his journey with the Lord in his seventies. Comfortably nested in the town of Ur, Abram had made a name for himself. He had riches and a beautiful wife named Sarai. He belonged to a prosperous family. He worshiped many gods (as was the custom) because he had never heard of the one true, living God. But all of that was about to change. On an ordinary day, God was getting ready to do the extraordinary. God, who had spoken the world into creation, would speak to Abram and make him and Sarai into a great nation—God's chosen people.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harren. (Genesis 12:1–4)

Abram left his family, his religion, and his country—everything familiar to him—to pursue this new voice speaking to his heart louder than any other.

What was it about the words God spoke to Abram that made such an impact in his life? Abram had plenty of gods, money, family, and fame; yet the words God spoke to him would change his life, the lives of those around him, and the lives of everyone to come. Permanently leaving home was unheard of in Abram's culture. Abram had every tangible

reason to stay where he was, but God made him some big and compelling promises that were just interesting enough to propel him forward into his dream. God offered Abram a deep significance he had never imagined before, but to get it, he would have to walk away from the security and provision he had built for himself and trade them in for God's provision. Abram had no way of knowing that God would provide—he walked by faith (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).

God's words were life-changing because Abram chose to listen and follow them.

Following Jesus is not a method; it is a way of life. The Dream Builder wants all his children to walk through the door of their God-given dreams, but he may give each one a different path to follow. Our breakthrough comes when we stop, listen, and follow God's leading in our lives. That's why a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is so important: God's dream is revealed through our relationship with him.

Abram Chose to Listen to God—and to Follow Him

Abram's forefathers gave him a religion of false gods and untruths. His family probably presented convincing arguments as to why he should not leave his traditions, his false gods, his prominent position in the community, and his family to follow God's voice. Abram could have listened to them. But he didn't. He chose to listen to the one true, living God. He chose to follow the dream God had given him.

Abram listened to God's voice. Because he listened, he established a nation that would be a channel of blessing to all people. Through Abram's descendants, the Messiah would come and bring forgiveness and life to all who would join the family of faith. If Abram had listened to other voices, the outcome would have been quite different. Although he made plenty of mistakes and missteps along the way, Abram continued to listen to God, and God was faithful to build his dream through this man of faith.

Just as God knew all about Abram, he knows all about you. Just as he gave a dream to Abram, God has a dream—a calling—for your life. Are you ready to listen and live out your unique purpose?

The Lord spoke to Abram in a vision. Jesus came to earth to dwell with humanity. How does God lead us today? Read Galatians 3:14 and John 16:13–15.

Read Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 32:8; Acts 1:4–8; 1 Corinthians 3:9–16. Why do you think it's vital to allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you to your purpose?

The Holy Spirit Will Lead You

Joseph inherited the blessing given to Abraham, and as children of Abraham, we too are blessed by the new covenant. A blessed truth of the new covenant is that the Holy Spirit can lead us.

You see, if God is the Dream Builder, then we need to seek him for the blueprints of our lives (Jeremiah 29:11). The Dream Builder is not bound by the dreams we create; he moves us according to his plan, which can sometimes lead us in new directions (Mark 7:8).

The Holy Spirit lives inside every believer and speaks to us every day, everywhere. One primary way the Spirit speaks to us is through God's written Word, which is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12). There is a relationship between God's Word and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:17; John 1:1; 2 Timothy 3:16). As you keep in step with the Holy Spirit, you will find the pathway to God's destiny for your life.

Right on the heels of the Gospels, the book of Acts is filled with adventure as believers follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Motivated by God's love, the early church moved, keeping in step with the Spirit—and their lives impacted others. The apostles listened and followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and God accomplished the amazing.

God has not changed. The Holy Spirit who indwelt and empowered the early church still lives inside every believer. God is still the Dream Builder. God has a dream for *you* and a plan for that dream. Each step he gives you as your dream unfolds is like another thread in an unfolding tapestry of God's design.

God Has a Dream for You

When Abram listened to the Lord, the experience was life-changing. When you believe God will speak to you—not just to Abram or Joseph, not just to the disciples or the apostles—it will be a turning point for you too.

Abram's obedience to God's voice allowed God's blessings to flow to him and through him to others. The nation of God's chosen people began through one man saying yes to God's voice.

Moment-by-moment choices will frame your world. Whom will you allow to write your story? Take the pen and place it in the Author's hand by surrendering to his words so he can shape your soul.

You are blessed to be a blessing. God wants to plant a dream in your heart. This is your heritage; this is your future. It was Joseph's story, and it is also your story. God is a Dream Builder, and he will lead you into your unique destiny as you listen to and follow the Holy Spirit.



Key Treasure

The Dream Builder wants all his children to walk through the door of their God-given dreams, but he may give each one a different path to follow. Our breakthrough comes when we stop, listen, and follow God's leading in our lives.

