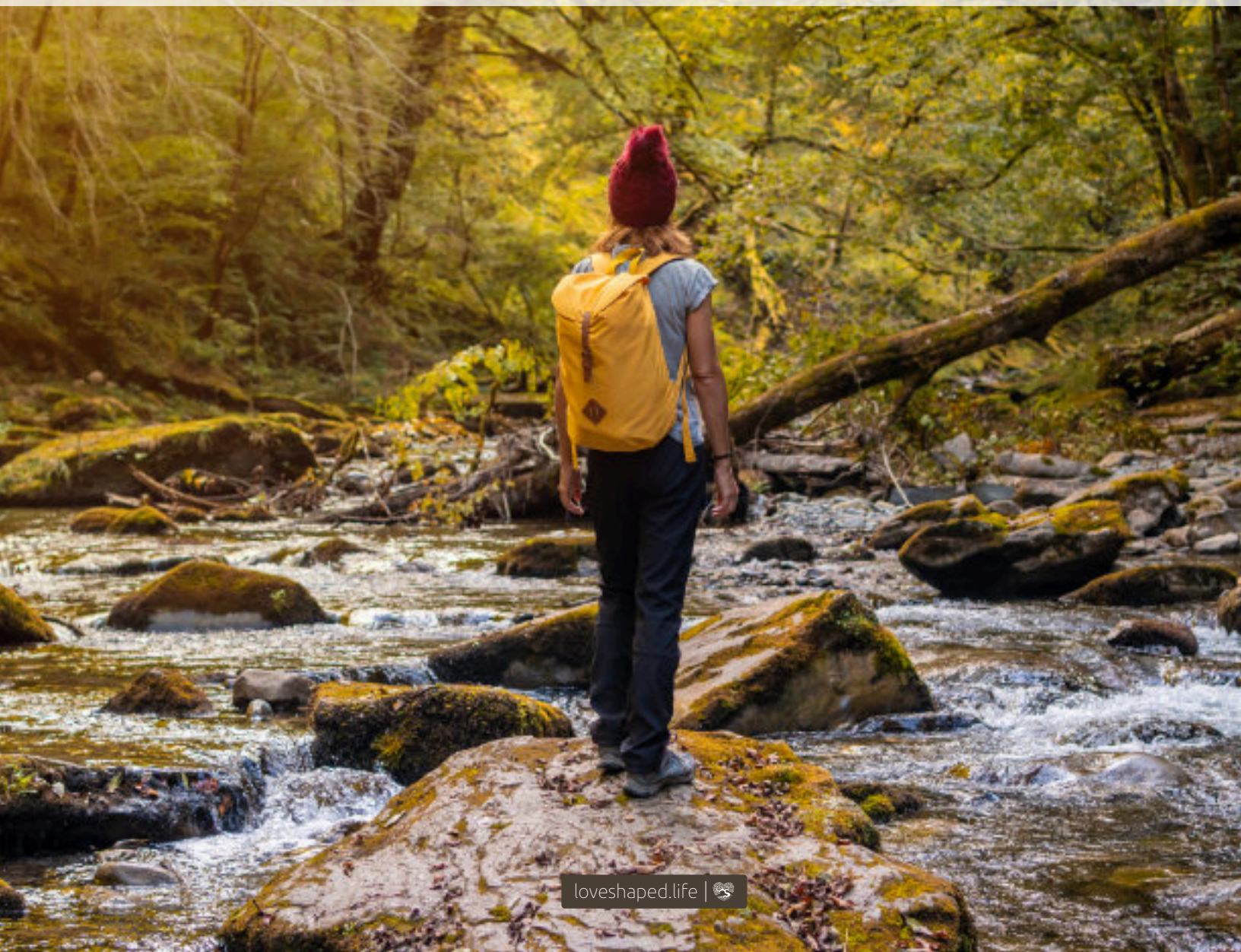


Journey to a Loveshaped Life

Experiencing the Transformative
Power of Seeing God's Beautiful Heart



Welcome to Your Journey

Thank you for taking this next step toward experiencing a life shaped by love! If you've ever felt paralyzed by conflicting spiritual messages or wondered what God is truly like beyond religious caricatures, you're not alone. This guide offers a simple yet profound framework that has helped spiritual seekers move from confusion to clarity, from disconnection to authentic relationship.

