

SCRIPTURAL SUPPORTS · A JOYPATH COMPANION

The Relational Practices

& the Seven Sacred Skills



Every passage, written out and gathered in one place. Fifteen relational practices and the Seven Sacred Gentle Protector Skills, with the Scripture beneath each one.

"...that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days."

DEUTERONOMY 30:19-20 · TO CLING IS *DABAQ*

BY JOANNA HUGHES

15 PRACTICES · 7 SKILLS · 299 PASSAGES

The Relational Practices

What Scripture shows us about connection with God and with each other.

Scriptures gathered by **Paul Goodman**, adapted by **Joanna Hughes**.

I Heart Connection with God (clinging to God) is the Goal

Everything else in this document grows out of this one root. Not information about God. Not activity for God. Connection with God, heart to heart, clinging to him as our very life.

JOHN 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. *A heart connection with Jesus is the source of true life and transformation.*

ROMANS 8:15-16 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. *The gospel restores a deep, intimate relationship with God as our Father.*

DEUTERONOMY 30:19-20 ...therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days... "Cling to Him" is the Hebrew *dabaq*, the very word for a husband clinging to his wife. Notice what choosing life turns out to mean: to love God, to hear His voice, and to cling to Him. He is your life.

II Heart Connection with the Body is ALSO the Goal

The connection God offers us is the same connection He asks us to offer each other. In Scripture these are not two projects. They are one.

JOHN 17:21-23 That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one. *Jesus prays for unity and deep relational connection among believers.*

EPHESIANS 4:15-16 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. *The body of Christ is meant to be deeply connected, growing in love.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. *The gospel unites us into one body, emphasizing relational wholeness.*

ACTS 2:42-47 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common. *The early church modeled heart connection that overflowed into joyful giving and sharing in the community, not just religious activity.*

JOHN 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. *Love and relational connection are the defining marks of true faith.*

1 JOHN 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. *A heart connection with God naturally results in loving connection with others.*

COLOS SIANS 3:14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. *Love holds everything together, making heart connection the core of the gospel.*

III Transformation

We do not think our way into maturity. We are changed by who we stay close to. Transformation is relational before it is anything else.

MATURITY HAPPENS THROUGH CONNECTION WITH JESUS

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. *Transformation is a relational process. We change as we stay connected to Jesus, with confident face to face encounters with Him.*

NUMBERS 6:24-26 · THE PRIESTLY BLESSING The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace (*shalom*).

JOHN 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. *Maturity comes from staying connected to Jesus, the source of life.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. *Spiritual growth is an ongoing process that God Himself initiates and completes.*

MATURITY HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

EPHESIANS 4:15-16 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. *Growth and maturity happen in community as we support and build each other up.*

HEBREWS 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. *Encouraging one another is essential for transformation.*

PROVERBS 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. *Maturity comes through relationships that refine and strengthen us.*

COLOS SIANS 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. *Growth happens as we teach, encourage, and share gratitude together.*

JAMES 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. *Hardships help us grow into maturity.*

COLOSSIANS 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. *The goal of discipleship is to help others grow into maturity in Christ.*

HEBREWS 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. *Maturity involves spiritual discernment and growth beyond basic teachings.*

GROWTH COMES FROM WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. *True maturity is marked by the fruit of the Spirit, developed over time.*

2 PETER 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Maturity is a step by step process that builds Christlike character.*

JOHN 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. *The Holy Spirit is key in leading us to transformation and maturity.*

ROMANS 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. *Part of transformation happens through changing the way we think.*

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. *Maturity means aligning our thoughts with Christ's truth.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. *Spiritual growth involves focusing our minds on things that align with God's character.*

IV Chesed Community: Relational Rhythms of Practice

Chesed community is built on rhythms, not intentions. These are the practices that make joy a habit rather than an accident.

A. SHARING GRATITUDE STORIES WITH EACH OTHER

PSALM 9:1 I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. *Encourages openly sharing what God has done.*

PSALM 107:1-2 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble. *Calls the redeemed to verbalize their gratitude and testimonies.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. *Highlights gratitude as a continual practice, even in difficult times.*

COLOSSIANS 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. *Encourages corporate gratitude and worship as a form of encouragement.*

HEBREWS 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. *Gratitude stories encourage and strengthen faith within the community.*

REVELATION 12:11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. *Testimonies, which include gratitude stories, have spiritual power to overcome darkness.*

MALACHI 3:16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. *God values and records the conversations of those who share about Him, showing that gratitude and testimony matter.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-5 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. *Shows how expressing gratitude for others deepens relationships in Christian community.*

ROMANS 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. *Paul models expressing gratitude for fellow believers, strengthening their bond.*

