

CHAPTER

01

GROWING IN THE
AWE OF GOD

“I am in awe of Father God
and His essence in me.”



The Principle of Design

We start each chapter by looking at one of the seven foundational principles of Wisdom. The first principle is the **principle of design**, which is foundational to all other principles.



A principle is a universal, non-optional, cause and effect relationship. Principles apply in our relationships with the spirit realm, with other people, and with creation.

God designed you and me and our physical and spiritual worlds out of His perfect and loving nature and essence as an exquisite expression of Himself. To know God is to be totally in awe of you and me and His essence in us. If we see ourselves as poor, broken and inadequate, there is no way we are going to trust our Maker. How could He have created me like THIS and still be a good God! When our relationships, families, finances, churches, businesses and health don't work, how can we trust that God is the awesome Maker of it all? Until these attitudes toward God, ourselves and our worlds are resolved, we can never trust Him enough to be intimate with Him or love Him. And we certainly would not find any joy in building a Kingdom for Him when He is such a flawed Designer and Creator.

Before the fall, all of creation worked as it should. Man and woman lived in beautiful harmony with their Maker and all of creation.

After the fall, mankind and all of creation was immersed in death, separation, destruction, and brokenness.

The good news (Gospel) is that Jesus Christ came to restore all things and reconcile all creation back to God's original design.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Colossians 1:19-20

When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we are a new creation. We are returned to the original design before the fall. Actually, if you can conceive it, we are better than before the fall because when God redeems something, He makes it better than the original.

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, and heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:26-29

No one rejects the one true God. People, can, however, reject who they think God is. To know Him is to love Him and move toward Him. The better we know Him, the more awe we have for Him.

Son or Orphan?

In your heart, are you an orphan or a son? When we have the heart of an orphan, we cannot believe we have a good Father who created us in His perfect image and qualified us to inherit all things. When the Israelites first came out of Egypt, they had hearts of orphans and slaves. Those with slave or orphan hearts tend to believe they lack resources that God and others are withholding from them and can feel powerless that their needs will not be met.

So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, 'What are we to drink?'

Exodus 15:24

On the other hand, when we are sons in our hearts, we have a foundational groundedness that our basic needs will always be met by our good Father. Even though we are aware there might be tough spots, in general, we expect that life will go well for us.

In this book, we use the term sons to describe both male and female children of God, and we primarily use the term to describe a condition of the heart. Sons are commissioned to build their Father's Kingdom. The Kingdom includes all things that are submitted to and governed by Jesus, our King.

The redemption of all things was made possible by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Blood covenant He attained with you and me. The rest of this chapter is focused on understanding what He did for us in this Blood Covenant. It's all done for us! Our part is to receive it and walk it out.



In this textbook, each chapter covers one of the seven stages of growth from conception to adulthood.

Growth Stage 1: I Belong to God and His Community

You and I were sent to earth to grow in intimacy with God into sons of God who can build our Father's Kingdom. We grow because we are nurtured by Him with all things we need, including His presence, His love, wisdom, family, home and many other resources He provides as our good Father.

We begin growing the moment our earthly father's sperm fertilizes our mother's egg. Our growth to mature adults follow the seven stages of growth outlined in Figure 1-1. These seven stages align with the seven chapters in this book and all the other groups of seven outlined in the Big Picture table at the beginning of the book. The first stage of growth addressed in this chapter is to know that we belong to God and His community.



Figure 1-1 Seven stages of growth from childhood to adulthood

We all grew up in imperfect families and some of us missed chunks of what we needed to mature. But it's never too late to fill in what we missed as children. It's never too late to grow up!

Belongingness

Belongingness is an emotion we experience when we are consistently loved and cared for in the womb and during infancy and lasts a lifetime. Because we started out experiencing a stable, grounded and loving environment, we generally feel that:

- I have rights in a community that my basic needs will be met, for example, the right to feel safe.
- My security in community comes from within and not from outside me.
- I am grounded inside and can recover quickly when rattled.
- In a crisis, I stay calm and handle myself well.

Many of us did not experience this consistent loving care at the beginning and we tend to see life differently:

- In a crisis or under stress, I get anxious and can react without thinking. I might panic, get emotionally wobbly or cannot be counted on to stay engaged. I might try to escape, shut down, fight, or be unreasonably compliant. (Psychologists call these reactions flee, freeze, fight, or fawn.)
- My groundedness (emotional stability) depends on external factors, such as how others treat me or what needs I perceive as being met or not met.
- Generally, I often feel uncomfortable and out of place in community. I might withdraw, control, or be a people pleaser, hoping to get my needs met. I struggle with feeling insecure and not valued by others.

We all need to feel at an emotional level that we belong to a loving God who consistently takes good care of us. In the womb, a loved and nurtured baby bonds to the mom. As an infant, they don't yet know where they end and mom begins because they are one. Later they can develop a healthy otherness. It's difficult to understand otherness until you first attach to someone.

Growing into Belongingness

I grew up without this emotional belongingness and was constantly striving for what seemed like never enough love. As I was able to come to Father God to receive His love, He rooted, grounded and filled me with Himself and I was able to grow into a deep sense of belongingness.

*For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, **being rooted and grounded in love**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**.*

Ephesians 3:14-19

People can help us to feel belongingness in community by:

- Creating an atmosphere or culture of “I’m glad to see you!” We can all help people feel welcomed, wanted, desirable, valued, celebrated, and cared for.
- We can take the time to get to know the treasure someone is and express from the heart, “I see you. I believe in who you are and who you will become. I see God in you and with you. The world is a better place because you are here.”

Belongingness with God is possible because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ who made a way for us to be reconciled with (reattached to) God. In this chapter, we discuss two steps toward belongingness:

1. **Legitimate with God.** When we are born of the Spirit of God into the family of God as a new creation, we have His **essence**, His divine nature. When we come to Him, we learn that He is glad to see us and He can be counted on to meet our every need. That's our Daddy! See Figure 1-2.
2. **Legitimate with people.** As we grow in confidence in our relationship with Him, we become more and more confident of our **legitimacy in various communities and situations**. We don't need to rely on what people think about us, our reputation, or even our own confidence in our abilities. Just as growth happens little by little over time, legitimacy is seldom a one-time event. Over time, we grow in our legitimacy with people as we grow in our legitimacy with God.



Figure 1-2 We are comfortable in the presence of Father God because we came from Him and we are like Him



CONCEPTS

Most of our work for the first two chapters is about how we see God and ourselves and our relationship with God. All this is founded on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, we start at the finish line!

Concept 1.1 Starting at the Finish Line

I once asked Jesus, “What is the greatest compliment You ever received?” He took me to the Scripture, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” Jesus was deeply honored that God chose Him as God’s very best gift He could give to us, His creation!

With a heart of infinite love for us, Jesus walked out life here on earth perfectly, with no sin, and then allowed Himself to be hung on a tree. On the cross, He took to Himself all our sickness, sin, iniquity, rebellion, defilement, defeat, law, poverty, enemies, curses, and death, making it possible for Him to reconcile all things in heaven and earth to the Father. In Christ, we are able to express the fullness of God! Glory!

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. Colossians 2:9-10

We will be forever learning what all He did for us and in us. A good place to start is the diagram in Figure 1-3 and Scriptures in Table 1-1.



Figure 1-3 The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ

Surrender to Jesus as my Savior, Lord and King	Water Baptism by Faith into the Lord Jesus Christ			Of His Essence and Seated with Him	START HERE The Finish Line
	Old Me Crucified with Him	Old Me Buried with Him	New Me Resurrected in His Body		
Ephesians 5:8 I once was darkness with a nature to sin.	Romans 6:1-11 I died with Him. Death was my way out of sin, slavery and past covenants with evil.	Colossians 2:9-12 As with circumcision, the cutting away of the old me.	John 3:5-8 I am light, born of water and the Spirit. I was conceived as Jesus was conceived.	Ephesians 2:6 I am ascended in Him and seated with Him.	
Romans 10:10 With my heart and mouth, I am saved.					

Table 1-1 When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we start a new life at the finish line of what He completed

Jesus completed all the requirements of the Blood covenant before you and I were aware of His work. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we enter into the Blood covenant already available to us. It's our job to receive it.

When you enter into a covenant with someone, you become one with them. As impossible as it seems, consider what it might look like to be **one with God!** We must start with our very essence.

Concept 1.2 Born of the Spirit of God in His Essence

When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we are born a second time, this time born of the Spirit and born of water. As diagrammed in Figure 1-3, we receive forgiveness at the cross. We enter into His body and our dark selves are crucified with Jesus in the waters of baptism. In the waters of baptism, we die with Him and are buried with Him. As we come up out of the water, we are raised up with Him in His resurrected body. As He is seated with Father, so our relationship with the Father is restored.

We are a new creation! 2 Corinthians 5. **As God is light, so we are light. As we share in this divine nature, we are fully acceptable and pure in the eyes of the Father.**

For ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Peter 1:4

Think of an immense inheritance of money left to you. Until you know about it and step forward to receive it, you might never actually benefit from it.