As founders of Loveshaped Life, we've walked alongside people from all spiritual backgrounds who share a common longing: to experience a genuine connection with God that transforms from the inside out. What we've discovered is that at the root of spiritual confusion often lies a distorted perception of God's character. When we become immersed in the story of God's love, our hearts come alive with its beauty, and meaningful change unfolds naturally.

**You are fully known and fully loved.
Though your darkest secrets are an open
book to him, his love for you is undimmed.**

The Spiritual Seeker's Dilemma

Today's spiritual landscape can feel like navigating a dense forest without a compass. Perhaps you recognize some of these challenges:

- *You're drowning in spiritual information from countless sources, each claiming to have the definitive truth. Religious voices, spiritual teachers, and cultural messages all compete for your attention, leaving you unsure which path leads to authentic transformation.*
- *You've encountered distorted pictures of God that don't ring true to your deepest intuitions. Perhaps you've been told God is primarily demanding, distant and uninvolved, perpetually disappointed, or merely an impersonal force in the universe.*
- *You long for spiritual authenticity without dogmatic pressure. You want a faith that engages both your heart and mind, but you're*

wary of systems that require checking your questions at the door.

- *You desire genuine spiritual connection but feel hesitant about institutional religion. Past experiences may have left you cautious about spiritual communities that seem more focused on conformity than transformation.*

If any of these resonate with you, know that these challenges are normal and shared by many. The confusion you feel isn't a sign of spiritual failure—it's often the beginning of a more authentic journey.

The Root of Spiritual Confusion

At the heart of spiritual paralysis lies a fundamental misunderstanding about God's character. When we operate from distorted perceptions of who God is, our lived reality inevitably reflects those distortions.

Consider how these common misconceptions might be affecting your spiritual journey:

- *When we see God as primarily demanding, we approach spirituality as a performance to earn approval rather than a relationship to enjoy.*
- *When we perceive God as distant and uninvolved, we struggle to believe our prayers matter or that divine presence is available in our daily lives.*
- *When we imagine God as disappointed or angry, shame and guilt become our primary spiritual motivators rather than love.*
- *When we reduce God to an impersonal force, we miss the possibility of intimate connection with a being who knows and loves us personally.*

These distortions create a spiritual experience marked by fear, obligation, and guilt rather than freedom, joy, and love. But there is another way.

The transformative power of discovering God’s true character cannot be overstated. When we begin to see God as Jesus revealed him—wildly loving, radically forgiving, and passionately pursuing relationship with us—our entire spiritual journey is reframed. What was once a burden becomes a delight; what was obligation becomes invitation.

Introducing the SMAR Framework

Over years of walking with spiritual seekers, fighting through spiritual struggle, we’ve discovered a simple yet profound process that helps people experience God’s transformative love. We call it the SMAR framework:



These four steps work together dynamically, creating a sustainable rhythm for spiritual growth. Throughout this process God guides you, opening your eyes to recognize his love where you couldn’t see it before, speaking truth within your contemplation, empowering your acceptance, and continually renewing your perspective from within.

Let’s explore each step more deeply.



See: Discover what God is truly like

“As I lay awake during those many sleepless nights, I began to rehearse Bible stories in my mind. I asked God to show me who he really was and if I’d misunderstood him. As I meditated on these stories, I came to a renewed conclusion: God is love.”

—Bob

Step 1: See

Like a bright, welcome light on a dark stormy night, seeing God for who he is changes everything. It's the heart-shaping vision essential to the love-shaped life.

Seeing is about opening the mind and heart to discern truths about God's radical love in daily life and Scripture. It's the foundation of transformation, as we cannot be changed by a love we haven't yet perceived.

The apostle Paul prayed that believers would have "the eyes of your heart ... enlightened" to comprehend "how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 1:18 & 3:18, NIV). This vision isn't just intellectual understanding—it's a soul-delighting truth that consumes our whole inner horizon.

Practical ways to begin seeing differently:

- Create space to encounter Jesus's revelation of God in the Gospels. Watch wide-eyed as love,

respect, mercy, kindness, compassion, and sympathy pour from Jesus like a refreshing river in a burning desert of brokenness.

- Practice noticing love in unexpected places. God often appears in ordinary moments—a sunset, a kind word, the laughter of children—if we have eyes to see.
- Ask God directly to help you see his true character. Jesus promised that God will "give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him," and one of the Spirit's primary roles is revealing God's heart (Luke 11:13, NIV).
- Be willing to let go of familiar but distorted ideas about God. Some of these may feel safe and familiar—things we've heard from religious leaders, parents, or friends—but they may be keeping us from experiencing the wideness of God's big, gentle heart.