PHILEMON 1:4-7 I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. *Gratitude is a relational practice that builds faith and joy.*

B. CHECK-INS · SASHET: SAD, ANGRY, SCARED, HAPPY, EXCITED, TENDER

ROMANS 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. *Supports the idea of checking in emotionally with others, acknowledging joys and sorrows together.*

PSALM 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Encourages honesty with God and others about emotions.*

EPHESIANS 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

GALATIANS 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. *Encourages mutual support, a key component of check-ins.*

HEBREWS 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. *Reinforces the practice of regularly gathering for encouragement.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. *Emphasizes encouragement, which is central to check-ins.*

C. ATTUNING TO JESUS · RADICAL LISTENING AND ATTENTION PAYING

JOHN 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *Jesus emphasizes the importance of recognizing and responding to His voice, a core part of listening prayer and discernment.*

PSALM 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God. *Encourages slowing down and paying deep attention to God's presence.*

1 KINGS 19:11-12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. *God often speaks in subtle ways, requiring attentive listening.*

MARK 9:7 This is my beloved Son; listen to him. *A direct command from God to listen intently to Jesus.*

ROMANS 8:14-16 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.' For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. *When the Spirit resides in us, we can allow Him to lead us, if we invite Him to.*

V Radical Listening and Attention Paying to Each Other

Listening is not waiting for a turn to talk. It is the daily work of making another person feel truly received.

JAMES 1:19 Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. *Encourages active listening before responding.*

PROVERBS 18:13 If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. *Reinforces the importance of truly understanding before speaking.*

ROMANS 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. *Suggests deep attunement to others' emotions and experiences.*

VI Relationally Present in the Moment

Presence is the one gift we cannot give while we are somewhere else. Jesus modeled undivided attention, and He praised it in others.

LUKE 10:38-42 · MARY AND MARTHA But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. *Jesus commends Mary for paying undivided attention to Him rather than being distracted.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. *Encourages focusing on others with full attention.*

COLOSSIANS 3:12-13 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another... *Calls for presence, patience, and attentiveness in relationships.*

ISAIAH 50:4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. *Describes the process of being trained by God to listen well and speak life-giving words.*

GALATIANS 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. *Paying close attention to others is part of fulfilling Jesus' command to love.*

VII Raising Healthy Spiritual Moms and Dads

Every family needs mothers and fathers. Spiritual families are no different. Maturity is not the end of the journey. It is where parenting others begins.

SPIRITUAL PARENTS ARE CALLED FOR

1 CORINTHIANS 4:15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. *Paul describes himself as a spiritual father to the Corinthian church, emphasizing the need for mature believers to raise up others in the faith.*

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-8, 11-12 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us... For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. *Paul describes his nurturing and fatherly role. Both mothers and fathers are needed in the spiritual family.*

GALATIANS 4:19 My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! *Paul expresses spiritual parenthood by likening his efforts to a mother laboring to see Christ formed in his disciples.*

SPIRITUAL PARENTS TEACH AND DISCIPLE OTHERS

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. *Spiritual parents raise up future leaders who continue the cycle of discipleship.*

TITUS 2:3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. *Mature believers, especially spiritual parents, are called to train and nurture others in the faith.*

PROVERBS 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. *While often applied to biological parenting, this also reflects the importance of spiritual parenting.*

MATURITY IS THE GOAL OF SPIRITUAL PARENTING

COLOSSIANS 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. *The goal of spiritual parents is to guide others into maturity in Christ.*

HEBREWS 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. *Mature believers are called to become teachers and guides, moving from spiritual infancy to parenthood.*

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. *Leaders in the church are meant to equip others for maturity and spiritual parenting.*

SPIRITUAL PARENTS IMPART WISDOM AND BLESSING

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. *Though directed toward biological parents, this principle of constant discipleship applies to spiritual parenting.*

MALACHI 4:6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction. *A prophetic vision of restored generational relationships, which applies both spiritually and naturally.*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. *Spiritual parents model Christ so others can follow their example.*

THE CHURCH AS A FAMILY OF SPIRITUAL MOTHERS AND FATHERS

EPHESIANS 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. *The church is a spiritual household where mature believers act as spiritual parents.*

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. *Paul encourages Timothy to see the church as a family, valuing older believers as spiritual parents.*

JOHN 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. *Love and relational discipleship are the marks of a spiritual family which exhibits the radiant love of Christ.*

VIII God's Goal is to Develop Vibrant Families of Jesus

God has always been building a family, not an audience. The household of faith is the point, not the byproduct.

