

a)

New Perspective + Defined by Father's Love

During these times of quiet reflection, we're asking two basic questions: What do I want to ask of the Lord, and what does He want to say to me at this time. We then wait, listening for His response. Let these questions guide your reflections and help you identify the things you want to process with the Lord. Take time to quiet your mind. Ask the Lord to help you hear what He is saying, and to give you freedom to pour out whatever is on your heart.

1. SELF-IMAGE - What defines us?

- DEFINE + Determine/identify the essential quality or meaning of something; what characterizes or distinguishes something.

 Merriam-Webster Dictionary
- SHALOM + Definition of broad Hebrew meaning of "Shalom" | Peace → Definition, note at John 14:27, Quest Bible, NIV "The Biblical concept of peace has at its root the meaning of 'totality,' or 'completeness.' Important nuances of meaning include such things as fulfillment, maturity, soundness, wholeness, harmony, security, well-being and prosperity. Also connotes absence of war and freedom from disturbance."
- *JOHN 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

What is <u>your</u> self-image? How would it compare with God's version? Simply ask Him to help you recognize the right description of how you see yourself.

What do you feel defines who you are, in both positive and negative ways?

you identify what is missing of the peace of His presence within you.

- b) Read the Hebrew definition of *shalom* the peace of the Lord, resident in your heart. As you ponder this, ask the Lord to help
- c) In what way do you feel conflicted? Ask Him to help you see how this may be connected with your self-image.
- d) Reflecting on how you define yourself 🛨 Ask the Lord to help you identify ways in which He values you.

Ask for help in recognizing gifts and characteristics that you could value and use as an expression of who you are.

2. ROOTED AND ESTABLISHED IN LOVE # Nurturing the Garden of My Heart

Nurture, "the process of caring and encouraging the growth or development of someone or something" is a key way of learning to define ourselves in the safe context of Father's love*.

- a) Our Shepherd ~ Today, and in the coming month, ask the Lord to help you rely on His role as your shepherd. How would He lead you? What restoration of soul does He want to work in you?
- b) Ask Him to begin a new work in you, one that will help you and truly give you a new perspective on yourself image. Let Him show you what you need in order to change your perspective.

c) What else do you yearn for that can only come through His daily care? What do you want to ask of your Shepherd?

d) Relationships ~ Ask the Lord to show you how He wants to nurture you through the people you love and trust, and who love you. Ask Him to send someone new into your life if You feel the need. + In this quiet time, listen for anything more He has to say.

Ephesians 3:16b-18 -

And I pray that you being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Psalm 23 -

- The Lord is my shepherd;
 I shall not want.
- He makes me lie down in green pastures.He leads me beside still waters.
- He restores my soul.

 He leads me
 in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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 anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

John 10:3-4, 10 -

³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ~ ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

^{*} Song of Songs 2:14-15 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock in the crannies of the cliff. Let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. \sim Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom.

The work of the Holy Spirit is key to the healing we may need, especially because we cannot often see or name things that have deeply wounded or limited us in some way. These passages, I Corinthians 2:9-10, and Romans 8:26-28, so clearly assure us that He discerns the deepest recesses of our hearts and stories, and works for our good. (See also: I Corinthians 12:4-11. When we need inner healing, the gifts outlined by Paul are much needed.)

- a) Is there a specific area in your life where you need the discernment and work of the Holy Spirit? Of the questions below, what would be helpful for you?
 - ~ Ask the Lord to make a way for you ... to open a season of healing in your life.
 - ~ Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into a time of discernment —for His help in searching your heart. Invite Him to intercede for you, and/or, lead you to believers who would pray with you, relying on the Spirit to provide the spiritual gifts needed.
 - ~ What else would you like to ask of the Holy Spirit?

⁹ However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Romans 8:26-28

- ²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
- b) Redemption! As part of their healing journeys, each of today's speakers have shared how the Lord is redeeming their lives.
 - ~ Wait on the Lord. Is there something in your life that the Lord wants to redeem? Ask Him if there are barriers in the way of what is on His heart for you.
 - ~ Is there something in your life that you want the Lord to redeem?
- 4. Be still before Him. Let Him speak to you about whatever is on His heart for you today, and in this season of your life.