DAY 3

The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever.
—*Psalm 138:8*

I needed to clear the cluttered thoughts in my head, so I set my writing aside and headed outside for a walk. It was June and I was on a retreat at the coast, where I could pull away in preparation for writing this study. That particular day, careless words cast my way invited worry into my heart. I made the mistake of replaying the reckless words repeatedly in my head. Fearful thoughts began their persuasive, persistent parade in my mind. I allowed them to stay. Doubt made its debut, and I began to question God's promises to me concerning a new direction in my writing. My focus shifted off God's faithfulness and onto myself.

God Is More than Enough

As I found my way to the seashore that night, the beauty of the beach lifted my heavy heart up to God's arms. The pounding of waves rolling to reach the shoreline soothed my soul. At each step, the sand surrounded my feet and pushed up between my toes. Like diamonds tossed on a blanket of black velvet, the stars scattered across the dark sky were breathtaking. The sound of waves, the sensation of sand, and the sight of God's shimmering, starlit sky interrupted my thoughts from their destructive cycle as I realized I was surrounded by God's faithfulness. The stars reminded me of God's promise to Abram.

"A son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:4–5)

Underneath the starry sky on the beach that night, I was reminded that the One who hung the stars in the sky is also the One whose strength would supply what I needed in order to serve him. How would I be able to take this next step in the pathway of purpose? The answer came from my heart with a verse I had hidden there by memory. Just before I wrote *Brave Heart*, the very first Bible study in the Nourish Bible Study Series, the Lord gave me this promise to hold on to: "The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever" (Psalm 138:8). I repeated the promise over and over—and hope and faith began to glimmer again like a new, flickering star.

Promise Keeper

Promises are a vital part of God's provision as he builds our dreams. Our faith is like a bridge between God's promises and his provision.

God would provide everything Abram needed to follow the plan. God told Abram he would bless him, make his name great, and would be on his side when things went wrong. He added other amazing promises besides.

When the Dream Builder gives you a dream, he will also give you the means to accomplish it, whether or not you realize it at first. Sometimes the fulfillment of those promises is immediate, but other times, when God gives us a promise, we must wait for the actual provision to arrive. It's important to hold these promises in our hearts while we wait on God's perfect timing to see them fulfilled.

Dwelling on God's promises instead of your problems anchors your heart to hope to keep you steady and steadfast in your purpose as you wait for God's provision.

From Faith to Fear and Back Again

Time passed, and Abram and Sarai weren't getting any younger. Still they saw no signs of a son from their own flesh and blood. As they waited, their faith wavered. Because beliefs determine behaviors, their doubts drove them to take matters into their own hands, deviating from God's plan. At Sarai's request, Abram, then eighty-six, slept with his servant Hagar, and she conceived a son they named Ishmael. It was not uncommon during this time in history for a man to sleep with a servant to grow his family. Hagar and Abram most likely thought they were helping achieve God's dream for him. However, this choice would reap negative consequences, causing havoc in Abram's home front and for God's chosen people for generations to come (Genesis 16:6–16; 21:8–21; Galatians 6:7–8).

Although they were still pointed in the direction of God's dream when they chose to involve Hagar, Abram and Sarai went outside God's plan. God had specifically told Abram that his family would come from his line. But I would be embarrassed to point my finger at Abram, since in my haste to make things happen, I've sometimes been guilty of trying to play Holy Spirit. Every time I do, I regret it.

When unbelief enters our thinking, it can cause our minds to swing from faith to fear. Abram still struggled with doubt. Even though God continued to speak to him through the years, confirming his promise, Abram could not grasp how Sarai could have a baby in her old age.

However, Abram's failure was not final. The Dream Builder is a rebuilder. God began to build Abram's faith by continuing to remind him of his promise to Abram through his spoken word. When Abram was ninety-nine, the Lord appeared to him again.

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you." (Genesis 17:3–6)

During this same encounter, God changed Sarai's name to Sarah, declaring that she would become the mother of many nations.

Walking by faith isn't natural. In fact, Abraham first fell facedown and later laughed. "Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" (Genesis 17:17). It seemed out of the question. Sarah too laughed at the Lord. Both Sarah and Abraham had their eyes on their own ability instead of God's.

Dwelling on God's Promises Instead of Problems

Over the years God continued to renew Abraham's mind by repeating his promises to him, like waves constantly crashing on the seashore. God was not simply building a dream—he was building Abraham's faith.

At some point in this journey, Abraham's faith strengthened beyond doubt. The laughter ceased, and he never looked back. He also stopped looking within. Abraham was looking up, and his faith was strengthened as he dwelled on God's promises instead of his own problems.

Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:19–21)

One day, God's promise became a reality. Sarah gave birth to Isaac. This baby was the evidence of God's faithfulness to his promise, and a miracle so unbelievable that Sarah remarked that people would laugh when they heard the news.

The name *Isaac* means "laughter" or "he laughs." Let his life remind you that often God will give us a promise so humanly impossible that others may laugh at us if we are not already laughing ourselves. Human effort brought about Ishmael's birth; God's promise resulted in Isaac's miraculous birth. Our Dream Builder is the ultimate promise keeper (Galatians 3:3; 4:23–25).