Because we are like Him, of His essence, the relationship with Him can be restored and reconciled. Because we are of Him, we are His. We belong to Him.

Once the truth that we are of His essence settles into the core of our being, we no longer fear that Father God will reject us when we come to Him. We know He receives His own, and even in our deepest guilt, failures, and disappointments, we can run to Father and receive His love as any small child would run and jump into her Daddy's arms.



Whoever tells the best story wins agreement! Following is the first of many stories you'll see in this book. A well-told story with punch and passion can inspire and change the course of our lives.



“That’s Not Good Enough.”

In deep depression, I once said to God, “God, I give You my poor broken life. I give You my mess.” As I prayed that, I sensed a little pride as I thought I had prayed a pretty nice little prayer. It certainly was an improvement over other recent prayers about putting me out of my misery. But when I heard Him say, “That’s not good enough,” I was stunned. I couldn’t imagine that giving Him my broken life was not good enough for Him.

I asked with some indignation, “Lord, what do you *mean*, it’s not good enough?”

Immediately, He directed me to these verses in Malachi:

“But you profane [my name] by saying of the Lord’s table, ‘It is defiled,’ and of its food, ‘It is contemptible.’ And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously,” says the Lord Almighty. “When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the Lord. “Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.” Malachi 1:12-14

I was appalled! Not only did He call me a cheat, but He said I had accused Him of offering me contemptible food! At first, I didn’t know what to think, I was too shocked. But then I settled down and recognized my mistake. I had so undervalued the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross that I saw the only offering I had to make to Father God was me, a blemished and wounded sacrifice. But Jesus had done it all. I am one with Jesus, the acceptable male in the flock. I had a perfect sacrifice to offer Him – my redeemed self!

Months earlier, I had vowed to give Jesus everything I was and had. I told Him my life was no longer my own; it belonged to Him. I knew He had made me the righteousness of God. All that Jesus is, He put into me, re-creating me in His likeness and image. God had spared nothing for my sake. He had given me everything He had, and I had given Him everything I had. And yet, in the moment, I thought all I had to offer Him was brokenness, and forgot that I had His redeemed me to offer Him!

I kneeled down and asked God to forgive me for belittling all that Jesus is in me. I told Him that night I would never, ever come to Him with only the problem. When He gave me Jesus, He gave me everything.

For thought and discussion:

1. When you think of coming to speak with Father God, what feelings or expectations come to mind? Can you use this story of being the acceptable sheep in the flock to change the way you approach Him?
2. Some people see themselves as merely legally adopted by God rather than being born again into God. A legal adoption does give us our identity as sons of God but does not change our essence. Describe the difference between the position of legally adopted son and born again son of God using the words “essence” and “identity.”

Concept 1.3 Spirit, Soul and Body Made Whole

We began as a spirit, created by our Father God in heaven, created in His image, of His likeness, from His essence. God is light, but not just any light. He is divine light. Our spirits are made of the substance of His divine light (Ephesians 5, II Peter 1), and that light is the same light that created the universe with the spoken Word.

*Father God reached
into Himself, pulled
out of Himself some of
His very essence, the
substance of light, and
formed you and me!*

God wrote a book about each of us (Psalm 139) and in it, He recorded all the good works we are designed to do as sons of God in the earth (Ephesians 2). He sent us to earth to represent Him on the earth, fully equipped with His divine design, to fulfill His purposes on the earth as creative beings of light. He sent us from His heart into the fertilized egg in our mother's womb (see Figure 1-4). At that time, He knitted us together, spirit, soul and body, into the bloodline of humanity.



Figure 1-4 We were sent from Father God into the fertilized egg in our mother's womb

As sons of Father God, our spirits carried to earth the DNA of God, His divine nature, character and design. When our spirits entered the fertilized egg, our spirits began the process of giving us life, which will continue until the day we die (2 Corinthians 3:6, James 2:26). Our spirits can exist, think, feel, speak, listen and make decisions. Some moms report they can communicate with the spirit of their babies just hours after conception. Our spirit, soul and body also inherited the generational blessings and curses of our earthly family lines.

As spirit beings, created in God's image and likeness, the spirit is designed by God to sustain, nurture and interact with the soul and body (see Figure 1-5). We as spirit, soul and body are designed to represent God in the earth, to rule and reign as God instructed Adam. However, having entered into a disobedient and fallen humanity, we eventually sin and our brilliant spirits grow dark. With our spirits dark and separated from God and our souls and bodies hurting in the pain of fallen humanity, we need a Savior. We need a rebirth.

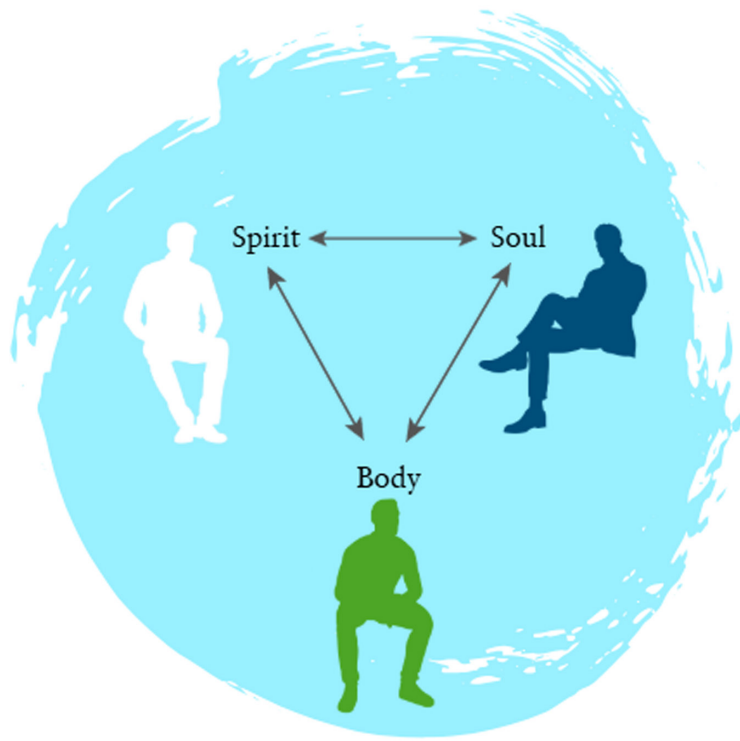


Figure 1-5 We are created in God's image as spirit, soul and body

What part of us is saved? Spirit, soul and/or body? Even though we don't all experience complete freedom and wholeness in spirit, soul and body at salvation, I believe God has given this all-encompassing and complete salvation to us:

*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcison not performed by human hands. **Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ,** having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.*

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made you alive with Christ.** He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*

Colossians 2:9-14

I've heard testimonies and witnessed people having powerful encounters with God in the act of water baptism where Father spoke to a person their new name and spiritual destiny, covenants with evil were broken, terrorized demons fled, hearts were transformed, addictions were broken, tattoos of evil covenants disappeared off the body, and many other miracles. Our spirits, souls and bodies are created by Him in His image, and Father God wants all parts of us made holy and set apart for Him.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 5:23

Concept 1.4 No Lack Because of the Blood Covenant

When we enter into Blood covenant with Jesus, an exchange takes place. He gives you all that He has, and, ideally, you give Him all you have. Now, as with a marriage covenant, you and He have all things in common. You and He are becoming one.

No Lack in the Core of Who We Are

Remember that Jesus even gives us His essence when we are born again. Knowing we have the essence of God in us can heal our shame. Shame is rooted in the lie that “at the core of my being, I am not enough.” Believing this lie causes us to feel unworthy in the presence of God or community. Experiencing the truth that we are made in His essence allows us to be with Him and in community secure in who we are. We are like Him.



Poverty of Thinking Led to Shame

In Genesis 3, we learn how the enemy set up Eve to create a sense of false lack. She lacked for nothing but when she believed she was in lack, she acted on it and that led to the Fall. We can all fall into this same trap whenever we begin to entertain thoughts that we are not enough or God is withholding from us.

Let's follow the drama as it unfolds:

1. The enemy said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”
2. The woman answered they could eat from any tree except the one in the middle of the garden and they also should not touch it. When we read the Scriptures carefully, we see she was already a little confused because God had said nothing about not touching the tree. But more importantly, we see the lie deceptively implied that God was withholding good from her.
3. When Eve considered the thought that God might be withholding good from her, she positioned herself for the bigger lie. The enemy then said, “God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
4. Just as the first lie, this one is implied and not clearly stated. The premise of the statement is that she was not already made in the image of God, even though God had made it clear that she was indeed created in His image. How was she deceived that she was not already like Him? I believe it was because the enemy had positioned her to think, if God is withholding good from her, He might also be withholding Himself. So perhaps she was not truly as like Him as she *thought* she was and needed to *do something* to better herself.

5. And so she ate. When we begin to see ourselves as less than enough, it's easy to see others in the same light. She turned to her husband and basically said, "Hey, you don't look so good yourself. *Do something* to better yourself." And so he ate.

6. But even with all that happened and the immense consequences, God still believed enough in Eve that He stated that one day her offspring will defeat this enemy.

