

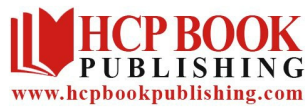
A collage of nautical-themed items. In the foreground, a pocket watch with Roman numerals is visible. To its left is a telescope. In the bottom right corner, there is a small model of a three-masted sailing ship with yellow sails. The word "SHIPS" is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the center of the image. The background is a dark, textured surface.

NAHCHON GUYTON

ONE JOURNEY: 7 SHIPS

THE 7 SHIPS NEEDED TO NAVIGATE THE WATERS OF LIFE

NAHCHON GUYTON



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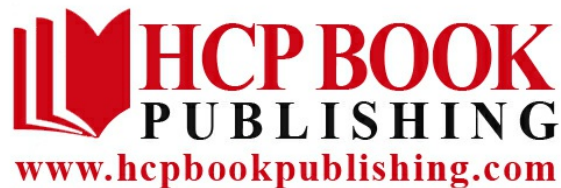
Fruits of the Spirit Defined

Notes

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For more information on Nahchon D. Guyton, visit www.nahchon.com and feel free to leave your comments and opinions about this book and your personal journey.

*There is more to life than what you have experienced. Take this journey and
experience more.*

“Life is too short to live in fear, and too long to live with regrets; so, do something great. You only have one life to live, so live it well.”

Dedications

First, I must give honor and thanks to Jesus, my Lord and Savior.

This book is dedicated to my life partner and wife, Crystal; my daughter, Christchon; my son, Tristan, and to the people who inspired me throughout this journey called my life.

Special thanks and gratitude to my grandmothers, Rosemary Guyton, and Chestina Ezell-McCarthy, who have gone home to be with the Lord.

I want to thank my mother, Ruth Hemingway; my father, Russell Guyton, and my second mom, Caroline Guyton. You all helped me to finish this book. To those I did not mention because there are far too many to list, please know that I appreciate you just as much.

I hope that wherever this book finds you, that the message, the spirit and the concepts that grace these pages will bless you on your journey.

Nothing is more important than knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so I hope through the reading of this book that you get a good introduction to Him and understand that He loves you.

PREFACE

Life is a journey that requires our participation, if we want to succeed and live an abundant life. Success is not a measure of what you gain only, but rather a process of pouring out and into others. Making a difference in the life of someone else, being the hope for another, and learning along the way is the path to success. Life is a team sport; you need a team to do life well.

The purpose of our journey is to make us aware of our custom path that leads to success, and to teach us how to endure the process without shortcuts. A shortcut is something we take to avoid going through the storms and/or the process. Learning as we go through the storms of life and going through the process is how we learn endurance. If we want to live a life of abundance, we must understand that avoiding issues is not the way to success.

Spend time in the process learning and growing. The trials and tribulations of life, whatever they may be, can awakened us to the still calm voice of God. When we are in pain, or facing a difficult circumstance, we have the largest opportunity to gain understanding for an abundant life. The changes, trials and the state of being uncomfortable is where we uncover the gems of success which are locked in the tribulations of our personal journey. To speed up the process is to learn to listen and lean on that still small voice that guides us all. That still small voice is the voice of God.

We should focus on building a real relationship with God the Father and

learn what He has put in us for the benefit of the world and our success on Earth. We are all here to live an abundant life with Him as the head. The journey is where we learn what it means to be alive.

The journey called life is not simply getting things, doing what you want and going where you please. The journey is about learning, growing and flourishing in your understanding of God and this gift of life. We are His investment, and, like any great investment, He expects a positive return.

We will gain the most through the process of change. We all should seek to learn from the trials we go through, and not be so focused on the results than the lessons. Results are critical to lasting success and extremely important, but not as important as learning the lessons. If I point out a street sign to you, you must first be able to see the sign, and comprehend what it means in order to benefit from it. If you do not see the street sign, you will not be able to benefit from the knowledge the sign contains. This is true for all processes and challenges. If we don't see the value in the lesson, we will not be able to benefit from the process.

We do not learn at the end of a process but during the process. Similar to an exam, the results show us what we learned or did not learn from the process. We will become the person He designed us to be, only if we learn how to be present, thankful and appreciate the process. *What did we learn?* No matter what we go through, we must learn to be thankful for our team (family, friends, partners and mentors).

The process are the trials, tribulations, and the challenges of life. The process is often uncomfortable. Change is constant, and most people hate change because they fear the unknown. Change is the only way to grow and progress. We all know people who have been going through the same issues for years, some of them may be us. If we do not change, we will continue to go through changes, difficulties, challenges and upheavals because we refuse to learn and change our minds and hearts. We will continue to go through those issues until we learn the lessons. We must learn quickly because our

legacy depends on it.

