



PARTICIPANT JOURNAL

LESSON 4 | WHO AM I? | FINDING ABUNDANCE

The baptism of Jesus is a pinnacle moment for all those who profess the faith. We believe that the sacrament of baptism initiates us into the christian journey with one another — it reminds us that we aren't alone in our desire to be close to Jesus. Even when we are tempted by the repeating messages of failure or fear — God invites us, just as God invited Jesus before His temptation in the wilderness, to live into the safety of who God says we truly are. Over time this creates in us a confidence, out of our relationship with God, to practice self-compassion and empathy in relationship with others.

FALSE SELF

Defends Quickly
Demands Perfection
Preoccupied
Speaks/Judges First
Hustles for Worthiness
Isolates
Rigid
Excludes
Critical of Self & Others
Dismisses Vulnerable Emotion
Reactive

TRUE SELF

Confesses Easily
Pursues Faithfulness
Present
Listens First & Seeks to Understand
Rests in Belovedness
Reaches
Flexible
Includes
Sees Beneath Behavior with Empathy
Honors & Expresses Vulnerable Emotion
Reflective

JOURNAL EXERCISE : TRUE SELF/FALSE SELF

Look over the list of true and false self, and journal about which ones you relate to or add others examples that come to mind. As you write, consider what fears may be present beneath your false self (examples: fear of being alone, being dismissed, not having what you need, not having a voice, getting walked on, not belonging, feeling overwhelmed, being inadequate, being judged, being excluded, not having a good life, being responsible, etc...)

TRIAD DISCUSSION

Share parts of your journal reflections with each other.

Share what fears trigger your false-self reactions.

GROUP SHARING

Read the following quotes together before you go through the discussion questions.

"Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion... If I am not in touch with my own belovedness, then I cannot touch the sacredness of others. If I am estranged from myself, I am likewise a stranger to others."

— Brennan Manning, Abba's Child

Just as Christ witnessed and received His Belovedness from Father and Spirit at His baptism, how might being in touch with the radical love of God (your belovedness) impact you, your times in the desert, your ministry or vocation?

Looking honestly at our false self helps us not to be 'estranged' from ourselves and others. How might an awareness of your true and false self impact how you relate to yourself, others, or God?

Share about your practice of 'Bringing Your Tapes to the Table' this past week. Did it impact the 'volume' of your internal tapes? Did it impact your experience of God?

If so, how? Share your 'take away' from the lesson, your journal, or the group sharing time?

DAILY PRACTICE FOR WEEK FOUR : PRAYING PSALM 23

The Psalms have been considered the prayer book of the church for centuries. Contemplative prayer heals us....heals our false self...heals our lens of scarcity. Henri Nouwen puts it this way,

"Prayer makes men contemplative and attentive. In place of manipulating, the man who prays stands receptive before the world. He no longer grabs but caresses, he no longer bites, but kisses, he no longer examines but admires."

This week you will practice praying Psalm 23 as often as possible. Begin and end your day with this Psalm. Picture each line as you read it through slowly several times each morning. Focus in on one phrase each day... the phrase that resonates with you as you read Psalm 23 each morning. You may want to write this phrase down. Let this phrase become your breath throughout the day...praying it as often as possible. I can just picture the table that God the Father, Son, and Spirit are setting for you right now. Come to the table this week as you meditate on Psalm 23.

*The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

BENEDICTION

"You were chosen in Christ before the world was made—to stand before God in love— marked out beforehand as fully adopted sons and daughters. Now go in the knowledge of your belovedness." Ephesians 1:4-5