MATTHEW 12:48-50 But he replied to the man who told him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.' *Jesus redefined family around doing God's will, emphasizing spiritual kinship.*

JOHN 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. *Becoming a child of God means being part of a new, spiritual family.*

MATTHEW 23:8-9 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. *Jesus emphasized brotherhood among believers and our shared identity as children of God.*

ROMANS 8:15-17 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. *Paul emphasizes that we are adopted into God's family and can relate to Him as "Abba, Father."*

GALATIANS 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. *The church is called the household of faith, showing a strong family identity.*

EPHESIANS 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. *Believers belong to God's household, a term used for families.*

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. *Paul instructs Timothy to relate to others in the church as family members, reinforcing the familial nature of Christian community.*

ROMANS 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. *Paul describes the church with family-style love, brotherly affection.*

1 THESSALONIANS 2:11-12 For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. *Paul saw himself as a spiritual father, guiding believers like children.*

1 JOHN 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. *John emphasizes our identity as God's children, reinforcing the idea of God's family.*

IX Joy Fueled: God's Face, God's Glory, God's Smile

Glad to be together. That is what joy is at its root, and it is what God feels toward us. His face shines. He is not merely willing to be with us. He delights in it.

1. THE GLORY OF GOD AND HIS FACE SHINING UPON YOU

NUMBERS 6:24-26 · THE PRIESTLY BLESSING The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

EXODUS 33:18-23 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ... "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live. *This links "glory" and "face" of God.*

PSALM 80:3, 7, 19 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. GOD'S SMILE AND HIS SHINING FACE

PSALM 67:1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us.

JOB 29:3-4 When His lamp shone on my head, and by His light I walked through darkness... when the friendship of God was upon my tent.

PSALM 31:16 Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! *Smiling in biblical language is often rendered as God showing favor, delight, or peace through His countenance.*

3. GOD'S JOY AND GLORY

NEHEMIAH 8:10 The joy of the Lord is your strength.

PSALM 116:11 In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

ZEPHANIAH 3:17 The Lord your God is with you... He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you with His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.

JOHN 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

JUDE 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy...

EPHESIANS 1:18-19 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

EPHESIANS 3:17-19 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, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

HEBREWS 12:2 For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

ROMANS 14:17-18 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

GALATIANS 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

1 PETER 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy...

X Relational State vs. Enemy Mode

Enemy mode is the state where a person stops seeing others with love and starts seeing them as threats, obstacles, or enemies. Scripture names it, warns against it, and shows the way back.

1. ENEMY MODE AS A HARDENED OR UNLOVING HEART

MARK 3:5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart... *Jesus encounters people in enemy mode. Their hardened hearts prevent them from responding with love. Jesus stays Himself while experiencing the heavy emotion of anger, in contrast.*

HEBREWS 3:12-13 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. *An unbelieving, hardened heart makes people resist God and others, fostering enemy mode.*

1 JOHN 4:20 If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. *Enemy mode creates a disconnect between claiming faith and actually walking in love.*

2. ENEMY MODE AS AN UNTRANSFORMED MINDSET

ROMANS 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. *A flesh-driven mind naturally operates in enemy mode against God and others.*

EPHESIANS 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. *Paul contrasts enemy mode, bitterness, anger, malice, with relational restoration: kindness, tenderness, forgiveness.*

COLOSSIANS 3:8-10 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. *Enemy mode belongs to the "old self," while transformation brings renewal in love.*

3. ENEMY MODE AS A RESPONSE TO THREAT

JAMES 4:1-2 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. *Enemy mode stems from internal conflicts, leading to relational breakdowns.*

PROVERBS 29:22 A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression. *Enemy mode fuels division and sin, keeping people relationally separated.*

MATTHEW 5:21-22 You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment... *Jesus equates anger, enemy mode, with the spirit of murder, showing its danger.*

4. JESUS' CALL TO TRANSFORM OUT OF ENEMY MODE

MATTHEW 5:43-44 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. *Jesus challenges enemy mode by calling us to love instead of reacting with hostility.*

LUKE 6:27-28 But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. *The antidote to enemy mode is love, blessing, and prayer for those we naturally want to fight.*

ROMANS 12:17-21 Repay no one evil for evil... If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves... 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink'... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. *Instead of falling into enemy mode, we overcome hostility with acts of love and peace.*

XI Heart to Heart Check-ins

A heart to heart is two people turning toward Jesus together. Scripture keeps returning to the strength of the pair, the cord not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

LUKE 10:1-2 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...'

MATTHEW 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

ACTS 2:46-47 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

XII Shalom, Shaloming, and the Shalom Self

Shalom is more than the absence of conflict. It is wholeness, the settledness of a person who is safe, at rest, and at home in God. We can receive it, return to it, and become it.