Legacy; the marks, impact, and difference we leave behind, will be the results of what we have learned while on the journey. If we believe that the destination is the goal, then we are missing the point of the process and the journey.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. His death was tragic, but his death was not his legacy. What he did while he was living is what we celebrate. We celebrate the way he overcame the trials, tribulations and challenges of the day, to make it better for them that followed; that is legacy. He did his best then, so we could live a better life now.

Let us look at Jesus' journey to the cross. If the cross was the destination, we would miss the beauty of the ministry of Jesus and the Gospel. He died on the cross, but I like to reason that the cross was not the goal. The goal was redemption, reconciliation and spreading God's love. The cross was just a part of the process.

What He did in the last three years of His life on earth is what the gospel is built on. *Why celebrate His death?* His life is what mattered then and now. He died on the cross but rose again to make a point to all who followed Him that death has no power over Him or us for that matter. We are eternal beings who will never really die. We will live forever, but our time on this Earth is limited, so we must make the most of our time here. We must live in such a way now that our legacy will live on.

As we journey on in this life, we too will have a cross to bear. It is a part of the process. We must hold on to our faith knowing that this too will pass, if we are willing to endure to the end.

MINISTRY OF CHRIST

As we consider the ministry of Christ, notice I did not say the ministry of

Jesus. I would like to point out that even though Jesus and the Christ are the same, they are two different people contained in one vessel. They are one body, with one soul and yet they are two, which became one.

To learn and grow in any form, we must participate in the process of study and learning. Active participation requires awareness, attention to the fact that something of significance is happening. Think of it like this, we must be present in mind and in the moment. Our attention and participation are required for us to grow through the process.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE HAD A PURPOSE

Jesus understood His purpose so much that He told His parents that He was about His Father's business. He was 12 years old. He understood that He had a purpose and that He had to participate in the process to fulfill His purpose. Jesus was not going to let His situation dictate His purpose. *Are you as clear on your purpose as Jesus was at 12 years old?* Jesus had a definite purpose, and an inner knowing about who He was and why He was here. Let us examine His journey to improve our own.

Let us take this journey together, making the choice to learn, grow and develop according to God's purpose so we can be all we were created to be in Christ Jesus. You can start by making these your daily declarations:

TODAY, I CHOOSE

Today, I choose to be great.

Today, I refuse to settle for anything less than my all.

Today, I will give 100 percent of my mind and effort.

Today, I will stand for something.

Today, I will stand up for someone, even if it is just in truth.

Today, I will be king of my destiny.

Today, I refuse to allow life's circumstances to dictate my faith. I will show my faith by my commitment to self and the communities where I live and work.

Today, I will learn something new.

Today, I will do something new.

Today, I will teach someone.

Today, I will share myself, and knowledge with others.

Today, I will be true to self and all those I encounter.

Today, I will live my life with honesty, integrity, and self-respect.

Today, I choose to be happy.

Today, I will be all that I can be, because today is all I have.

INTRODUCTION

WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

I wrote this book for several reasons, the main reason being that God told me to write it. I know it was the Lord because He was clear and patient as He led me to the Scriptures that support the concepts He wanted me to write. When the Lord asked me to write this book, I was just coming out of being unemployed but sustained by His grace for almost a year. I was just catching my breath from being unemployed, and I was not in a writing mood. Even though I am a creative writer, poet, motivational writer, and business/program writer, and I always wanted to write a book, that was not the time I had in mind. The Father said otherwise, so I wrote what He gave. I am not a trained writer nor an English major. My major is information technology, graphic design and web development so if I was to write anything, it should have been about building, repairing and operating computers, or creating web pages or a logo.

Nonetheless, God wanted me to write about these 7 Ships: (***Relationship, Friendship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Stewardship, Partnership and Leadership***) and share how they affect and ultimately shape our lives.

ACT NOW; TIME IS LIMITED

Most people shy away from their purpose as if they are the source. We feel inadequate, incapable of pulling off the request alone, as if God has chosen the wrong person. Some go as far as making excuses for why they cannot obey the request. They give one reason after another as to why God must be wrong for picking them to do what He asked. We should never allow fear to keep us from accepting the offer of being God's hands and feet in the world.

Many are afraid, just like I was, that they do not have what it takes to finish. We are not the source but the vessel. God is the artist and we are the clay. He molds, shapes and builds what He desires, and all we need to do is yield to the process.

CONFESSION TO STAY PLIABLE

I have prayed and confessed to my team (family, friends and mentors) on several occasions that I want to die empty. With every drop of good, and fruitful knowledge that God has given me, I knew I could only write this book with Jesus as my Lord and Savior and the Holy Spirit as my guide.

