

**You shall worship the  
Lord your God and serve  
Him only. Luke 4:8**



**Glacier Bible Camp Ladies' Retreat 2025**

**Foundations of Freedom Notes**

**Focus Group Sessions Notes**

**“For An Audience of One  
Living Free to Worship”**

1. Friday Afternoon 3:45-5:15 pm

**Foundations of Freedom Session 1**– JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle before Focus Groups

- Group One - **Living Free From Anxiety & Fear** (Lower-Level Lodge) Rev. Mary Ballenger
- Group Two - **Living Free from Insecurity & Negative Self Image** (Tabernacle). – Brenda Sturm

2. Saturday Morning 9:50 - 11:15 am

**Foundations of Freedom Session 2** – JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle before Focus Groups

- Group One – **Living Free from Unforgiveness & Bitterness** (Lower-Level Lodge) Rev. Dawn Rehbein
- Group Two – **Living Free from Pride & Self Sufficiency** (Prayer Chapel) Karen Anderson
- Group Three - **Living Free from Brokenness & Dysfunctional Relationships** (Tabernacle) Dawn Lakey
- Group Four - **Worship Walk** (Meet at the Tabernacle Main Doors) Christy Edmonds

3. Saturday Afternoon - 4:00-5:15 pm

**Foundations of Freedom Session 3**– JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle, before Focus Groups

- Group One - **Living Free from Guilt & Shame** (Prayer Chapel) Rev. Emma Curtis
- Group Two - **Living Free from Unhealthy Habits** (Tabernacle) – Rev. Tonya Blessings
- Group Three - **Living Free for Purpose & Direction** (Lower-Level Lodge)-Kim Vohs

## **“4 R’s” Tools** in your walk to Freedom

- To **recognize** what has happened and where we could be with God. Recognize the lie that we might be believing Asking His intervention and forgiveness and then moving out of a place of woundedness into freedom. Being able to freely worship is key to moving into all we could be with Christ.
- To **receive** God’s acceptance and forgiveness along with His perspective and direction for our continued walk with Him and what He has called us to be.
- To **resist** the enemy’s plan for your life. Being able to use God’s word to assist us on our path to freely worship
- To **reframe** what has taken place in our lives and see with clarity to move towards our purpose in worshipping and serving Christ.

Saturday Afternoon - 4:00-5:15 pm

**Foundations of Freedom Session 3–**

JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle, before

Focus Groups

- Group One - **Living Free from Guilt & Shame** (Prayer Chapel)  
Rev. Emma Curtis
- Group Two - **Living Free from Unhealthy Habits** (Tabernacle) –  
Rev. Tonya Blessings
- Group Three - **Living Free for Purpose & Direction** (Lower-Level Lodge)-Kim Vohs

## Foundations of Freedom Session 3 Reframe JoAnn Roberts

### **Tool #4 – Reframe**

***“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Romans 12:2***

His Name is to be exalted higher than everything. During last year’s retreat, we talked about enthroning Him to His rightful place, and de-throning anything we had placed above Him in our lives. Everything needs to be put in its proper place, below (lower than) the Name above ALL Names. How does that apply to this? That means that I need to exalt Him:

**In my heart** – by choosing what I desire and love in my life.

***“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (Prov. 4:23, NIV)***

**In my mind** – by what I choose to think on, and how I let my mind be renewed by His Spirit, and the truth of His Word, over what my flesh wants and thinks.

**In my soul** – by what I choose, and in my emotions as they are subjected to the rule and reign of Christ, instead of those things ruling me.

**In my mouth** – by what I let come out of my mouth (as well as my self-talk)

The Bible talks about the tongue a lot! **James 3:9-12** says, ***“With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.”*** (ESV) The book of Matthew explains this further by saying that ***“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (12:34),”*** and ***“what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person (15:18).”***

The mouth speaks what the heart believes! It is the heart that needs to be changed, and thankfully, that is what God does in us: ***“I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.”*** (Ezek. 11:19, ESV)

**1 Peter**, says, ***“Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit (lies).”*** (1 Pet. 3:10, ESV). We need to be like David, who cried out to the Lord: ***“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds.”*** (Ps. 141:3-4, ESV)

In Christ, we are a new creation. We have a new life, so we should also have new thought patterns, new responses. We are walking in a new way, the old way has passed away, **(2 Cor. 5:17)**. This is the transformation that **Romans 12:2** was talking about. This does **not** mean “fake it till you make it.” What it means is that now in Christ, sin no longer reigns in our lives, so now we have the ability to choose. It is choosing to believe what God says over what anyone says, even what your emotions say! In doing so, our minds are renewed, and we are conformed to His image.”

We get to choose the truth over the lie, new beliefs over old beliefs. **Romans 12:1-2**, says, ***“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”*** (Rom. 12:1-2 ESV) Our lives are now being transformed by the renewing of our minds, a putting away of the old flesh patterns of thinking, and having new, biblical patterns of thinking.

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV)***

Though I don't know that we will ever fully understand this side of Heaven, the depth to which trauma affects our lives. I believe that aligning our heart with His is especially important in those hard times, and that it will be key to the healing and restoration process that we will need.

