

“A powerful, prophetic, and inspiring book.”

—Christine Caine, founder of A21 and Propel Women

Embrace Your Identity and  
Purpose in an Age of  
Confusion and Comparison



WITHOUT  
RIVAL

LISA  
BEVERE

Bestselling author of *Lioness Arising*  
and *Girls with Swords*

“Imagine the world if each of us understood how loved and valued we are. In her book *Without Rival*, Lisa Bevere encourages us to know and understand that we are uniquely created and loved by God. Because we are, we have each been given a crucial and important role to fulfill in God’s plan. This book is an invitation to pursue God and the mission he has for you.”

—**Holly Wagner**, pastor and author

“We live in a culture that is filled with wandering souls looking for identity in all the wrong places. This book is a true compass that points men and women to the real source of our spiritual identity. We belong to God, he has chosen us, and we are loved uniquely. Lisa does a masterful job of bringing these timeless truths to life. This book is a must-read!”

—**Brady Boyd**, pastor of New Life Church, Colorado Springs, and author of *Addicted to Busy*

“In *Without Rival*, Lisa shares the penetrating truth about who God created us to be and how he loves each of us personally and uniquely. After reading this book, I can’t imagine anyone ever doubting God’s love for them!”

—**Chris Hodges**, senior pastor of Church of the Highlands and author of *Fresh Air* and *Four Cups*

“If you have ever struggled with your identity, this book will be a game changer. Understanding who we uniquely are in Christ transforms us from playing it safe to taking our place in God’s great plan of redemption.”

—**Sheila Walsh**, author of *God Loves Broken People* and core speaker for Women of Faith

“*Without Rival* is a truly eye-opening book that I believe will greatly impact this generation. Lisa Bevere conveys God’s love in such a beautiful and vivid new way that will surely captivate every reader. As readers delve deeper and deeper into this amazing book, they will learn more and more about God’s love for them as well as the importance of finding one’s identity in him.”

—**Matthew Barnett**, co-founder of The Dream Center

“*Without Rival* is a beautiful reminder of God’s love for all people. Lisa approaches the subject with fresh revelation and expresses her thoughts in such an elegant and concise manner. This is a truly beautiful book that every reader will be inspired by.”

—**Caroline Barnett**, co-pastor of The Dream Center

“In a world obsessed with competition and comparison, this book is a must for every mother, daughter, leader, and friend. It’s time we joined hands instead of comparing what’s in them. It’s time for celebrating one another instead of tolerating. We are without rival, so let’s make room for everyone to thrive.”

—**Charlotte Gambill**, lead pastor of LIFE Church,  
Bradford, UK

“If you struggle with feelings of worthlessness or lack a sense of purpose, *Without Rival* is just what you need to silence your inner critic. God has positioned you to find contentment in the midst of any circumstance and live a life without comparison.”

—**Pastor Steven and Holly Furtick**, Elevation Church

“Lisa will help you discover how to experience the freedom and confidence that comes from knowing you are God’s exclusive masterpiece—without comparison and without rival—and that you have everything you need to reach your unique God-given destiny.”

—**Victoria Osteen**, co-pastor of Lakewood Church,  
Houston, Texas

“Lisa Bevere’s book *Without Rival* will wake you into new dimensions of your identity in Christ. Lisa’s book is full of insight and godly wisdom. It will challenge, inspire, and equip you to pursue the Lord’s unique calling on your life. If you are longing to tune in to what the Lord is speaking over your destiny, this book is for you! I highly recommend it.”

—**Kris Vallotton**, senior associate leader of Bethel Church,  
Redding, California

“Lisa Bevere has been a close friend of ours for many years, and we believe the insights she shares in *Without Rival* will bring freedom to many. As you read these pages, ask God to help you overcome the desire to compare and compete, and allow him to show you how to embrace and celebrate the person he created you to be.”

—James Robison, founder and president  
of LIFE Outreach International

“I love Lisa. She is carrying such a timely word. This book is a must-read, must-believe for people. Knowing who you are and your need for others is huge! You will be strengthened as you read this, feeling the Father speak over you your true, unshakable identity.”

—Jenn Johnson, worship leader/songwriter  
with Bethel Music

“*Without Rival* is a brilliant wake-up call for women of all ages. Lisa’s message that we are uniquely loved and called by God is so needed. I love her passion and energy that leap off of every page.”

—Alli Worthington, author of *Breaking Busy: How to Find  
Peace and Purpose in a World of Crazy*

“Lisa’s bold and Spirit-filled words will help set women free from comparison, pride, and envy. She lives what she preaches: when you belong to Jesus, you are without rival.”

—Sarah Bessey, author of *Jesus Feminist*  
and *Out of Sorts: Making Peace  
with an Evolving Faith*

“Lisa’s newest book is such a treasure. It’s basically the literary equivalent of God putting his hands on both sides of our face, turning our attention toward him, and then saying slowly and firmly, ‘I love you.’”

—Lisa Harper, author and Bible teacher

“Understanding who you belong to, your unique place in the family of God, and the character of Christ is paramount to

the continual growth of a healthy heart and soul. Lisa Bevere has a unique ability to expound on biblical truth and personal revelation when it comes to these eternal principles. You will discover again not only who *you* are but who *he* is—an unrivaled, personal, and powerful Savior.”

—**Brian and Bobbie Houston**, global founders  
and senior pastors of Hillsong Church

“In a world where women can be marked by comparison and rivalry, Lisa Bevere does what she does best—pulls us close to her feminine heart with nurturing, empowering, and healing words: ‘Daughter, you are enough, because you are uniquely loved.’ *Without Rival* strips us of our need to compete, landing us safely in the heart of the Father and rooted in his embrace. A must-read for all women longing for deeper connection, identity, and purpose.”

—**Christa Black Gifford**, award-winning songwriter, speaker,  
and author of *God Loves Ugly* and *Heart Made Whole*

“Lisa Bevere’s new book *Without Rival* is a beautiful description of the unique love that God has for each of us. The book reminds us that we have no rivals because God created us to have our unique values and identity in him. This is a must-read for all!”

