

Unstuck: #4 “It’s a Choice” – Genesis 25-29

Dr. Matthew Cassidy – 2/5/2012

Josh Hamilton

You might have read last week the fateful story of Josh Hamilton. He is a great individual who plays for the Texas Rangers, one of the greater baseball players at this time. When he started in major league baseball, he was the first round draft pick. That was how spectacular his skills were anticipated.

One of the things about having Josh Hamilton on your team is that when you get Josh Hamilton, you also get the monkey on his back. He has an unfortunate addiction to alcohol and various drugs. As he started off his career as a professional, he started getting in a lot of trouble and ended up having to leave baseball for three very important professional years as he tried to get his life together. He finally ended up going into rehabilitation and surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. In returning to baseball, the team that brought him back on said: We are going to have to hire someone to be his personal confidant. This person literally has a job description called Josh Hamilton’s accountability partner; this person travels with the team and makes sure Josh stays well and is doing his best out on the field. In 2010, Josh Hamilton won the American League Most Valuable Player award. It is a fabulous story and he is a great individual.

Last weekend, Josh went into a restaurant with some friends and ordered a drink. That was not a good thing to do because then he ordered three more drinks. Then he went from the restaurant to a bar with a friend and then went back to his hotel. When his friend left, he went back to a bar and it spiraled out of control. Then Josh had to do some press conference interviews. It was unfortunate because he is such a strong individual and loves the Lord. In his explanation, he said:

“My life in general is based on making the right choices; it’s all based around my relationship with the Lord.” “And I look at it like that, you all know how hard I play on the field and I give it everything I absolutely have. When I don’t do that off the field, I leave myself open for a weak moment.”

It’s true. He was not playing absolutely every part of his life outside the playing field and then he was vulnerable. It wrecked him again.

Here is the question I was pondering when I was reading about this. What was Josh Hamilton thinking last weekend, on that day? When everybody was going around the table and he said: *Yeah, I will have a drink*. What was his thinking?

Here is what I think was going on inside his head. I think he was thinking that Josh Hamilton was not Josh Hamilton that night because Josh Hamilton has never met an alcoholic beverage that he did not love until death do you part. I guess he thought *that* Josh Hamilton did not exist anymore. But he did. So he ordered three more and then he went to a bar and ordered more. He left and came back and there he is again.

The point is that Josh Hamilton, who has an addiction to alcohol and drugs, will always be Josh Hamilton as long as he breathes. His life story in heaven, the story he is writing for heaven – not the one here but the story he is writing for heaven – is unique to him and his story will be filled with expressions of trusting God, living by faith, in the containment of that monkey. We are supposed to live by faith. That is what pleases God, right? It is impossible to please God unless you live by faith.

What does “live by faith” mean? It is very practical, concrete and it is also very specific. In this man’s life, it is to tame the monkey on his back. When he gets to heaven and he meets his Savior, he will say: *Yeah, that monkey, and a couple of times it was a gorilla, but when I finished I went this many days, that turned into years, that turned into decades, and I was an inspiration to other people who had monkeys and it was all for You. It is great to be here and it is great to be without that monkey.*

You Have to Know Yourself

You have to know yourself, know the way you are made, and the things that have happened in your life to fully appreciate how to know God better. If you want to live by faith, you have to know God. But you have to know yourself to know God. Here are four quotes from saints through the ages:

St. Augustine: “Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know Thee.”

Meister Eckhart: “No one can know God who does not first know himself.”

St. Teresa of Avila: “Almost all problems in the spiritual life stem from a lack of self-knowledge.”

John Calvin: “Our wisdom ... consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves.

Our wisdom consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves. I don’t want to belabor this point too much; I don’t even want to argue it. You have to know who you are to be able to know who God is. If you want to run the path that God has for you, the unique, very specific path for you, how are you going to trust God in ways other people won’t have to? You will

have a different set of struggles and if you know what those struggles are, you can be successful and live a great life. Otherwise, you can be caught or stuck for your entire life.

Here are some things you need to know about you that are not going to change.

The first has to do with your nature – how you are made. You probably have heard that figure of speech – *You can do anything you want as long as you set your mind to it*. That is simply not true. If it were true, I would be a figure skater right now. That is somebody else's dream, I think, but not mine.