***“I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation — the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ — for this will bring much glory and praise to God. And, I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News.”***(Phil. 1:9-12 NLT)

**Psalms 23** talks about the Lord being our Shepherd, and in the Psalm, we see that the Lord promises to be there with us, leading us ***through the valley of the shadow of death***. We live in a toxic, painful world, yet the Lord doesn't promise to take us out of it, He promises to be right there in the middle of it with us. We get to eat with Him, walk with Him, and rest with Him.

***“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time. (Ps. 34:18-19, NLT)***

In the world of psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental-health workers, it is being recognized more and more about the importance of finding, or having, some sort of purpose, or meaning in what they are going through. They were finding that trauma caused people to stop asking questions like, “What is life all about?” “Why are we here?” When you are working with people who are facing painful circumstances, they often ask these types of questions, and so it is the same for many believers when they are struggling to understand the “fiery trial” that has come upon them.

We talked about that on the first night, how the hard times can make us stop and ask, “*What does God want for our lives?*” “*What were we created for?*” It makes us stop and re-evaluate what is really important in our lives.

To survive traumatic events, experts would say that you have to be able to find meaning, or purpose. I have also heard it said that you are not supposed to ever let someone who is suffering leave without a sense of hope (that has its' foundation in God and His word) but unfortunately, many times, they try to offer a hope that is temporary. Apart from Christ, there is NO hope, and I am so thankful that He doesn't give us just a slight glimmer of hope (“*I hope is going to be ok!*”). The Bible tells us that His Hope is an anchor for our souls! I am not a sailor, or someone who is on a lot of

boats, but I don't think you need an anchor when you are sitting safely at the dock. An anchor is for when you are out, beyond your depth, and the storm is raging around you. Likewise, our God is the best anchor there is, and He has promised to hold on to us through it all.

The tool that we are looking at today is called *Reframing*. When we go through hard times, we generally begin to question everything we believe. In light of our topic, and how many lies we believe, we can see that might not necessarily be a bad thing. Trauma has a way of exposing so many things in our lives, including the lie that we are in control, but the point is not just to expose it, but to replace it with the truth of His Word: HE IS IN CONTROL.

In **1 Peter 3:15**, we are told to ***"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (NIV)*** Do you have hope? Is it something you can anchor your life to? That is truly the hope that we find in Him, and Him alone. All earthly hopes will fade away and eventually disappoint. The hope that we have in Him is not just for here, it is an eternal hope, one that reaches beyond death and the grave. One big thing that trials do is remind people that this is not the end, we were made for so much more than this. It is good to grieve. You have to acknowledge the pain, and not stuff it, or numb it, but just remember to grieve with the hope that you have in Him. Being able to truly lament before the Lord is a form of worship and depth of intimacy with Him.

Unfortunately, there are many believers who believe that being a Christian means that they will never face pain, or struggles. As a result, when they do, they can be crushed, and at times, they walk away, saying something like *"This God-thing isn't working, I am done...."* But Scripture that we mentioned about the Fiery trial tells us why it is occurring. Earlier, in **1 Peter 4:14**, it says, ***"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (ESV)***

The purpose of the trial is to prove your faith, so that it would result in praise, glory, and honor! The purpose was NOT to kill, steal, or destroy you, but to increase your ability to trust Him ~ to show you that He is bigger than your circumstances, and He is in control. What type of response will we have if we trust Him? Worship! Praising and glorifying His Name.

Don't let bitterness and Unforgiveness come in (against Him, or people). Remember the warning to not let a bitter root grow up and defile many. There is also the danger of unforgiveness – "Forgive us as we forgive, and if you don't forgive others, your Heavenly Father cannot forgive you!" If you want to heal, you have to forgive! (**Matt. 6:15**)

***"Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2, NASB)***

Only God can give ***"beauty for ashes...oil of joy for mourning...garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness..." (Is. 61:3)*** The process of reframing can be so varied. I have seen some things, where

peace and understanding came fairly fast, and other times, when the journey was longer, and harder, but God has been so incredibly faithful through it all.

#### Tool #4 **Reframe**

- God has a plan.
- You can't stuff your pain – Grieve, but with Hope
- Release **everything** to His Control
- Don't give up. There will be joy in the morning.
- Don't get bitter; **Forgive** to heal.

### ***"The 4 R's – Tools for the Abundant Life"***

#### Tool #1 **Recognize**

- Our responses to circumstances we don't like.
- Situations that "trigger" an emotional response in us (anger, shame, etc.)
- What we talk about – our self-talk, and what we say about people and circumstances in our lives.

#### Tool #2 **Receive**

- His Word, which is truth.
- Abide in Him, continue in Him.
- Agree with His Word (for your life and circumstances)
- Receive

#### Tool #3 **Resist**

- Obedience Creates Authority – Don't transfer it to the enemy.
- Capture your thoughts and bring them into submission to Christ.
- Don't give the enemy a stronghold.
- Recognize lies in thought patterns, responses, and traits.
- Stay "Plumb" with the Fruit of the Spirit
- Know your position.
- WORSHIP!