—**Jentezen Franklin**, senior pastor of Free Chapel  
and *New York Times* bestselling author

“My dear friend Lisa Bevere has done it again. *Without Rival* is a powerful, prophetic, and inspiring book that will help you to discover who you are and whose you are as a woman of God. Give a copy to every woman you know—I know I will.”

—**Christine Caine**, founder of A21 and Propel Women

“We are not just loved equally, we are loved uniquely. In *Without Rival*, Lisa unpacks the truths that will help you recover your power and purpose.”

—**Mark Batterson**, *New York Times* bestselling author  
of *The Circle Maker* and lead pastor  
of National Community Church

# WITHOUT RIVAL

Embrace Your Identity and Purpose  
in an Age of Confusion  
and Comparison

LISA BEVERE



*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Dearest one,

You are a daughter loved by a Father without rival, entrusted with a message and promise beyond compare, in a time without precedent. You have been chosen for this moment that is at once great and terrible. For this very reason, you must love fearlessly . . . believe outrageously . . . and hope without measure.

Lisa Bevere, *Without Rival*

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## An Identity without Rival

Our chief want is someone who will inspire us  
to be what we know we could be.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**H**ave you ever had a rival?  
I don't mean a bit of friendly competition in  
sports. Nor am I referring to toddlers who compete  
for the attention and affection of their parents.

I'm thinking in terms of a more consistent detractor. A  
rival certainly does not feel like a friend or like family. When  
rivalry comes into play, its goal is not so much to win the  
game as it is to remove you from the field.

But what if you discovered that the life you have always  
wanted was outside the realm of competition? What if you  
learned you did not have to lose to opt out of the game?  
What if you discovered you *couldn't* lose? What if you could

not only think outside of the box but also choose to *live* outside of it?

Decades ago I read a book that suggested that the end of the world as we know it would be brought about by widespread alienation (rather than an alien invasion). It theorized that the time would come when the world would be divided into two opposing camps or trains of thought. When this climate of widespread division existed, then it would be a small thing to incite opposing factions into attacking one another until we experienced a full-blown apocalypse.

Any systematic division this extensive would start on a much more intimate scale. It can begin close to home where divided houses are filled with wounded people with divided hearts. There are very real forces that whisper lying innuendos that assault your mind, your will, and your emotions in the hope of causing you to turn on yourself and then to turn on others.

It is hard to escape the messages and messengers that tell us we are not good enough, young enough, smart enough, fast enough, and rich enough. We are bombarded in the hope that we will shrink to their expectations. It is only human nature that we would want to deflect this incessant bullying that implies we are never enough. When this harassment reaches a critical point, some will yield by conforming and copying, while others will rebel as they sling back accusations of their own.

We judge when we feel judged.

We shame when we feel shame.

We hate when we dislike ourselves.

When we've been bankrupted, it is not long before we want to rob others. It is a cycle in which everyone loses and nobody wins. But what if the words of Paul were true?

But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Tim. 6:6)

Godliness is the ability to adopt God's vantage point. This means just as we acknowledge how he sees others, we embrace how he sees us.

Contentment and being truly comfortable in your own skin won't breed complacency; they will release creativity! Turn away from all the detractors and distractions. He has his eyes on us so we can lift our eyes to him.

What then?

Rather than compete for what was never meant for you . . . you would have the energy to discover what is yours.

I pray this book brings clarity to what the unwholesome everyday muddies. Rather than striving to win a competition that gains you nothing, I want you positioned to win the war. There is a very real battle going on for the strength of your soul. It is time you took *your* place in this world. Let's expose the lies and distractions and find out who you really are.

## Lost and Found

I love dogs. Recently, while I was far from home on a trip to South Korea, our beloved dog, Tia, was impounded. Apparently, a workman left the front door of our home open, and Tia left behind the warmth of our house in an attempt to brave the streets of a subzero Colorado winter. For whatever reason, she didn't find her way home that night. A yet unidentified neighbor was kind enough to take her in overnight and then drop her off the next day at the animal shelter.

Tia had a tag on, but it was next to useless because the phone number on the tag was no longer connected to our

house. Then add into this mix the fact that her dog license had expired (sorry, I thought it was a onetime process) and you have a much-loved dog with a home but with no voice or identity markers to help her find it.

In Seoul, Korea, I was oblivious. My sons had wisely chosen to hide Tia's misadventure from me, but no doubt there was panic on the home front. They looked and looked but couldn't find the dog anywhere. They feared the coyotes had gotten her. As a last resort, almost on a lark, they followed someone's suggestion and called the dog pound.

When Austin arrived at the shelter and saw Tia, he wasn't sure she was our dog. The ordeal had so completely changed her demeanor that she appeared depressed rather than excited to see him. She remained in the corner of the cage, shaking and cowering. After Austin paid the equivalent of a night in a fine hotel and some hefty fines (apparently an expired license is severely frowned upon), she was ours to bring home once again.

When I returned home and learned of the whole story, I was a little hurt. Not by my sons but by my dog. Tia had been our dog for more than a decade, and this was the first time she had ever wandered away and not returned on her own. I was concerned . . . why now? Were her cataracts affecting her vision? Had her advanced age disoriented her? Was she looking for me?

Ultimately, the reason she left did not matter. She belonged to our family and her inability to find her own way home did not negate this fact. The search was made, the fine was paid, the license was renewed, and she was pulled out of her cage of shame and returned to her place on our bed at my feet. One errant night was not cause enough for us to disown her.

You probably know where I'm going with this. If we (imperfect pet owners that we so obviously are) would do this much for a dog, what would our heavenly Father do for us? Your first step in knowing your identity is found in who you are to him. First John 3:1 gives us a window into how God sees us.

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to. (Message)

Let's talk about just how marvelous God's love is. It is awe inspiring, spectacular, and over-the-top. It is the very opposite of mundane or ordinary. Its depth is enough to cause us to marvel. And this marvelous love is an extension, kind of like a gift with a purchase but better, because this is a gift with a gift. We were gifted salvation. God saw us in our wretched, caged state, cowering in the corner of some religious humane society, and paid the price to save us. But he didn't stop there. He drew us close, renewed our license, and identified us as his own. (All before we'd even had a bath!) You really are his. And he loves all of his children marvelously. But he loves them uniquely.