SHALOM · PEACE THAT COMES FROM GOD'S PRESENCE

NUMBERS 6:24-26 · THE PRIESTLY BLESSING The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace (shalom). *Foundational for relational connection, where God's face and presence bring peace. Core to LIFE Model thinking.*

ISAIAH 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace (shalom shalom) those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. *Double "shalom" emphasizes deep inner calm and wholeness. What the LIFE Model calls returning to joy.*

PSALM 4:8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. *Safe attachment, especially with God, is a major theme in Wilder's neurotheological work.*

SHALOMING YOURSELF · RETURNING TO JOY AND QUIET

PSALM 131:2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. *A perfect picture of shaloming oneself, quieting internally, as taught in the quieting skill of the LIFE Model.*

PROVERBS 17:1 Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife. *The LIFE Model values quiet over chaos, emphasizing how relational calm supports joyful living.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Shows the spiritual side of returning to peace. Trust and gratitude shift the brain out of fear mode.*

ROMANS 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Joy and peace flowing from trust. Central to LIFE Model teachings on building strong, joyful, secure attachments.*

XIII Stages of Maturity

5. THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OVERCOMING ENEMY MODE

GALATIANS 5:19-23 Now the works of the flesh are evident: enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. *Enemy mode belongs to the works of the flesh, but the Holy Spirit produces love and peace.*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. *Enemy mode is often fear-driven, but the Holy Spirit brings love and self-control.*

1 PETER 3:8-9 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. *Believers are called to resist enemy mode and respond with blessing instead of retaliation.*

HEBREWS 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

JOHN 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

EPHESIANS 4:2-3 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

COLOSSIANS 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 PETER 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

PROVERBS 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

SHALOM SELF · WHO YOU ARE WHEN FULL OF THE SPIRIT

PSALM 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. *A classic picture of returning to a peaceful, cared-for self, your shalom self, with God's presence restoring you.*

ISAIAH 30:15 In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. *Our strength comes from rest and quiet. Core concepts in returning to joy and calming the nervous system.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. *The ability to call to mind God's goodness in distress leads us back to a settled, hopeful state.*

ROMANS 8:6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. *Being led by the Spirit aligns us with our true, peaceful identity, our shalom self.*

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. *Jesus' peace is a return to relational security with Him. Critical in the LIFE Model's understanding of identity in Christ.*

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. *Living in peace with others and ourselves is how we embody our relational selves: mature, joyful, and connected.*

COLOSSIANS 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

GALATIANS 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

We grow the way a family grows: infant, child, adult, then parent and elder. Each stage has its own gift to receive and its own work to learn.

Infant Stage. Learn to receive love and care, and to return to peace from distress with help from others bonded to us.

PSALM 131:2 I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother...

PSALM 23:1-3 He leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul...

Child Stage. Learn what your needs are and how to ask for them. Learn group identity, boundaries, and how to return to joy with others.

JOHN 14:27 Peace I leave with you... Do not let your hearts be troubled...

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 The peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Adult Stage. You are able to identify and take care of needs. Take responsibility, act from your identity, and maintain peace under pressure.

ISAIAH 30:15 In quietness and trust is your strength...

ROMANS 8:6 The mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Parent & Elder Stages. You are able to tend to your own needs and the needs of someone else too. Help others return to joy, act in alignment with God's character, and pass on relational skills.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11 Strive for full restoration... live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed...

XIV Listening to Jesus' Voice · SIFTS

God speaks relationally, sometimes softly through a sense, a picture, an emotion, a thought, a Scripture, or a song that bubbles up. SIFTS trains our awareness to hear Him through all these Spirit-led channels.

Sensations. Body awareness, physical reactions, peace, trembling, warmth.

ROMANS 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. The Spirit witnesses inside of us, often even sensed physically.

PSALM 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. An invitation to experience God with the senses, not just intellectual knowledge.

LUKE 24:32 · THE ROAD TO EMMAUS Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us? A burning heart sensation confirmed they had encountered Jesus.

JEREMIAH 20:9 But if I say, 'I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,' his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. God's Word caused a physical, burning sensation Jeremiah could feel.

EXODUS 34:29-30 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai... his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. Moses' physical appearance was visibly changed after encountering God's presence.

ROMANS 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. God's love is experienced as something poured into our inner being.

Images. Pictures, visions, mental images.

JOEL 2:28 Your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

NUMBERS 12:6 When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. God clearly states He uses visions and dreams to reveal Himself.

ACTS 10:9-11 · PETER'S VISION He fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. God uses vivid imagery to communicate new truth to Peter.