All good gifts come from the Father above. God gave me this book, not for me to hold it for myself, but to share it with you and the world.

What has God giving you to share?

YOU CAN REFUSE THE GIFT

We have the power to say no to Him, His gift of eternal life, and His ways because He gave us free will. He bought us with a price; Jesus' life. We can say no to the gift, but why not say yes to His offer of eternity with Him as head of our life?

I accepted the gift of Jesus and let Him be Lord and savior of my life. By accepting the gift, I gave up my rights to a life that I deserved, for a life I

could not earn in a thousand life times; eternal life. I gained access to eternal life because I surrendered my will to His.

MY WILL AT WORK

Years ago, I tried to write another book and it turned out to be more of a training guide or workbook than a book. Yes, that was my will at work. I was writing but God was not inspiring or guiding me. When I was trying to write, it was a lot harder than it should have been, and it required more effort. Writing a book is not an easy task for anyone.

WE ARE NEVER WAITING ON HIM

Whenever I sat down to write this book, the Lord provided the words. It may have come together sooner if I had not wasted writing time doing other things. God is always waiting on us to get out of our own way, so He can have His way and take us from glory to glory or, in my own words, from greatness to greatness. God is always moving on our behalf and waiting for us to get out of the way. We often foul up and destroy some of the simplest tasks set before us because we are not paying attention to the process or listening to the Father's instructions via the Holy Spirit.

WE CAN ACCOMPLISH MORE

We can accomplish more if we stop being so reluctant to step out in faith and do what God has called us to do. Many people will die with the solutions the world needs. They have answers to problems hidden deep within them; answers to cancer, traffic and social ills, etc., but it never manifests because of fear. The same amount of energy it takes to believe in fear is the same required to act in faith.

WE ALL HAVE GREATNESS WITHIN US

We all have greatness within us. God created us that way, but we can only access it fully by allowing Jesus to expose us to the open doors. Jesus is the key to us walking in our greatness. I am not talking about the Jesus of religion, but the Jesus that you will come to know and discover through a real, honest relationship. Jesus wants you to live life to its fullest, in abundance of faith and truth.

NEVER TOO OLD TO START

You are never too old to start the journey. Take the necessary steps today to be a better you. The world is waiting on what you will bring to make it a better place for the next generation. Suspend your desire to be right in your own eyes. Take God's mercy and trust His grace. Allow Him to shape and mold you into the person He created you to be. Let Him provide for your needs, wants, and the desires of your heart.

FOUNDATION

Foundation For The 7 Ships: Understanding IN ALL COMMUNICATION, THERE IS NOISE

Most people are not usually speaking the same language, even though they are using the same words, terms, and sometimes the same dialect. Most people in North America speak English as their primary language. Others may speak multiple languages and English is their second language. Same language, different meaning. Now imagine you were speaking to someone from the South and you are from the North East. You want to go get some fresh produce, so you ask for the nearest bodega. The other person looks at you with utter confusion. The odds are, they have no idea what you mean.

NOISE WILL AND DOES CAUSE CONFUSION

As the speaker, we take it for granted that we are being clear. We know what we mean when we speak, but in all communication, there is noise. Noise will and does cause confusion to the receiver. Most of us speak with little concern about the noise. We just spout off what we want to relay, then we are upset when we are misunderstood.

There are a variety of factors that come to play in the confusion; culture,

emotions, climate of the space, inflection, tone and body language. The listener or receiver is interrupting the message through their lens, not ours, and that is why we end up in confusion.

Noise is anything that can and does hinder clear transmitting and receiving of a message.

WE HAVE TO TALK

When a woman tells a man, “We have to talk”, consider those same words but with two totally different interpretations of the meaning and intent.

To limit the noise that is always present in communication, we must purposefully define the words used and clarify what we want the listener to understand in the exchange. This can be accomplished by asking questions, for example, “*What did you hear when I said this?*” Or ask them to explain what they understood. Listening, learning and communicating all require active participation on the part of the listener and the sender.

With that said, as we journey, I hope to have your full attention as we dive into exploring the 7 Ships (***Relationship, Friendship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Stewardship, Partnership and Leadership***) that influence all our lives.

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

My hope is that we learn something new about ourselves or at least get a revelation about ourselves and God from these 7 Ships. We often think we understand what a word or phrase means and in doing so, we remove the opportunity to learn what the speaker meant by a particular word or phrase. This could be a grave mistake in some cases, but in most cases, it adds to the noise and can accelerate the breakdown in communication.

7 SHIPS NEEDED TO NAVIGATE THE WATERS OF LIFE

Here are the 7 Ships: ***Relationship, Friendship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Stewardship, Partnership and Leadership.*** We use these 7 Ships to navigate the waters of life. We are going to explore these 7 Ships in Jesus's life to illustrate Jesus' redeeming love for all humanity. We will compare how the world uses them and focus on and looking to Holy Spirit for a greater insight into what they mean to us, and for us, on a personal and spiritual level.