### **Equal or Unique?**

Often in our human attempts to make all things fair, we are tempted to think that God loves us all the same. As good as this may initially sound, *same* just isn't big enough. The

word *same* implies that we might be somehow replaceable or interchangeable. Like, “Oh no, I broke one of the purple glasses I bought at Target last week; I hope they still have the same ones in stock.” Or using my current example, “The dog I loved for more than a decade wandered off the grid. That’s okay; I’ll just buy another one to replace her and I will love it just the same.”

This doesn’t work for me, and I don’t believe it works for God either—and I will tell you why.


One afternoon I took a nap. The problem was I was on my laptop and not my bed when I fell asleep. As my head bobbed forward, I abruptly woke up to discover eight pages of the letter “t.”

At which point I felt I really should go and take a real nap. So I picked up the dog at my feet and wandered off to my bedroom. As I was dozing off, I heard the Holy Spirit whisper, “I do not love my children equally.”

Shocked, I sat straight up in my bed. Where did this blasphemous thought come from? I blurted out, “You have to love us the same or else it wouldn’t be fair.”

My protest was answered with, “I don’t. *Equal* implies my love can be measured, and I assure you . . . it cannot. *Same* would mean my children are replaceable or interchangeable, and they are not. My heart is not divided into compartments. No one could take the place of or displace another in my heart. For you see, I don’t love my children equally, I love them uniquely.”

Take a deep breath and listen. *God loves us uniquely rather than equally.* Believe me, *unique* is better.



I don’t love  
my children  
equally, I  
love them  
uniquely.

If you have more than one child, you probably already understand this. When that second, third, or later child was born, your love was not divided. It was multiplied in ways that were immeasurable. You couldn't quantify your love for each child even if you tried. How can you measure the pull on your heart? Your love for each child is unique. Each one awakens your parental love in a different manner. Interestingly, you may love something unique about one child that is the opposite trait of something you love in another. For example, I have a feisty granddaughter who is a whirlwind. She is the sister of my firstborn grandson, who is intentional and gentle. I don't compare them. I love, enjoy, and appreciate their very different approaches to life. I would not want them to act the same for the world. Neither one of them occupies more of the real estate of my heart; I love both of them completely, but uniquely.

*Equal* also implies God's love is measured or measurable, and it is neither. It's infinite. *Unique* carries so much more depth. There is only one like you! St. Augustine said it best: "God loves each of us as if there was only one of us."

Our Father's love cannot be likened to a pan of brownies or a cherry pie that is painstakingly cut by a loving parent into equal portions so that no child feels slighted. His marvelous love is not subject to portion control. Do you understand he loved you before there was a beginning, and his love for you knows no end? You can turn from him, run away, and make your bed in hell, but your actions will not stop his love. (Seriously, though, who'd want to sleep in hell?)

Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord said this about his love: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jer. 31:3).



Notice the tense here. It is past. His love is a settled matter. He loved you, the real you, the unique you, with an everlasting, never-ending, it doesn't matter how old or how young, how thin or how heavy you are kind of love. He loved you when you were young and foolish. He loves me more mature and random. God is love. Our Father does not *have love* for you . . . he *is love* for you.

Our Father's marvelous love for us is infinite, intimate, and unique. And you are uniquely loved because you were uniquely created.

*Unique* means "the sole example of, prototype or only one," and my favorite definition, "*without equal or rival.*" Our Father God stands alone without rival, so we shouldn't be surprised that in his eyes we are daughters without rival, which eliminates every reason that we should ever compete with one another.

You are the only example of you!

You are the beginning and the end of you. There is not a designer sample scheduled for mass production. In his lineage, there are no copies, or same, and no equal. There is no rival for the way you express his love to others or for how he expresses his love to you. No one can do *you* like *you*!

God uniquely created your DNA and knit your frame in secret so he could surprise the world. He authored how your heart expresses itself; he was the architect of your smile and the melody of your voice; he made all of your features with the fondest thoughts of only you in mind. He celebrated along with your parents your first smile and watched with affection your first steps.

Because of this tender, intentional care, there are multiple facets of your life that express and reflect his love uniquely.

He wove all these exceptional aspects and specific talents into the package of you, his daughter. He knew each attribute would be expressed best through your feminine form.

He knew you would represent and relate to him best as a daughter. This is the very reason he chose female for your gender. There is a very tender bond between fathers and daughters.

He didn't have another daughter in mind when he fashioned you . . . you are his delight.

This means you wouldn't do it better if you were taller, shorter, blacker, or whiter.

This also means you would not be a better carrier of the love he has entrusted to you if you were a male. God does not love sons more and daughters less. Nor does he love each gender equally. He loves male and female uniquely. Perhaps as you grew up you heard whispers, or even shouts, that your father or mother wished you'd been born a son. Maybe there was a time you wished you'd been born a male too. But know this . . . God never did.

Our Father rejoiced when you drew your first breath, and as the years unfolded, the angels of heaven rejoiced with him when you were reborn as his Spirit-quickenened daughter.

Marvelously loved one, there is absolutely nothing accidental about you.

## **A Daughter without Rival**

So what does all this mean? It means there is more than enough immeasurable, inexhaustible love for us all. You don't have to fight for your place at the table or win his love. No one can take you out or replace you . . . you have no rival.

But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own. (1 John 3:2–3 Message)

Together we're going to discover how to be our full selves—not someone else in an attempt to earn the love and acceptance of others. We're going to stop comparing ourselves with others because comparison is not inspiration. Comparison is cheating us and this earth of who we truly are. Where is the need for comparison or competition if our value and identity are ultimately tied to our innate uniqueness? We will only exhaust ourselves. You are a daughter without rival carrying a light without equal equipped to fight a battle without rival—uniquely.