But here is a better quote: *You play the cards you get dealt*. That is true. I will explain in a little more detail as we use it for an example.

The second has to do with nurture. These are the influences in your life that you have chosen to interpret in a certain way, either in a positive or negative context. There are defining moments and they are defining because you chose to make them defining. The way you interpret certain events that occurred to you will influence who you are – for good or bad, for better or worse.

I am introducing this new word, inhibitors – inhibitors to spiritual growth. Inhibitors are a combination of the two – the way we are made and the way we have interpreted the events in our lives. It causes an inclination towards a particular primary emotion that we are going to fall prey to quite often.

For example, using Bible examples here, if a person is born with some great gifts and insight, and his parents are doting all over him, and they are overprotective and exalt that one child, that child will have an *inhibitor of pride* to his spiritual growth. He will have to put off that pride and put on humility and compassion to be able to grow in his spiritual life. Pride is always going to be the thing that haunts him.

For example, a person who is a passionate person [like we looked at last week], made by God, and then they are neglected as a child, *their inhibitor will probably be envy*, comparing themselves to other people, wanting what other people have. They will have to put off envy and put on contentment and gratitude.

It is something you will have to know about yourself in order to deal with it. The better you know yourself, the better you will be able to anticipate the trials you will go through –but also the expressions of faith in your life – the monkey on your back.

You can look at it this way. Life is like a track race and every one of us is going to run on this track of life. The way you are made, that is the lane you are given. You are the third lane in, and that is the lane you run on. The way you interpret what has happened to you and your inhibitors are like the terrain of that particular lane. By the way, we help dig the holes of that terrain. We dig a big gulch here and put a little ankle twister there; we add a mound of dirt later on. It is a track and so it is going around and

around. We keep repeating certain things. We will see that big gulch and that ankle twister and that mound again.

The question is – do you remember where you have been? Are you anticipating where you are going? It is a circle, an oval, a loop. The better you understand yourself, how you are made, how you have interpreted the things that have happened to you, and this inhibitor, it will help you avoid the ditch, jump over the gulch, and help you climb the mound.

Biblical Example: Jacob, Man of Deceit

If you look at the life of Jacob, he is a man of deceit. He was made that way. In Genesis 25:21-26, it starts off where his mother, Rebekah, cannot get pregnant. She prays the prayer they pray in the Old Testament and she becomes pregnant with twins. Jacob is one son and Esau is the other son. They are fighting while they are inside their mother, so much so that she prays for relief. *God, what is happening inside of me?* God says: There is a bigger plan here.

Listen to the blessing. (Genesis 25:23) There are two nations inside of you and they will separate and be at odds with one another. But the older will serve the younger. While that promise is made and, therefore, it will be granted, when the babies are born (verses 25:25, 26) it says:

The babies' natures:

25:25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

They named him Red and he is like a wild animal.

25:26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

So while Esau is coming out, Jacob grabs his heel and just rides the wave. That is his birth experience. They called him Jacob because Jacob means *heel grabber*. But it is a double entendre because Jacob, heel grabber, means *con man*. He was deceitful in the very way he was made.

Sons' nurture:

The way he was raised did not help much either. In the next couple of verses,

Gen. 25:27, 28 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

So the boys were raised with parents, Isaac and Rebekah, who came from families that favored various children. They were victims of that and it tore their families apart. They got married and brought that into their family. Isaac is known for just lying around, being slothful, and loving to eat a lot. Because wild game was provided by Esau, Isaac loves him best.

Rebekah likes things around the house kept well and orderly. She is into control. So she likes Jacob the best.

Listen to the compounding influence of this.

Inhibitor for Jacob:

What is the inhibitor for this man, Jacob? His name means *deceitful*. His mother is deceitful and plays favorites. He is going to be deceitful. It is not a bad thing necessarily. It is going to be the way he can trust God to fulfill God's promises in his life. God's promise in his life is that he would rule over Esau and he would be the one who inherits the promise of Abraham. So, this is a chance for Jacob to just wait on God and see what He does. But that is not what Jacob chooses to do.

There are a lot of stories involved in his life and usually they revolve around his being deceitful. The classic one is when his father, Isaac, is looking at possibly dying soon (he thinks he is anyway) and he is blind because of his age.

