

# LIVING *fully alive* IN JESUS


*I came so they can have real and eternal life,  
MORE AND BETTER life than they ever dreamed of.*

*john 10:10b (msg)*

God desires for you to have LIFE...but not just any life. Not a life that simply goes through the motions and survives the day, only to wake up and do the same thing all over again. No, God wants you to experience the FULLNESS of life that comes through being made alive in Christ. One of the fathers of the faith from the 2nd century, St. Irenaeus, famously said, "The glory of God is man, fully alive." When we step into the MORE and BETTER life God has for us, it's not merely for our sake. Living fully alive is not a self-help mantra. Your life, ignited by the Spirit, living fully as God intended, is the ultimate reflection of God's glory here on earth. See...you were created in the image of God. When God created you, he uniquely designed you in a way that would reflect his character, nature, and goodness to the rest of the world. When you live in community with other little God-reflectors...LOOK OUT! That's when God's glory shines the brightest!

As you begin your walk today, take a few minutes to wake up. Become aware of the beauty and LIFE around you. Invite the Holy Spirit to join you on your walk.





Spend a few moments reflecting on what it means for you to live fully alive in Jesus. Allow your surroundings to inspire you to worship your Creator who used the same imaginative power to create YOU as he did the intricate beauty of nature around you. Allow the words of this prayer to be the desires of your heart.

## Holy Creator + Giver of life:

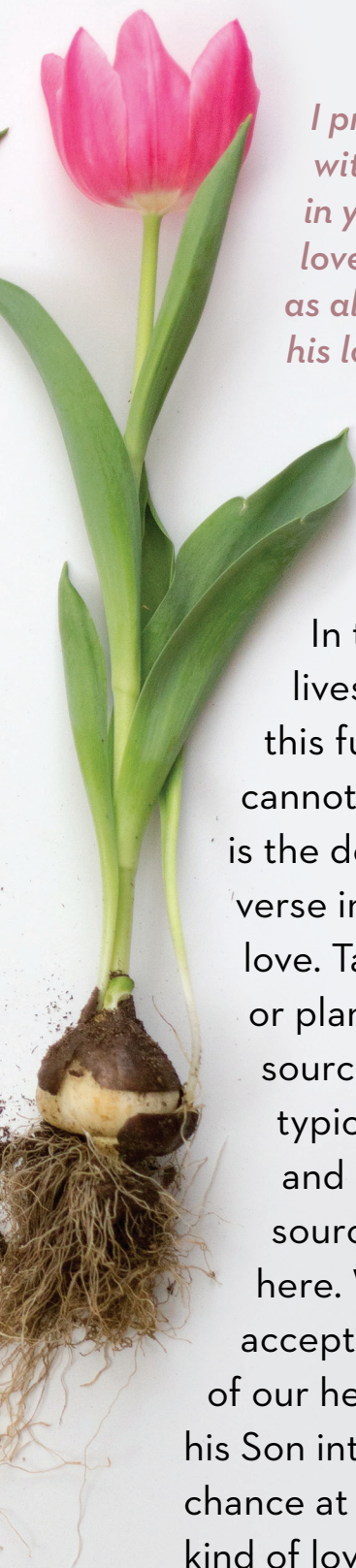
You are a mighty Creator. Thank you for creating life and beauty and goodness. Help me to see myself as a carrier of your glory here on earth. I want to experience the full life you promised me. I don't want to sleepwalk through life. Forgive me for the times that I have settled for a life that is less than all you desire for me. Your word says that you came to earth to give me a more and better life than I even dreamed of. God, I have had some dreams! For every dream that didn't become a reality in my life, I praise you, because your way is better. Help me to see the plans and purposes you have for me because I want THAT life, Jesus. Holy Spirit, awaken me to your hope and possibilities. Call them forth from the wet cement of my life. Whatever they may be, and whoever I am becoming, may it be a reflection of your goodness.

*"As I am a vessel,  
let me not be a sodden paper cup  
full of steaming frustration, carelessly  
sloshing unpleasantness on those around me.  
Rather let me be like a communion chalice,  
reflecting the silvered beauty of your light,  
brimming with an offered grace."\**

*Amen.*



# I AM *Loved* BY JESUS



*I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

*Ephesians 3:16-19 (nlt)*

In the message translation, the last line of this verse says, "Live full lives, full in the fullness of God." The source and beginning point of this full and abundant life is found in the LOVE of God. One simply cannot talk or think about or ponder the love of God too much, for it is the deepest well imaginable and the foundation of everything. This verse in Ephesians tells us to allow our roots to take hold in God's love. Take a minute to look around you. Are there any trees or flowers or plant-life? For a moment, consider their design. Where does their source of life and vitality come from? It is not in the parts that are typically seen, but rather in their roots. Cut them off from the root and they no longer live. The same is true for us. God's love is our source of life...all of our beauty and goodness and purpose starts here. We simply cannot live full lives without first understanding and accepting this unconditional, life-altering, boundless, relentless love of our heavenly Father. He showcased his deep love for us by sending his Son into the world to die on a cross so that we could even have the chance at living fully alive. He offered himself in our place. THAT is the kind of love your Creator has for you!

*I am loved by God.  
I am LOVED by God.  
I am loved by GOD.*

*Say it out loud if you need to, but let the truth of those words seep down into the depths of your being. Consider the life around you. The birds, the insects, the trees...even the sand crabs. In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us that observing God's care over nature should lead us away from worry and instead deeper into the providing love of God.*

*Aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?*

*As you spend time in the loving presence of God, allow his affection, his grace, and his loving kindness to fill you to the brim. Let these words be your prayer.*

*Jesus, lover of my soul:*

*I may never fully understand or grasp the breadth of your love but I will earnestly spend my life in pursuit of experiencing it. Thank you for loving me. Words are not adequate to convey my gratitude for your love.*

*May my life be marked by your love. May it be the source of my life and the overflow of my heart.*

*When I am tempted to find my worth, my identity, and my wellspring in anything other than your love, may you lovingly correct my course.*

*As I live into the continual journey of seeing myself through the lens of your love, help me to use that same lens to view the other image-bearers around me. May your love pour out of my life on to those you've put in my path...that they may also come to see themselves in light of your deep love.*

*Amen.*





# I AM BEING *shaped* BY JESUS

*Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God - truly righteous and holy.*

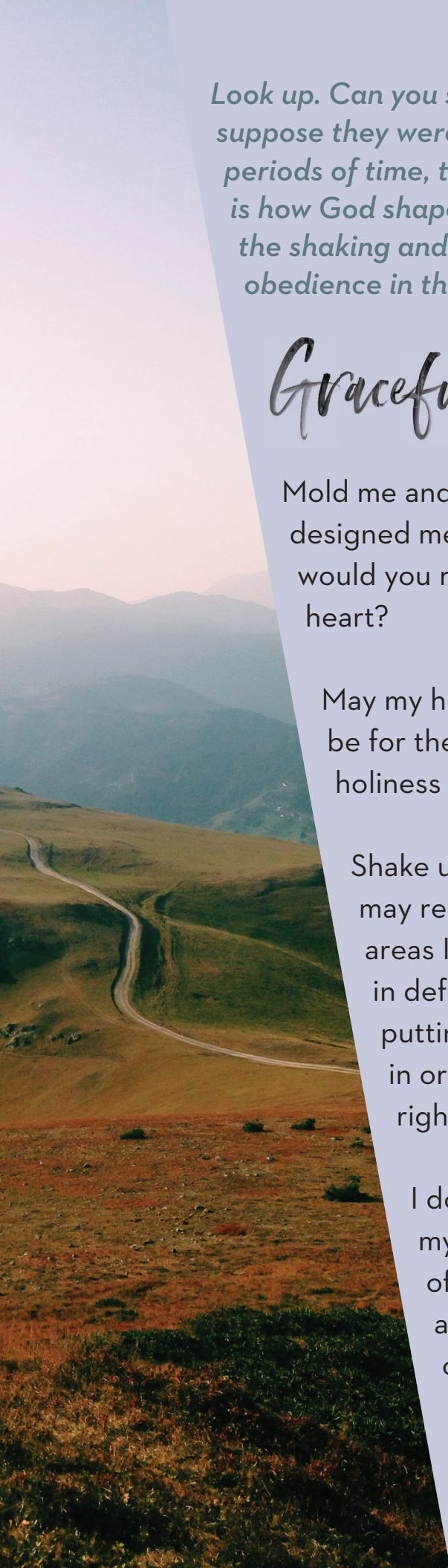
*Ephesians 4:21-24 (att)*

God's love is not only endless; it is transformative. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God is renewing our thoughts, reshaping our corrupted desires and realigning our hearts to his. While God loves you, as you are, right where you are...he loves you too much to allow you to continue living "your former way of life" that led to destruction. When you decided to put your hope and trust in Jesus, you became a new person. You became someone marked by the love of God, and defined by holiness.