So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't. (Rom. 12:5–6 Message)

This passage of Scripture reveals the two main detractors from a life without rival: pride and envy. The description of *unique*, a daughter without rival, does not mean you've arrived. What it does mean is there is a journey, and a piece of the puzzle, and a function in the body that is yours to contribute.

*Pride* disconnects us from the body when it whispers imaginations that exalt us beyond measure and tease us into say-


ing, “My part is the most important part. I stand alone, self-sufficient, self-important, arrogant, and exalted.”

On the other hand, *envy* tempts us to neglect our individual God-given roles in this world when it demeans our assignments. Envy says, *I don't value my role or my part, because I want you out of the way so I can have yours.*

Both of these are two edges of a deadly sword designed to take individuals out and separate related groups of people from their function and place. Sometimes the enemy pits both ends against the middle as he attacks men in the body of Christ with rivalry and a distortion of gender pride while the women fall prey to gender envy.

Be a true friend to all of us by being an authentic you. It is time God's daughters celebrated “unique” and stopped settling for the “same” or competing for “more.” You actually give others permission to disrespect you when you do not express your true self. People can always discern a counterfeit or copy from the original. Even if they don't see it, they will feel and hear it in the hollowness of your words, actions, and appearance. There is a vast difference between following an example and copying. This is one reason why you are so frustrated when you try to be someone else. Life is like a multiple-choice test, and the only wrong answers are the ones you do not choose for yourself.

We slight the designation of our Father's love when we deny our unique self-expression. And please understand that what you look like should be the least of your concerns. So



No one can  
take you out  
or replace  
you . . . you  
have no rival.

many people think they express their uniqueness through their taste in clothing, hair, jewelry, and makeup. These outward expressions are accessories. They are far from the most profound revelation of who you are.

The truth is you can look different and still not understand unique.

Let's stop wasting our time looking around and allowing constantly changing public opinion to imprint its copycat image or ideas on us. Let's confidently embrace all that God created us to uniquely reflect.

### **Whom Do You Belong To?**

I don't need to know who it is you hang around with. I don't need the name of your parents, school, or employer. I want to know the name of the one who gave his life to purchase you. And yet you are missing out on so much if you imagine the reach of his sacrifice stops there. When he found you, he didn't brush you off and put you back where you were before. He raised you. And graced you with his righteousness.

Say it now, even if it is but a whisper of your heart: *I am his and he is mine.*

Your eternal Father is the only one who has the right to define you. Your mother conceived, carried, and cared for you, but your heavenly Father conceptualized, created, and spoke you into existence. When you were lost, he redeemed you so he could once again call you his own. The day will come when time as we know it ends; then he will regenerate each of us, and we will realize this earth life was but a seed, and there in heaven we will blossom into our truest form.

I don't know where life has placed you right now, but please understand that locations, seasons, and circumstances are constantly changing. What really matters in the midst of all the ebb and flow is who you are and to whom you belong.

At the beginning of this chapter I placed a favorite quote of mine by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." God is that someone. Everything he is and everything he does inspires. The Creator masterfully crafted all that we see, hear, and know as creation to reconnect us with our divine identity. He sent his Son to reestablish our relationship with him.

With this great reconnection to our true identity in place, far too many are content to allow the shallow confines of *what they do* or *what they have* or even *who they love* to define them. But it is foolish to tie your identity to something that could be so easily taken away from you. Jobs change and skills can be lost and things can be stolen. Even important relationships can be stripped from us. What you have and what you do and who surrounds you can change, but it is vitally important that you never lose who you are and the Creator to whom you belong.

If you only know where you are going, you run the risk of losing yourself along the way. If you only know what you are called to do, you may compromise yourself to achieve your goal.

And thus the age-old question, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

Knowing *who you are* is vastly more important than knowing where you are going or even what you can do. Because he is your Creator, God has quite a bit to say to you about

who you are. And who you truly are carries within it the revelation of what you could be.

## Who Are You?

You don't have to look at what you've done or even what you've been through. Don't describe yourself by what you do. You won't need to reference your relational status—single, divorced, married, or dating. This isn't a Facebook status update. This isn't for me or even for them.

I want *you* to know who you are.

Before we go any further, pick up a pen, close your eyes, and ask your Creator to whisper his unique designations over you. Don't be afraid that you are making up words of love and value. These words are really how he sees you. Be still a moment and know. I challenge you to write down three words or phrases that he whispers over you. When you have finished this exercise, look at the words you heard when you were able to push aside everyone else's definitions of you and hear what God was whispering over your life. Are you even a little surprised with your list? Has it been awhile since you considered this perspective on yourself?

I want to assure you that God will never speak something that is contrary to his Word. *The Holy Spirit animates what God's Word outlines*. But because we have a Bible in our possession, should we only read and cease to listen? The Message translation of Hebrews 12:28 assures us that "God is not an indifferent bystander." I believe the ethereal question raised seven times in the book of Revelation remains an invitation to us today:

Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches. (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22 Message)

The fact that this question is repeated *seven times* in the span of one book of the Bible cannot help but underscore its prominence . . . and makes me realize I can be awake while my ears remain asleep. It is my very urgent hope that this book awakens your ears to hear.

We can yet turn and hear the voice of God. What might happen if we invite the Holy Spirit to speak into the very places of our lives that we have declared him silent? Will you let him speak to you one-on-one? Is God allowed to speak specifically into your friendships, marriage, and family? In so many ways it is our habit to turn a deaf ear to the warnings of God, and in the process we miss out on other things he longs to impart. Hearing corporately as a body begins with individuals who decide to listen. Do we dare awaken our ears to hear?

We cannot afford to doubt our God-assigned, unique destiny. If we do, we will undermine with hesitancy, fear, or anger all that has been entrusted to us. God wants to redeem, restore, and change your identity so that there is no incident, season, or name from your past left to define you. Yes, seasons, criticisms, and events can refine you—they have the potential to shape the mettle of your life, but they are not the substance of your life . . . God is.

You were sincerely sought because you are uniquely loved and are a unique expression of God's love to others. All that this identity as children of God means is just beginning to be expressed as each of his children becomes who he created



them to be. In a world in which everyone is trying to discover or remake themselves, he is finishing what he authored. This book is an invitation to pursue him . . . that he might reveal you!