The Next Step in God's Plan

As Abraham grew older, his thoughts turned to the future. It was time for Isaac to marry. Fully committed to God's vision, Abraham sought his servant's help to find Isaac a wife. Finding one from his own clan of people, especially after moving far away, was a step in the plan that would bring new challenges. But this time Abraham was not laughing; he was fully persuaded that God would provide a bride for Isaac and continue to build his dream.

After hearing God’s promises spoken to him repeatedly, Abraham had the words hidden in his heart. This time the Lord did not have to speak to him to remind him of his promises—Abraham declared the words himself: “The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and *promised* me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’ —he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there” (Genesis 24:7, *emphasis mine*).

God Provided—Again

God was faithful again. The story of Isaac and Rebekah is simply a sweet one to savor. Read Genesis 24:34–67 and answer the questions below.

What evidence can you find that Abraham’s faith was contagious with his servant and his son Isaac?

Note the characteristics of the servant’s prayer—are there some characteristics that you would like to bring into your own prayer lives? What role do God’s promises and provision and our faith play in our prayer lives?

Verse 63 tells us that Isaac meditated. When and where did Isaac meditate? What do you think he was meditating on?

Abraham’s servant walked with faith like Abraham’s as he went out to find a bride for Isaac. The servant prayed specifically, simply, and with absolute assurance. Let the servant’s prayer inspire you to pray bold, simple, but specific prayers filled with faith in God’s promises to accomplish the “how” in your dream. In response to the servant’s faith-filled prayer, God led him directly to Isaac’s new bride, Rebekah.



Abraham's faith was also found in the surrendered heart of his son Isaac. While he was waiting for the servant to return with his new bride, Isaac, instead of doubting and worrying, "went out to the field one evening to meditate" (Genesis 24:63). I believe he sat and gazed at the stars, prompting his thoughts to rest on God's faithfulness as he meditated on the promise given to Abraham.

After meditating, he looked up and saw camels approaching. On one camel was a woman named Rebekah, who would carry on the important lineage of Abraham's blessing. The Bible says Isaac loved Rebekah. They quickly married. Before Abraham died, he saw his son of promise marry. He died in peace, knowing that his dream—God's dream—would continue.

God is ever faithful to his word—always.

What promises has God given you? Are you in a season of waiting to see those promises come to pass? While we patiently wait and believe, we would be wise to pray persistently for the fulfillment of those promises. Prayer is the key to keeping our hope alive and our steps aligned with his Word. Meditating on those promises will help you to walk by faith and not by sight and to remain steadfast on your journey to becoming the woman God created you to be.

DAY 4

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. —*Psalm 25:4–5*

As our story continues, Rebekah and Isaac are going to have a baby ... or two (Genesis 25:19–28).

I imagine a smile blazed across Isaac's face when his beautiful wife told him she was pregnant. She had been barren, but the Dream Builder answered their prayers. Rebekah not only carried twins, but she also carried the future of God's chosen people. She was essentially pregnant with God's dream.

When the twins jostled inside Rebekah, the storm she experienced within concerned her. The Bible says Rebekah went to inquire of the Lord: "Why is this happening to me?" God spoke to Rebekah and gave her a blueprint—or prophecy—for the future.

The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23)

Rebekah gave birth to fraternal twins, Jacob and Esau. Esau was born first, with Jacob literally grasping the heel of his brother as he arrived seconds later. Although Esau was technically born first and therefore, by tradition, would be the recipient of the blessing, God revealed to Rebekah that the younger son, Jacob, would actually inherit the blessing.

Although God foreknew that this would happen, the Bible points out clearly that Esau willingly traded his birthright. Read Genesis 25:29–34; 27:27–34 and Hebrews 12:14–17. For what did Esau trade his birthright?

Before you look down on Esau, remember that *you've got a "stew" too*. Like Esau's hunger for stew, healthy desires can quickly turn into unhealthy demands that destroy our ability to make wise decisions. All of us have desires that can overtake our thoughts and actions. The enemy uses these desires like buttons to push us in a direction we don't want to travel. Beware: If Satan used Jesus' hunger to try to tempt him in the wilderness, he will use our appetites to tempt us as well. (Matthew 4:1-4)

What is your appetite—your "stew"? What do you think you need in order to feel secure, happy, significant, and accepted? What are you hungry for?

Appetites that dominate our thoughts can drown out God's Word in our lives. Focusing on our desires, even healthy ones, with such intensity will anchor our thoughts in a destructive way and can suffocate our harvest. When we give in to those kinds of thoughts, they have power over our lives.

Wise women find freedom to build God's purpose with bold faith by letting go of worldly goals and seeking only heaven's reward. Courageous faith comes from looking up—from a gaze fixed on God's vision for your life.

Vision

When Jacob and Esau grew to be men, the time came for Isaac to bestow his official blessing. Isaac called for his son Esau to prepare a meal so he could bless him.

Isaac favored Esau, but Rebekah favored Jacob. When she overheard Isaac's plan to bless Esau, she took matters into her own hands. Rebekah dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes and covered his hands with goatskins to make them hairy like Esau's. Isaac's weak, old eyes prevented him from seeing the truth. Jacob consented to his mother's plot, Isaac was deceived, and Jacob received the blessing instead of Esau (Genesis 27).