The goal is to help you understand these 7 Ships. We approach this with openness, making room for the Holy Spirit to show the way, thus producing a greater return. We only know in part. In order to know more, we need the Holy Spirit to reveal and guide us to the solutions, opportunities and wisdom.

DEFINITIONS OF THE 7 SHIPS

Fellowship: *a member of a group having common characteristics, goals and worldview, known to share the challenges of life with nothing hidden, often over a meal.*

Relationship: *connecting or binding participants in a relationship, where both parties benefit from the union, but not always equally.*

Friendship: *one attached to another by affection or esteem, sharing their best to make sure the other is well; someone to lean on in time of change; someone with whom you share a life, nothing hidden, all is exposed.*

Discipleship: *one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another, to the point that they adopt the mind of the teacher, speaking in the same manner as the teacher.*

Stewardship: *one who actively directs affairs for themselves or another for the benefit of the owner or themselves; a good manager.*

Partnership: *person with whom one shares an intimate relationship, with*

the sole purpose to build, create or produce something of value so that both parties can benefit from the proceeds.

Leadership: *providing direction or guidance through giving of one's time, mind and energy to ensure that the follower is well cared for so they can develop fully, lacking nothing, sometimes to the discomfort of the leader, for example, Jesus or a good parent.*

JESUS, BORN INTO THE WORLD

Many have heard of the miracle; the virgin birth of Christ. If not, here it is in short:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:18-21)

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)

JESUS WAS ABRAHAM'S LEGACY

I want to offer you a different take on the story using the 7 Ships as the basis for my perspective. Jesus was born a relative to Abraham by virtue of His relationship with Joseph, His earthly father. Jesus was Abraham's legacy. He was a direct descendant of Abraham through the process of adoption.

Jesus became a descendant of Abraham by way of his adopted father, Joseph. (*See Matthew 1:1–17 for the full lineage of Jesus*)

Why is this important? Abraham, known as a friend of God, walked with God, and believed God. (*See James 2:23*)

GOD THE FATHER, COMING IN THE FLESH AS JESUS

What was the purpose for God to come to Earth as Jesus? Adam's fall through disobedience caused all humanity to disconnect from God. There was no one else who was blameless and without sin that could redeem man, so God gave us His only begotten Son so we could have a chance to get back to our rightful place with God the Father. From the beginning, God wanted to fellowship with us, as our leader, and friend. We are His partners in caring for the earth. (*See Genesis 2*)

THE PURPOSE FOR JESUS

God wanted a direct connection to us without any outside interference. God did not want lawgivers, or rule-setters such as the Priest, Pastor or Rabbi coming between Him and us. God can use them to build and share the gospel, but He did not want our relationship with Him to be filtered through men. He wanted to be our all, our friend, our leader, our partner, our savior, and our God. God knew that He needed to show us by example how to live a sinless life in Jesus. God is a just God, so someone had to pay the debt for our sin.

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF US?

God was planning to do all the heavy lifting. All He requires of us is love and obedience, to become a disciple who would seek fellowship with Him daily and be a good steward over all He provided. He wants us as a friend,

but not the kind of friend we find in today's world. He wants a true friend who sticks closer than a brother. You will find this definition of friendship used throughout this book. God desires to be an intricate part of our lives, because He has a deep affection for us. God desires our friendship and for us to choose Him as King.

Friendship: one attached to another by affection or esteem, sharing their best to make sure the other is well; someone to lean on in time of change; someone with whom you share a life, nothing hidden, all is exposed.

HE GAVE US FREE WILL

The beauty about this life and God's love for us is that we have free will. We can choose to be with God or not. Regardless of our choice, His love never fades. To follow Him or not is our choice. God will never force us to do anything. The difference for most is the amount of pain we suffer trying to navigate the waters of life without Him at the helm; we could forever be separated from Him. God's love is everlasting, but we can close the door on it by not allowing Him in. We can spend eternity in darkness because we refused to accept the gift of light, which comes through a real relationship with God the Father by Jesus Christ.

In the beginning, before the fall, God's goal was to have a relationship with us that would ultimately lead us into a deep friendship, followed by eternal discipleship. He wanted us to take part in the Kingdom of Heaven. He wanted us, as humans, to reign on Earth with Him as King and Lord over all creation, "On earth as it is in heaven." (See Matthew 6:10).

OUR DESIGN

As we explore Christ's journey to and off the cross, we will see what God

truly intended for humanity.

