



# JOURNEY INWARD *to* JOURNEY OUTWARD

## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Introduction



Teresa of Avila says that to know God one needs to know oneself and to know oneself one needs to know God. This is not about navel gazing or being self-centered. This is about coming to an awareness of parts of ourselves that need transformation and opening ourselves to that transformation by God - not by “trying harder” or “doing better”. Why? So that we can be formed more fully into the image of Christ for the sake of the world. A vital starting point is to be fully aware of one’s own belovedness before God because in the arms of compassion it becomes safe to look at what wounds and scars hold us from loving ourselves and others. This week you are invited to notice what God is inviting you to receive or heal in your soul, in the core of your being.

## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Scripture

### John 21:15-19 (NRSV)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

### Psalm 139 (from Nan Merrill’s Psalms for Praying)

Oh my Beloved, You have searched me and known me!

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

    You discern my innermost thoughts.

You find me on the journey and guide my steps;

    You know my strengths and my weaknesses.

Even before words rise up in prayer, Lo, You have already heard my heart call.

You encompass me with love where’er I go,

    And your strength is my shield.

Such sensitivity is too wonderful for me; it is high;

    Boundless gratitude is my soul’s response.

Where could I go from your Spirit? Or how could I flee from your Presence:

If I ascend into heaven, You are there!

    If I make my bed in darkness, You are there

If I soar on the wings of the morning or dwell in the deepest parts of the sea,

Even there your Hand will lead me, and your Love will embrace me.

If I say, “Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night,”

Even the darkness is not dark to You, the night dazzles as with the sun;

    The darkness is as light with You.

## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Scripture

### Psalm 139 continued (from Nan Merrill's Psalms for Praying)

For You formed my inward being, You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise You, for You are to be revered and adored.

Your mysteries fill me with wonder!

More than I know myself do You know me;

my essence was not hidden from You,

When I was being formed in secret, intricately fashioned from the elements of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance; in your records were written  
every one of them.

The days that were numbered for me when as yet there was none of them.

How precious to me are your creations, O Blessed One!

How vast is the sum of them.

Who could count your innumerable gifts and blessings?

At all times, You are with me.

Oh that You would vanquish my fears, Beloved;

O that ignorance and suffering would depart from me—

My ego separates me from true abandonment,

To surrendering myself into your Hands!

Yet are these not the very thorns that focus my thoughts upon You?

Will I always need reminders to turn my face to you?

I yearn to come to You in love,

To learn of your mercy and wisdom!

Search me, O my Beloved and know my heart!

Try me and discern my thoughts!

Help me to face the darkness within me;

Enlighten me, that I might radiate your Love and Light

## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Readings

“I created you  
Now let me love you  
That’s all I’ve to to say

Would you like me to repeat that?”

- Janet Hagberg, “That’s All I’ve Got To Say” 2006 Janethagberg.com

Self compassion is a way of relating to ourselves kindly, embracing ourselves, flaws and all....it is linked to having more sense of connectedness with other, better interpersonal relationships. The more we are able to keep our hearts open to ourselves, the more we have available to give to others.

- Kristen Neff, Excerpts from TEDX talk at Centennial Park Women on February 6, 2013

“At some point in the journey, most of us realize that life has wounded us in many ways. We feel broken and fragmented. This brokenness is a hindrance to our experiential awareness of God. Whatever causes us to feel inferior to others, whatever has made us feel rejected or lonely, whatever causes us to hold back in our relationships with people will affect our relationship with God. As we relate in prayer to God who loves us and calls us beloved, and as we are honest about our hearts and our Brokenness, we find healing for our many wounds...It is God’s desire that we be healed of our broken wounded selves. If we have fears or hurts from relationships with our parents or other authority figures, it will affect the way we relate to God.”

- Joann Nesser, *Praying When the Well Runs Dry*, Self-published, 2007



## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Readings

**“Where the action in our life is, God is present and active with us...**

If we are searching for God, the first place to look is where the action in our life is right now. That is a pivotal locus of the encounter. Are we struggling with sexual additions? Then that is the area where we are most engaged with God. Are we working to overcome the damages of our childhood? Are we dueling with depression? Then there is probably nothing of greater significance in our relationship with God right now than these core struggles.

Why is this? Because God has a stake in what we make of ourselves, and the areas of our life that most absorb our attention are the areas of greatest consequence in that regard. This is where our energy is going. That is where we are making choices that have lasting consequences for our becoming. Spiritually, we want not only to be aware of God, but to make a good response. So the questions the spiritual guide wants to ask is: What is the opportunity God is offering you here? What is God inviting or challenging you to? What gift is God trying to give you?”

-Excerpt from: Toward a Life-Giving Christian Spirituality: Ten Guiding Principles by Thomas Heart published September 2017 in Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction.





## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals— Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. The story of Peter's redemption at the end of John's gospel needs to be understood in light of Peter's denial of Jesus during his arrest and trial. Jesus predicted that before the cock crowed, Peter would deny him three times, and this indeed occurred. But Peter also is claimed by Jesus to be the rock on which the church is built. This reveals Peter as a broken AND beloved character rather than beloved OR broken. What are ways that you feel both beloved AND broken? How do you hold onto your belovedness when you recognize your brokenness? How do you stay honest about your brokenness?
2. The version of Psalm 139 used this week is from a book entitled *Psalms for Praying*. What part of Psalm 139 could be a prayer in your life? What resonated with you from the Psalm?
3. Kristen Neff suggests that those who can have self-compassion are better able to have compassion on others. Jesus says we are to love others as we love ourselves. What have you noticed about yourself or others when you carry a negative internal dialogue? What changes in your external interactions when your inner dialogue is one of self-compassion?
4. What do you believe are the obstacles to truly taking in that you are beloved by God? What helps you take in the truth that you are beloved?
5. In the introduction, it was stated "you are invited to notice what God is inviting you to receive or heal in your soul, in the core of your being." Where is your invitation this week for receiving or healing? Or as Thomas Heart phrased it, where is the action in your life right now?



## Week 4: Broken and Beloved as Individuals—Prayer Practices

Write your own **Psalm Pantoum**. Using Psalm 139 (there is one version in the readings above) read through it slowly and underline 6 phrases that stand out to you. You may need to read through a few times to cull down to just 6. Next, number these phrases 1-6. In the space below write the phrase in the corresponding space (so phrase 1 in the space numbered 1 and phrase 2 in the space numbered 2 etc.) at the end you will have your personalized psalm prayer. Keep it near you and pray it daily.

1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
2	_____
5	_____
4	_____
6	_____
5	_____
3	_____
6	_____
1	_____

Begin a Spiritual Journal: We can draw closest to God when we come with our most honest selves. Try this 10 day experiment where you prayerfully answer these two questions

- What's bugging me today?
- What's bringing me joy?

Some may be in the habit of pushing down negative thoughts and so may not be readily aware of anything bugging us. This simple practice offers a way to get in touch with the idea that we are holding on to pain, frustration and anger so that we can work them together with God.

- Cindy Bunch, *Be Kind to Yourself*, InterVarsity Press, 2020.