7. In Matthew 4:3, we see Jesus tempted in the same way as Eve was tempted when the enemy said, "*If* you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." The question on the table was are you really who God says you are? If so, prove it.

8. But Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Eve failed the test when her identity and essence as a child of God was questioned, but Jesus passed the test for us all!

9. The last recorded word that God had spoken over Jesus before the temptation is in Matthew 3:16, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Jesus stood on what God had said about Him and chose not to *do anything* to prove He is who God says He is.

For thought and discussion:

1. Can you think of a situation where you attempted to prove to someone that you were worthy to be in their community?
2. What could you have said or done differently to establish your worth in community based solely on the fact that God sent you as His son into the community?

His Covenant Grace Makes Up for Our Weaknesses

You might be thinking about your own genuine shortcomings that make you feel unworthy to be with God or community. The shortcomings might be real, but God's Grace is more than enough to make up the difference (see Figure 1-6). Grace is available for us when we are in covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, one with Him, sharing in all things. Suppose Jesus is so tall and we are so short. Grace lifts us up to be as tall as Jesus is. Where we are weak, He is strong. In Christ, all things are possible.



Figure 1-6 By His Covenant Grace, Jesus lifts us up to His level and we have no lack

Suppose you have a weakness that is difficult to overcome. You can pray, “Jesus, I need you to strengthen my will so that I can overcome this weakness. We call this self-control. You and He together are strong in the Blood covenant.

*“The LORD is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.” Psalm 23:1*

Concept 1.5 We have Intimacy with Him in the Blood Covenant

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. Luke 22:19–20



At the heart of the Blood covenant with Jesus is sharing our essence. When we eat His body and drink His Blood, we enter into the most intimate of moments with Him. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. When we eat His flesh, we eat the Word, and that Word does it work in us. Life is in the Blood, and when we drink His Blood, we can ask Him to cleanse our DNA, intermingling it with His DNA, and give us a Blood transfusion of life. Out of these intimate moments with Him, we grow and are transformed. In these moments, we can ask Him to bring us into the presence of Father in the most childlike and innocent way.

Concept 1.6

Building the Kingdom on the Blood Covenant as Sons of God

Up until Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of God, no one as a part of fallen humanity had claimed that status. When Jesus claimed to be one with the Father and the Son of God, the Jews tried to stone him.

For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 5:18

What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?

John 10:36

King David, Isaiah and Daniel wrote about the eternal Kingdom of God and looked forward to its coming. In Luke 22:16, Jesus explained that the Blood covenant will find its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. David, Isaiah and Daniel looked forward to the sons of God bringing His Kingdom. Jesus explained in Luke 17 that the Kingdom is within us. **As mature sons of God, we are the ones chosen by God to bring forth the Kingdom from within us to all of creation. This is possible only by the Blood covenant He has with each of us.**

Concept 1.7 Do You Love Me?

In 2003, when I was in my fifties, Jesus took me, as a five-year-old girl, to the Father and placed me in His arms. As I gazed into His face, I *knew* I was loved. The look in His eyes changed me. In that moment, I saw I was His cherished daughter, and He was so delighted I had come to Him. It astounded me to realize that He was more hungry for me than I was for Him! I began a journey that day from having the heart of an orphan to that of a beloved and legitimate daughter. Love is a feeling expressed by what we do, and I was feeling His love for me as *His emotions toward me*.





For teachings on each of these four keys to knowing God's love, listen to the "Am I Loved?" audios at FromHisTable.com.



*Love is not a theology;
it's a feeling, an
emotion expressed by
what we do.*

Just a few months before, I had changed my prayers to God from, "Why don't You use me?" to "What I really need to know is do You love me?" I had finally asked the right question! Over the next few months, He slowly showed me lies I had believed and mindsets I had accepted that had kept me from knowing His love. Four key issues emerged:

1. **Forgiveness.** I needed to forgive from my heart my earthly father. As long as we hold our parents accountable for our problems, we tie God's hands from fixing them. My father was never loved himself, so how could he love me?
2. **Judgements.** I needed to repent of judging my earthly father. I had judged my father for being distant from me. In fact, he was distant but when I judged him for that, I reaped that judgement in my own life that I would also see Father God as distant.
3. **Shame.** I was covered in shame. I saw myself as flawed and inadequate and not deserving unconditional, relentless love from God.
4. **God's goodness.** I had always thought I was chasing hard after God. In a powerful encounter with Jesus, I discovered the truth that He had been chasing hard after me and I was finally allowing Him the joy of experiencing me.

Once these four issues were resolved, I was ready to allow Jesus to bring me to Father. Feeling Father's love for me as I looked in His eyes, changed me from the inside out. Knowing His love first hand allowed me to start the maturing process from a servant of God who obeys Him to a son of God who can inherit His Kingdom. My identity (the way God and man know and see us and the way we see ourselves) as a child of God had to be rooted and grounded in His love for me at an emotional level.

Concept 1.8 Maturing as a Son of God

As we mature, our identity needs to grow into what we do and the fruit we produce. Jesus compared us to trees and said:

Jamie Winship, author of the book "Living Fearless" and former police officer and CIA operative, has boiled down his identity statement to, "I am a militant peacemaker."

"By their fruits you shall know (identify) them."

Matthew 7:20

And Paul reminds us that creation is waiting to know us:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Romans 8:19

The fruit that identifies us as sons of God is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5). The reflection of the image of God in our essence must equally reflect the images of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The cyclic and ongoing process of growing to mature sons of God who are rooted in love and bear good fruit is outlined in Figure 1-7. The figure ties together many of the concepts in this book.



Figure 1-7 We are rooted in love and by our fruit, we will be known (identified) as sons of God

Our identity is rooted in who God is, how He designed us, and how He wants us to see ourselves. As we mature, our identity grows to include the birthrights He wants to give us and how He wants to partner with us so that we can possess our birthrights. Think of Abraham, whom God called or identified as the father of many nations. Who God decided Abraham would become and do was His identity. God partnered with Abraham to secure his identity and birthright.

Building Belongingness, Worth and Competence

God intended for the feelings of belongingness, worth and competence to be established in us as children, as shown in Figure 1-8.

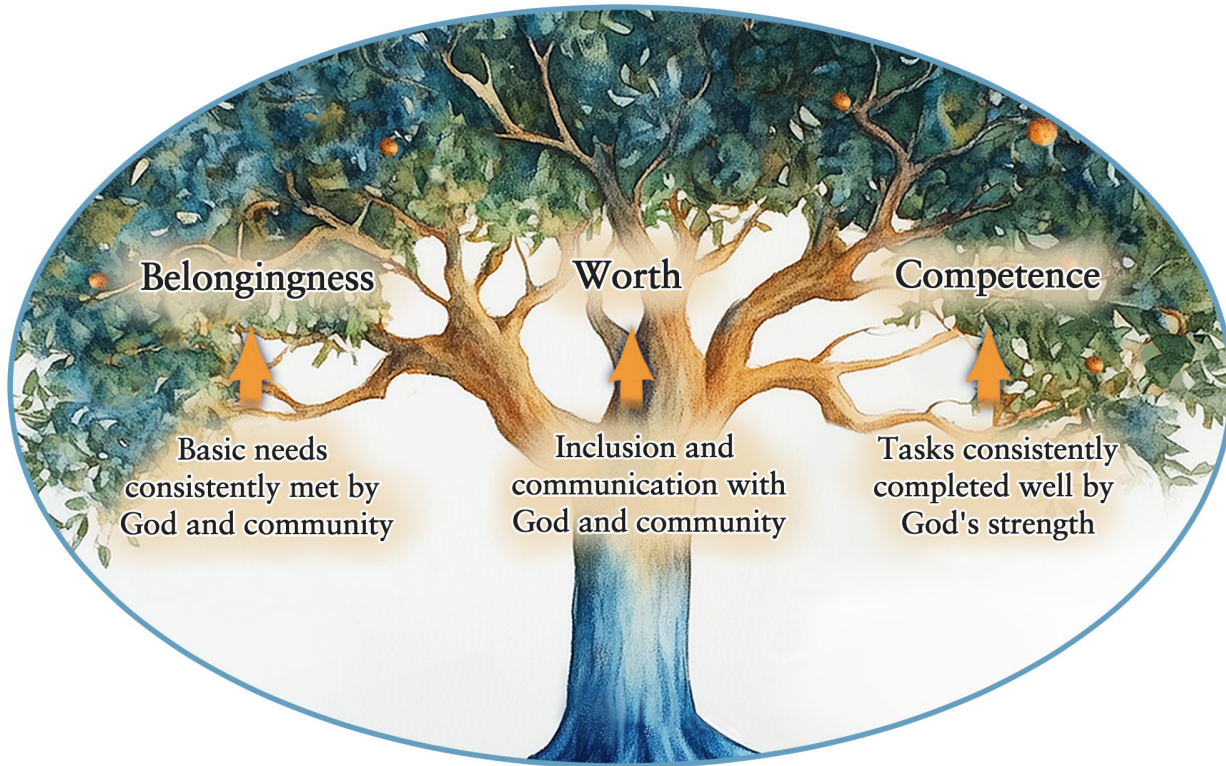


Figure 1-8 Personhood and legitimacy are built on belongingness, worth and competence

Here is God's plan for building belongingness, worth and competence in us as children in healthy families:

- **Belongingness.** The emotion of belonging comes when we feel loved and our needs are consistently met. Baby cries and someone consistently responds with love to meet the current need (for example, comfort, food or sleep).
- **Worth.** A sense of worth happens with inclusion. It has been said that with children, love is spelled T-I-M-E. When parents spend time with children, watching them play, playing with them, talking with them, listening to their stories, and generally
- Later, as adults, we have a groundedness and stability about us that no matter what crisis or current need, we feel a deep sense of expectation that we will find a way through.

enjoying the joy their children are experiencing, children feel inclusion and develop a healthy sense of worth.