HABAKKUK 2:2-3 Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time... Visions and revelations are meant to be recorded and shared at the right time.

ACTS 16:9 · PAUL'S VISION OF MACEDONIA During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Vision guides mission and decision-making.

Feelings. Emotions stirred by the Spirit: peace, conviction, joy.

GALATIANS 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These feelings are signs of the Spirit's voice.

JOHN 16:8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment. Conviction is a Spirit-driven feeling.

NEHEMIAH 8:10 The joy of the Lord is your strength. Emotion, joy, is a way God's Spirit strengthens us.

Thoughts. God bringing ideas, impressions, and memories to mind.

JOHN 14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. The Spirit brings thoughts, teachings, and reminders.

1 KINGS 19:11-13 ...And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. God's voice comes when we are still, and comes in a whisper.

ISAIAH 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.' God's voice is close, personal, and guiding, not shouting but quietly directing.

REVELATION 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. He knocks and speaks, but waits quietly to be invited in.

Scripture. The direct words of God in the Bible.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...

HEBREWS 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword... Scripture is not dead text; it is alive through the Spirit.

PSALM 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Scripture guides us in real-time decisions.

Songs. Spiritual songs, hymns, and melodies that arise from or toward God.

EPHESIANS 5:18-19 Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

PSALM 40:3 He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. God gives fresh songs that reflect His work in us.

ZEPHANIAH 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you... but will rejoice over you with singing. God Himself sings over His people. A stunning image of mutual singing.

JAMES 5:13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Singing flows from the heart's state. Joy leads naturally to songs.

XV Hesed · The Centrality of Sticky Covenant Love

Hesed is the Hebrew word for steadfast love, lovingkindness, mercy, covenant faithfulness. It is the glue of every bond in Scripture, the love that sticks through failure, betrayal, and hardship because of a prior commitment.

1. HESED IS COVENANT LOVE, LOYAL AND COMMITTED

EXODUS 34:6-7 The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love (hesed) and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. God describes Himself as full of hesed. It is a core part of His nature, showing that His relationships are defined by faithful, affectionate, enduring love, not mere sentiment but relational devotion.

2. HESED IS ACTIVE AND SACRIFICIAL

RUTH 1:8 & 3:10 May the Lord deal kindly (hesed) with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me." "Blessed are you... for you have shown hesed... Naomi and Boaz describe Ruth's loyal care as hesed. Her love is sticky and sacrificial. She leaves her homeland, cares for Naomi, and risks her future to preserve the family line.

3. HESED CREATES LASTING BONDS OF TRUST

PSALM 136 · THE REFRAIN His hesed endures forever. Every line of this psalm ends with that phrase. God's covenant love is the foundation of creation, deliverance, and provision. A reliable glue that holds His people close.

PSALM 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy (hesed) shall follow me all the days of my life... God's covenant love is portrayed as pursuing the psalmist throughout life.

4. HESED IS MUTUAL, MEANT TO REFLECT GOD'S LOVE IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

MICAH 6:8 ...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness (hesed), and to walk humbly with your God. Loving hesed is not just about sentiment. It is about living in loyalty and deep kindness, mirroring the kind of bonds God forms with His people.

2 SAMUEL 9:1, 3, 7 Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness (hesed) for Jonathan's sake? David seeks to show hesed to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. A human example of covenant faithfulness.

The Seven Sacred Skills

JoyPath's Seven Sacred Gentle Protector Skills, each with its Scripture beneath it.

Scriptures gathered by Joanna Hughes.

1 RESTORE WITH SOUL RENEWAL

Soul Renewal

Nurturing personal well-being, replenishing energy through soul-renewal practices

PROVERBS 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body. *inner peace as physical medicine*

PROVERBS 22:3 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

ECCLESIASTES 4:6 Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

ECCLESIASTES 9:17 The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.

ECCLESIASTES 7:19 Wisdom brings strength to the wise more than ten rulers of a city.

MATTHEW 11:28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. *Christ modeling the need for rest*

PSALM 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. *God's design for renewal*

EXODUS 20:9-10 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work. *God's command for regular rest*

LUKE 5:16 Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. *Christ's pattern of solitude and renewal*

MATTHEW 14:23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. *Jesus filling His cup before ministry*

MARK 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. *Jesus prioritizing renewal*

ISAIAH 40:30-31 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. *renewal as necessary for sustained energy*

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. *honoring the body as sacred stewardship*

ECCLESIASTES 4:6 Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. *wisdom of rest over exhaustion*

PSALM 127:2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. *sleep as divine gift*

1 KINGS 19:3-7 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life... He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die... Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water... The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' *God attending to Elijah's physical needs before spiritual renewal*