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why is knowing who you *are* more important than even knowing *where* you are going?
2. Discuss why unique is better than equal or same.
3. What are a few of the rivals that have detracted from your ability to embrace your identity and receive God's love?
4. Do you find it difficult to describe yourself outside of what you do? If so, why?
5. What does God whisper over you?

# 2

## Our Unrivaled God

The words printed here are concepts. You must go through the experiences.

St. Augustine

### **Nobody like Him**

In the late 1980s, the landscape of Christian worship music began to change as Integrity Music searched the globe to introduce the worship music of different continents to us here in North America. Our family would wait excitedly each month for our latest subscription cassette tape to arrive (yes, I am that old) and then play the heck out of it. Our favorite choices were rewound so many times that by the time my traveling husband listened to them, the carefully engineered highs and lows of the music were almost nonexistent. One tape in particular was a family favorite: *Rejoice Africa*. I can still see my second son, Austin, in his Mickey

Mouse underwear riding his spring-bound horse, golden mullet bouncing as he belted out the lyrics.

On one of the songs, the South African praise and worship leader passionately interjected the phrase, “Nobody like him!”

Without an ounce of hesitation, my three-year-old son did his best to mimic the worship leader’s passionate declaration each time the song was replayed.

One day Austin approached me with the question I should have seen coming.

“Mom, why doesn’t anyone like God?”

I did my best to explain that it wasn’t that *nobody liked* God; it was that there is *nobody like* him.

God alone does not mean we serve a God who is lonely or bored. Just as the phrase “there is no one beside him” doesn’t mean that no one wants to sit with him.

Our God is not passively watching and waiting. He has seen to everything and is now resting in his finished work, rejoicing when his children ask him to unpack the story.

Nor is the High and Holy One on the outside looking in.

His vantage of past, present, and future is somehow synchronized so that he sees the end in the beginning and begins things once he has ended it.

Through us he wants to be on the inside looking out, not because he needs our eyes but because we need his vision.

*The God Most High* describes a God above all that we could even comprehend as height. The psalmist overflowed with the awe of this revelation in Psalm 96.

Oh sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth!

Sing to the LORD, bless his name;  
tell of his salvation from day to day.  
Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous works among all the peoples!  
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;  
he is to be feared above all gods.  
For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,  
but the LORD made the heavens.  
Splendor and majesty are before him;  
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.  
Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!  
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering, and come into his courts!  
Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;  
tremble before him, all the earth! (vv. 1–9)

Repeatedly, Scripture poses one form or another of this question, “Who is like the Most High?”

This is not a rhetorical query merely posed for our musing. It is a life-defining inquiry that begs a resounding answer: “No one!” Our response to this declaration of his preeminence positions us to receive or unwittingly reject what God has for us. You see, there once was one who imagined he was like the Most High. It was an angelic prince who in many ways was the pinnacle of perfection. We know him as Satan, but then his name was Lucifer, the star of the morning and the archangel who covered worship. As such, he beheld God’s glory and stood in his holy presence in the throne room. Ezekiel 28:12–17 describes him like this:

You were the signet of perfection,  
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
every precious stone was your covering . . .  
and crafted in gold were your settings  
and your engravings.  
On the day that you were created  
they were prepared.  
You were an anointed guardian cherub.  
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of  
God;  
in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.  
You were blameless in your ways  
from the day you were created,  
till unrighteousness was found in you.  
In the abundance of your trade  
you were filled with violence in your midst, and  
you sinned;  
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain  
of God,  
and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,  
from the midst of the stones of fire.  
Your heart was proud because of your beauty;  
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your  
splendor.

God fashioned him in splendor, full of wisdom and perfect in form and function. At some point, his worship must have turned to a lesser form. Perhaps it was downgraded to admiration. The path of his transgression is unclear, but we know this magnificent and wise creation began to view the Creator as a rival. In the dynamic of worship, there is an understanding that outside of God you are nothing. Isaiah describes his fall this way:

How you are fallen from heaven,  
O Day Star, son of Dawn!  
How you are cut down to the ground,  
you who laid the nations low!  
You said in your heart,  
“I will ascend to heaven;  
above the stars of God  
I will set my throne on high;  
I will sit on the mount of assembly  
in the far reaches of the north;  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.”  
(Isa. 14:12–14)

He could not *make himself* like the Most High . . . he could only *unmake himself*, and Lucifer the morning star became Satan the deceiver. This undoing began in his heart. He began in perfection and ended up flawed. We are flawed and imperfect from our birth, and in Christ we are made whole and perfect through rebirth. Pride encourages the worship of self, while humility dethrones the selfishness of pride. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he was undone.

Then I said, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” (Isa. 6:5 KJV)

This undoing prompted God’s provision, and one of the stones of fire Lucifer had walked among was brought to the humbled Isaiah.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And

he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”  
(Isa. 6:6–7)

As we seek him, we find him. With this revelation we worship and declare he alone is holy, he alone is good, he alone is the way, the truth, and the life. He alone is the Most High God.

The very existence of our God is unprecedented; he is without precedent or prior reference point. There was none before him. Our God did not evolve. Our God was and is and is to come. Just as we have learned that we are unique, our God originated unique.

Before him there were no gods, which is why we should have no gods before him. Even though our God is invisible, his existence is undeniable. The book of Romans asserts:

But the basic reality of God is plain enough. Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So nobody has a good excuse. (1:19–20 Message)

The English Standard Version reads this way:

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

All of creation affirms the reality of its Creator, but a definition of our God is quite another thing. It is my hope

that this chapter awakens your spirit to more of your divine connection with him.

We have established that we are daughters without rival because our heavenly Father loves us without rival. To connect on a deeper level with your God-given identity, it is imperative that you really understand more of what is involved in this divine endowment. Let's expand our understanding of who our God without rival is. *Merriam-Webster's* defines God as "the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator and ruler of the universe."