#### Tool #4 **Reframe**

- God has a plan.
- You can't stuff your pain – Grieve, but with Hope
- Release **everything** to His Control
- Don't give up. There will be joy in the morning.
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## ***“Footnotes”***

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## Living Free From Guilt and Shame Rev. Emma Curtis

Thank you for choosing this session. You are already getting the victory over **guilt** and **shame** by coming. We hate to admit we are the one who is **guilty** because we are **ashamed**. Hopefully this message will help us all be honest about **guilt** and **shame**, especially honest with ourselves. We can live free from **guilt** and **shame** if we can admit it, confess it to the Lord, and let Him cover it with His forgiveness. One of the things we have been zeroing in on at our ladies weekly Bible study is being honest with ourselves. Gaining wins in our battle with our enemy by being able to look at our own hearts and be true to ourselves as well as honest with God.

Have you ever heard the saying, “you got caught with your hand in the cookie jar”? That happens when you have been found out about doing something that was wrong. There is also a saying, “You got caught with your pants down.” I am not going to demonstrate that one, but I am going to talk a bit about the feeling we may have all experienced from taking a cookie, or from any sin we have not yet confessed and accepted God’s forgiveness for. For a child, getting caught taking a cookie is a time of learning, a time of knowing what it feels like to know and feel **guilt** and **shame**. Those are feelings none of us likes to have and thankfully we do not need to keep them. In order to be free from those debilitating emotions they have to be confessed and forgiven. We teach our children that they must be sorry for what they did and ask us, or whoever they wronged, to forgive them. Jesus took care of all sin when He died on the cross for us. The freedom we are looking for can only come from the Lord and He has already paid the price for any sin or wrong we have done.

This cookie jar is here to remind us of anything we need the Lord to forgive us for. As I go over Scriptures on this subject, we will find help to get the things that cause us **guilt** and/or **shame** out of our thoughts and feelings. The cookies in this jar have Bible verses in them and you will get to take one before you leave. The verses may not pertain to **guilt** and **shame**, but they will serve as a reminder of what we learn today.

I’m giving you a personal example of how I easily got deceived in my own thinking and convinced myself I didn’t need to feel **guilt** or **shame**. I, with the enemy’s help, convinced myself I didn’t need to repent.

***My husband’s name is Greg, and we have been married 63 years. There may be a time, or two, or three, when he has aggravated me, and I put him in his place with a sharp and unkind word or two. Now our two sons have no problem helping either one of us to see the truth in a situation. So as I shared what happened with our youngest son you will see myself deceit, as I expected him to commiserate with me because I knew I was in the right, I didn’t get the answer I expected. I was positive, Greg was the one responsible for what I said. My son explained to me how I was in the wrong and that I needed to apologize. I had totally deceived myself and did not want to even admit to myself I was guilty. I was ashamed of what I said but wasn’t being honest with my own heart and mind.***

This is called self-deception, and the devil encourages us to do that, so we remain guilty.

When we do harbor **guilt** or **shame** in our hearts, we are discrediting what Jesus has done for us. We are treading on the blood of Jesus if we keep the **guilt** and **shame** He died to remove from us. He paid it all so we could live free from sin and all its consequences.

**First Corinthians 15:3 tells us.**

**“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”**

God’s Word tells us where these sins come from and how we can trust the Lord for freedom from them. Adam and Eve opened the door to sin for all mankind. They had no knowledge of good and evil until they exercised their free wills and disobeyed God. When Adam and Eve were created, sin had not been introduced on this earth. They walked and talked with God as friends. We have no comprehension of what it felt like to that man and woman to walk and talk, to visit and be friends with God in total nakedness. They lived totally free of any inhibitions. They were free from **guilt** or **shame**.

**Genesis 2:25 the man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.**

The Bible tells us the tree God forbid them to eat from looked really good to them and they were definitely interested. Our enemy, the devil, used a snake to entice them into acting on their desires and to lose faith in God.

**Let’s ask ourselves: “Am I interested in, and possibly desiring, anything I shouldn’t be?”**

**Genesis 3:1-5 now the serpent was craftier than any of the wild animals the Lord had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent “We may eat fruit, from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.’ “For God knows when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

After losing faith in what God had told them, and believing the devil’s suggestions, they ate of the fruit of the tree God had warned them about. When we, through Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God we opened the door of sin on all mankind. The first man and woman, and every human being since, have the gift of free will. We can choose to listen and obey God or follow lies of the enemy as well as follow self-desires that are not in line with God’s will.

One of the explanations for **shame** is “a feeling of **guilt** for improper behavior.” When you know you did something wrong you feel **guilt** and you are **ashamed**. Guilt is “a crime or violation of law whether man’s law or God’s law.”

**How often does your self will come into disagreement with God’s will?**

My first thought is when I’m driving and am tempted to go faster than the law allows.

Our couple in the Garden of Eden knew immediately they had done something very wrong. They began to sense feelings they had not known before. They ate the fruit and:

**Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

When we realize, we may get caught, we want to hide what we have done. Can you picture Adam and Eve's feelings as they look at each other and see each other's naked body? They try to cover themselves as quickly as they can. Did you know it was because of the sin in the Garden of Eden that you don't like anyone seeing you naked?