Worth is developed in a child based on the degree of loving inclusion by parents and the surrounding community.

- **Competence.** When our parents gave us tasks to do that we were able to do with some appropriate stretching, we felt confident that we can handle the demands of life.

Because none of us grew up in perfect families, no one has fully experienced this ideal process as children. With God, it's never too late! God wants to accept responsibility for our growth to maturity as sons of God and will gladly do so as we submit to Him and His ways. Some general ways He accomplishes this are:

- **Father God builds our belongingness.** When belongingness did not happen as children, we can ask Father God to help us grow in these areas.
 1. Father God, as our loving provider, builds into us a sense of belongingness by expressing His love to us and consistently meeting our every need.
 2. When we intentionally engage with God, expecting Him to be our loving provider, we learn over time that He is who He says He is.
 3. In a healthy community, we learn that we are loved and cared for by others who actively engage with us in appropriate ways. We learn that “right or wrong, we belong.”
 4. We learn it is safe to ask for and expect appropriate love and help when needed.

- **Jesus Christ builds our worth.** When inclusion did not happen, we feel unworthy and not valuable. Rather than seeking value through symbols such as popular brands and the best clothes or through our hard work, we can ask Jesus for help:

1. Jesus Christ embraced the crucifixion so that we can be included and reconciled to our Father. Jesus consistently includes us in His communications with us as His friends and members of His family.

2. When we ask God to show us the value He places on us, He will likely do that with inclusion. He will speak with us, share His authority with us, and include us in what He is doing, demonstrating how much of Himself He desires to share with us. And He loves it when we include Him in what we are doing.

3. In a healthy community, a sense of worth is established in us by two-way inclusion:

- I include you in my life.

- I am interested in being included in your life.

- **Holy Spirit builds our competence.** Holy Spirit builds competence in us as we learn to take on tasks that He directs us to do and learn that He can be trusted to resource us with whatever is needed to complete these tasks. We learn that nothing is impossible when He partners with us.

No, Not a Commodity!

Belongingness and worth must be given to us by others, but we can build feelings of competence in ourselves by our own efforts. When belongingness and worth were not given to us as children, to develop an identity, we can resort to becoming highly competent by working hard to excel in school, sports, or other activities. When we build our belongingness and worth on competence, we become a commodity. See Figure 1-9.

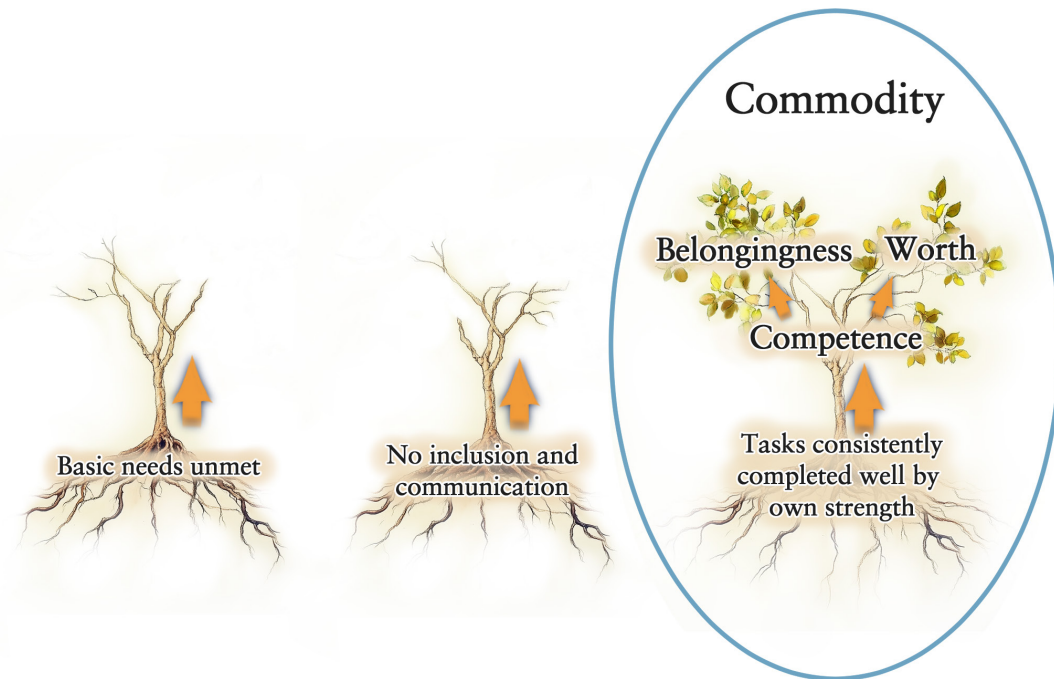


Figure 1-9 When we must build our identity without the help of others, we can become a commodity

A commodity, such as coal, sugar or gasoline, is a basic good or service in commerce where one unit is of the same value as another unit. (All coal is as good as any coal.)

As a commodity, our belongingness and worth never feel solid nor bear good fruit because they are built on a wrong foundation. We repeatedly need to prove that we are legitimately valuable to God and others.

Person or Commodity?

Our ultimate goal in pursuing a healthy identity is to more accurately reflect each Member of the Trinity. See Figure 1-10.

To stand in the office and authority of person (personhood), I must know that I am loved and uniquely me. But as a commodity, one human being is as good as another regarding what we can contribute to God and community. We must not settle for just competence. We must build our identities on seeing our unique designs and value as God sees us.



Figure 1-10 A three-legged tripod of belongingness, worth and competence can support an accurate reflection of the Trinity

What's in a name? A commodity (such as coal or sugar) needs no name. When God gives us a name, He embeds in the name our birthrights. To know the name God has given you helps to establish you in the office of person with His personal authority to be present in community with a commissioning from Him to bring His Kingdom to earth in a specific way that only you can accomplish. If you don't know the name God has given you, ask Him. Sometimes, He gives different names for different seasons of our lives.



A Boy Learns About His Worth

A mom recognized her 10-year-old son, Dennis, did not value himself and wondered whether that was why he struggled with unforgiveness and poor behavior. They attend a church where he does not speak the language. One Sunday, his mom decided to be more inclusive with Dennis, so she drew her son to her and quietly translated the sermon for him. That afternoon, Dennis told his mom he had decided to forgive several people in his life, including forgiving her. The conversation ended with reconciliation and tender hugs.

For thought and discussion:

1. How did Dennis' mom build up the feelings of worth in her son?
2. It's hard to forgive when we don't feel that we have worth or value because forgiving is giving. Read Luke 6:37-38. Explain how forgiving is a type or form of giving. We cannot give unless we have first received. According to Luke 6, what happens when we give?
3. Why do you think Dennis found the strength to forgive after feeling more worth or value?
4. Is there someone you need to forgive? Perhaps you can find His strength or Grace to do so by asking Him to show you how valuable and worthy you are to Him.



To learn more about belongingness, worth and competence as a foundation for legitimacy, listen to the album "The New Spiritual Authority: Intimacy" by Arthur Burk at theSLG.com.



Gangs often provide counterfeit legitimacy built on belongingness, worth and competency. They are perceived as meeting every need, highly inclusive, and will train people to fight well. It is my hope and dream that many righteous communities rise up to meet these three basic needs for true legitimacy based on unconditional love.

Legitimacy in Community

Building a strong and intimate relationship with God can take time and requires that we be reconciled with Him at many levels:

- My spirit must know at an emotional level that I am always loved and received by God
- My soul and body must also know at an emotional level and I am loved and received by God
- I must be reconciled to my spirit, soul and body, as His beautiful and perfect creation
- I must be reconciled to my past, present and future, securely rooted in His love

When this reconciliation happens, we find a legitimacy with God, an emotional confidence that I have a right to be with God, receive all He wants to give me and do whatever He has called me to do.

Once we know this legitimacy with God, we can experience that same legitimacy with people. We don't have to earn or prove our value to others or edit ourselves to fit the expectations of others. We are comfortable in our own skin and we rest securely in our **personal authority** to be in any community and for any purpose that God sends us.

Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart [kidneys] instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure... Psalm 16:5-9

A legitimacy lie says that we are legitimate when we can do something or have something another cannot do or have.