At the heart of God's reshaping power is abiding and realigning. In his book, *You are What You Love*, James K.A. Smith says, "Jesus' command to follow him is a command to align our loves and longings with his—to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where he is all in all—a vision encapsulated by the shorthand "THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

So how do we become shaped to be more like God? Well, it starts with repentance. While not a very pleasant word, repentance is the starting point for realignment. When you first decided to follow Jesus, there was probably a pretty big shift. A complete turning around and moving in the opposite direction. This is how we often speak of repentance. However, on the path of following Jesus, repentance is not a one time thing. Jesus invites us to DAILY consider if our lives are in alignment with God's character. Maybe even moment by moment. Jesus calls us today to realign continually with the good news of the kingdom.





*Look up. Can you see any mountains or hills? Cliffs? How do you suppose they were formed? By the mighty hand of God over long periods of time, through seismic shifts both great and small. This is how God shapes us as well. Continual realignment through the shaking and shifting of our habits, desires, and deeds. Long obedience in the same direction.*

## *Graceful + skilled Potter:*

Mold me and shape me into the person you created and designed me to be. As I learn to abide in you more and more, would you realign my desires to more accurately reflect your heart?

May my heart be your heart. May the longings of my life be for the things of your kingdom. May I hunger for your holiness and thirst for your truth.

Shake up the ground and shift my priorities so that I may realign my heart to yours. Father, I repent for the areas I've fallen short, where I've thrown up my hands in defeat, claiming my old life as my own rather than putting on my new self. Help me to daily recalibrate in order to stay on the path that leads to life and righteousness and joy and holiness and goodness.

I don't want to settle for anything less. So search my heart. Point out the areas where I've veered off course. Show me where I've allowed dust to accumulate on the reflective mirror of my life, obscuring your reflection and distorting your love. Transform me from the inside out.

*Amen.*



I AM EQUIPPED TO

Do what Jesus did

*"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.*

*Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!*

*John 14:12-14 (alt)*

If love is the roots, our deeds are the fruit. How we love others, how we care for the outcast, how we stand for justice and work for peace...this is what the world sees and what the world needs. When Jesus taught us to pray, he told us to ask, "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Central to the message of Jesus was the idea that the Kingdom of heaven is HERE. Jesus' resurrection was inauguration day and we are his ambassadors, empowered by the Holy Spirit to see the things of heaven actualized here on earth.

That sounds impossible. True, if we are relying on our own power and creativity.

However, it starts with nurturing a prophetic imagination. As you walk, look around you. Yes, there is beauty and life. However, there is also decay and pollution and trash and ugliness. This is proof that while the Kingdom has come, it has not yet been realized in all of its fullness. Things still aren't what they should be. God is still at work, bringing everything into right alignment. Oh! That God would grant us the vision to see it!

And the craziest part of all? He wants to partner with us to usher in his Kingdom. He wants to USE US to fill the earth with his beauty and goodness!



*It starts with a prophetic imagination and it ends with a simple, "Yes."*

*God gives us the vision to see things the way they WILL BE one day and then invites us to be a part of his redemption plan. We simply need to say "YES".*

## *Great Redeemer:*

When you look at the world and its decay and distortion of your goodness, you are not dismayed. You are still good and what you have created is still good. You are in the process of redeeming it ALL. My life, the lives of those around me, and creation in its entirety. I look with anticipation towards that day!

Give me visions of your great world. Help me to see where you're moving and give me the courage to follow the tides of your progress.

Lord, as my heart realigns with yours and you shape me into your image, give me the heart to see those around me. To TRULY see them. Call me forth to be a fisher of souls. May I bring light and goodness and hope and peace with me wherever I go...because I carry you with me.

Bring to my mind the face or name of someone in my life that could use your healing touch...who could use some hope, or at the very least to know they aren't alone. Use me to be your hands, your heart, and your mouthpiece.

So here I am, Lord. Send me.

I am your willing vessel. My greatest desire is to see your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.

*Amen.*