Man now knew what was good and what was evil. With that knowledge came the realization they had disobeyed God. As God comes to walk with them, they hide from him.

**Genesis 3:9 But the Lord God, "called to the man, "Where are you?"**

Adam tells God they are hiding because they are afraid, and they are naked. God already knew this, but he continued to question them. "Who told you were naked?" God asked. "Did you eat of the tree I told you not to?"

When we are aware we have disobeyed God, and we sense Him speaking to us from His Word we have to make a choice just as Adam and Eve were given a choice. Do we admit what we have said or done and ask for forgiveness or try to make excuses possibly even blaming others. Adam and Eve blamed each other and finally the snake. They felt the full force of **guilt** and **shame** while the devil slithered away grinning.

When we have done something wrong whether it is a really big sin or a little unkind word

The devil will try to heap guilt on us. We are all here today with what is possibly considered big or small sins. Sin is sin and needs to be confessed, repented of, and walked away from. The wonderful truth we have from this story of man's sin brought onto every person since Adam is the amazing truth that sin is removed from us by the one man, Jesus Christ.

**Romans 5:19 "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."**

Adam is the one man who disobeyed God and through him all mankind became sinners. Jesus Christ is the one man who obeyed God and through Him all mankind can be forgiven any and all sin. God cursed the snake for the part it played in the devils' scheme. In this curse God also places a curse on Satan. In chapter three we find the first reference to Jesus' work at Calvary.

**Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."**

Here we see God's plan of redemption for the world. I am quoting from the Life in the Spirit study Bible: *"It predicts the ultimate victory for humankind and God over Satan and evil by prophesying of a spiritual conflict between the offspring of the woman (i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ) and the offspring of the serpent (i.e., Satan and his followers."* We see and live in that conflict to this day, but we also have victory over Satan when we claim Jesus as our Savior and live in obedience to Him.

As you study the Bible you will see these truths born out over and over again. **Isaiah 7:14** tells us that Christ would be born of a woman. **Isaiah 53:5** tells how He would be struck through the crucifixion. **John 12:31 & 32** tells us Jesus would rise from the dead to completely destroy (crush) Satan.

God meted out punishment to the snake and all snakes, to Eve and all women, and to Adam and all men. Then He made coverings for their naked bodies.

**Genesis 3:21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**

Covering man's sin is indicated here as God killed animals to use their skins to make clothes for Adam and Eve. Many theologians believe "the requiring of the death of an animal to cover their nakedness sees a parallel to the system of animal sacrifices to atone for our sin instituted by God through the leadership of Moses" (Taken from comment in the English Standard Bible) We do know it points to the shedding of blood for the remission of sin.

We have come to this class today to learn how to be free to worship without guilt and shame. *In my teens I lived a life I am not proud of, and I try not to talk about it very often. My problem was, as a new Christian, I didn't refuse the lies the devil continued to push on me. I felt so terribly guilty of my life and was terribly ashamed. I let the enemy beat me up about it all the time. I would share some of the things I had done with very close Christian friends, and they would encourage me that I was forgiven. At the same time the enemy would be telling me I should be so ashamed. A very dear friend told me one day that I was treading on the blood Jesus shed for me by continuing to wallow in **shame** and **guilt**. She gave me the very Scripture God had spoken to me when I committed my life to Him:*

**I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will purify us from all unrighteousness."**



You may carry reminders physically of what you did or what you are doing at present. You can be sure that Satan and his demons will keep throwing them up to you, reminding you of how bad you were or are. The blood of Jesus that washed away your sins continues to keep you clean.

**1 John 1:7 “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 unrighteousness.”**

If you have accepted the Lord and are “walking,” living a life of attempting to grow as a Christian you are walking in the light. This “walk” includes church attendance, Bible studies, a consistent prayer life and practice of Bible reading. The first step to have this purification in your life is to accept Jesus Christ because He died to set you free from every sin. At the end of this message we will have a prayer time and if you haven’t taken this step, please do that today.

Just as the blood in our bodies’ flows continuously through us cleansing and purifying impurities, so the blood of Jesus flows through us spiritually purifying us. The Greek word is translated purify in the New International Version and in the King James is translated cleanses. Either way it means an ongoing process, a constant keeping clean. The blood in your body flows endlessly, carrying away the chemical by-products that would interfere with it. It does this with a cleansing process. It is a perfect metaphor of the perpetual problem in us of sin. “Just as blood cleanses the body of harmful metabolites, forgiveness through Christ’s blood cleanses away the waste products, sins, that impede Spiritual health.” ( In His image by Dr. Paul Brand and Phillip Yancey)

When we mess up, steal a cookie or sin in any other way, Satan tries to convince us that we have a tourniquet stopping Jesus’ blood flow from cleansing us. God’s Word tells us that is not true. As we walk in fellowship with the Lord His blood is purifying us all along the way. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Ask God for forgiveness and know he has been keeping you clean all along. The **guilt** and **shame** must never be a part of your life.