Isaac says to his favorite son, Esau, in contrast to what God has already promised. – *Look, I am going to give you the blessing. So, before I do that, why don't you go out and catch some wild game and, like I do, I will just sit here and wait to be fed.*

While Esau is out chasing his prey, there is other prey being hunted. Rebekah overhears this conversation and she wants her favorite son to receive this blessing. So she connives with Jacob, the conniver, the deceitful one, and says: *Here is what I want you to do. I want you to dress up like Esau. We will put this wool coat on your shoulders and on your arms. I want you to go in there. I will cook Isaac's favorite meal, and then you are going to walk in there and pretend to be Esau.*

That is what happens. He walks in with the smell of the meat filling the tent. Jacob walks in there and listen to what he says. Isaac asks: *Who is it?* Jacob says: *It is Esau, your first born.* [Those words are very important.]

Isaac is like: *Wait a minute. That doesn't sound like Esau. Are you Esau?*

Jacob says: *I am Esau.*

It gets pretty suspicious so Isaac says: *Come over here. I want to kiss you but I want to smell you and touch you. There it is – okay.*

Isaac gives Jacob the blessing, the blessing of the first born.

No sooner does that happen that Jacob runs for it. The real Esau walks in and says: *Hey, I am here. I am Esau, your first born.*

Isaac, it reads, (Gen. 27:33)

Isaac trembled violently and said :35 “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

That is what Jacob does. His name means that.

Gen. 27:36 Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing! I will kill him.”

Again, Rebekah hears that and says: We have got to do something about that. So, she says to Jacob: *Go, tell your dad that you need to run back to my house, my upbringing and spend some time with my brother Laban [Jacob’s uncle], to find yourself a bride there.*

Here is part of the point. Because of the manipulation and favoritism, the lying, Rebekah will never see her favorite son again. There is a price for living a faithless life, a life that is controlling and smothering, and deceitful. She will never see Jacob again and Jacob will never see his mom again.

What kind of person lies to their father to receive a blessing that belongs to their brother? Who does that? Who would disguise himself as a sibling to steal something from their father?

Here is the part that is really unfortunate. Jacob was going to get that blessing anyway. He didn’t have to do what he did. Rebekah did not have to do what she did. God said – that is the way it is going to work out. It was going to happen. – Instead of waiting and trusting, Jacob chose to take things into his own hands and look at the cost.

I will bet that 90% of what you want from God, the things you dream about, He wants to give them to you anyway. The 10% God does not want to give you, it is because your dreams are so shallow and petty. God wants so much more for your life. Jesus said: *I came that you might have life, life abundantly.* That is what He desires for us and yet here is what happens. The very things that God wants to give us, our inhibitors stand in the way of those things.

God will train Jacob to overcome his inhibitors:

Jacob is stuck and he can choose to be stuck his entire life if he ignores the things that inhibit him -- his inclination to be deceitful, to get whatever he wants at any expense to any one else. What God is going to do in his life is to keep bringing back this theme of – this is how you, Jacob, will trust Me for your life. It is a unique path and one that is just for you. You dug these ditches and I am going to help you

by faith to spring over them. – That is Jacob’s story and that is why God will allow certain things to happen to him – so that Jacob gets it, so that he will become more aware of how he could live for God.

There are a lot of Jacob stories but the next one is especially fun. When Jacob runs into his Uncle Laban, he introduces himself. They bring him into the tent and here is the family. (Genesis 27:15-19)

Jacob says: Who is that!

Laban says: Oh, that is Leah, my eldest daughter.

Jacob says: No, not that. [Leah] That! [Rachel]

Laban says: That is Rachel, the younger one.

Jacob says: Wow, I feel like I am right in the heart of God’s will right now. I want her.

Laban says: Hey, I heard you are good with sheep. I will hire you to be a shepherd and just because you are family, I will pay you. How much do you want as a salary?

Jacob says: I want Rachel. That is what I want.

Laban says: Fine, here is what we will do. You will work for me for seven years and I will give you my daughter to be married to you.

The text says: The time went by as quick as could be. Then day one of year seven, Jacob says this quite passionately (Genesis 27:21) *My seven years are done and I want Rachel. I want to sleep with her tonight.*

You can’t argue with that passion, personally. So they had this big, flamboyant wedding, a classic Middle Eastern wedding with lots of wine, lots of partying, lots of fun to be had. The bride comes out covered head to toe in clothing with not much showing. They go into the tent and consummate the marriage. They fall asleep and he wakes up the next morning and here is what the passage says:

Gen. 27:25 So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah!