Due to our lack of knowledge and understanding of spiritual things, we have become world thinkers, five sense seekers and not world changers. We have become a light of the world and not the light in the world. We believe the lies of the world; that we are limited to the things of this world. Heaven is the Kingdom and God is the King, and we are His children. We can do what our Father says and not what we learned from living in a falling world.

The ground on which we plant our feet is to be sovereign territory. We take it for the King, not by force, but with love and kindness, just as God in Heaven is sovereign and is love. We are not held by the limitations of this world, but we are to demonstrate the love of the Father to the world.

THE INNOCENT PAID IT ALL FOR THE GUILTY

Heaven is not the reward, but I offer the view that it is the training ground where we learn the ways of the Father.

We read in the Bible that at the end of time there will be a new heaven and a new Earth. (*See Revelations 21*). Why would we need a new Earth, if Heaven were the goal or the reward? We will reign with Jesus for a thousand years on this Earth (*See Revelation 20:6*), then this earth will pass away, and a new heaven and a new earth will come down, and Jesus will be King. That is the way God, the Father, intended from the beginning with Jesus being the King, and us in direct connection with Him for eternity as sons and daughters.

WE CANNOT SAVE OR REDEEM ANYONE

When Jesus returns, He is coming back for His bride; those who took the journey of walking with Him and being a light in the world as a reflection of the redeeming power of the cross. God is not coming to save our flesh. The

flesh can never please God. He is coming for our souls. Our souls are comprised of our mind, our will, and our emotions. He wants to redeem our soul and in the process of our redemption, He is asking us to help redeem others by displaying His love to our fellow man. Despite our attempts, we cannot save or redeem anyone. I repeat, we cannot save or redeem the soul of anyone. We can only point them to the One who can save and redeem them; Jesus the Christ.

We are required to point others to Jesus with love and kindness. Jesus did not come to punish, but to save. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. I believe it is the Lord's will that we live a full life, not a life of despair, fear, shame, and guilt.

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33).

The good news is that Jesus overcame the world with all its trouble, sin, shame and death. We are in the world, but it does not have rule over us. We have rule over it through Christ Jesus.

THE EXCHANGE; LIFE FOR DEATH

Jesus volunteered and took what we deserved by taking the punishment of the cross, so we could share in what He deserved, everlasting life. The journey that we take as followers of Christ requires us to pray for our enemies, and to show our haters the love of Christ. I accept this to be true. We should be willing to take abuse and mistreatment for Christ sake. When it comes to spreading the Good News and the redeeming power of the cross and showing Jesus Christ orchestrating/cultivating good fruit in our lives, we should take whatever comes with that as the Holy Spirit leads us. Salt provides flavor, light brings illumination to dark places, and servants serve by providing for and taking care of others.

Nowhere in that mandate does it call for us to abuse or allow abuse to ourselves by others. This is very important, because Jesus showed kindness to everyone, including the very ones who killed Him.

Through Christ Jesus who strengthens us, we can lean on and lean into the saving arms of our Lord Jesus Christ, and rely on the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and correct our every step as we journey through life.

GOD IS LOVE

Now let us stop and consider what it means when we hear that God is Love. The Scriptures does not say God is made up of love, but God is love. This thing called love embodies His whole existence. Our heavenly Father created us in His likeness and image, so our makeup is love. The same is true for God who is Love. Jesus tells us that if we see Him, we have seen the Father” (See *John 14:9*). Jesus is love too, since He is the full embodiment of the father. (See *Q/A at the end of this book.*)

THE GOAL

The goal of this book is to help you develop a true personal relationship and understanding of who the Father is and how to grow closer to Him through Jesus Christ. If you can apply the truth of the 7 Ships as Jesus did, then I can assure you that you will be prepared to take this journey and live an abundant life.

We will take a closer look at the 7 Ships that Jesus used to redeem us from sin and shame, along with how we too can benefit from these 7 Ships. Jesus did not die and rise again to show us that He was God nor that it was impossible for us, but rather to show God’s love for us. He wanted us to know that in God there are no limits to what is possible, but without God, there are all sorts of limitations and impossibilities.

We will begin at the end and walk backwards through time and space to show you the 7 Ships that Jesus used throughout history to shed light on what I feel has been a gross misrepresentation of God and Jesus. The purpose is to help you become a better steward, leader, partner, disciple, and friend who can walk in relationship with God through fellowship with Jesus and other believers.

I would ask that you open your mind and heart to hear what the Spirit is saying as we take this trip of “One Journey: 7 Ships.”

THE 7 SHIPS



Let's Begin

CHAPTER ONE

EXPLANATION OF THE JOURNEY

“Dance. Smile. Giggle. Marvel. TRUST. HOPE. LOVE. WISH. BELIEVE. Most of all, enjoy every moment of the journey, and appreciate where you are at this moment instead of always focusing on how far you have to go.”
— Mandy Hale, Author of ‘The Single Woman: Life, Love, and a Dash of Sass.’