**Romans 8:1 Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

I like the way the King James Bible says **verse 2, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”** That’s us who are walking in the light, in Christ, and His blood is continually purifying us **from all sin.**

Will you take this moment to really look at your own thoughts and heart. Have you been feeling **shame** and/or **guilt** because the enemy has deceived you? As we prepared today to leave all those deceptions behind and enter into worship free of Satan’s trickery. Are you ready to receive God’s Word that tells you can claim the covering of the blood of Jesus for anything and all that you have done.



**“A Whole Lot to Handle”**

**1. Introduction**

**A Whole Lot to Handle – phrase origin and definition**

The phrase "a whole lot to handle" refers to a situation or person that requires a significant amount of effort, attention, and patience to manage. It implies that something is complex, demanding, and potentially overwhelming. The idiom "whole lot" itself signifies "a great deal" or "a very large quantity". The phrase "to handle" suggests the action of dealing with or managing something or someone.

Expensive car analogy:

- Expensive cars generally require the most maintenance. They are performance oriented. Maintenance is performed with great frequency, great cost, and great inconvenience.
- Looks good on the outside but requires constant care. Often flashy requiring center stage.
- Expensive cars generally include expensive accessories to look their best.

**Women who are a whole lot to handle**

- ❧ Greater than normal need of support
- ❧ Give a superior attitude and rely on others to maintain their status
- ❧ Often yell and complain loudly to have actual or perceived needs met
- ❧ Sometimes move at rapid speed, without forethought or reason

**2. Sarai “Princess” – Genesis 16:1-6, Genesis 18:9-15**

- Adult woman called a princess generally means that she is spoiled, demanding, selfish, inability to control emotions (temper tantrums, joking and laughing inappropriately)

**Genesis 16:1, “Now Sarai, Abram’s wife had born him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant, whose name was Hagar.”**

- **Sarai was beautiful but barren** – looking at the grief of being barren spiritually – not talking about the struggle some women face in baring children
- Earlier passage describes Sarai as being exceptionally beautiful
- Barren – not being fruitful spiritually, unable to reveal the goodness of God
- Looking good on the outside, but empty inside
- Healthy head of hair - but thought patterns don’t line up with Scripture
- Beautiful blouse – but heart doesn’t reflect the nature of God
- Showy shoes – but no direction for feet in those shoes

### **Sarai was wealthy but unwise**

- Egyptian maidservant – foreign slave – unschooled spiritually
- “Hagar” – name means ensnared – bondage to false religion – slavery
- Sarai had opportunity to enhance Hagar’s life
- Sarai had natural wealth and spiritual wealth but was unwise

**Genesis 16:2, “So Sarai said to Abram, See now the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please go into my maid, perhaps I shall obtain children by her? And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.”**

### **Sarai was correct and cultured**

- Correct – person right in part but wrong in the whole
- Cultured – culture of the day said that children born by a slave would be owned by the master
- “Obtain” literally means to fix what is wrong – Sarai thought she had the ability to manipulate or fix something.

### **Sarai was fast and furious**

- She acted without considering the consequences
- She didn’t consider her future or the future of her family
- “Abram” heeded her voice – she persuaded him, she presented an intellectual argument – talked him into taking Hagar

**Genesis 16:4-6, “So he went into Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. Then Sarai said to Abram, My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me. So Abram said to Sarai, Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please. And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled her presence.”**

### **Sarai was about my and I**

- She thought she was exempt from the principle of sowing and reaping
- Thought it was okay to manipulate, use, and abuse
- Sarai did not accept personal responsibility
- She blamed others
- She was wrong, but felt wronged
- She was unwise, stirred up strife, and then stood back and blamed.

**Genesis 18:9-15, Then they (two angels/presence of the Lord) said to Abram, Where is Sarah your wife? So he said, Here, in the tent. And He (angels or the Lord Himself) said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son. (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well**



advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore, Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After, I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

And the Lord said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. But Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh, for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh!”

**Sarah listened, laughed, and lied**

- Sarah content to observe and not participate
- Eavesdropping
- Purposely placed herself in a position to actively hear without being seen

**Laughed – means mocked**

**Laughed within her heart – yet God still heard**

**Laughter stemmed from unbelief – God, voice of God through husband**

**Believed in self more than God**

**Believed physical body and aging process more powerful than God**

**Believed in right to express emotions contrary to word of God**

**Believed that God would not give her pleasure or fulfill her dreams**

**Denied she laughed**

**She was afraid – had some reverence for God, but immaturity**

### **3. Sarah “Queen” – midst of struggle experiences name change**

- ♥ Sarai “Princess”
- ♥ More literally “My Princess” – midst of being immature, selfish, and certainly a lot to handle – God calls her His own
- ♥ God saw not only who Sarai was but who she would become
- ♥ Name changed to Sara meaning “Queen” – mature, majestic – literally means mistress or lady (no longer young, immature girl)
- ♥ Spiritual change – God changed her name when she was an elderly woman – name changes don’t necessarily correspond with chronologically years

**Signs of maturity based on [Genesis 21:1-7](#)**

### **Lord visited Sarah**

- Literally means to make a deposit
- He gave her something and she received what was given
- Took her participation

### **Conceived and gave birth at the set time**

- Mature people conceive spiritually, carry, and give birth
- Set time – timing of significant importance

### **Named son Isaac (means laughter)**

- Sarah once laughed at the word of God
- She now laughs with God in delight over His gift

### **Interference and manipulation put in check**

- Abraham circumcised Isaac – no mention of interfering, manipulating, offering opinion

### **Desire to minister joy to others**

- Acknowledged that God was her source of joy
- Willingness to share that joy with others

**Genesis 21:7, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne *him* a son in his old age.”**

- Acknowledged that God was able to fulfill her desire
- Acknowledged that God was able to fulfill her husband’s desire
- Recognized herself as a gift from God to her husband
- Recognized herself as a source of food or nutrition

## **4. Self-Examination**

## Living Free for Purpose and Direction      Kim Vohs

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.