You may think this definition is all-inclusive and definitive, but this is but the *beginning*. Between the very real challenge of our earthbound language and the struggle of our terrestrial vantage point, we cannot help but be limited in our interpretation of the Unlimited One. How could we possibly find words to describe the one whose very revelation would leave us speechless?

God transcends definition.

To define something, you must capture its essence with words that embody your subject. By superseding our very language, our God defies these parameters.

Okay. Forget the definition. What about a description? Again, impossible. How can we bring clarity to the vague outline when we've been blinded by unapproachable light?

He'll show up right on time, his arrival guaranteed by the *Blessed and Undisputed Ruler, High King, High God*. He's the only one death can't touch, his light so bright no one can get close. He's never been seen by human eyes—*human eyes can't take him in!* Honor to him, and eternal rule! Oh, yes. (1 Tim. 6:15–16 Message)



If our eyesight cannot even process the appearance of our God, then how could we do more than assemble a stick figure of his wonder? Our words will fail us and we will echo the words of Job after God shows up in a whirlwind of marvel: “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5–6).

I truly love the way The Message unpacks these verses.

I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all first-hand—from my own eyes and ears! I’m sorry—forgive me. I’ll never do that again, I promise! I’ll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor.

This revelation of God awakened a hunger for more in Job. Far too many of us are satisfied with a revelation of God that is best described as “crusts and crumbs.” We are content to listen to sermons, tune in to podcasts, issue “likes” on Facebook and Instagram posts, and retweet the leftovers of another person’s banquet. There is nothing wrong with any of these, but in comparison to the feast God has for you, they are but crusts and crumbs. The truth is that God wants you to feed on his faithfulness. I want to whet your appetite, because there is a vast difference between talking *about* God and listening to a God who talks *to* you.

I know there are those who say we serve a God who no longer speaks. But this reasoning insults his very nature. Even if he chose to be silent, the spectacle of creation would become his voice. He sent his Holy Spirit to comfort and counsel us. As we read the Bible, it is God’s Holy Spirit who instructs and leads us into all truth. God is not a deaf

and dumb idol. God is not a Father who listens without a response. If we don't embrace the mystery of who God is, we won't know how to approach him. Some of the ways God speaks are through his Word, his creation, his servants, in visions and dreams, and through related members of his body. I have prayed and believe he will speak to you through the pages of this book. God is ever speaking. The question is, are we listening for him or limiting him? It is essential that we embrace this God of incomparable, limitless wonder and believe that he wants to communicate with us personally.

The brilliant theologian Thomas Aquinas spent most of his life writing about God. Both a priest and a philosopher, he labored to pair the findings of science with his understanding of our Creator. Three months before his death, however, Aquinas had a vision of the eternal realm, and the awe of it caused him to scribe these final words then lay aside his pen. Aquinas declared:

The end of my labors has come. All that I have written appears to be as so much straw after the things that have been revealed to me.

And yet this is the very man who had carefully studied and written volumes of words that declared the glory of God and the wonder of the church. He also lived in a very different age than ours, one when words carried a greater depth of meaning and thus were chosen with great care. The opportunity to read and write was a privilege reserved for the rich, royal, or consecrated. Thomas Aquinas was a highly skilled wordsmith, yet he chose the word *straw* to describe his

life's work. Straw is frequently used to describe that which is worthless. Straw is the by-product of useful grains, most often used as bedding for livestock and mulch for plants. Essentially, he was saying that the written works of his life were best suited to be trampled underfoot by beast and man.

This was the most fitting analogy he could draw between his writing about God and the reality of God as it had been revealed to him. It is altogether possible that these two sentences spoke more than any of the pages he had labored over for more than two decades. These words were woven with humility and wonder, for Aquinas experienced what Augustine had declared over a millennia earlier: "God is best known in not knowing him."

The revelation of God begins when we acknowledge that we do not in fact yet know him. Every definition we have is classified by human context and concepts. We could liken our ability to articulate who God is to that of an infant's attempt to describe its mother when it has yet to form words. In the vast universe of life, humans inhabit but a fraction of creation. It is as though we stand on a grain of sand and endeavor to describe the vastness of the ocean and all that its depths contain.

### **Who Is Our God?**

And yet our Father wishes that we would draw near to know him better, to experience his presence and learn his voice. Just as it is one thing to know about fire and quite another to experience its light, warmth, and burn, God invites us to know him, not just *about* him. Here are a few things we

know of God with supreme certainty because this is how he introduces himself throughout the Scriptures:

**I am . . . one.** Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19

**I am . . . the Alpha and the Omega.** Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13

**I AM . . . WHO I AM.** Exod. 3:14

**I am . . . from everlasting to everlasting.** 1 Chron. 16:36

**I am . . . the author and finisher of your faith.** Heb. 12:2

**I am . . . the creator of heaven and earth.** Gen. 1:1

**I am . . . able.** Matt. 3:9

**I am . . . love.** 1 John 4:7–8, 16

**I am . . . good.** Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19; 1 Tim. 4:4

**I am . . . among you in your midst.** Deut. 6:15; Luke 17:21; 1 Cor. 14:25

**I am . . . truth and true.** John 3:33

**I am . . . your healer.** Exod. 15:26

**I am . . . Spirit.** John 4:24

**I am . . . Father.** John 6:46; Phil. 2:11

**I am . . . glorified in the Son.** John 13:31

**I am . . . your witness.** Rom. 1:9; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5

**I am . . . revealed.** Rom. 1:17

**I am . . . for you.** Rom. 8:31

**I am . . . over all.** Rom. 9:5; Eph. 4:6

**I am . . . merciful.** Deut. 4:31; Rom. 12:1

**I am . . . faithful.** 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18

**I am . . . wiser than men.** 1 Cor. 1:25

**I am . . . not the author of confusion.** 1 Cor. 14:33

I am . . . the author of peace. 1 Cor. 14:33  
I am . . . your sufficiency. 2 Cor. 3:5  
I am . . . gracious and generous. Exod. 34; Neh. 9  
I am . . . slow to anger. Joel 2:13; Nah. 1:3  
I am . . . highly exalted. Phil. 2:9  
I am . . . working in you. Phil. 2:13  
I am . . . invisible. Col. 1:15  
I am . . . the God who is coming. Col. 3:6  
I am . . . the righteous judge. 2 Thess. 1:5  
I am . . . Savior of all people. 1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10  
I am . . . unbound. 2 Tim. 2:9  
I am . . . the builder of all things. Heb. 3:4  
I am . . . just. Heb. 6:10  
I am . . . alive. Heb. 10:31  
I am . . . a consuming fire. Deut. 6:3; Heb. 12:29  
I am . . . light. 1 John 1:5  
I am . . . greater than your hearts. 1 John 3:20  
I am . . . the God who is, and was, and is to come. Rev. 1:18  
I am . . . holy. Rev. 4:8  
I am . . . almighty. Rev. 11:17  
I am . . . your strength. Exod. 15:2  
I am . . . your song. Exod. 15:2  
I am . . . jealous. Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24  
I am . . . not a man. Num. 23:19; Deut. 4:24  
I am . . . God of gods and Lord of lords. Deut. 10:17  
I am . . . great, mighty, and awesome. Deut. 10:17  
I am . . . not partial. Deut. 10:17

I am . . . your praise. Deut. 10:21

I am . . . with you in battle. Deut. 20:4

I am . . . a warrior. Exod. 15:3

I am . . . your dwelling place. Deut. 33:27

I am . . . your rock and refuge. 2 Sam. 22:32–33

I am . . . God alone. Deut. 4:32, 35; 1 Kings 8:60

And this isn't even an exhaustive list! I invite you to explore each of these, but in this chapter I'd like to focus on three. The first thing I want to address is the concept of God is one.

## God Is One

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deut. 6:4–5)

Don't mistake this designation of "one" to mean that our God placed first in some universal god contest. The reference to "one" is not as much about assigning a numerical value to God as it is about clarifying that God is the one and the only. *One* means there is no other. There is no god number two, three, or four. He alone is worthy, for he alone is God. This correlates with what Jesus said was the greatest commandment:

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment." (Matt. 22:37–38)

Our love for God is to be a unified expression of heart, soul, and mind with one focus and one accord. God alone is the center of our focus and the only one worthy of our


worship. God understands that we do not do well with a divided heart, and he will not tolerate any rival gods, so it is a good arrangement. This command is not because God is insecure about his position with us; it is for our protection so we will not be diverted and led astray.

This can be a confusing Scripture passage in our day and age when not many people declare themselves to be worshippers of other gods. We are more likely to bow to man-made idols rather than deities with ancient names. From the very beginning, God warned his children:

You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 26:1)

Most of us have not erected pillars or figures of stone in our houses or yards, but that does not mean we are not carrying idols in our hearts. *An idol is anything that you give your strength to or draw your strength from.* It is where you go to get your life. It could be what you run to as a refuge. This could range from something as mundane as food or as far reaching as your involvement with social networks. If you review the list above of who God is, then you should know he is our strength, life, and refuge. No *person, relationship, organization, or thing* is to have power over you, except God.

For some of us, our feelings are an idol. If we *feel* beautiful, we believe we are beautiful. If we *feel* good, we believe



An idol is  
anything that you  
give your strength  
to or draw your  
strength from.

we are good. If we live by our feelings alone, they will lie to us and it will not be long before we are led astray.

The truth is you are beautiful because our God beautifies the meek with salvation (Ps. 149:4). You are beautiful because God makes all things beautiful in their time (Eccles. 3:11). Do not allow the foolish idols and image makers of what this world calls beauty to speak *into your life* when God has already spoken blessing *over your life*! David the worshipping warrior described the practice of idolatry this way:

Their idols are silver and gold,  
the work of human hands.  
They have mouths, but do not speak;  
eyes, but do not see.  
They have ears, but do not hear;  
noses, but do not smell.  
They have hands, but do not feel;  
feet, but do not walk;  
and they do not make a sound in their throat.  
*Those who make them become like them;  
so do all who trust in them.* (Ps. 115:4–8)

What does this mean, “those who make them become like them”? When you elevate what is human, you become limited to what humans can create. Idols are forms without function. They hold the appearance of life without any of the power of quickening it in others. Thus, their worshipers compromise their God-given senses, losing their voices and their freedom of movement. When you worship God, you are transformed into his image from glory to glory. Because there is no one like our God, there is no greater way to bring out what is unique in you than to pursue him. You



can be a student of other people but never a worshiper of man.

## God Is the Alpha and the Omega

The second truth, that God is from everlasting to everlasting, is but another way of saying he is the Alpha and the Omega. Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. When the letters are paired in this context, they represent all that is from the beginning to the end. *Alpha* means “the onset, genesis, birth, dawn of, commencement, and the threshold.” When it comes to *omega*, the definition is not as clear, but it means “the end, final point, and to the extreme.” Perhaps the definition of *omega* is more vague because we humans are more familiar with what *has been* than with what *shall be*. This is the very reason we need to draw near to God to hear his counsel. He alone has been to the far reaches of all that we know as time. There is none like our God. The prophet Isaiah tells us:

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is *none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done*, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.” (Isa. 46:9–10)

And The Message reads:

Remember your history, your long and rich history. *I am GOD, the only God you've had or ever will have—incomparable, irreplaceable—From the very beginning telling you what the ending will be*, All along letting you in on what is going to

happen, Assuring you, “I’m in this for the long haul, I’ll do exactly what I set out to do.”

God declares the end of a thing at the beginning. He declares the Omega when only the Alpha has been penned. We are invited to look back and see his faithfulness. He knows how each and every day will end when it but dawns.

For a long time now, I’ve let you in on the way I work: I told you what I was going to do beforehand, then *I did it and it was done, and that’s that.* (Isa. 48:3 Message)

It’s finished and final. He hasn’t left something undone; he isn’t going to be swayed to change his mind or draw back. *Jesus was his final answer.*

So I got a running start and began telling you what was going on before it even happened. That is why you can’t say, “My god-idol did this.” “My favorite god-carving commanded this.” You have all this evidence confirmed by your own eyes and ears. Shouldn’t you be talking about it? And that was just the beginning. I have a lot more to tell you, things you never knew existed. (Isa. 48:5–7 Message)

Our God tells us in the beginning so we won’t end up trusting in people or things that are doomed to disappoint or fail us. Shouldn’t we be talking about what he has done rather than what we have done? Shouldn’t we be more acquainted with what the Creator predicts than with the predictions of his creations?