Let’s begin, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* (John 1:1). I want to spend some time here as we talk about the first ship briefly; **Relationship**.

Remember our definition of Relationship: *connecting or binding participants in a relationship, where both parties benefit from the union, but not always equally.*

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP?

Why should we have a personal relationship with the Father, through is only begotten Son, Jesus Christ? He wants to be a part of our daily lives, or

better stated, our eternal life. He never wanted to be a second or third thought; He desires to be the first thought. He desires to speak into each moment. He desires to help us navigate our vessel of life, so that we can fulfill not only His purpose but enjoy some of the gems (the beauty of living) of the journey along the way. Life will not always be full of roses and warm fuzzes all the time. Sometimes you will encounter some harsh relatives, friends and strangers who will seek to destroy you.

Life is a journey so prepare and take it one step at a time and trust the Author and not the story.

You are here to show the world the love of God. You cannot do this if you are not in a true relationship with Him. A true relationship requires a commodity that is limited and often neglected; time.



TIME

I am essential to every aspect of life.

I can be your best friend or your worst enemy.

I grow with you or slowly diminish depending on you.

I appear to be forever when you are born; I seem like yesterday as you go on.

I am the measure to which all life is measured.

I am a moment.

Most feel I am forever, when their young and others say I am not enough, when the years have come and gone.

I am to be cherished and utilized, but so often, I am wasted and poorly spent.

I hold the treasures of life and all its pain; what you get depends on you.

I walk with the wealthy and with the poor, the eager and the lazy.

I give freely to him who desires my richness and take from him who would use me for wasted moments and fruitless fun.

I profit the wise and punish the fool.

I am a weapon for life, to be mastered and controlled, so many handle me carelessly.

They blame me for being so little and not all I should be; I give everyone the same portions, so why blame me?

Remember what I said, "I can be your best friend or your worst enemy and it all depends on you."

When I am positioned for battle correctly, I never seem to run short, but let the master hand me over so freely to the world of not and see me vanish right before your eyes.

I will do it smoothly, stealth like, in that moment of realization, I am gone, and you are left surprised.

I am all you have, and you never know when I may decide to leave, so put me to work for your good or wake when I am far spent, and you wish you could.

I am here now, use me. When I am gone, I am gone.

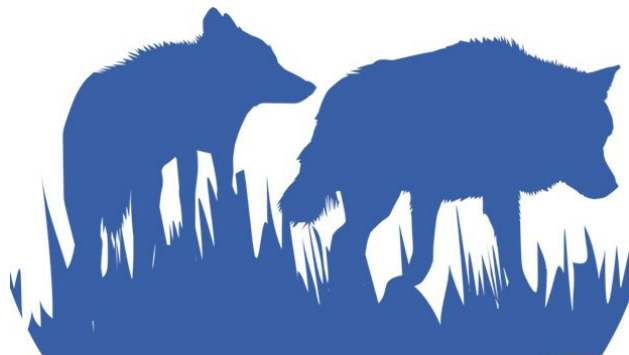
What I yield to you depends on you.

TIME DOES NOT DIFFER FOR ANYONE

Time does not differ for anyone; God wants to know that He is a priority, but not because He is needy or because He needs our time. He wants to spend time with us, so He can help to guide us. He knows what lies behind every choice we may or may not make. He knows the heart of every man, and He understands the heaviness of living on this side. He knows when we grow in our spirit we will no longer be conformed to the leading of the flesh. Where you choose to spend your time is an indication of what you value. All relationships require time. If you have a failing relationship, check the amount of quality time you commit to building, growing and developing that relationship. Relationships are not hard, they can be challenging, and they all require a time commitment.

THE STORY OF TWO WOLVES

The following is a story about two wolves to illustrate the internal war we all fight. Who wins, is up to us.



A grandfather is talking with his grandson and he says there are two

wolves inside of us, which are always at war with each other. One of them is a spirit wolf, which represents things like kindness, bravery, and love. The other is a flesh wolf, which represents things like greed, hatred, and fear. The grandson stops and thinks about it for a second, then he looks up at his grandfather and says, “Grandfather, which one wins?” The grandfather quietly replies, “The one you feed.”

LEARN HOW TO FEED THE SPIRIT

As the above story illustrates, the one you feed the most is the one that will grow. The one that gets the most time in your heart and mind is the one that will grow. As long as the earth remains, there will be hot and cold, summer, winter, seedtime and harvest (See Genesis 8:22). Once you plant the seed, you have to give it some time if you expect to see the harvest. Do not think that you are wasting time by cultivating relationships with people of God. I am not talking about people who attend church out of duty, but people who know the Father in spirit and truth because they have a relationship with Him. You will know them when you see them.