The Message version: Trust God from the bottom of your heart;  
don't try to figure out everything on your own.  
Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;  
he's the one who will keep you on track.

How many of you right now feel like you can say "I know exactly what God's purpose for my life is!"  
Now who all feels like you are struggling to know God's purpose and direction?

We've all been there, "God what am I supposed to do?" Well, the word has all the answers right so I'm going to open my bible put my finger on a verse and God's going to give me an answer. Then you get some random verse that makes no sense.

When you look at a tombstone you will see year dash year. The first date represents the birth, the second date represents the date of death. But that dash between is what really matters. That represents the life that the person lived.

As we think about that dash, every one of us in here would say I want my dash to matter. I want to live with purpose and direction. We all want to feel like we are accomplishing something.

You may have come in here today and you are praying for direction for your life, and I hope what is said here today will bring freedom to you as you walk out your purpose.

Maybe you are like I was in my early years; I was so afraid of messing up God's purpose for my life that I would get stuck in indecision. I believed God had an "A" plan for my life and if I made the wrong decision then I would ruin everything and be stuck in God's "B" or even "C" plan.

I had this picture in my mind that living out your purpose and having direction meant seeing results.

It's a lot of pressure to live thinking the only way your life has meaning is if you perform correctly and there are tangible results that everyone can look at and say, "wow look at how much this life mattered, look at all the people saved, look at how well she performed at such and such task."

It is my hope that today God will release you from the pressure of performance and show you the freedom you have in Him.

So, let's set the record straight from the start: your purpose in life is to bring glory to God by loving God and loving others, your direction is to move towards God.

Your dash in life should be this: **She lived for God.**

Your purpose and direction is not defined by what you do, but by whose you are.

I have freedom in worship, when I have a right view of God. God is not limited by my abilities or inabilities. He's not limited by my circumstances. I might look at my situation and think, "if only I had a purpose!" But when I have a right view of God, and my life is centered on him, I then find I have purpose.

We have a GREAT BIG GOD! We have a God who knows the beginning and the end and everything in between. We have a God who is sovereign and Holy and beyond what our minds can fathom. We have a God who is working and orchestrating and wasting nothing in our lives, whose purpose and plan has been in motion from the beginning. When we read the bible, we are reading God's story, HE is the hero, and he invites every day ordinary people like you and me to be a part of HIS STORY.

**Judges 4** is one such example I would like to look at.

Before we pick up in Judges 4, let's look at the context of Judges, which is pretty much summed up in **Judges 21:25** In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

That sounds a bit how things are today. Everyone is just doing what they think is right in their own eyes. God heard the cries of the Children of Israel as they are in Egypt, he sends Moses as a deliverer, then God raises up Joshua as a Conqueror after Moses, and the Israelites are supposed to go and conquer all the nations in the promised land, but they aren't totally obedient to God and instead compromise in many ways but the most detrimental being Idolatry. They try to intertwine the worship of YHWH with the worship of false gods. This leads to all kinds of sinful acts. They are doomed. When we get to Judges we see this cyclical pattern of the Israelites being oppressed by other people groups, so they cry out to God, God raises up different judges (or military type leaders) he delivers Israel, then they serve God for a short time, compromise again, rebel and become oppressed again.

In Judges 4 we have the story of the only female judge, Deborah, who is not only the military leader, but also has the position of judging like we think of judging, as well as being a prophetess. She calls one of her military leaders to her, Barak and tells him to go fight against their oppressors who are led by a guy named Sisera and God is going to hand them over to them. Barak's response is conditional obedience, he basically responds "I'm only going if you go with me."

Deborah says yes, I'll go, but because you put conditions on your obedience God is going to give the honor of victory to a woman.

#### **Judges 4:14-24**

**14 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. 15 At Barak's advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.**

**16 Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all Sisera's troops fell by the sword; not a man was left. 17 Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the**

wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

18 Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. 19 “I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up. 20 “Stand in the doorway of the tent,” he told her. “If someone comes by and asks you, ‘Is anyone in there?’ say ‘No.’” 21 But Jael, Heber’s wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. 22 Just then Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. “Come,” she said, “I will show you the man you’re looking for.” So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple—dead.

23 On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites. 24 And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.

Jael, had an ordinary life. She knows how to put up tents. Her people, the Kenites, are a nomadic people. Put up tent, take down tent, move. Someone said, “How did she not wake Sisera up when she put the tent peg to his head? Because in a single moment what was an ordinary skill became an extraordinary part of God’s story. She was doing what she knew how to do. All this time God had been preparing her for this moment.