MARK 6:31-32 He said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. *Jesus inviting disciples to rest after ministry*

ROMANS 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. *caring for the body as worship*

MARK 6:31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' *Jesus recognizing human limitations*

IN SUM

Scripture affirms that soul-renewal is biblically grounded—not as self-indulgence but as wise, essential stewardship that enables sustainable service. It shows how Jesus himself modeled the rhythm of withdrawal and engagement, rest and service. The biblical pattern clearly establishes that filling one's cup first isn't selfish but necessary for effective ministry and relationships, just as flight attendants instruct passengers to secure their own oxygen masks before helping others. These verses reveal a profound truth: caring for your own heart isn't optional—it's the foundation for authentic connection. When you prioritize soul renewal, you're not just following good advice; you're embracing a sacred design for human flourishing that releases life-giving energy to all your relationships.

2 Release to Empower

Letting go of inappropriate control, avoiding needless emotional turmoil, staying on your own paper

PROVERBS 19:11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. *maturity in letting go*

PROVERBS 16:32 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. *self-control as true strength*

MATTHEW 6:25-27 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? *worry's futility*

LUKE 12:27 Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. *nature's lesson in trust*

PROVERBS 12:25 Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up. *anxiety's burden*

PSALM 37:8 Let go of anger and leave rage behind. Don't get upset—it will only lead to evil. *release preventing harm*

PROVERBS 16:32 The one who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and the one who controls his temper better than one who captures a city. *restraint as power*

ECCLESIASTES 7:9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. *reactivity as foolishness*

PSALM 112:7 They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD. *steadiness through trust*

LUKE 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. *worry stunting growth*

PSALM 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. *stillness as remedy*

PHILIPPIANS 4:5-7 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *peace through release*

JOHN 14:1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. *trust conquering trouble*

MATTHEW 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? *worry's ineffectiveness*

IN SUM

The Bible consistently reveals how futile it is to control what isn't ours to control. These passages show that letting go of releasing inappropriate control isn't weakness but profound wisdom. Scripture affirms that worry adds nothing beneficial to our lives, while letting go creates space for peace and connection. When you practice this gentle release, you're not surrendering influence but exercising the true strength described throughout biblical wisdom literature—the counterintuitive power that comes when we relinquish our grip and trust the natural order of healthy relationships.

3 CULTIVATE HONOR WITH RESPECT

Honor

Creating trust through sincere accountability and respectful communication

PROVERBS 24:26 An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips. *truth as intimacy*

PROVERBS 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. *tone transforms conflict*

PROVERBS 17:9 Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. *forgiveness builds bonds*

PROVERBS 15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. *words as life-giving medicine*

PROVERBS 13:3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin. *restraint as self-protection*

PROVERBS 17:27 The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. *wisdom in measured speech*

PROVERBS 28:13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. *vulnerability creating mercy*

PROVERBS 10:8 The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin. *receptivity to guidance*

PROVERBS 21:23 Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. *discipline in speech*

ISAIAH 32:17 The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. *honor producing peace*

PROVERBS 15:2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. *wisdom in presentation*

PROVERBS 21:9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. *consequences of dishonor*

PROVERBS 20:5 The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. *honoring another's depths*

IN SUM

Scripture places extraordinary emphasis on how we speak to and about others, revealing that our words create either sacred spaces of connection or barriers of distrust. These passages show that honor isn't merely politeness but the foundation for all thriving relationships. The Bible consistently demonstrates how sincere accountability creates trust, while harsh words destroy bonds. When you practice respectful communication, offer authentic apologies, while maintain loving limits, you're participating in the profound wisdom that transforms conflict into understanding—creating the sacred space where truth and love coexist, allowing relationships to heal and flourish as divinely designed.

4 TRANSFORM WITH APPRECIATION

Appreciation

How gratitude fundamentally changes our perception, creates abundance mentality, and renews our entire being

PROVERBS 17:22 A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. *gratitude's physical impact*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. *gratitude as transformative practice*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. *gratitude reshapes our thought patterns*

ROMANS 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. *appreciation as mind renewal*

ECCLESIASTES 2:14 The eyes of the wise are in their head, but the fool walks in darkness. *gratitude as enlightened perception*

PSALM 103:1-2 Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits. *wholehearted appreciation*

PROVERBS 15:15 All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. *gratitude creates ongoing abundance*

PROVERBS 16:21 The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction. *appreciation creates wisdom*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. *gratitude as spiritual practice*

COLOSSIANS 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. *thankfulness creates peace*

PSALM 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. *gratitude as a gateway to greater experiences*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *thankfulness as anxiety's antidote*

ROMANS 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. *ingratitude leads to darkness, implying gratitude leads to light*