A CUSTOM LIFE FOR EACH OF US

Consider for a moment that I am hiring you to build me a custom home. Would you not seek me for instructions as it relates to my wants, likes, dislikes preferences and desires so you could build according to my vision? God is seeking this kind of consideration. He designed a custom life for each of us. In order to live that custom life, we have to seek the One who designed it. This requires that we spend time with Him and His people. We were created to be in relationship with God and His people. Spending time with God and His people gives us understanding of who He is, who we are and how God works in our lives.

UNDERSTANDING IS A FORM OF PROTECTION

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and even though both of you were speaking English, you had little to no idea of what they were trying to tell you?

Understanding is defined as *information that a person can stand under.* When you truly understand something, it covers you. When you understand your rights as a citizen of a country, and you visit another country, you stand under the citizenship and protection of your homeland. Understanding is a form of protection. It covers us in a variety of ways, and that is why we can stand under that information.

King Solomon wrote:

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. (Proverbs 4:7).

We could avoid a lot of pain if we sought to get a full understanding of matters. Most of us would rather just jump into something with little or no understanding, then we get hurt and want to blame everyone but the guilty one, ourselves. We need to seek to understand God and His ways if we want to have a successful Journey.

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Every journey starts the same; one-step at a time in a direction with the hope of finding it, whatever it may be. We are looking for the next great thing, the last tribe in the rain forest, or some hidden treasure in the middle of nowhere. We are looking for something, and sometimes we are in search of ourselves.

Often, we are not willing to stop the search until we have uncovered it. It is what drives our search, but what if it was in you? Would you stop searching? We look without, because we often feel empty within. We want to

be significant and make a difference in the world; so we go in search of the elusive “it,” a thing that will make us feel completely whole, lacking the understanding that we came to this planet whole, lacking nothing.

THE ELUSIVE “IT”

The elusive “it” can be described by some as fame and fortune, and for others it is helping and giving so they are seen as a good person. Yet, for others it is drugs, alcohol and sex. No matter what “it” is, we are all in search of it so we will not feel empty and alone. We think that if we could get it, we would be okay, whole and complete. Understand that nothing from the external can fill the vast emptiness of the internal. No matter what we achieve without God, we are still broken.

“IT” HAS BEEN DISCOVERED OVER 2000 YEARS AGO

Breaking News, “it” has been found. Yes, reports confirm that “it” was hung on some sticks shaped like a cross on mount Calvary. “It” was hiding in plain sight. “It” was just hanging there in plain view of everyone. The uninformed person booed, hissed and spat on “it.” Those who knew what “it” was, bowed and worshipped.

The news has been collaborated by some ancient writing, that “it” was not of this world, “it” came from a far off place called “The Kingdom of Heaven” where “it” was King of kings and Lord of lords.

Reports say that “it” was a gift-giver, a life-giving presence that when “it” gave up the ghost, the Earth shook, and thunder roared. They took “it” and laid it in a tomb, rolled a stone in front of the tomb to keep “it” from escaping. Guards were placed in front of the tomb to watch “it.” “It” must have been something of great value that they went through all that trouble to keep “it” from getting out. There were reports that three days later, a few

believers who trusted and followed “it” came to visit. They knew “it” as savior, friend and healer of the sick. When they arrived at the tomb where “it” laid in death, “it” had risen and was gone. They were distraught, shaken and felt they were robbed. They heard a voice and saw a figure who said, “It had risen.”

New information is coming in, “it” was not an “it” but a man and God.

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

Jesus was the promise fulfilled. There is no more need to search for “it.” Who you are searching for to give your life significance is Jesus, the artist, potter, creative word, the One who set the stars in the heavens. By His light we walk. His light shines with the intensity of the sun and sparkles like a diamond; His light is perfect and created in perfection (Love).

Jesus has designed our walk with Him in the same manner. Every step has been considered before it was ever made; every problem solved before it came into being; every roadblock removed before we ever traveled the road.

Just like a diamond, we need to be clean thoroughly, cut carefully to shine our brightest. We cannot let the world define or clean us. We need a deep clean, one that is able to reach our soul, and refresh our spirit.

DIAMONDS FROM HEAVEN

We are diamonds from heaven, and like earthly diamonds, we must be fashioned and shaped into precious jewels. We have to be cut, polished and cut repeatedly, until we reach our full brilliance. This process of cutting and polishing is what makes us diamonds so valuable.