She didn’t hesitate and say “God, if only I had a sword, then I could do something extraordinary for you!” No, she simply took the tools that she already knew how to use and found that there was purpose in all the mundane of learning how to use those tools, she brought down the wicked leader, which in turn brought down the wicked nation.

Here’s the question though: As cool as it is that Jael has this crazy story, is she the hero of the story? Look back at the text at **vs 15 “The Lord routed”** and **vs. 23 “God subdued.”** It’s the providence of God that brought the king to her tent. It’s the providence of God that she knew how to swing a hammer and drive a tent peg into the ground. God is the hero! Take the pressure off of yourself. You don’t have to be the hero, God is!

Do the everyday ordinary things God has put in front of you in faith, then you will be living with purpose and direction, and you will be equipped to do whatever God needs you to do whenever he needs you to do it.

We must stop qualifying things the same way the world does. What if God’s direction is “I want you to be a prayer warrior. I want you to go to your prayer closet an hour each day and pray over prodigal sons and daughters.”

Somehow we think the only person that has purpose and direction is the missionary in Africa, and somehow our simple obedience to the prayer closet, or our obedience to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, or our simple obedience to care for an ailing loved one, or our

simple obedience to live out our singleness as unto the Lord is of lesser significance, purpose or importance.

But what God is truly after is your heart. He wants your trust and obedience. That you understand whatever season you are in God is cultivating in you HIS purpose and direction in your life.

**Colossians 1:10-12 is a prayer lifted up on behalf of believers “that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”**

God’s purpose for your life is not that you look back and say, “Boy I did so much for God!” What he desires is that you bear fruit, you are filled with knowledge and spiritual wisdom, you walk pleasing to him and have endurance and patience with joy.

If God has you in a season of waiting...there is purpose in that.

We have to trust that God is working in the everyday, mundane facets of our life. There is purpose and meaning in that.

Think about the life of Jesus. The New Testament accounts of Jesus' life are sparse, with a significant gap of approximately 18 years between his childhood and the beginning of his ministry, leaving that period of his life largely "mundane" or unrecorded. The Bible mentions Jesus's birth, his visit to the temple as a boy ([Luke 2:41-51](#)), and then there's a gap. These 18 years, from around age 12 to 30, are not described in the bible. We don't get details until Jesus is thrust into public ministry when he is baptized by John the Baptist.

What was Jesus doing all that time? Growing, eating, drinking, learning, living life. At the same time being obedient to the Father.

Just as Jesus's "hidden life" was a time of preparation and growth, we can find God's grace and purpose in the seemingly mundane aspects of our own lives, whether it's holding a baby, cooking a meal, or leading our homes.

Jesus's "hidden life" demonstrates that faithfulness is cultivated in the furnace of routine, where we learn discipline, develop steadfastness, and cultivate patience.

Just as Jesus persevered through the challenges of his "hidden life," we can find strength and resilience in our own daily struggles and find God's presence in the midst of them.

By embracing the mundane and seeing it as an opportunity for holiness, we can begin to see Jesus in the everyday, recognizing that God is always working in the crevices and commonness of life.

Things that seem insignificant to us are elevated when they are done in obedience to Jesus.

Here is an example:

**Matthew 25:34-39 34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’**

These every day ordinary things are celebrated in God’s kingdom.

**1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**

The world tells us You were born for greatness. You were born to shine. You were made for more. We live in a culture that prizes education and significant, visible, lasting contributions to society, but the simple tasks of life and daily care of the vulnerable are not as highly valued. Look at **Mark 9:37** though, Jesus with a child in his arms said, **“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me”** Could it be that we are communing with Jesus when we do the everyday task of taking care of our families?

To the single ladies, your life has no less value or purpose than those who are married and have children. Live out your purpose by simply saying yes to God in those everyday moments. Take the friend to coffee, spend the time reading the book, learn the trade, visit the nursing home, all of those have purpose when you are doing them for God’s glory.

To my friends whose children have grown, and you felt like your purpose was wrapped up in raising those children, YOUR LIFE NOW HAS NO LESS PURPOSE. God is there in the gardening, in the phone call to the friend, in the care for the sick family member, in the baking of the bread...all of those moments have purpose when you are doing them for God’s glory.

To my friends that are working a 9-5, teaching, sacking groceries, taking vitals, God is there when you say the kind word, when you pray the prayers under your breath, or model Christlikeness by living with integrity. Then coming home exhausted but cooking dinner anyway and somehow making it to the basketball game and managing to still get a prayer in with your kids every night. All of those moments have purpose when you are doing them for God’s glory.

To our friends who are going through sickness and don’t understand why God would allow such hardship in your life. Or the one who’s marriage is in shambles, or your children are wayward, and you are questioning, “Did I somehow make a mistake? Did I do something to cause all of this?” “Did I miss God’s purpose or direction for my life?”