Counterfeit Legitimacies

A counterfeit legitimacy is any feeling of legitimacy that does not come directly from God. When we depend on legitimacy from sources other than God, we are not free to follow wherever God is leading when He directs us to step outside what others consider legitimate. In fact, we will never grow to complete maturity as sons of God able to build the Kingdom when we don't have permission to grow past others who legitimize us or our own beliefs in what makes us legitimate.

As we explore what makes us feel legitimate, know that our legitimacy in one area of our lives (for example, I am legitimate in my family when I take care of people) might be based on a totally different foundation than in another area of our lives (for example, I am legitimate at work when my boss brags on me). Father God sometimes will remove a counterfeit legitimacy (we cannot meet the needs of our family or our boss berates us) so that we can see the need to build a better, more righteous legitimacy in Christ alone.



Leah Discovered Her True Source of Legitimacy in Community

Jacob had two wives, Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29-30), and Jacob loved Rachel but not Leah. Leah passionately struggled to gain legitimacy in community by gaining her husband's love. Her legitimacy lie was, "I am legitimate when my husband loves me." When God saw that Leah was not loved, He opened her womb so she could have children, and Rachel was barren. Notice the names Leah gave her first three sons:

- Reuben means misery. Leah said the Lord had seen her misery and maybe now her husband would love her.
- Simeon means one who hears. She said the Lord heard she was not loved.
- Levi means attached. She said maybe now my husband will attach to me.

But with the fourth son, she turned from looking for legitimacy from her husband's love, and she said, "This time I will praise the Lord!" She named her son Judah, which means praise!

Leah finally realized that she might never have her husband's love, no matter what she did to earn it. She *did* realize that God Himself was favoring her! She had His love and His attention! She took her eyes off her husband to meet her need for legitimacy and put her eyes on God. She began to praise Him for what she did have, laying aside what she didn't have.

There's no indication her husband ever learned to love her. But we can see her true legitimacy growing by looking at what she named her later children:

- Gad means good fortune.
- Asher means happy.
- Issachar means reward.
- Zebulun means honor.
- Dinah means justice.

For thought and discussion:

1. The power of this story is how God favored her with children even before she decided to root her legitimacy in God alone. God always has a way of compensating us for deep loss. As Leah responded to His favor in a righteous way, He chose Judah as the son of Jacob and Leah in the bloodline of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Christ followers, you and I are part of the Tribe of Judah, the Lion of Judah! How does this fact affect our understanding of true legitimacy?
2. Leah sought after her husband's love. What counterfeit legitimacies might you have sought after in the past?
3. The principle of compensation assures us that when we are weak, He is strong. Who do you know who has a significant personal weakness, such as a mental or physical handicap? What treasure has God put in them to compensate for this weakness?
4. This entire book is a work in growing in true legitimacy. Based on what you've learned in this chapter, describe a personal strategy to help you grow into true legitimacy. Expect to add to and revise your strategy throughout the book.

C. S. Lewis in "The Weight of Glory" writes about our struggle for legitimacy as our passion to be in the innermost circle. He said, "As long as you are governed by that desire you will never get what you want. You are trying to peel an onion; if you succeed there will be nothing left. Until you conquer the fear of being an outsider, an outsider you will remain." May we all conquer the fear of being an outsider!

Concept 1.9 We Must Choose to Grow and Build

Why are we here? As we begin to seek God and find His truths in the Word, we realize we have a purpose in life (also called our birthright) and we want to get there. To possess our birthrights, we must both grow and build. By God's design, we must receive *from* Him before we build *with* Him. We cannot give what we've not first received. The process of cyclic receiving and giving is shown by the pink arrows in Figure 1-11.



Figure 1-11 As we move through repeated cycles of finding truth in God's word, we grow through intimacy with God and are able to build His Kingdom

Many of us don't realize our need to grow through intimacy with Him until we try to build His Kingdom and fall short of our expectations (see Figure 1-12). When we fail to build all the magnificent Kingdom of God we envision, we realize a need to grow. Our felt need to build motivates us to embrace the productive pain to seek a deeper relationship with Him, where we lean more deeply into His truths and grow through knowing Him better.

"Trials and obstacles in life are inevitable, but growing and maturing through them is optional." Author unknown

Growing and building are choices, and some choose not to grow or build. Two situations that can stop our growth and stop our being more and more effective as builders of the Kingdom are:

- We don't know how to grow or we decide growth is too painful or difficult and we stop growing. We might even stop trying to build the Kingdom.
- We are able to accomplish something in the Kingdom and settle for that even though it is not all we dream of.

Earned Trust and Earned Authority

To continue to grow through intimacy with Him and build His Kingdom, we need more dominion as sons of God. Jesus teaches us that His trust in us is earned, and earned trust leads to earned authority. Here is one of many examples in the Gospels:



Figure 1-12 When we are not yet mature, what we build is small compared to what we envision

Building the Kingdom is expressing our dominion as sons of God. As we grow through intimacy, we are able to express more of His dominion.

Anne Hamilton defines authority as the delegated right to uphold the word and will of God.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. Matthew

24:45-47

As children of God and human beings, we all have some innate authority in our lives. In addition, as we grow and mature, we earn more authority to help others.

We earn God's trust and resulting authority when we make right responses to pain. Two types of earned authority are:

- **Moral authority.** Our personal experiences of trusting God that we can share with others to help them see what is possible in their own similar situations.
- **Spiritual authority.** The standing we have before God that moves His heart to intervene for others as we celebrate with Him what He has done for us. We also gain authority to displace evil in a person's life. It has been said that spiritual authority is:
 - When God listens to us and responds.
 - When the devil listens to us and responds.

An example of earned trust and authority is when someone has learned to rely on God for supernatural help to stop smoking. That person is in a much better position to encourage a friend to rely on God and embrace the pain needed to stop smoking than a person who has never smoked. Through their own victory over smoking, they know God better and have earned God's trust and authority to pray for their addicted friends.



A Pastor Is Honest with God About His Legitimacy

Kent Mattox was led by God to open a new church. In brutal honesty, he told God, "I'm probably the most insecure pastor You've got. But I know You want to deliver me. I ask You to pour out Your people and provisions until I don't care and until You can deliver me." As the church grew to several hundred in only a few short months, Kent realized his insecurity had most likely caused God to make the church explode. When he heard about a church that closed its doors for the month of July as a seventh month Sabbath rest, God said, "I want to show you that you don't need money to build a church."

Kent admitted he was scared that, at the end of July, there would be no people and no money. But, as he obeyed God, he told the church:

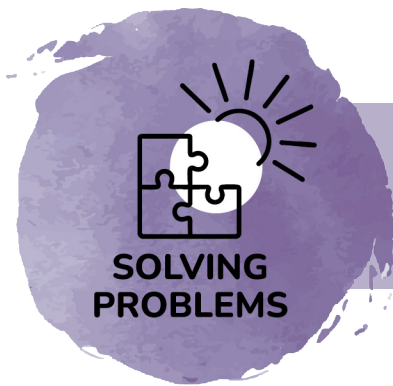
1. If you came from another church and did not leave in good standing, go back and clean that up. Come back with a clean slate.
2. God might tell you to take what you've received here and go bless another church. Be free to do that.
3. Some need to take a break and enjoy family, coffee and the Sunday paper.

Near the end of July, money was running quite low when a lady dropped off a big check that paid all the bills for the month. At the first service in August, all the people returned plus an extra 140!

For every Sabbath July since then, God was faithful to perform many financial and spiritual miracles. The momentum and excitement when people returned in August after a month of rest was enough to propel them through the entire year.

For thought and discussion:

1. How did God respond to Kent's brutal honesty about his legitimacy issues?
2. Describe the legitimacy with God and community that Kent was able to develop by closing his church for a month.
3. What earned authority did Kent achieve by closing the church?



Throughout this book, you learn to solve problems by identifying and applying the principles of God. In this section, we demonstrate the process of problem solving in four steps, which we apply many times in this book.

The four steps to solve a problem:

1. Collect data.
2. Analyze the data looking for repeating patterns.
3. Identify one or more principles from the patterns.
Recall that a principle is a universal, non-optional, cause and effect relationship.
4. Apply the principle to the problem at hand and then to other problems in the future.

Let's take a very simple example to see how the four steps work:

1. Here's the data: Red, blue, chair, sofa, yellow, green, lamp, table, purple...
2. What is the pattern? Two colors are listed, followed by two pieces of furniture.
3. What is the principle? Alternating lists of two colors and two pieces of furniture.
4. Applying the principle, what will be the next item listed? A color.

Problem 1.1 Build Legitimacy in Those You Lead

A leader or mentor needs to be able to recognize that someone they lead (a child or adult) has not matured in one or more of the stages of growth and know how to help this person mature through the missing stage. The first stage of growth is belongingness, which builds in a person a deep sense of legitimacy or personal authority to be here.

In this team activity, you learn how Jesus interacted with His apostles to build legitimacy by establishing in them feelings of belongingness, worth and competence. You learn how to solve the problem of someone not feeling legitimate before God and in community by exploring how Jesus did it:

1. **Form a team of three or four people.**
2. **Collect data.** Each team member selects one of the four Gospels. Don't use the same Gospel as does another team member. Read or search through and make a list of each time Jesus interacted with His twelve disciples. Fill in the first two columns with a reference and state the interaction.