Can you imagine Jacob – whoa, whoa, whoa. Oh, you are that sister. You are not Rachel.

No, I am not.

And he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?”

Why have you Jacob-ed me? It is hard to explain when I am summarizing the story but the word choice of Laban is purposeful because the author wants us to understand that this 7-year coin has finally dropped and it is reflecting all the way back to him lying to his father – because every time Leah’s name is mentioned previously, it is Leah, the older daughter .. Leah, the older .. Leah, the older. --- Why have you Jacob-ed me?

27:26 But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place, to marry off the younger before the first-born.

Because it is our custom to marry off Leah, the first born.

What? First born? Why are we calling Leah the first born suddenly? It has been Leah, the older daughter each time.

The author is saying: Do you remember the last time anyone used the words first born? Oh yeah, I remember. It is when Jacob walked into the tent of a blind man who asked “Who are you?” and Jacob said: “I am Esau, the first born.” The author is connecting those two incidents.

This could have been a fabulous time for Jacob to go: *Okay, I get it. I think I am ready to write that letter of apology now. I understand what I did to other people. --- Who in the world would lie to their own family members, to disguise themselves and dress themselves up as the sibling, to lie to their parents, to get what they want? Who would do that? Now I get it. I don't like what that feels like.*

But Jacob does not do that. Jacob tripped into the hole that he dug and it doesn't make a difference in his life. He continues to be Jacob, deceitful, and he will continue to get what he wants, the way he wants it. And the things that he wants, God wants for him. But Jacob will not trust God for it and he will get it his own way. It is a terrible thing because it could have been a game. It could have been an adventure.

Jacob could have said: God, I know You want me to be prosperous because you promised that. I am just going to see how You do it. God, I know I am going to receive the blessing of the older son. I am going to sit and wait and watch because it is like me to get involved and to lie, cheat and steal to get what I want. I am not going to do that but I am going to trust You for that.

Jacob could have acknowledged his inhibitor to spiritual growth and then lived a great life of faith, particularly for him. But Jacob doesn't and guess what happens in his life.

One of Jacob's children uses a garment to lie to him about a favored son. Does that sound familiar? Now we are three generations into garments being used to hide the identity of someone and that someone is a favored child.

What a mess. It is a terrible mess. It is a terrible mess because someone chose not to live the life of faith that God had for them by acknowledging the way they were made, the way important events were interpreted in their lives, and to acknowledge the inhibitors in their lives. It just didn't have to be that way.

Observations and Applications

It doesn't have to be that way for you. It doesn't have to be that way for anyone if we just learn to know ourselves better. In the context of application, at Grace Covenant Church, it is our agenda, our goal here at Grace [and it is supposed to be the goal at every church] to present every single person mature and complete [Colossians 1:28]. What that means is that when you finally see your Savior face to face, you have gotten to the place of faith that you are thick with character. You are stable in your understanding of how you are to live your life and you lived that life. You are pleasing to God because you have lived by faith in those particular areas that are special, just for you.

Besides the epistles saying that we are to present each person mature to Christ, the last commission that Jesus gave was to go into all the world, making disciples of all nations. But listen to what He says: ... teaching them to obey all that I have commanded. [Matthew 28:19, 20]

If those words seem harsh to you, that you would obey all that Jesus commanded, later on John says this ... and that you would obey the commandments and they would not be burdensome to you. [John 14:15]

Have you ever loved someone so much that you found yourself in the middle of doing something that you would not normally like doing ... but you are doing it? Love is compelling you and it is not burdensome. That is what the commandments are like when you are mature. You do them because of love and it is no big deal. It was a big deal a few years ago but I wasn't so mature a few years ago. I wasn't so in love a few years ago.

You see, it is unfortunate that a cartoon like this one would have to be written because people just don't get what we are doing.



Isn't that the truth? Why are there so many Christ-followers walking around and they are such jerks about it? Because they are not following Christ – they are living an entire life stuck because they won't do the two things John Calvin said: "Our wisdom ... consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."