Job could have asked those same questions, he lost everything...surely there can’t be purpose in that. But all along, in the background God was working. Jobs friends hurled accusations, “You must have some hidden sin in your life” but Job is like no, I’ve been trying to live right. So, Job laments the

days of his past when his body was healthy and his life filled with family and friends, he feels his present suffering is no longer endurable and he demands that God provide an explanation, then God himself speaks up and responds to Job. **(Job 38-41)**

First God asks Job all of these impossible questions, like: **“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” (38:4). “Have you ever in your days commanded the morning light?” (38:12). “Where does light live, or where does darkness reside?” (38:19). “Can you lead out a constellation in its season?” (38:32).**

And of course, the correct response to all these questions is for Job to say, “No I don’t command the universe. I don’t know the answer to any of these questions. No, I’ve only lived a short time....”

After looking at the large scale of the cosmos, God questions Job about the world he actually lives in **(Job 38:39-39:30)**. He asks Job if he’s ever provided food for lions, or seen an isolated mountain goat give birth? No? Well, perhaps Job understands the feeding patterns of wild donkeys that roam the hills, or ostriches and their strange ways of caring for their young. Maybe Job and God can have a stimulating conversation about Job’s knowledge of war horses, and the aerodynamics of an eagle soaring on thermal air currents. As it turns out, Job doesn’t know as much as he thought, even about the world he lives in and should be familiar with. At the end of God’s invitations to dialogue, Job comes up short:

Then Job answered the Lord and said **,”Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.” (Job 40:3-5)**

Job’s many accusations of divine neglect or incompetence have failed. As it turns out, God is intimately familiar with every molecule and creature in his world and knows more about them than Job can comprehend. Whatever reasons God has for having allowed Job’s suffering, neglect is not one of them. Job never does find out why he suffered and neither does the reader. The goal of the book of Job was never to offer us a reason for suffering but it does make clear that God does know everything that transpires in his world, and his perspective on the universe has a wider range than any human will ever have. The things that don’t make sense to me are not beyond God.

**Romans 5:1-5 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we<sup>[a]</sup> have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice<sup>[d]</sup> in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,<sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,<sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”** In our suffering, God’s love is being poured into our hearts. We experience God’s compassion and mercy on full display. We are being formed for HIS PURPOSE.

“Obedience doesn’t always guarantee our desired outcome. Sometimes its purpose is to teach us faithfulness to God instead of our desired outcome.” Tara Leigh-Cobble



God desires that in all things we simply trust HIM. We have to learn contentment in whatever season we find ourselves in, trusting that God is good and as I'm walking in obedience to Him all the pieces of the puzzle are falling into place.

Paul gives us a lesson in contentment in **Philippians 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

How do we live in freedom for purpose and direction?

Have the right perspective, trust God, learn contentment and simply obey.

There is a story in the book called "God of the Longview" by David Wigington that will help us to get our perspective right.

In 1852 a French missionary named Pere Charles Renou went to the mountains of the Yunan Province. He went to build a church among the Yi people there. He built a few buildings but had very little success in building anything that lasted. There were no churches and no believers. But He loved coffee, so when he had moved to Yunan he took with him coffee plants to grow to harvest beans, roast them and brew coffee for himself. He found the mountainous environment perfect for growing coffee so he taught the locals about the coffee trade and showed them how to grow coffee for export. Fast-forward to modern times. In a little town in the Yunnan province a Christian organization felt led to start a coffee shop as a way to reach people with the gospel in a closed country. In China visitors cannot just go wherever they want, meaning Christians can't just go evangelizing in the mountains, they must have a reason to be there. The workers ended up finding out that surrounding the town, in the mountains were coffee plantations, where 90% of all coffee beans in China are grown. To have a coffee shop, you must have coffee beans. So now these Christian workers have a reason to go into these remote villages, to buy coffee beans and have an avenue to evangelize. So in the 21st century, access was gained to remote villages because a French missionary 166 years earlier had taught the people how to grow coffee.

I wonder if Renou knew how much purpose his life really had. He was obedient to go when God told him to, but in his lifetime, it looked like nothing really came of it. He was going to be a missionary and didn't see even one person converted to Christianity.

But that is the beauty of having the right perspective, we realize the results aren't up to us, God just wants our simple obedience. When I have a right view of God, I just say yes to whatever he puts before me. I realize that HE is enough there for whatever task he sets before me has PURPOSE written all over it. HE is the prize; He is the one who is worth it all. He is the one we are living for. So whatever task he has led you to do, do it faithfully, do it wholeheartedly and do it for HIS glory, and trust that HE is using it for HIS glorious purposes.

Here is the freedom—THIS GREAT AND GLORIOUS GOD IS IN CONTROL

**Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[a] have been called according to his purpose.**

There is purpose in the mundane.

There is purpose in every season.

There is purpose in waiting and in pain.

Purpose is found when we have the right perspective.

Purpose is found when we simply obey.

Purpose is found when we learn contentment.

The culmination of this is that I will live centered on and fully trusting in God.

We are going to end right back where we started: Trust God with everything, you don't have to try to make sense of every season you go through, because God has a view outside of your limited view, He knows what He is doing, So just live to worship him and he will give your life purpose and direction.

We can live in freedom to worship God and know that we have God's purpose and direction in our every moment.