Reference	Interaction	Purpose
John 1:38	Jesus invites Andrew to spend the day with Him in His home.	Worth
John 1:42	Jesus gives Simon his new name, Peter.	Worth
...	...	...

3. **Analyze the data.** Working as a team, go through each of your lists and identify the purpose of each interaction, filling in the last column of the table:
 - Consistently meeting needs: **Belongingness**
 - Inclusion, often through communication: **Worth**
 - Command a task that stretches the person: **Competence**

Make sure you all three agree on the purpose of each interaction. If you see more than one purpose for an interaction, pick the one you think was His primary purpose.
4. **Identify the principles.** Working as a team, examine the data and your analysis looking for consistent patterns that we can use to identify a principle that Jesus used to build belongingness, worth and competence. Collect as many observations of principles as you can. For example:
 - The data: Jesus built competence in His apostles by giving them tasks.
 - The pattern: All tasks Jesus assigned required supernatural resources.
 - The principle: God always provides the resources needed to complete a task He assigns us.
5. **Scripture to support the principle.** Find a Scripture that supports each principle. For example, one Scripture to support the above principle that God supplies resources to do His tasks is Philippians 4:19-20.
6. **Apply a principle to a new situation.** In the problems that follow, apply the principles you have just identified. You might need to return to your data and analysis to look for principles you might have overlooked.

Problem 1.2 Legitimacy Lies and Counterfeit Legitimacy

Dorothy works as an administrative assistant to the CEO of a construction firm. No matter how hard she works, she can never seem to please her boss. He criticizes her performance and reminds her daily of what she did not do, rarely praising her for what she did well. Rather than recognizing the boss is a blamer and predator and she needs to fire him (look for a new job), Dorothy beats herself up each day for not performing well.

Here are some legitimacy lies we can believe that lead to a counterfeit legitimacy:

- I am legitimate when people praise and acknowledge me.
- I am legitimate when I can solve your problems.
- I am legitimate when God answers my prayers.
- I am legitimate when I have friends who love me and care for me.
- I am legitimate when I know things or do things that you don't know or can't do.
- I am legitimate when I have more stuff or have a better life than you have.
- I am legitimate when God speaks to me more than He speaks to you.
- I am legitimate when I'm a leader and others look to me for their legitimacy.
- I am legitimate when I have an impressive title or degree.
- I am legitimate when I'm associated with the right people.

Questions and activities:

1. Of these legitimacy lies, which lies cause us to see ourselves as a commodity?
2. Of these legitimacy lies or others you can identify, which lies is Dorothy agreeing with to establish her legitimacy?
3. Do you think Dorothy's boss wants to be the one to legitimize her? Why or why not?
4. How can counterfeit legitimacies keep us from growing past people who try to legitimize us?
5. Self-blame can keep us from facing the real core problem and solving it at its root. State the core problem in her boss as best you can.
6. State the core problem in Dorothy as best you can.
7. Using the principles Jesus used to establish legitimacy in His apostles, propose a solution to each of the two core problems.
8. List three things Dorothy can do to reject a counterfeit legitimacy and embrace her true legitimacy based on the love of God.
9. Dorothy has come to you for help. You don't want to overwhelm her with your solutions. What are five questions you can ask her to steer her in the direction of uncovering the root of her problems and finding solutions?

Problem 1.3 Counterfeit Legitimacy by Title and Association

Read in 1 Kings 13 the story of the man of God sent from Judah to Israel who lost his life on that assignment.

Questions and activities:

1. What did the man of God do that was in disobedience to God?
2. Why do you think the man of God was deceived by the old prophet?
3. Fundamentally, which feeling did the man of God lack, belongingness, worth or competence, that led him to be deceived?
4. What statement or title of legitimacy was the man of God seeking?
5. What association do you think the man of God might have been seeking, which led him to be deceived?
6. What could the man of God have said to the old prophet when the prophet invited him to dinner that would have pleased God?
7. What counterfeit legitimacy would he have had to deny to please God in this situation?
8. If you were discipling this man of God, what strategy would you use to build in him the legitimacy he craved? Model your strategy after a strategy Jesus used to disciple His apostles.
9. Search deep into your own life for something you have done or said to attain legitimacy from a person or group that you admire. What is the legitimacy lie that you believed caused you to do that? (I would be legitimate if...)
10. Ask Holy Spirit for a story or character in the Bible where this same legitimacy lie was believed. Can you relate to the character in the story?
11. What heart-felt changes can you make to move your heart toward more genuine legitimacy before God and man?
12. What can you ask God to do for you to help you build more legitimacy with Him?

Problem 1.4 Embracing Productive Pain

Servants and slaves want to avoid all pain and tend to look for the fast and easy fixes in life or simply decide to live with their nonproductive pain. True sons of God know that productive pain is necessary for growth and transformation and are willing to pay the price.

For example, we can put up with a dripping faucet running up our water bill for months or years because we don't want to pay a plumber to fix the problem. Paying a high water bill is nonproductive pain. Paying the plumber to fix the problem is productive pain.

Questions and activities:

1. Is feeling illegitimate in community a source of nonproductive pain or productive pain? Explain your answer.
2. Are facing and renouncing the legitimacy lies we have believed a source of nonproductive pain or productive pain? Explain your answer.
3. Suppose a leader you admire de-legitimizes you because you failed to meet their expectations. Describe how this source of pain can be nonproductive or productive.

Problem 1.5 Building Belongingness in Community

You've just started a new job as assistant manager in an ice cream shop. After a few days, you realize that the staff is struggling to do community well and you're beginning to feel you do not belong. Rather than giving up on this job and starting a new job search, you decide to take this opportunity to learn the skill of building belongingness in community. To get started, you consider these six principles and activities that can help build belongingness:

- **Enjoy my joy.** People grow in belongingness when they can identify what gives them joy and learn to enjoy and savor what gives joy.
- **Celebrate.** Celebrating past and current achievements, both individually and corporately, helps bring a community together and builds belongingness. Celebrating essence, not based on what we do, is the foundation of belongingness.
- **Anchor truths.** We all need to have identified a few truths that we can always count on as anchors when life is not going well. For example, "God has a plan for my life."
- **"I'm glad to see you."** We all want to feel welcomed when we first walk into a room. Faces, words and behavior can make us feel welcomed or unwanted.
- **Physical stability.** Furniture, schedules and food can all be used in moderation to create an atmosphere of stability, which can help us feel that we belong.
- **Heritage.** Belongingness can be established in the generations by sharing the backstories and history of our family, school, or business. New family members, student or employees feel more a part of an organization when they know and celebrate its heritage.

Questions and activities:

Jesus often taught by asking questions. Because you don't know the staff well and have not yet gained enough respect to make major changes in how the ice cream shop is run, you decide to teach and build by asking questions:

1. What questions can you ask an employee when they are within ten minutes of finishing their shift?
2. Anne is the store manager and you know her birthday is coming up next week. What questions can you ask her best friend at the store to encourage her to celebrate Anne on her birthday?

3. John, the store owner, stops by a couple times a month to check on the store. What three questions can you ask John to help discover the heritage of the store? How can you best use the answers to these questions?
4. What anchor truth might you embrace about your job that you can share with other staff members? How can you share it with a question?
5. When it's your turn to lead a shift, what can you do or questions you can ask to help staff realize that you are glad to see them?
6. What simple things can you do during your shift to help staff members feel celebrated and valued?
7. You notice that schedules are not consistent from week to week, and this often creates stress with the staff because they don't know the hours they will work until Saturday for the following week. How can you approach the problem with Anne and John? What suggestions might you make? What reason might you give to convince them that stable schedules are good for business?
8. How can you celebrate essence and a person's right to belong to community regardless of their performance?

Problem 1.6

Renounce Legitimacy Lies and Build True Legitimacy

Legitimacy in community comes from knowing and experiencing God as a loving Father. Only then can He build into us the emotions of belongingness, worth, and competence which satisfy our feelings of being legitimate in a community.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3-4

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

We have the dignity of knowing we are chosen by God and these good works were all written in the book our Father wrote about us. Here is our true legitimacy in community that no one can take from us.

Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all [my] days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began. Psalm 139:16 CSB

This verse does not indicate a few major good works, but rather speaks of *all* the days of our lives. Every day we walk with God in true legitimacy as His son or daughter.

Questions and activities:

1. What *everyday* activities might be written by your Father in your book that you are now doing or plan to do?
2. What *major* activities that you are now doing or hope or expect to do might be written in your book?
3. What preparations are you working on now to prepare for these good works?
4. What legitimacy lies have you been tempted to believe about yourself that oppose what you believe is written in your book?

Many of us have never given much thought to the good works God designed for us to do. In the next chapter, we lay a foundation for discovering these assignments by looking at how our Father uniquely designed us. Our design perfectly matches the good works He has assigned to us.