Naturally, when Esau discovered he had been cheated out of the blessing he thought was rightfully his, he was angry. I guess he forgot about the stew? Steaming with envy, he vowed to kill his brother for stealing his blessing and birthright. Rebekah told Jacob to run away to escape Esau's wrath until it subsided.

Jacob fled to preserve his life. He was away from his mother, who loved and protected him, and his father, who provided for him. He was haunted by thoughts of his brother, who hated him and was hunting him down to kill him. He had left all that was familiar. Along the journey, homesickness must have settled deep within him. Shame and remorse for stealing his brother's blessing probably played across his thoughts. Alone, afraid, ashamed, Jacob found his way to Luz. Worn out emotionally and physically from his travels, as the sun began to set, Jacob decided to rest for the night. Choosing a rugged, cold stone for his pillow—and perhaps to serve as a weapon of protection if angry Esau should appear¹—Jacob drifted off into a restless sleep.

But Jacob was not alone. The Dream Builder had the right words at the right time for Jacob. God reached out to him through a dream and through his spoken word. With a visual and verbal reminder, Jacob was assured that God would not abandon him and would accomplish his purpose through him.

Read Genesis 28:10–22. Describe Jacob's dream. What do you think this vision meant?

Consider the words God spoke to Jacob, and put yourself in his place. Why were those the right words at the right time?

Can you remember a time when God reassured you with a verse from the Bible—the right words at the right time? Describe that time here.

From verses 18 and 19, how did Jacob mark this spot where God spoke?

Jacob didn't simply acknowledge the dream in his mind. He marked the spot and moved with confidence instead of giving in to fear. Vision helped him put that revelation into action. Read Genesis 28:20–22. How did Jacob move immediately to put God's word into action?

How might his actions have been different if he had been driven by fear instead of directed by God's word?

A rush of reassuring love must have washed over weary Jacob. God knew him—all about him—and still spoke to his heart. God spoke not just any words but the exact ones Jacob needed to hear: "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:15). The stairway to heaven was a visual reminder that Jacob—not just Abraham or Isaac—had access to the Almighty!

Amazed, Jacob did not want to forget this moment. Knowing now that God would protect him, Jacob made his stone pillow into a pillar to mark the spot where God had spoken. He also marked this occasion by giving this place called Luz a new name: *Bethel*, which means "house of God." God had spoken to him personally—not just to his grandfather Abraham or to his father, Isaac, but to Jacob! This was worth documenting.

Centuries later, another biblical figure named Habakkuk heard a word from God uniquely tailored to his own discouraging circumstances. Read Habakkuk 2:2. What did the Lord tell the prophet to do?

Why is it important for *you* to write down the vision God gives you and make it plain? How does doing so help you say no to satisfying an appetite and yes to answering God's call on your life? How does it affect your actions and, ultimately, activate God's purpose for your life?

Writing down God's plan, provision, and purpose for your life creates focus and reduces the intensity of any doubts we might have. Getting busy or caught up in "good things" can distract you from God's dream and dilute your energy. Writing the dream on paper helps you communicate your message to others, like the herald in the Bible verse. Keeping a list of the steps God has asked you to take, if you have a sense of what they might be, shows you a clear path and builds your faith and strength for future steps, as does recalling God's provision through thanksgiving. Reminding yourself of the "why" will keep you going forward for your purpose when the enemy whispers in your ear, "Just quit!"

List any ideas you have on how to create visual reminders of God's purpose for your life.

Journaling, writing goals, and creating vision boards are all practical ways to keep the focus on vision. Vision boards are collages of pictures that depict your dream. Journaling identifies the "footprints" of God that he has left for you in Scripture. You will begin to see a trail God is cutting just for you through untraveled territory. Writing down your goals, not just thinking about them, will give you a visual aim to live with clear direction.

At Bethel, God gave Jacob a vision to lift his eyes upward so he could move onward past his feelings of fear. Jacob put his faith into action by making a vow to establish Bethel as God's house and giving God a tenth of all he would receive. Then he continued on his journey. This action set his adventure in motion.

God has a vision for you. As you sit at the feet of Jesus, expect Bethel moments as you travel through the Scriptures. Keep them before you in a tangible way that strengthens your focus. Find freedom to build God's purpose with bold faith by letting go of worldly goals and seeking only heaven's reward. *Onward!*



DAY 5

For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. —1 Peter 1:18 NLT

You are doing amazingly well! We have covered so much ground. I applaud you for hanging in there with me.

In an effort to quickly capture Joseph's history through Abraham, Isaac, and today Jacob, you and I are blazing through the beginning of Israel's history at warp speed. It would be nice to stop awhile and ponder the patriarchs more deeply; however, today we are pressing on to learn about Joseph's mother, Rachel. Today you'll dive into the Scriptures and look at what life was like when Jacob was born and learn more about the woman who nurtured him in those early years.