How do you know yourself? If we could know ourselves better, wouldn't that be great? If we had a pathway to go by, if we understood the way we learn that is particular to us, if we knew what our inhibitors are.

Monvee

A few months ago, the staff stumbled onto a tool that could really help with that and we are going to implement this throughout our whole congregation. It will serve us well. Here is a little commercial for it that will help you understand what Monvee is and how you can get involved.

[Go to www.Monvee.com - watch the video which was presented during the service.]

“... You feel like you are on top of the world ready to change it. But then after a while you get stuck and your growth starts to drag. Maybe you get apathetic and you go back to your old habits. It feels like there is something in the way and it puts a stop to your spiritual growth. So you say to yourself: ‘Be more determined. Be more committed. Wake up earlier. Do more. Try harder.’ But hard as you try, you just can’t snap out of it. So then you decide you will find someone who seems like they know what they are doing. Do what they do and expect the same results. Sometimes this works and you find a few practical tools that really help you grow. But other times, you end up putting your feet into someone else’s spiritual shoes and discover obstacles instead of a catalyst for your spiritual growth. You end up right back where you were before – stuck. But what if there was a better way? What if there was a tool that could help you build the plan to grow that would not only reflect your God-given individuality but would also help you figure out what it is that is getting you stuck in the first place? If you have ever wondered if there is something more out there, besides trying to fit your soul into one-size-fits all spiritual growth, Monvee is the tool for you...

“Monvee compiles all the ways you can grow spiritually and puts them into a plan that addresses what is most likely causing you to be stuck. You have what it takes to grow. Find out what is getting in the way. ...”

In your bulletin, we made it a tear off for you [the Monvee web site and sign up information]. Take this home, go on the web site and log in, using this Grace Covenant Church code id. Because we paid these fees, because we wanted everybody to be involved in it, you can go on the web site. It helps you understand. It gives you a profile for free. You and your mate can take it. If you have kids, it is a fun test to take. It is not like a lot of tests because it is fun and it is short. That is one of the reasons we picked Monvee as a way of doing diagnostic work. It is not rocket science but it sure is helpful.

It prints out a profile for you, saying – you probably have this as an inhibitor. You have a learning style based on the way you answered some of these questions. You have a learning style that is most

effectively stimulated by reading, or listening, or singing, or experiencing, or conversing. It will track you to a personality in the Bible who is a lot like you. I bet you already know who the person is because that is the person you like to read about in the Bible – because they are a lot like you.

It gives you a pathway of experiencing God. You combine these aspects. Each of us has a different pathway. There are some common pathways like some experience God by being extremely active in His causes. These are the guys who are charging hell with squirt guns and going out there and doing crazy stuff, and the crazier the better. They feel God's presence when they do that.

Other people are very contemplative. Because of that, they are the last to want to get on that charge going towards hell. They like solitude and silence and prayer. A lot of times they serve as the conscience for a church.

If you project on each other, you can see the war that could get going. *Why aren't you out here in this fight? – Why aren't you praying more?* --- It is because we experience God differently.

Other people love creation and that is where they meet God.

Other people like to study or learn.

There are so many pathways we can be on. But the point is that when you take this test, (again, this is free – the Assessment and the Discovery Summary) every person in your family can take it. It would be a fun thing to do as a family. You can start seeing – Look, in light of the pathways and our learning styles and our inhibitors and the personality types we have from the Bible, look at how fun our family is. Look how each person is going to have to trust God in a different way to express their faith. One will have to trust God by doing something courageous. Another will have to trust God by sitting back.

If you pay \$20, you get a Roadmap, a particular plan you can use which is filled with details our church has added. One of the ways you can learn about God is by reading your Bible. It will say: At Grace Covenant Church, one of the best ways to read your Bible is by reading The Voyage (our Bible reading method). Books that we like a lot are implemented in there like: “Unstuck” aka “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”. While we are going through these pathways together, the customized ones are also customized for this church.

There is feedback too if you do this “Roadmap” packet, then you can send it to some friends and they can check up on you. Even the system itself will check up on you in a month or three months or six months. “Hey, how is that pathway coming?”

If worship is your style, what things have you done to implement worship more effectively in your life? It could be a very fun thing for you and your family to do together. It could be something fabulous

for the church to do. If all of us take it, we could learn more effectively how to serve you because of your pathway styles. It is an alternate way of looking at your spiritual growth, a way of getting unstuck.