Problem 1.7 Build Belongingness for a New Family Member

You and your family have decided to take Susan into your home. Susan turned 18 the fall of her senior year in high school, and her parents decided they no longer needed to provide a home for her because she is legally an adult. She plans to graduate from high school, work full-time during the summer months, and go to college in the fall with plans to become a physician. She is an excellent student, stays out of trouble, smokes to calm her nerves, and works at a local restaurant on evenings and weekends. You want Susan to feel like she belongs to your family and can thrive in the family.

Christway Counseling Center (www.christwaycounseling.com) has identified 12 basic needs in a family. You can access the list on the Forms and Resources page on their website. Here is a brief description of the 12 needs:

1. **Acceptance.** The most basic need in a family is to know we are willingly accepted by another even when we mess up. We are accepted because God put us here.
2. **Admonition.** To know that we can count on a family member to gently warn us about potential problems helps build our confidence that we can be competent as a member of the family.
3. **Affection.** Physical touch, even a gentle tap on the shoulder, says someone cares about us and wants a close relationship.
4. **Appreciation.** Simple expressions of appreciation and thankfulness help us know that we are welcomed and wanted as a family member. We need to feel celebrated.
5. **Affirmation.** We all need to know that someone has a favorable opinion of us and is willing to say so.
6. **Attention.** We each need to feel that someone in the family is interested in our projects and goals.
7. **Comfort.** When we hurt, it's important another person in the family tenderly acknowledges that we are in pain.
8. **Encouragement.** We need family members to believe in us and our goals enough to urge us to keep going when the going is tough.
9. **Instruction.** We all need someone to model and train us in how to thrive in community.

- 10. Respect.** We each need to be treated as though we are valuable and important to the family, even when we mess up.
- 11. Security.** To rest and be at peace in the family, we cannot live on high alert or fear that we might be physically or emotionally harmed or kicked out at any time.
- 12. Support.** A family member sometimes needs another to help carry the load, assisting as appropriate for the situation.

Do the following:

1. In the list of 12, categorize each need in one of three groups that build legitimacy through belongingness, worth or competence.
2. Look at your family and how you do life together. Describe how well you think your family meets each of the 12 family needs.
3. Of the 12 needs, list three needs that you believe your family does best.
4. Of the 12 needs, list three needs you believe the family should work on the most.
5. Based on the 12 needs, describe how successful you think your family would be at welcoming Susan into the family and meeting her needs.
6. To admonish Susan, what might you say to warn her to avoid causing potential problems in the family? Do you need to make a list of what she should avoid?
7. To encourage Susan, what instructions might you give her to help her fit into the family with joy and grace?
8. A written social contract can help establish some ground rules to help Susan fit into the family without too much stress on everyone. Write a social contract for every family member and Susan to sign. For example, one item in the social contract might be “No smoking inside the house.” (An admonition to avoid problems.) Another might be “Everyone takes turns washing the dishes and taking out the garbage.” (An instruction for success.)
9. Make a plan as to how your family might better meet one of the needs in the list and discuss your plan with your family. You might want to adjust the plan based on the family discussion.
10. What if anything did the family decide to do to implement the plan?

Problem 1.8 A Problem You Want to Solve

What is a minor or major problem in your life that you want to solve? You might begin this process of identifying a problem by asking God what is a problem He would like you to solve. State the problem as accurately as can. What data do you need to collect to help you solve the problem? What patterns can you observe from the data? What principles are involved? Can you solve the problem by applying these principles? Be sure to ask God for help and guidance as you work.

If you cannot solve the problem, perhaps the tools gained in later chapters will give you the skills and wisdom you need. Keep a record in your journal of progress made toward a solution.



These projects are designed to help us grow ourselves and unpack our spirits so that we are better able to grow those we lead.

Growth Project 1.1 Evaluate Yourself as a Servant or Son of God

In the book of Exodus, God told Moses how he intended to bring the nation of Israel into their birthright with His seven “I will’s”:

“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.’” Exodus 6:6-8

But when Moses told the people what God had promised, they would not listen because of their small spirits and cruel oppression. In response, God devotes the entire book of Numbers to tell the stories of how He grew a nation of slaves and servants raised in Egypt into a nation of sons able to possess their land birthright in Canaan. Some of the characteristics of slaves and sons are listed in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Slaves consume what they can and sons build beyond themselves

Slaves, Servants or Consumers	Sons or Builders
I work to earn God's love and belong in community.	I know I belong to God and community based solely on His unconditional love for me, and I know my needs will be met.
I see myself as a commodity. What I like is not that important.	I see myself as a person. I know what I like and how I am designed with purpose and joy.
I obey when it is required. Tell me what to do. I reserve the right to sync or not sync to others.	I value the blessing of obedience. I take initiative. I do well even when my supervisor is not looking because I know it's right. I sync to my leaders, and I expect my followers to sync to me.
I avoid pain whenever I can. I want a free ride. I deserve it. The consequences of my wrongdoing are not that big a deal. I hope to get by with it.	I voluntarily embrace productive pain. Cause and effect: I recognize that every effect has a cause.
The end justifies the means. In general, I will go along with what others wants to do. I don't have the resources I need to be successful. Others have these resources and won't give them to me.	I will stand up for what is right even when I am put out of community. I don't generally look outside myself for solutions to my problems. I know the solutions are inside me to be unpacked.
I expect to be paid well for my skills, and I will do as I am told.	I see my value in an organization is more in my potential I can unpack than in the skills I currently possess. I look at myself and other people and see many resources we are not yet using. I want to unpack them in me and in others.
I see myself as a stand-alone. I often see myself as a loser and follower.	I see myself as a life-giving part of this tribe. I usually see myself as a winner and leader.

The book of Exodus describes the heart of God's people as slaves when they first came out of Egypt, and this book is about growing us from slaves to sons. At the beginning of each chapter, in the Principle section, is a Scripture from Exodus to help us understand the heart of a slave being transformed to the heart of a son.

Do the following:

1. In a table similar to the one started in Table 1-3, collect the seven Scriptures from the book of Exodus found in the Principles section of each of the seven chapters. Also list the corresponding characteristics of a slave and the "I will" of God that overcomes.

Table 1-3 The nature of slaves as described in seven verses in the Book of Exodus

Book chapter	Scripture	Nature of a slave	God promises "I will"	Do you need to grow in this area?
1	"So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, 'What are we to drink?'" Exodus 15:24	I lack resources. I don't expect my needs will be met.	"I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians."	
2...	...	...	...	...

2. In the last column in Table 1-3, evaluate yourself in this stage of growth.
3. Which stages of growth will you work on as you work your way through this book? Try to identify exactly what you expect to learn about God and His ways that will grow you to this level of maturity as a son of God. How do you expect your relationship with God will change?

Fundamentally, the yoke of the Egyptians is a poverty mindset that God is not enough and I am not enough. This up-side-down thinking causes us to see Jesus as weak and less than the real Jesus we need and causes us to work hard to make up for our intrinsic lack or give up trying because of our powerlessness.



To learn more about how to identify the stages of growth that are missing in our lives, see the Growth Project 5.3 near the end of Chapter 5 "Assessing Stages of Growth."

Growth Project 1.2

A Treasure Hunt for Resources

*It's not so much the favor
or anointing on our lives
that allows us to possess our
birthright, but the authority
we earn through overcoming
the struggles of the journey.*

In the book of Numbers, the first thing God told Moses to do was to take a census of all the men in Israel able to serve in Israel's army. A slave doesn't see the resources they have, and God as a good Father wanted His children to see how well equipped they were.

Suppose you have a friend who is having difficulty identifying the internal resources and assets they have available. This problem-solving activity guides you through a treasure hunt to find these resources. God puts inside us resources and assets through two ways: (1) our innate design and (2) the moral and spiritual authority we earn throughout our journey of life.

Do the following:

1. Choose a partner. Ask your partner to tell you their life story as you take notes. Ask probing questions looking for the choices or voluntary actions your partner made throughout their life.
2. Create a table with four columns and collect your data into the first two columns, like this:

Situation or time range	Choice or action	Good/Bad/Both	Design (yes or no)
Went on first date and realized the girl did not have high moral standards	Did not ask her for another date		
Entered high school	Signed up for football		
Entered college	Played in a jazz band on weekends		

3. To begin analyzing the data, fill in the third column. Did your partner consider the choice a good one, bad one, or both good and bad, considering what they knew at the time?
4. Looking just at the good choices, what principles has your partner embraced? When we make good choices that affect how we live (cause and effect), we build earned authority to apply the underlying principles in our lives. With this earned authority, we can influence others for good. For example:

“My partner made a choice to play football, a tough team sport that teaches multiple principles of perseverance and teamwork.”

5. Make up three stories where your partner can use their earned authority for good. For example:
 “Sally is struggling to keep up her schoolwork. My partner can describe to Sally how difficult it was to practice football in the sweltering August heat and how wonderful it felt when all that hard work paid off and the team won their first game.”
6. Go back through all your partner’s choices, good or bad, and fill in the fourth column. Did the choice uncover part of your partner’s design? Yes or no.
7. Summarize what you have uncovered about your partner’s design. For example
 “My partner has a love and talent for music and spontaneous performance.”

Growth Project 1.3

Celebrate God with Thankfulness and Gratitude

We all need to see our good Father God as a good provider. This project is designed to build belongingness and heal our brains by applying the strategy given in the book of Romans:

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Romans 1:21

Paul teaches here that people who do not express gratitude and thankfulness toward God will think empty thoughts and their hearts will become unintelligent. To prevent this brain rot and a dark heart that has little understanding, we must develop a lifestyle of gratitude and thankfulness toward God for all the good things He gives us and does for us. When we do so, we can expect not only a healthy brain and heart, but also to know His will for us:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

When God gives us His plans or directions and our minds and hearts can only think empty (barren or unproductive) thoughts, we cannot hear His will, test it, or approve it. The thoughts from God never land, or if they do land, we dismiss them as being too wonderful for us with our rotting brains and small thinking and lack of understanding.

Design a plan to express thankfulness and gratitude each day. Decide where, how and with whom you intend to say thank you to God and tell Him and others how grateful you are for what He has done that day. Share your plan with your discussion group, class, spouse or family. Then work the plan.

Growth Project 1.4 Create a Creed for Your Organization

A creed is a formal statement of your core values or beliefs. In an organization, it can serve as a written social contract of how the organization does life together. In Figure 1-13, you see a creed based on the seven stages of growth, written for a school. The children recite the creed at the beginning of each school day and work toward following the expectations in the creed they have all agreed to.



Figure 1-13 A sample creed based on the seven stages of growth and principles of Wisdom

Using this creed as a beginning point, do the following:

1. Read the “Here We Grow” sections near the beginning of each chapter to understand the seven stages of growth. Discuss with your organization (family, school or business) how you want to do life together to create an atmosphere of growth and transformation.
2. Write your own creed so that everyone can agree on it and commit to it.
3. Reciting the creed each day can set the atmosphere for the organization and change the culture.



The spirit projects at the end of each chapter are designed to enlarge your spirit, help you unpack the design of your spirit and learn to dialog with your spirit so that you can better know and synchronize with God.

Spirit Project 1.1 Is There a Spirit World?

Read Psalm 18 and Psalm 23. David is spirit aware and writes about this awareness in many of the Psalms. How would you describe his spirit world in Psalm 18? In Psalm 23? Can you describe or draw a picture of his spirit world at one point in these Scriptures?

In Luke 22:29, Jesus said, “I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me.” In John 18:36, Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” The Kingdom of God is in the spirit realm and so are our kingdoms. As profound as it might sound, we are expected to rule and reign in the spirit world. As you work your way through these Spirit Projects in the book, my hope is you will be able to see and experience your spirit world and learn to rule and reign in it. Can you describe or draw a picture of what you see when you ask Jesus to show you this realm?

Spirit Project 1.2 Blessing the Spirits of Those You Lead

Throughout this course, you will get to know your spirit better and learn to talk with your spirit and the spirits of others, be led by your spirit, and learn from your spirit. In this chapter, we begin the process by blessing your spirit and the spirits of others.

Do the following:

1. Go to Arthur Burk’s website at theSLG.com and search under Free Stuff, Audio, where you will find several albums on blessing your spirit. Download and listen to one of these albums, inviting your spirit to come to the front and receive these blessings.
2. Invite your spirit to come to the front and, in your own words, bless your spirit. As you speak your blessings, consider what you know that God wants your spirit to know and do. Develop the habit of blessing your spirit each day. A good time to bless your spirit is right before you go to sleep or wake up.
3. Write a blessing for the spirits of all those you lead. If you lead a family, business or classroom, write the blessings based on goals you have for your organization. Read the blessings aloud each morning. If the people in your organization are not ready to hear you bless their spirits, you can bless them in private.
4. Watch and record the changes you see that reflect your blessings.



To learn to bless your spirit,
listen to “Blessing Your Spirit:
Precious Daughter” or “Blessing
Your Spirit: Beloved Son”
at theSLG.com



Spirit Project 1.3 Receiving Father’s Love

Hebrews 12 refers to Father God as the Father of our spirits. When we realize that God is spirit and we are spirits made by Him and like Him and coming from Him, it’s easier for us to receive His love. Father hungers to receive us into His arms and love on us as His dear children of light. If you have never experienced the emotions of being received into the arms of your loving Father God, ask Jesus to help you.

Settle yourself down in a calm place and fix your eyes on Jesus. In this place of quietness with Him, ask Jesus to take you to the Father to receive His love. The feeling of experiencing this unconditional love is beyond any love the earth can offer and is sufficient to heal an orphan heart. Take the time to soak in this love often.

Spirit Project 1.4 My Essence

When I first became a Christ follower, I saw Jesus reach His hands into God expressed as the eternal River of God flowing as liquid light. Then He brought up a large double-handful of this essence of God and formed me as solid and finite light that shone with divine brilliance. I knew then I was from God, of God. Ask God to show you the essence of your spirit. How do you see your spirit? What is your spirit made of?

Where to Go from Here?

With Chapter 1 as your foundation, I suggest, rather than reading the book sequentially from cover to cover, you search the book, looking for the content that best helps meet your current needs. Figure 1-14 can get you started, and so can the Table of Contents. And don't forget the forums at *FromHisTable.com* where you can meet up with others to ask questions and process solutions.

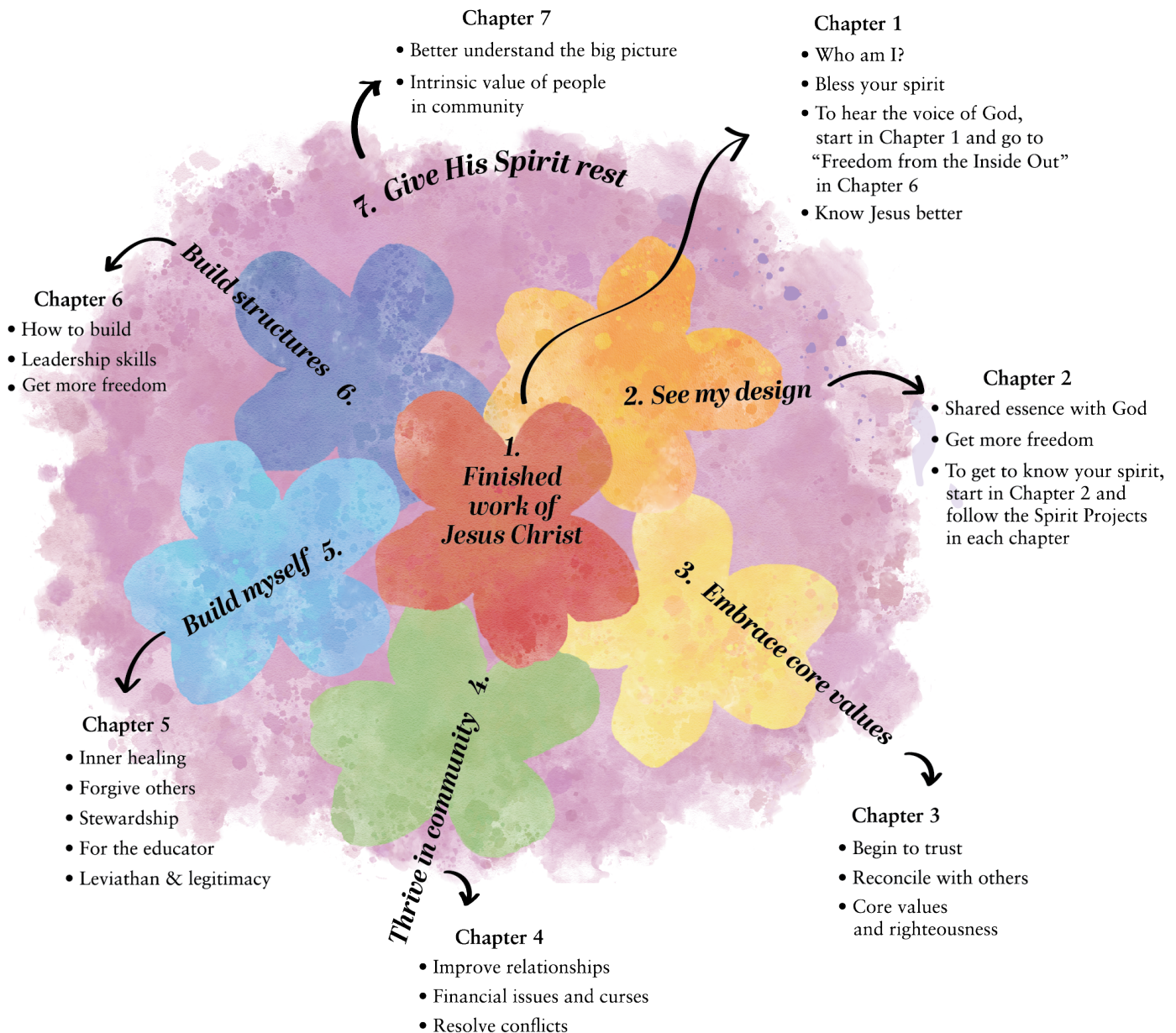


Figure 1-14 Explore the book for what you need next



"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27