God goes on to say:

This isn’t a variation on the same old thing. This is new, brand-new, something you’d never guess or dream up. When

you hear this you won't be able to say, "I knew that all along."  
(Isa. 48:7 Message)

There it is . . .

Our God declares the end in the beginning.  
In Christ, God loved us before we loved him,  
caught us before we fell,  
forgave us before we asked,  
clothed us in righteousness before we realized we were  
naked,  
and cleansed us before we were aware of our filth.

God called those who were enemies, aliens, and strangers  
his very own children and friends. And wrote the story of  
our life before we drew our first breath.

I challenge you to see this incomparable God for who he  
really is and begin to imitate your Father as dearly loved,  
marvelous children.

## **God Is I AM WHO I AM**

Next, I want to address *I AM WHO I AM*. Exodus 3:13–14 reads:

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and  
say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and  
they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say  
this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I am sure Moses must have been thinking, what kind of  
name is that? Imagine meeting someone and when you asked  
for their name they replied, "My name is I am." And when

you asked for further clarity, all they merely said was, “I am who I am.” You would be confused and rightly so. Think of how a conversation would go: “Hi, how are you, I am?” You would appear to be talking to them while addressing yourself. The confusion on our part echoes back to the concept of our God as one, and the only one who is all-encompassing. I am certainly not “I am who I am.” We are more accurately described as “I am because he is.”

God is that he is. God exists because God exists. I don’t exist because I exist or even because my parents got together. Ultimately, I exist because God exists. He is the Creator of *all* living spirits.

Because he is the *I AM WHO I AM*, I can say *I am in Christ* who is the *I AM*. I don’t think we truly understand just how powerful those five words are, because if we did, we would live with a different awareness. The world will try to tell us who God is, but ultimately he was revealed in his Son. God wants to reveal himself through his Son and in the process reveal you. One day Jesus was trying to help his disciples understand this dynamic by polling them in Matthew 16:13–18.

When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?”

They replied, “Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

He pressed them, “And how about you? Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter said, “You’re the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus came back, “God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn’t get that answer out of books or from teachers.

My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I'm going to tell you who you are, *really* are. You are Peter, a rock." (Message)

Do you hear this? When we have a revelation of who Jesus *really is*, then we are in a position to hear who we *really are*. Simon was really Peter. He would not always be a fisherman led by his feelings. He would be a Spirit-led leader and a rock. I can feel Jesus's excitement as he continues in Matthew 16:18–19.

This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

And that's not all. You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven. (Message)

When you know who you are . . . you know what is available to you. The church's identity and access to heaven's provision are intimately tied to her revelation of Christ. When we know the Word, we pray the Word, and heaven echoes yes and amen.

### **What Do You Call Jesus?**

Your concept of God will be reflected in you. Your God perceptions will ultimately be reflected in the life you live and the choices you make. One of the ways God is revealed in our lives is by what we call Jesus. If we call Jesus good

teacher, he will instruct us. If we call him wise counselor, he will impart wisdom. Islam calls Jesus both a prophet and a healer. Separately, these titles are but rumors and crumbs. But when Jesus is called on by the name of *Christ*, Son of the *living God*, then there is a revelation of Jesus the Lord in you. The book of 1 John tells us:

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, *because as he is so also are we in this world.* (4:15–17)


Within this confession an eternal connection is made, and the gap between his redemption and our reality closes. When we speak the Word of God, the distance that separates us from truth is bridged. We are positioned to identify with God based on who he is, not who we are. This means I am who he says I am. The realization and revelation of all the promises of God that “in Christ” has positioned me for are intimately tied to what I call Jesus. Is he Lord, healer, Prince of Peace, author and finisher of my faith? Do I call Jesus *God*, or do I simply name him good teacher?

Because he is love, I am loved and I can love.

Because he is life, I am alive.

Because he is able, I am capable.

Because he is my brother, I am God’s daughter.



Your concept  
of God will  
be reflected  
in you.

Because he is almighty, I am mighty.  
Because he is healer, I am healed.  
Because he is wisdom, I am wise.  
Because he is, I am.  
Because of who he is, I am who he says I am.  
I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

I challenge you to invite the Word of God into your life experience. To begin this process right now, let's arrest this moment with prayer.

*Dear heavenly Father,*

*I thank you that I am all that you say about me. Forgive me for reducing your image and for the times I bowed down to idols of my own making. I refuse to worship limited images set up by human hands. Holy Spirit, reveal any area in my life where these idols yet have sway. You are love, and therefore not only am I loved, but I can also love others as you do. You are my source of life and the very reason I draw breath.*

*You are able to finish what you begin in my life, and you have made me capable of all that you have set before me. In Christ I am your daughter, and because my heavenly Father is almighty, I have all the might I need by your Spirit. You are my ultimate healer; I will no longer look to the world to heal the very wounds it inflicted. Because you are the source of all wisdom, I will lean into your counsel.*

*Forgive me for the times I allowed your expression in my life to be limited to the crusts and crumbs of others. I want to know you intimately and profoundly.*

*I believe that you are more than I have ever imagined, and I invite you to lead me into a life of unrivaled wonder. Because of who you are, I am who you say I am. Regardless of what I feel in this moment, I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*In the name of Jesus, amen.*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In the past, did you compare or measure the Most High with what you've known or experienced? For example, did you think he was like your father (good or bad)? How do you see him now?
2. Are there any areas where you are living on crusts and crumbs? What about rumors?
3. What do you think Augustine meant by "God is best known in not knowing him"?
4. In what areas where God describes himself as the I AM do you need to know him more?
5. In the context of "an idol is anything that you give your strength to or draw your strength from," what are some areas in your life where you've unwittingly set up idols?
6. In God's presence, when you call him who he is, whom does he say you are?