PSALM 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! *appreciation engages the senses in transformation*

IN SUM

The Bible presents gratitude not as a mere emotion but as a life-altering practice. These verses deeply explore how gratitude fundamentally changes us from the inside out. They reveal appreciation not merely as an attitude but as a transformative practice that renews the mind, reshapes perception, creates internal abundance, and even affects physical wellbeing. The scriptural foundation shows how gratitude serves as a gateway to deeper awareness, shifts focus from scarcity to sufficiency, serves as an antidote to anxiety, and establishes a positive cycle that attracts more goodness. Rather than just describing gratitude's benefits, these passages illuminate how appreciation rewires our

entire being—changing our neural pathways, emotional responses, spiritual sensitivity, and relational capacity. The verses demonstrate that gratitude isn't just something we express but something that actively transforms who we are at the core level.

5 RECEIVE WITH OPEN ARMS

Receive

Graciously accepting kindness, allowing others to give, creating mutual exchange

PROVERBS 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another. *mutual strengthening through receiving*

ECCLESIASTES 4:9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. *partnership's power*

PROVERBS 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. *receiving support in need*

PROVERBS 20:5 The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. *allow ourselves to receive the drawing out*

JOHN 1:16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. *receiving as the natural order*

PROVERBS 27:19 As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart. *reflection revealing truth*

PROVERBS 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. *receiving wisdom for success*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' *interdependence as design*

MATTHEW 10:8 Freely you have received; freely give. *receiving precedes giving*

LUKE 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. *generosity's cycle*

1 JOHN 4:19 We love because he first loved us. *reception as love's foundation*

1 CORINTHIANS 4:7 What do you have that you did not receive? *all life as gift*

PROVERBS 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. *receiving affirmation graciously*

PSALM 23:5 My cup overflows. *image of abundance through receptivity*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. *receiving God's abundance to overflow to others*

PSALM 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. *the posture of being willing to receive provision*

PROVERBS 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. *on receiving affirmation from others*

ISAIAH 66:13 As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you. *the image of receiving comfort*

IN SUM

Scripture reveals a profound truth: more deeply address the theological foundation of receptivity - that we are designed to receive love first, which then enables us to love others. They emphasize that our very nature as humans is to be recipients before we can be givers, establishing receptivity as the natural order and foundation of all healthy relationships. The Bible consistently demonstrates that barriers to receiving often stem from pride rather than humility. The passages highlight how receiving is not merely a practical skill but reflects the fundamental pattern of love in the universe: we can only give what we have first received. This biblical understanding transforms receiving from a potential weakness into a purposeful strength that enables authentic connection and the capacity to love others from abundance rather than depletion.

6 SHARE YOUR HEART AUTHENTICALLY

Authenticity

Expressing vulnerability, honest, expression, sharing feelings, needs, and limits, authentic connection, overcoming fear of openness

PROVERBS 20:5 The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. *examining the depths of our hearts*

PSALM 139:23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. *inviting examination of our inner life*

PROVERBS 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. *importance of heart awareness*

LUKE 6:45 The good person brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil person brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. *authentic expression flows from the heart*

EPHESIANS 4:15 Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. *truthful communication as path to maturity*

JAMES 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. *vulnerability leading to healing*

1 JOHN 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. *transparency creating true connection*

MATTHEW 18:15 If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. *direct, honest communication*

MATTHEW 5:37 Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' *clear, honest limit-setting*

ECCLESIASTES 3:7 A time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak. *wisdom in knowing when to share*

EPHESIANS 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. *authentic speech that builds up*

1 JOHN 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear. *love creating space for vulnerability*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. *maturity in expression*

PROVERBS 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what finds favor, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse. *wisdom in knowing how to express oneself*

2 SAMUEL 6:14 David wore a linen ephod and danced before the LORD with all his might. *David's uninhibited expression of joy*

PROVERBS 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. *wisdom in setting conversational limits*

GALATIANS 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. *Paul's courageous confrontation*

PROVERBS 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. *mutual vulnerability creating strength*

JEREMAH 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? *acknowledging our need for self-examination*

PROVERBS 27:6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. *authentic communication even when difficult*

IN SUM

Scripture celebrates vulnerability as sacred courage, not self-indulgence. These passages reveal that authentic sharing creates the intimate connections we were designed for, while isolation damages the soul. From David's uninhibited worship to Paul's principled confrontations, biblical figures model expressing their hearts while maintaining

appropriate limits. When you practice heartfelt vulnerability and honest limit-setting, you're participating in the ancient wisdom that transforms superficial interactions into meaningful bonds, fostering the genuine connection, personal growth, and relational health that God intended.

