

Walk *in* Freedom

30 Days to Understanding God's Design
for Your Money, Identity and Purpose





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Introduction

Born out of a love for God's word and the wisdom contained in it, Crown began its ministry helping Americans manage their money and businesses according to biblical principles. For years, Crown has had the opportunity to take these principles around the world to bring freedom and flourishing to millions. Through the continuous spread of His principles, through many ministry experiences, we've realized that these principles serve people on a personal level, but also solve significant issues on a macro level, such as poverty. We believe God has given us a solution to end personal and generational poverty, founded on the idea that poverty isn't a resource problem, it's a stewardship problem.

Our newest program, *Restoration Path* is designed specifically for hurting individuals and marginalized communities who are struggling to overcome poverty. By helping them understand the answers to 5 key questions ...

1. *Who am I?*
2. *Where am I from?*
3. *Why am I here?*
4. *What do I have?*
5. *How do I use what I have?*

... we are leading these individuals on a journey from deep financial and spiritual pain onto a path of true freedom and flourishing.

But because God is the author of truth, His principles for stewardship are true for everyone. From the poorest nations to the wealthiest individuals, we are all called to be faithful stewards of what He has given us. So regardless of where you are in your journey, we hope God will bless you beyond measure as you answer these critically important questions for yourself over the next 30 days. It is our prayer that you will encounter Him in the pages that follow as you explore His Word and apply it to your life; and that as He guides you through the answers to these 5 questions, you will experience *"life that is truly life"* (1 Timothy 6:19) as you Walk in Freedom.

*Who
Am I?*

Day 1

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”

Genesis 1:27 NIV

Do you ever feel like a failure? Do you often compare yourself to others and conclude that you don't measure up? Today's verse reveals that no matter how we mistakenly view ourselves, we are created in God's image. What we think doesn't change this truth. God made us in His likeness and created us to be like Him. Nothing else in creation was made in God's image. This means we're perfectly designed to worship God and to bear His image to all of creation. But that's not all.

When we were in a fallen condition because of Adam and Eve's sin, God went one step further. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bear our sins on the cross and to close the chasm that separated us from Him. This merciful act is summed up in one of the most well-known verses in the Bible: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16 NIV). One of the most beautiful words in this passage is “whoever.” Just as all bear God's image, salvation is open to all who believe. So, the next time you don't feel you measure up, remember that God, who made the planets, galaxies, and stars, thinks you're important. And He values you so much that He not only wants

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a personal relationship with you in this life, He has cleared the way for you to live forever with Him in Heaven!

PRAY: *What aspects of yourself do you feel separate you from God or make you unworthy? Turn those over in prayer to Him, and listen to what He may have you change or what assurance He is offering you today.*

If we believe we are made in the image of God, we must extend this amazing belief to all others. Are there people, whether they are specific individuals in your life or maybe certain groups of people, who you struggle to see as being made in the image of God? Bring this conflict to God in prayer.

Day 2

“So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded”

Exodus 36:1 NIV

Who are Bezalel and Oholiab? Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, their worship centered on a place called the Tabernacle. It was a portable sanctuary that served as God’s earthly dwelling among His people. Someone had to build this structure and everything associated with the Israelites’ worship of God. Two of the key people involved in this project were Bezalel and Oholiab. Exodus 35 tells us that God filled them with the skills necessary to complete this important work.

In the same way, God has given you an assortment of talents. You have combinations of strengths, interests, and gifts that fit together in a general pattern. Crown’s Career Direct assessment can help you discover the abilities God has given you. As you learn more about yourself, you begin to understand why some tasks come naturally and others are more difficult. With this information, you can make informed career decisions now and

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re-evaluate your career goals as you move through the seasons of life, including retirement. But your skills aren't just for work. As in every other area of life, it's important to lay your personality on the altar as a sacrifice to be used in honoring the Lord. In the same way that He used the gifts He gave to Bezalel and Oholiab, He can use the gifts He has given you to further His Kingdom within your church, your community, and maybe, throughout the world!

PRAY: *Weaknesses do not make you weak. Take a moment to praise God for the gifts He did not give you, and thank Him for shaping you to be exactly who He designed you to be.*

Day 3

***“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else,
and live righteously,
and he will give you everything you need”***

Matthew 6:33 NLT

In 2013, the journal *Motivation and Emotion* published a report by a group of researchers who wanted to know how changes in materialistic desires related to changes in well-being. The researchers conducted three studies, and their findings supported the hypothesis that “people’s well-being improves as they place relatively less importance on materialistic goals and values.” God warned us about the dangers of materialism a long time ago. 1 Timothy 6:9 says, “*Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction*” (NIV).

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus offers an alternative to worrying about material possessions. It would be better for us, and for God’s Kingdom, if we heeded His advice. Larry Burkett, the co-founder of Crown Financial Ministries, observed that many Christians were so caught up in making more money and buying bigger and better things that they had lost most of their thrust to reach the unsaved world. He said that if believers were going to spend eternity in God’s presence and only about 70 years in this life, then obviously, they should be more concerned about what they will receive then than what

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they are getting now. Your identity is in Christ, not in what you possess. By following Him and seeking God's Kingdom above all else, you can make the most of your time and have your greatest impact as a believer during the years He has given you on this earth.

ACT: *God calls us to steward our resources, and sometimes that means we need to pass them on to others. Look around and select a good quality item that you feel called to give to someone else. Pray for the Lord to show you the best way to pass it on. You may have a loved one in need or you could donate it to a local non-profit.*

PRAY: *Pray these words, "God, you are more important than anything I own. Reorient me towards you and away from seeking out wealth and material comforts. Lord, you provide all I need. Let me find satisfaction in you alone."*

Day 4

“For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”

Psalm 139:13-14 NIV

Throughout history, artists from many countries created a broad range of works that are still with us today. Examples include Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and Vincent van Gogh’s *Starry Night*. James Whistler left us a famous portrait of his mother, and Rembrandt gave us a look at life in the 1600s in his painting *The Night Watch*. These artists, and many others like them, became known for the different ways in which they painted and for the particular subjects that they chose.

Now think about the days before you were born and imagine God, the Master Artist, creating an even more important work: You! God told Jeremiah the prophet, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart, I appointed you as a prophet to the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV). Just like Jeremiah, God also knew you before you were ever born. He not only formed you, He has a plan for your life, to give you hope and a future. So, the next time you hear a voice inside telling you that you don’t matter,

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remember that you matter to God. You are His unique creation, and that makes you special.

PRAY: *Pray these words, “Lord, thank you for carefully crafting me in my entirety. Help me to recognize your workmanship, and to love myself in the same way you have always loved me.*

ACT: *Care for yourself today. Society often makes self-care seem trite, reserving it for bubble baths or binge-watching television while eating a whole pizza by yourself. Take a moment to rest in God’s creation. If you cannot go outside, admire His beauty from your window, or imagine a place you once visited and admired. Allow everything else to fall aside, and indulge in the peace that can only come from God.*

Day 5

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’”

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

Israel’s first king was Saul. The Bible tells us, “as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others” (1 Samuel 10:23 NIV). But Saul’s height didn’t guarantee he’d do a great job. In fact, he ended up disobeying God, who rejected him as king. In Chapter 16 of 1 Samuel, we read how God sent the prophet Samuel to the household of a man named Jesse, who had eight sons. God had chosen one of these young men to be king instead of Saul, and when the first one passed before Samuel, the prophet was impressed. But God told Samuel not to consider this son’s appearance or height. In selecting Israel’s next king, God was looking at the heart. One by one, Jesse’s seven oldest sons passed before Samuel, but not one of them was the person God had chosen.

Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest. He is tending the sheep.” The youngest son’s name was

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David, and when he passed before Samuel, God said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." You may be looking at yourself and wondering how God could ever use you to make a difference for Him in this world. But God knows your heart. You were so important to Him that He gave His son to bear the penalty for your sins on the cross and to make a way for you to live with Him in Heaven forever. As a believer, you can make a difference because you have something valuable to share. So start telling others what God has done for you. And when they hear your testimony, the Holy Spirit can use your words to transform their lives both in this life and for all eternity!

PRAY: *This David who was selected for his heart is also the same man who committed adultery and murder. But God knew this from the start, and He still offered Him forgiveness and the opportunity to forever change His Kingdom. Do not allow your sins, past, present, or future, to allow you to give up on connecting to God or feeling worthy of His love. Pray, «God, you know all of me, the good and the bad. Thank you for your forgiveness. Move me where you want me to be, and mold me into the person you intended from the very beginning. Give me patience for myself in my mistakes, and help me to break free from sin.»*

Day 6

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you”

Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV

Moses spoke these words to the children of Israel as they prepared to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land. They would have to fight many battles, but he said in verse 3, *“The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you”* (NIV). Moses assured the Israelites that God was not going to forsake them, and He will not forsake His children today. Life is not always easy. In fact, there are times when life is hard. We may face problems on multiple fronts, and our situation can seem hopeless. During such trying circumstances, Satan will try to make us believe that God doesn’t care and has left us to face life alone.

But according to the Bible, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit lives within us. In 1 Corinthians 3:16, Paul wrote, *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”* (NKJV). We also have the assurance that Jesus is praying for us. Romans 8:34 says, *“Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us”* (NLT). In the meantime, God knows everything, including all our circumstances, both good and bad.

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David wrote, “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways” (Psalm 139: 2-3 NIV). Like the Israelites, who were facing what may have seemed like impossible odds, we have the assurance that when obstacles appear too great to overcome, God cares about us and is intimately aware of our circumstances. Do not lose heart. Jesus assured us in Matthew 28:20, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV).

ACT: *Write out some of your fears on a slip of paper. Pray over them, and ask God to give you peace. After praying, rip the paper and throw it away to symbolize that when we are with God we have nothing to fear. Then, write today’s verse and place it somewhere meaningful for you where it can serve as a reminder of God’s presence and love for you every time you see it.*

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