After Jacob had his first encounter with the Lord at Bethel, he continued on his journey eastward to meet his uncle Laban and the future wife he believed he would find. Laban was Jacob's uncle on his mother's side, and he had two daughters: Rachel and Leah. "Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful" (Genesis 29:17). Jacob was moved to tears when he met beautiful Rachel, the shepherdess. Jacob loved Rachel and quickly pledged seven years of work as a dowry to Laban in exchange for the hand of his beloved (Genesis 29:1–18).

However, Laban had another daughter and another plan. It was customary for the older daughter to marry first. Laban most likely didn't want his older daughter, Leah, to be unmarried all her life, so he deceived his nephew. After Jacob worked for seven years to marry his beloved Rachel and the wedding feast had been celebrated, Laban sent Leah in to consummate the marriage (vv. 21–22). It was simply too late when Jacob discovered the truth. His fate was sealed.

When he confronted Laban, his uncle agreed to give him Rachel's hand in marriage as well, as long as he would agree to another seven years of labor to earn her. So in the space of just over a week, Jacob found himself with two wives. Rachel he loved, but Leah did not have her husband's devotion (vv. 25–30).

I simply cannot wrap my head around these living conditions. Leah was second choice to her sister. Rachel was forced to share the man she loved. All the ingredients were there to cook up a terrible concoction of competition that would spill over into the lives of their children.

All in the Family

“If you really want to know more about a man, take a look at his family.” I heard this wise piece of advice as a young woman. And it is so true. No one would question that our background shapes our character. The people in our lives influence the way we are.

It is part of human nature to mimic the behavior we see in our parents. From learning to brush our teeth to learning how to act when we’re married, we use the template for life that our parents provide. As we create our own households, it is natural to recreate the environment we were raised in. We may intentionally choose to recreate some aspects, but the majority of this mimicking is unintentional. When we practice what has been modeled for us, generational patterns are produced. Some cycles are healthy and others are unhealthy.

The patriarchs were not immune to negative family patterns. For example, Abraham and Sarah favored Isaac over Ishmael. Isaac and Rebekah each favored one child over the other. Jacob would in turn favor his wife Rachel and son Joseph over the rest of the family. This destructive pattern continued for at least two generations, resulting in family strife. While these patterns never prevented God’s dream from coming to pass, they did create unnecessary discord and destruction.

Longing Leads to Jealousy and Competition

Read Genesis 29:31–30:24. Do you identify more with Leah or Rachel? Why? How did fear play a role in their actions? How did this create fractures in the family?

Leah longed for her husband’s love, and Rachel longed to have a child. Their desperation to have what they did not have sparked a competition that motivated them to use drastic measures: As Sarah had done two generations before, they “gave” their maidservants to their husband to bear more children. While this practice was common at that time, I can’t imagine how it affected their hearts or the hearts of their maidservants. One thing we will see in future chapters is that their behavior created a cycle: their children would give in to jealousy and hate.

I hear Leah’s heartache, her need to be loved, and her reasoning that bearing another child could solve her problems: “Surely my husband will love me now” (Genesis 29:32). Fear of rejection drove her decisions. Leah turned her hopes and happiness over to a man and sought through her children to get the attention her heart craved.

I can identify with Rachel’s jealousy—she had Jacob’s love but was desperate for a child. Jealousy often develops from the fear of losing something or someone. I believe Rachel was afraid of losing her husband’s love. She had always been the beauty; no one had known she was barren. Would she lose her standing as first place in her husband’s

heart? Did she feel threatened by her sister's fertility? Did she fear that she was viewed as the weaker sister because she couldn't have a child?

Rachel didn't have a child; Leah didn't have her husband's love. Driven by fear of rejection, their actions had a tremendous impact on everyone around them. Ironically, neither woman was ever satisfied. This is the lie that Satan feeds us: *God won't take care of you. You'll be happy when your husband is perfect. You'll finally have peace when your mother apologizes and makes up for the ways she didn't nurture you. When you get that promotion, your father will be proud and you can finally feel good about yourself.* If we give in to those fears, we will soon find that we have surrendered control by reaching out in our fear to the wrong person for the wrong rescue.

When Leah's and Rachel's need to be loved and valued was threatened, instead of turning to God for the kind of unwavering love, validation, and belonging that comes from being a daughter of the King, each woman reached for and grasped at the limited love of Jacob. This produced a wake of damage in their children's lives. Those twelve children, including Joseph, were born into a cycle of rivalry, jealousy, and insecurity.

A New Bloodline

Today, we are going to discuss how we create new cycles by turning to God, living in the Spirit, and allowing Jesus to have the greatest impact in our lives. Researching and analyzing our families can help us understand why we are the way we are, but only the Holy Spirit can change us from the inside out. God is not merely a rule maker—he is a heart changer. Place under his care those things in your life you want to change and surrender to him, and you will find freedom. Experiencing God's love is always the pathway to surrender. As you focus on your relationship with him instead of trying to control people around you, you will find freedom to live as God intended.

While my background may influence my character, Joseph's story reminds me that it doesn't define my God-given destiny. God is the Dream Builder and the Promise Keeper.

Do these words ever go through your mind?

- This is the way it will always be.
- God could never build a dream through me.
- I am powerless over the negative cycles that keep happening in my life.

All of us have negative cycles that may feel like inescapable realities. But the reality is that we *can* break those cycles by making new choices. We *can* choose new life and new legacies for our children. God brings a solution that surpasses self-help, self-determination, and self-effort. God's solution is found in sonship. The Dream Builder not only adopts us but longs for us to live "led" as his daughters.

Slave or Son? Fear or Faith?

Meditate on Romans 8:15–17 and answer the following questions. If possible, go to Bible-Gateway (<http://biblegateway.com>) and look up several translations.

What differences do you see in being led by God’s Spirit versus being led by fear?

What is the connection between fear and slavery?

How do unhealthy family patterns feel like bondage?

How is being under the control of something or someone else slavery?

Remember the fear that created the negative cycles in Leah’s and Rachel’s lives? Destructive cycles are created by fear, but God invites you to break those cycles by living led by his Spirit, living loved as his daughter, and living free as one who is not bound by any cycle.

Negative family patterns can feel like bondage. When you say, “This is one thing about me I can never change,” you are reflecting a slave mentality. We must think like a daughter of the Dream Builder by believing in his love for us and learning to trust and listen to the Holy

Spirit. Be mindful of what is influencing you. Trust your Abba Father and his great love for you. When praying, Jesus called God *Abba*, the Hebrew word for “Daddy.” As God’s adopted children, we have the same great privilege of calling the Creator of the universe our daddy.

God will lead you on a slow and deep journey of beautiful, internal transformation. This journey is called discipleship. It’s a lifelong process directed by the Holy Spirit. Listen, follow, and watch God unravel cycle after cycle as you surrender to him. You may find it helpful to consult a Christian counselor. Cutting new paths is not easy and takes time. Cycles, even if they are destructive, feel comfortable, so moving beyond them is a process.

When we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit through our relationship with our Dream Builder, he will give us new directions that will lead us out of our cycles to live as his child (1 Peter 1:17–19; Galatians 4:6–9; 5:1, 16–18). Our own efforts to fix our lives are often misguided, short-lived, and weak in comparison to the problems we face. But the Lord can do anything (Luke 18:27)! It’s all about abiding in Christ, listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, following them, trusting in his strength, and receiving joy (Galatians 3:2–5; John 15:1–11). As a daughter of the Dream Builder, you have been adopted into a new family: God’s family (John 1:12–16). His wisdom and love for you are completely pure, so you can trust the leading of the Holy Spirit (James 3:17; John 10:10–12, 27).

New Beginnings

God gave Abraham a dream: that he should follow God’s direction to a far-off land. Little did Abraham know that his so-far childless marriage would be the beginning of a nation of God’s chosen people and that through his lineage a Messiah, a Redeemer, would be born to save the lives of many. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

All of this happened in Abraham’s life *after* he left his father’s house. Your earthly father does not determine your destiny. Your heavenly Father is your Maker. Only he can determine who you are and the purpose for which you were created.

Whatever your family cycle is, know that your past does not define your future. There is hope! What you focus on will have the greatest impact on your life! Will you choose fear? Or will you choose faith in an amazing God who loves you beyond measure? If you focus on your Dream Builder and live by the Spirit, great good will come of it. Not just good for yourself, but good for touching the lives of many. Start new, healthy cycles for future generations!

DAY 6

“People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” —*Matthew 4:4 NLT*

Jesus taught us in Matthew 4:4 that his revealed words are daily food, essential for nourishing our souls. Spending personal time with God to hear his word for you is not merely a goal to aspire to but also a necessary element for the health of your soul.

Ready to nourish your soul?

The Nourish Bible Study Method is a key that helps unlock truth for the life you were created to live by giving you a proven, effective, three-step approach to Bible study that connects you with Jesus. When I developed this method, I had this goal in mind:

for every woman to be able to look at every God-inspired word in the Bible and see his truth shine through to light her path—a path that always starts with Jesus.

Starting in chapter two, you will begin to use the Nourish Method for the first three days of each chapter by applying one step of the Nourish Method each day to a weekly Nourish Scripture.

So, for today, I'd like to equip you for your journey by teaching you the Nourish Bible Study Method step by step.

What should you do if you are already familiar with the Nourish Bible Study Method? Simply skip this day of study, or continue reading to review and discover how the method is incorporated into each chapter of the Nourish Bible Study Series.

Nourish—A Three-Step Bible Study Method to Connect with Jesus

So, let's get started!

Jesus carved out time in his day to break bread with others. Whether in an intimate setting with his disciples, a wedding celebration at Cana, a seaside fish dinner cooked over a fire with friends, or miraculously feeding thousands with five loaves and two fishes, Jesus paused to eat food with those he loved.

Think of your time with Jesus as gathering around a family dinner table he has prepared for you with much love and care.

Reveal, Respond, and Renew are the three steps of the Nourish Bible Study Method. Think of each step in the Nourish Bible Study Method as an ingredient in a recipe for a nourishing meal. Each ingredient is important and plays a role. Each ingredient interacts with the others. Combined, they enable you to find and understand life-giving truths in the Word that you had never seen before and nourish your soul for your journey in life.