7

EMBRACE THE IMMANUEL LIFESTYLE

Immanuel Lifestyle

Divine relationship, continuous conversation with God, freedom from fear, living in His presence

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *talking to God about everything brings supernatural peace*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 Pray without ceasing. *continuous conversation with God*

1 PETER 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. *bringing every concern to God*

PROVERBS 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. *acknowledging God in everything*

PSALM 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? *freedom from fear through relationship*

ISAIAH 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. *God's presence eliminating fear*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. *divine relationship producing clarity instead of fear*

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. *Christ's peace as antidote to fear*

PROVERBS 18:10 The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. *God as refuge in all circumstances*

ISAIAH 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. *God's attentiveness to our communication*

PSALM 55:17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. *constant communication throughout the day*

PSALM 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. *freedom from fear through seeking God*

PSALM 46:10 He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' *peace through awareness of God's presence*

ISAIAH 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. *peace as result of focused trust*

JAMES 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. *invitation to intimate relationship*

PSALM 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. *God's accessibility*

JOHN 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. *ongoing divine communication*

JEREMIAH 29:12-13 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. *God's promise to respond*

PSALM 91:1-2 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' *dwelling in God's presence brings rest*

PSALM 4:8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety. *peace even in vulnerability*

JOHN 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. *peace amid life's challenges*

COLOS SIANS 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. *Christ's peace as life's governor*

IN SUM

These verses reveal the profound biblical foundation for the Immanuel lifestyle—"God with us" as a living reality. Scripture consistently portrays continuous conversation with God not as a religious obligation but as our primary source of peace, wisdom, and freedom from fear. From David's intimate psalms to Paul's exhortation to "pray without ceasing," the Bible presents a model of relationship with God characterized by constant communication about everything. This divine dialogue transforms how we navigate life's complexities, providing an anchor in storms and guidance in decisions. When we embrace this lifestyle—talking with God about everything and fearing nothing else—we experience the transcendent peace that Scripture repeatedly promises, not as an occasional spiritual experience but as our inheritance and natural state.

The Ancient Roots

None of this is new. Long before the neuroscience, the early church already lived it.

Augustine of Hippo

354–430

"You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

He saw our emotions themselves as love in motion: desire is love reaching, joy is love resting, fear is love fleeing a threat, grief is love feeling the blow, and all good when the love is good.

ECHOES Heart Connection with God — every feeling you name is your love moving toward its rest.

The Desert Fathers & Mothers

3RD–4TH CENTURIES

"Be still, and know that I am God."

They withdrew to the Egyptian desert to practice hesychia (stillness) and nepsis (watchfulness), guarding the heart and noticing its every movement before God in the quiet of the cell.

ECHOES Soul Renewal & Listening — stillness and watchfulness are ancient disciplines, not a modern trend.

John Cassian

C. 360–435

He carried the desert's wisdom west and recorded the practice at its heart: a monk would bring the movements of his heart into the open before a trusted elder, because a feeling disclosed to a warm face loses its power, like a serpent dragged into daylight.

ECHOES Heart to Heart & Authenticity — bringing what you feel to a face is recovered tradition.

Basil the Great

C. 330–379

He taught that our love for God was never taught to us but sown at our making, a spark of divine love hidden inside us and waiting to be fanned into flame.

ECHOES Immanuel Lifestyle & Receive — the longing to be near God was planted in you.

Gregory of Nyssa

C. 335–395

"This is the vision of God: never to be satisfied in the desire to see him."

Because God is infinite, the heart that loves him keeps stretching toward him forever, always filled and always reaching. He called it epektasis, and counted it not failure but the very shape of being alive to God.

ECHOES Stages of Maturity — a heart that still reaches after every season is stretching, not behind.

Irenaeus of Lyons

C. 130–202

"The glory of God is a living human being; and human life is the vision of God."

Not a person merely busy and thriving, but a person alive in beholding God. We are most ourselves not in achievement but in the light of the face that shines upon us.

ECHOES Joy Fueled — we come alive in God's presence, glad to be with the One who is glad to be with us.

These skills and practices are not a technique invented last decade. They are an **inheritance**, carried by the church for sixteen centuries and confirmed again, in our time, by the way God made the human heart.

Every practice has roots.

Carry one verse into your week, into your next heart to heart, your gathering around the table. Watch what connection does.

The Relational Practices & the Seven Sacred Skills · Scriptural Supports

A JoyPath guide · by Joanna Hughes

Relational practice supports gathered by Paul Goodman and adapted by Joanna Hughes; the seven sacred skills supports by Joanna Hughes.

Drawing on the Life Model, the Immanuel Approach, intimacy research, and the ancient church.