A diamond is not pretty in its rawness, and neither are we. Coal is the birthplace of a diamond. With great pressure and much heat, that dark piece of coal becomes hardened into what we call a diamond. Even though it is a

diamond by nature, it has not come into its fullness. A diamond must yield itself to the master artisan so that he can shape it into a work of beauty. This process may seem hard or a long journey, but it looks harder than it really is. We must make a conscious effort each moment of the day to stand, knowing we no longer belong to the worldly systems, but we are a New Creation in Christ Jesus.

The directions of our thought must change dramatically. There should no longer be a “me” focus, but a “we” (humanity) focus. The buyer requires that His will be done, along with the fulfillment of your God created purpose which He told through the Scriptures. He died on the cross, so He would be able to relate to the human condition, making Him better at directing our ship.

HUMBLE YOURSELF

We must become as little children, open minded and trusting the Holy Spirit to work in and through us. We need to humble ourselves, so we can learn from more mature followers of Christ, though age is not always an indicator of maturity. We can judge maturity by their walk and fruit. I am amazed at how many age-old followers of Jesus are on milk and still crawling, yet they refuse to accept that they have not grown in years.

This journey is perfected in love, filled with grace and mercy, which renews daily. We can stand before God in faith, trusting our Lord without wavering, knowing we are more than conquerors (See Romans 8:37).

A sign of our maturity comes when we are comfortable with surrendering the direction of our present situation (life) to the Lord and Him alone. It is not ours to fight alone; we are in direct relationship with the King of heaven and the entire universe. We are not alone, ever.

We no longer reach for our old ways of warfare, but we are holding on to Christ as we come to realize that God is real, not because a preacher told us,

but because we have experienced His love personally. We have experienced that life-giving power that closed the mouth of fear, doubt and want. We are royalty, covered in the blood of Jesus, and united with Him forever.

BATTLEFIELDS OF LIFE

We have to know that we are victorious by faith in Christ Jesus, and no enemy can overtake us. Always trusting that God will deliver our enemy to us, we hear Jesus say, *“Sit and eat, this battle has already been fought and won, and the enemies you see today, you will see no more forever.”*

We know that through Jesus, we are more than a conqueror, and greater is He who is in us, than any enemy we face in this world.

We must walk by faith on this journey. This journey allows us to walk on water, above sin, shame, fear and even death. Despite our circumstances, we must trust in Jesus the Christ, and not our present situation, or our current aches and pains. He is always near. We just need to call His name, Jesus.

We must trust and hold to the fact that every step we take with Jesus is on solid ground, even when the ground beneath our feet starts to move. We need to trust the quality of our seed of faith, not the environment, or what we see and hear. We cannot rely on our five senses, and even our own understanding of the matter is a weak defense.

On this journey, our refuge, strong fortress, and hedge of protection is, and will always be, our faith and trust in Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher, the Alpha and Omega, the One who planned for every situation, the One who gave us a way of escape, the One who gave His life so that we might live in freedom.

If we can obey the Master, move when He says move, hold when He says hold, we will slay dragons, walk on water and eat the good of the land.

The journey is not always easy. Our flesh is constantly at war against following the leading of the Holy Spirit. The flesh wants to be satisfied and

have its way. We can, and we must, overcome the desire to let our feelings direct us. Raw emotions and flesh can never please God.

CHAPTER 1 OUTRO

Do not give away your seed for a moment of pleasure. Do not give away your legacy for a taste of sweet revenge, which in the end is death to you and your future seed. Do not fall into the trap that you cannot be like God. You are made in the image and likeness of God. The enemy Satan is always working to confuse your identity. You are like God, that is how you were created. Surrender your will to the Father and fall into the arms of Jesus. He loves you and has a great future planned for you. You did not and could not die for yourself, but Jesus did. He gave you His reward in exchange for your reward.

CHAPTER 1 TAKE AWAY

1. **Understanding is defined as** *information that a person can stand under*. When you truly understand something, it covers you. If you lack understanding, you are exposed. What you don't know can and will hurt you.
2. **Time is your most valuable asset, so treat it as such.** Time does not differ for anyone. We have the same number of hours per day, the same number of minutes and seconds. Where we spend it determines what we value. Learn to make the time you have work for you. Don't squander the moments; once they are gone, they are gone forever.
3. **The directions of our thought must change dramatically** from a "me" focus, to a "we" (humanity) focus. The journey is about growing into the person God called you to be. Your thoughts will

always come before your actions. Change your thoughts and you will change your life. You are not here for you alone; you are here for me and I am here for you. We were created to be in a community.

4. **This process may seem hard and difficult. The journey looks harder than it really is.** The problem for all is surrendering self and will to the process of change. The journey is designed to teach, grow, refine and produce God-like fruit. Embrace the changes with an attitude of gratitude and know in the end that it was all for your good.