Here are the three steps that Nourish will lead you through:

- **DAY 1: *Reveal*.** Connect with Jesus by studying the Scriptures and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal truth in the Scriptures.
- **DAY 2: *Respond*.** Apply the truth using our IMPACT questions so that your life can impact the lives of those around you.
- **DAY 3: *Renew*.** Let the truth you've just learned from God's word renew your mind. Allow God to anchor his Word in your heart. Putting this life-changing discipline into your daily routine, using our practical method, will change the way you think and live.

Reveal. Respond. Renew. Starting next week, for the first three days of each chapter, you will take one Nourish step each day to help you take a break from the hustle and gather around the table with Jesus through the study of his Word.

Let's take a closer look at each of those three steps.

The **Reveal** Step

Connect with Jesus and Allow Him to Reveal Truth

There is something special about sharing a meal with others—it is more than just eating food. It is about coming together to be with one another. Gathering at the table to break bread brings pause and a place to connect.

As you carve out time to dive into Bible study and pull your chair up to the table, don't come just to read. Come to connect with Jesus by relying on the Holy Spirit to reveal his word to you.

Switching Up Your Goal: Why Are You Studying the Bible?

What if you switched your goal from completing your study to connecting with Jesus? What if you let go of the aspiration to understand it all or do it all? What if you saw the Bible as a way to connect with your Creator instead of a way to learn a list of rules to follow? This is what the *Reveal* Step is all about.

So often, we make the mistake of coming to our table with Jesus to cross it off our to-do list rather than just to listen and let him lead and teach us. You see, God knows the nourishment need and when we need it.

Discovering the difference between diligently studying the Scriptures for information and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal truth through those Scriptures is life-changing—because Jesus is life-changing.

The goal of the *Reveal* Step is not to study the Scriptures solely to gain information. It is to connect with Jesus through the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to nourish us with life-giving truth.

How to put the *Reveal* Step into practice during DAY 1.



- 1 **PRAY.** As you begin your time in God's Word listening to Jesus, you will gain direction on becoming the woman God created you to be. Open your Bible to the weekly Nourish Scripture located at the top of the page in each chapter. Begin with prayer, asking God to speak to your heart.
- 2 **JOURNAL.** Prayerfully read and reflect on the weekly Nourish Scripture. Phrases, verses, or words will catch your attention because the Holy Spirit is highlighting truth for you—mark them. Journal any thoughts you may have in the space provided for you on Day 1. Taking pen to paper will help you to process the truth God is revealing just for you.
- 3 **DISCOVER.** Some days, you will simply mark up the day's passage in your Bible and journal. Other days, the Lord will prompt you to learn more about a certain word or verse or to investigate background information on the Nourish Scripture by using outside resources. Let him be your guide. For a list of some of my favorite outside resources and ways I use them as I study the Bible, download our FREE e-book, *Nourishing Your Heart*, at www.nourishbiblestudymethod.com.

The *Respond* Step

Respond to Jesus by Applying the Truth to Your Life

When God initiates the process by revealing truth and we respond to that truth, it impacts our lives and the lives around us. Holy Spirit revelation requires application for activation.

How do you study the Word in a way that *activates* the greatest *impact* in your life? You do this by *asking the right questions*.

This approach provides the focus that will help you refine the truth further and apply it more directly and profoundly to your life. That was the purpose we had in mind when we created our six IMPACT questions for this step.

How to put the *Respond* Step into practice during DAY 2.



Return to the weekly Nourish Scripture and ask yourself the six IMPACT questions found below. What happens if some days, you can't seem to come up with an answer to all six questions? Simple—don't worry about it. If after thinking about it for a few moments, no answer to a question occurs to you, then move on to the next one.

IMPACT

IMAGE OF GOD TO TRUST? An attribute of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit to trust.

MESSAGE TO SHARE? A word of encouragement, truth, or prayer to share.

PROMISE TO TREASURE? A promise in the Bible to believe.

ACTION TO TAKE? A specific step God is calling you to take.

CORE IDENTITY IN CHRIST TO AFFIRM? A truth about how God sees you to affirm.

TRANSGRESSION TO CONFESS? A sin to acknowledge for help, healing, and restoration through Christ.

Now that you know the IMPACT acronym, you know what to look for when you are studying a passage. Review the table on the next page to dive more deeply into each question so you can see why each one is important in your journey to apply the truth to your life.

IMPACT	
IMAGE OF GOD TO TRUST?	It is important that we begin here, since what we believe about God directly affects our thoughts and actions. Attributes of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit can be stated directly or implied by actions in the Bible. It is eye-opening when we allow the Bible to define God’s image instead of allowing our circumstances to shape how we perceive God.
MESSAGE TO SHARE?	A message to share is a word of encouragement, truth, wisdom, or prayer from the Nourish Scripture that you feel led to give to another. It is also perhaps a message God simply wants to share with you. God’s truth refreshes your soul, and when you share this with others, you will find yourself refreshed also.
PROMISE TO TREASURE?	A promise to believe is a promise in the Bible to stand on by faith. Imagine the difference it would make in your life and the lives around you if you moved from knowing God’s promises to believing them. God is ever faithful to his Word—always.
ACTION TO TAKE?	During your time in God’s Word, if he prompted you to take an action step, follow through and take that step as soon as you can. Faith and action walk hand in hand. This step is all about abiding in Christ, listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, following them, trusting in his strength, and receiving joy (Galatians 3:2–5; John 15:1–11). Each step, small or large, creates impact.
CORE IDENTITY IN CHRIST TO AFFIRM?	<p>For this step, write “In Christ I am” statements that line up with the truth in God’s Word. Finding your core identity in Christ is not about frantically striving to be someone, but about surrendering to God by allowing his Word to define who you are and the purpose for which you were created. This is a precious treasure to guard by faith against outside influences (what others say, our circumstances, our actions, our past, our feelings, how others treat us, worldly standards) so that you can truly give to others by embracing all God has created you to be.</p> <p>Below are some examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am God’s child (John 1:12). I am completely forgiven (Romans 3:21–22). I am very valuable to God (Matthew 10:31). I am confident in asking God for wisdom (Jeremiah 33:2–3). I belong to the body of Christ (Mark 3:33–35).
TRANSGRESSION TO CONFESS?	The Holy Spirit highlights transgressions—not to condemn you, but to free you to become all God created you to be. Instead of bringing God your good behaviors (self-righteousness) or justifying, hiding, or trying to change on your own, bring your sin to God through confession. Here you will find the grace, healing, and transformation that only Christ can bring.

The *Renew* Step

Renew Your Mind to Anchor the Truth in Your Heart

Have you ever left out a vital ingredient by mistake because that particular ingredient was just a small amount, but its omission had adverse effects? I think we've all been there.

Just like a dismayed contestant on the Food Network show *Chopped* who forgets a small basket ingredient because it was hiding under a dish towel, we can be disappointed with the results of our time in God's Word because we have missed a vital ingredient to weave into the fabric of our lives: *biblical meditation*.

For years, although I was deep in Bible study, I shied away from biblical meditation and missed out on a vital ingredient for soul nourishment.

*How could just five minutes a day focusing on one verse heal me?
Isn't that a New Age thing?*

I heard a lot about the importance of Bible study but nothing about biblical mediation.

Here's What Happened When I Added the Five-Minute Ingredient

When I began to put God's prescription of renewing my mind into practice by starting my quiet time meditating on God's Word for just five minutes, the results were incredible.

The shift in my life personally was so profound that I decided to renovate the Nourish Method to devote one entire step to this spiritual discipline.

God does not neglect to tell us about this vital ingredient. Over and over again in the Bible, God tells his people to remember, reflect on, and renew their minds with his Word, his promises, his goodness. In fact, *meditate* is mentioned over 20 times in the Bible. This is for a good reason.

What you think determines how you live. What you practice in your thinking determines what grows in your life.

Just like a boat tied to its anchor, God wants our thoughts to remain steady on his truths for our lives. God alone is our anchor of truth. As an anchor exists to secure a vessel so it ceases to wander, God's Word secures our minds and hearts to him no matter what currents or waves we may face during the day.

How to put the *Renew* Step into practice during DAY 3.



An Anchor of Truth can be one word, truth, or verse that the Holy Spirit emphasizes to you during your time in God's Word—from your Nourish Scripture or any passage in the Bible.

- 1 SEEK GOD TO FIND YOUR ANCHOR.** Prayerfully review the weekly Nourish Scripture and the journal entries you made during the first two days. Ask God to identify for you the one anchor of truth he wants you to take away from the weekly Nourish Scripture.
- 2 RECORD YOUR ANCHOR.** Write your Anchor of Truth in the space provided on your Nourish Notes on Day 3 and on your Anchor of Truth Card. Tuck this card into your Bible or workbook just like a bookmark, so that you can be grounded in your truth daily. (Anchor of Truth cards available at www.TreasuredMinistries.com/shop.)
- 3 RENEW YOUR MIND WITH YOUR ANCHOR.** Start your daily quiet time by meditating on your Anchor of Truth. Utilizing your Anchor of Truth Card as a bookmark makes this daily habit easy! Quiet your thoughts. Focus on the truth. Read the truth. Pray the truth. Continue to reflect on your Anchor of Truth daily until the next week, when God reveals another truth to you in the course of your study.

You're invited

The table is set, and Jesus is ready to dine with you! He has truth to nourish your soul. Carve out time to open his Word and feed your soul with the Bread of Life.

Nourish. A Bible Study Method for Life. **Reveal** > **Respond** > **Renew**.

You matter.

You're invited.

Come gather at his table!

Learn more and use the Nourish Bible Study Method with any of our resources, including Nourishing Your Heart, the Nourish Notebook and 21-Day Challenge, Nourish Bible Study Series, and Treasured Devotions.

A full list of resources can be found at www.TreasuredMinistries.com/nourishstudies.