If you look at the possible, hypothetical, what could have been different in the life of Jacob, what if Isaac and Rebekah had a conversation -- that never happened -- but what if they had the deepest most purposeful conversation they had ever had in their adult life? What if Isaac took the initiative and just said:

Rebekah, today it changes. Today is the first day of the rest of our family's life. I will choose not to be a sluggard, a passive, and a glutton. I will not be known merely as a person who sits and eats. You are going to trust God and not take control, not be involved in everything, and not make sure everything happens according to your plan. That is how you and I are going to have to trust God. These boys who are coming up, we have to raise them the right way, a way we were never raised. We need to love them both uniquely and equally. You are going to have to help me learn to understand Jacob because I don't. And I am going to help you learn to understand Esau. We will choose to do that together. If we do this right, when Esau is at a certain age, when he is growing in his understanding of who he is, we will tell him that God's blessing is going to go to his younger brother. Maybe, just maybe, if we have done some of this right, he will be glad that Jacob will bear the burden of Abraham's promise because he was not made to endure such a responsibility. But let's pile up some rocks. [They pile up rocks around there a lot when they make covenants.] And let's say this is the day that things change. From this day forward, our family and our heritage changes because the last 500 years have been dominated by families lying within each other, favoritism, and deceit. From now on, from this day forward, you and I, Isaac and Rebekah, are changing the way we do things. We are changing our lives the way we trust God. From this day forward, we will be honest, thorough, truthful, and loving.

What would that have been like in the lives of Jacob and his sons and those sons? It would have been a lot different for Joseph. Joseph would have loved that conversation to have happened.

You could have that conversation. If you want to have that conversation, it is going to take more than a Monvee thing. You are going to have to pray for courage and to move out of your comfort zone. When you start understanding yourself and your inhibitor and the way you are designed uniquely, just like Isaac is going to have to have special help to be able to stand up and move and lead – he is going to trust God for that – Rebekah is going to have to learn to sit back and pray and wait. That is going to take courage on both of their parts.

You are probably going to need a trusted companion to make that happen because we can't do that alone. If you are in a great relationship with your spouse, or you are in a dating relationship, this is a great

place to start. That is the first and foremost place to start, like Isaac and Rebekah could start. But even if you are in a great marriage, you still need a great friendship to be able to do this with.

We have designed this whole church structure, all the cogs in this church, around the idea of mentoring one another, spending time with older men and older women who can help you understand your inhibitor, understand the way you have been raised and the way you have been made – so that you could run this path and do well with it.

What is your alternate ending? What is your conversation that is deeper and truer than any one you have ever had? What if you had a conversation like: *In light of all of my background and history, now I start understanding that the boundaries I have to make for myself are for my own good. God wants great things to happen in my life and great fruit to be produced from me. Because of that, I will be more intentional about who I choose to be my friends – because I am a person who is drawn toward friends as a pathway.*

Me personally, I am going to be more committed and dedicated to reading the right books with the right people because I love to learn and I love to interact with people about what I am learning.

What if you chose to walk a path of worship because that is how you learn and experience God in nature? You intentionally put in your schedule to spend time walking in pretty places, listening to worship music – without guilt. You can say, this is how I grow. This is how I experience God. This is the way I enjoy Him. This is me and I am okay with that.

What happens if you get unstuck? What happens if we all get unstuck? Good times. You have to have the conversation that says: Today, everything changes. That conversation ought to be with a significant person in your life.

But it starts with a conversation with God. Today it changes. Let's pray that prayer right now.

Dear heavenly Father,

The Spirit of God who dwells in the souls of people who follow You, today it changes. God, I ask that You help us understand ourselves and we would not be afraid of that understanding about the way we are made and that we would be content with that, and the experiences in our lives and the inhibitor of our spiritual growth, not so that we would be afraid but so that we would be encouraged to transcend them by living for you. I ask that You help us be faithful stewards of the only life You have granted us and the very unique way You have given it, that You would be pleased, that we would present ourselves ultimately to You mature and complete, obeying all that You have commanded and that it would not be

burdensome. We ask You grant this for Your pleasure and Your glory and Your happiness and Your enjoyment, not ours. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen