



JOURNEY OF **EMPOWERMENT**

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This book belongs to:

“If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.”
~ African proverb

JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT

Welcome to the Journey of Empowerment (JOE).

It's a path of discovery. You will learn about yourself and see a bigger picture of the world. You will find your place and learn how to make a difference. It's about choosing God's path and taking it together. There are the four stages along the way.

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JOE Objectives

This experience has four objectives in view for participants. JOE aims to:

1. Develop real stewards who know who they are and understand how God has positioned them to influence their countries.
2. Open the eyes of participants to discover that God's pathway to flourishing is found through fasting, confession, and prayer.
3. Equip people to empower others to take this trust journey so that together they can turn brokenness into blessing and transform individuals and institutions.
4. Inspire real stewards in every region and country of the world to hold each other accountable to follow standards together.

Here is a foundational Scripture passage for this journey.

“¹⁰Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

~ 1 Peter 4:10-11

Have you ever felt unsatisfied or unsure about how to address the needs and brokenness in the world around you? Many are suffering and crying out for help every day.

What if God uniquely gifted you to play a part in making a difference? We want to invite you on a journey of discovery that shows that each person matters and everyone counts. We will do activities, read Scripture, share stories, and learn together.

The transformational process starts with understanding together who we are in Christ, which relates to our identity. From there we learn that we are part of something bigger, so we grasp who we are together in community. Then we find out how following standards of faithfulness with accountability can be our ongoing process to protect this true identity and how it positions us to show the world who God is. But the secret is that we must do this together.

Is it time to ask God to reposition you to take your designed place in this world? What do you want to say to Him before we begin?



1



YOU MATTER

Who are you?

How would you define “identity” in your own words?

What was the initial picture of your design or identity?

“¹³For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

~ Psalm 139:13-16



What's your story? What factors have shaped your identity since your childhood?

I HAVE FELT LOVED AND ACCEPTED WHEN...

I HAVE FELT UNLOVED AND REJECTED WHEN...

How is your identity displayed in your daily life right now?

What if you shaped your identity based on what God thinks of you?

I AM...

MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE

"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

GREATLY DELIGHTED IN

"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17

BELOVED

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." Jeremiah 31:3

HEALED

"He Himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by His wounds you have been healed.'" 1 Peter 2:24

FREE

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

ACCEPTED

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

NEVER ALONE

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'" Hebrews 13:5

God made you special. After that, you were shaped by many factors.

Now after learning what God thinks of you, why do you think you are here?

Circle Prayer

We conclude the session with a prayer. Let's each pray a simple prayer going around in a circle. Say a name for God and a statement to God. Here are three examples:

- *Father in heaven, thank you for making me special.*
- *Jesus, help me believe the truth about my identity.*
- *Holy Spirit, teach me to use my gifts.*

My simple prayer is:



YOU ARE PART
OF SOMETHING
BIGGER

What is the bigger picture?

Let's read a story together from Esther 4:6-16.

⁶So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. ⁷Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

⁹Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹'All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.'

¹²When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?'

¹⁵Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

What was the role of fasting for connecting Esther's story with the bigger story of her people? How would you define fasting? Why is it important?



What if you lived for something outside of yourself and bigger than you?

Where do people look for meaning?

How can we grow to find God’s purpose for us?

What does God say about us and our purpose?

WE ARE...

GOD’S HANDIWORK

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

CHOSEN AND SET APART

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY

“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Romans 8:15

STEWARDS

“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

CHILDREN OF GOD

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” 1 John 3:1

VERY BOLD

“Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.” 2 Corinthians 3:12

CO-WORKERS

“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9

How might God have you play a role in a bigger story?

Circle Prayer

My simple prayer is:

3



WE CHOOSE GOD'S
PATH TOGETHER TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

What are different outcomes when we work together?

Let's read another story together from Ezra 9:5-10, 13.

⁵Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God ⁶and prayed:

“I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. ⁷From the days of our ancestors until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

⁸“But now, for a brief moment, the Lord our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. ⁹Though we are slaves, our God has not forsaken us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰“But now, our God, what can we say after this? For we have forsaken the commands... ¹³What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins deserved and have given us a remnant like this...”

What is the first step that Ezra took that we need to take together from his story? How would you define “confession” in your words? Why was it vital for Ezra to combine confession and humility? How did Ezra’s confession help chart a new course for his people?



Recall a story of an ordinary person from your cultural or organizational context who made a difference. Share it with a partner.

What are the challenges in your situation?

What is our part in changing our situation?

WE...

HUMBLE OURSELVES

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

CONFESS OUR SINS

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin.” Psalm 32:5

RENOUCE OUR WRONGDOING

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

REPENT OR CHANGE DIRECTIONS

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Matthew 3:2

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

WALK IN THE LIGHT

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

EXPERIENCE TIMES OF REFRESHING

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” Acts 3:19

Choosing God’s path starts with humbly admitting we have chosen the wrong path and then changing directions. What if we confess but don’t change directions?

Why are we better together?

Circle Prayer

My simple prayer is:

What happens if we help or don't help each other?

Let's read one more story from Nehemiah 9:5b-6, 32-38.

^{5b}Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all there is in them. You gave life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

³²Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. ³³In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. ³⁴Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep. ³⁵Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

³⁶But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. ³⁷Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

³⁸In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it.”

What were the roles of prayer and standards for Nehemiah? Why were they important for the individuals and for the groups of people that made up the nation?



WE HOLD EACH
OTHER ACCOUNTABLE
TO STAY ON TRACK



How does prayer before action help us be sure to play our parts?

What were the instructions of Jesus about helping disciples stay on track? How is it a trust journey?

HE SENT THE DISCIPLES... “¹Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. ²And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. ³Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace be to this house.” ⁶If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.” Luke 10:1-7 (NASB®)

Why do we have fear of accountability?

Share a situation when someone frustrated you or let you down after you asked them for help or trusted them. How did you respond?

The Apostle Paul follows this paradigm with people and calls for consistent collaboration between churches in different nations.

THE APOSTLE PAUL...

MINISTERED 2X2

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” Acts 13:2-3

GAVE CONSISTENT DIRECTIONS TO THE NATIONS

“Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.” 1 Corinthians 16:1

TAUGHT SHARING PROPORTIONATELY WITH THOSE IN NEED

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” 1 Corinthians 16:2

APPOINTED CREDENTIALLED COURIERS

“Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.” 1 Corinthians 16:3-4

IMPLEMENTED FINANCIAL CONTROLS

“And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.” 2 Corinthians 8:18-19

AVOIDED CRITICISM BY FOLLOWING STANDARDS

“We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.” 2 Corinthians 8:20-21

AFFIXED A SEAL TO ENHANCE TRUST IN THE COLLECTION

“Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.” Romans 15:28 (NASB®)

What if we all followed the same standards of faithfulness together? How might it strengthen our witness?

Circle Prayer

My simple prayer is:



You did it!

You navigated this journey to discover who you are and why you are in your context? You've also gained the spiritual tools to bring about transformation. You are empowered to have a big influence because everyone matters in God's world!

It's never too late or too early to choose God's path for restoring hope and healing to the world. The invitation is here and now you have all the tools you need to help others join you on this journey.

Take a quiet day. Read Scripture, think, and pray about an action plan regarding your trust journey. Also, find a companion to help you stay on track. A plan and a partner will help you to keep going. Here are a few more suggestions for reflection:

- Live day by day as the steward God designed you to be no matter what. You are the one who matters.
- Add the spiritual practices of fasting, confession, and prayer to your own walk with God.
- Search for and engage in a community where you can grow and nourish your identity in Christ and assist others too.

- See others from God's eyes. Show them respect. Reflect on how you fit together as part of God's kingdom program.
- Determine who to ask to be your accountability partner to help each other stay on track.
- Think about how administrative standards might influence your church or ministry to reflect a reliable witness to the world.
- Celebrate God's goodness and His deliverance in setting you free and giving you hope.

Are you the piece that is missing in the complex puzzle of your context? As you prayerfully consider your next steps, remember that it wasn't a pastor or famous ministry person that helped deliver God's people from difficulty in the biblical stories.

As we have seen on this journey, God worked through an orphan girl named Esther, a teacher named Ezra, a cupbearer named Nehemiah, and even a guy who persecuted Christians named Paul. If He can work through them to change their world, He can work through you to transform yours.

What steps will you take next?

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” -Jeremiah 29:11



Love	Compromise
Joy	Knowledge
Peace	Wisdom
Patience	Inconsistency
Kindness	Integrity
Generosity	Justice
Faithfulness	Unity
Gentleness	Humility
Self-Control	Compassion
Faith	Listening
Fear	Serenity
Grace	Achievement
Mercy	Responsibility
Condemnation	Community
Judgement	Unselfish
Criticism	Service

ABOUT GTP

GTP was formed in 2018 by ECFA (www.ecfa.org) as a separate entity to extend the work of enhancing trust in Christ-centered churches and ministries around the world. In obedient service to Jesus Christ, GTP multiplies faithful stewards and mobilizes peer accountability groups to build trust and to grow local generous giving to God's work. By confession, prayer, and fasting, GTP employs four programs—teaching, training, teamwork, and toolbox—with regional facilitators who empower disciples in the 12 regions of the Lausanne Movement. Join us in this work. You matter! Together we can multiply faithful workers and grow fruitful organizations. Visit us at www.gtp.org to locate free resources and to join the global network





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