Journal Prompt: What images or ideas about God have shaped your spiritual journey so far? Which of these feel life-giving, and which feel burdensome?

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Meditate: Create space to
reflect on God's love

*“God is there in the midst of the storm that you’re going through ...
Everything’s going to be all right. We can’t see the picture right in
front of us, but God sees the future. ... He’s there.
He’s going to take care of you.”*

—Elton

Step 2: Meditate

In the quietness of your heart, pick up those radiant bits of God’s love you’ve been gathering from everyday life or the pages of Scripture. Turn them over and over in your hand. See them. Feel them. Hear them.

Meditation is the deliberately-created space in which we ponder and probe truths about God’s love under God’s guidance. Like a gem merchant examining precious stones, we turn these truths over in our minds to discern their beauty and value more fully.

Biblical meditation isn’t about emptying the mind but filling it with truth. The ancient Hebrew poets and prophets described it as *chewing* on Scripture *day and night* or giving ourselves entirely to reflection on divine realities.

This practice allows God’s word to germinate and grow in our hearts, producing trust and hope. As we create space for reflection, the

Holy Spirit functions as the “inner upwelling”—the voice that speaks truth within our contemplation, distinct from our own thoughts.

Simple meditation practices for beginners:

- *Verse contemplation: Take a single verse about God’s love (like Jeremiah 31:3, “I have loved you with an everlasting love”) and spend 5-10 minutes reflecting on what it reveals about God’s character and how it might apply to your life.*
- *Narrative meditation: Read a Gospel story of Jesus interacting with people. Notice how he treats those who are struggling, outcast, or broken. What does this reveal about God’s heart?*
- *Presence practice: Set aside 5 minutes to simply be aware of God’s presence with you. No agenda, no words needed—just a conscious recognition that you are fully known and fully loved in this moment.*

Journal Prompt: What truth about God’s love feels most difficult for you to believe? What would change in your life if you could fully embrace this truth?

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Accept: Receive this love as your own

*“I felt like God was a God that was pursuing me,
and I never saw that before.”*

—Abbie

Step 3: Accept

The deliberate, concrete act of allowing the truth of God’s wild, untamed love to shape actual, real-life actions that move the theory of his love into the rhythms of daily life.

Acceptance moves beyond intellectual agreement to personal appropriation. It’s the process of taking the implications of God’s love and applying them to daily life, allowing these truths to displace the jagged, ugly signs we’ve internalized about ourselves and God.

This step can evoke mixed emotions. Fear may arise as we wonder, “Is this really true? What if I’m disappointed?” Yet alongside fear often comes a rising tide of relief and joy as we realize we don’t have to earn God’s loving affection.

Jesus said, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent” (John 6:29, NLT). This “work” of believing—of

personally receiving the truth of God’s love—unleashes the powerful, operative energy of divine love into every corner of our lives.

Practices for moving toward acceptance:

- *Imaginative prayer:* Picture yourself in a Gospel scene where Jesus shows compassion to someone in need. Imagine he turns to you with that same love in his eyes. What does he say to you?
- *Truth declarations:* Identify the lies you’ve believed about God or yourself, then create statements of truth to replace them. For example, replace “I’m a nobody” with “I am God’s treasured child” (based on Jeremiah 31:3).
- *Embodied rituals:* Create a physical expression of your acceptance of God’s love—go for a walk in nature or simply open your hands as a gesture of receiving.

Journal Prompt: What negative “signs” or messages have you internalized about yourself or God? What truth from Scripture directly contradicts these messages? (See page 10 for examples.)

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Examples

“I’m too broken for God to love me.”

This message often comes from shame over past mistakes, ongoing struggles, or deep wounds. We believe our brokenness disqualifies us from God’s affection.

Scriptural Truth: “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18, NIV). God doesn’t wait for us to be fixed before he draws near—he runs toward our brokenness with tender compassion. Romans 5:8 reminds us, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

“God is disappointed in me.”

This lie whispers that God views us with frustration, that we’ve failed him one too many times, and his patience has worn thin.

Scriptural Truth: “The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17, NIV). God doesn’t merely tolerate us—he delights in us, sings over us, and celebrates our existence.

“I have to perform perfectly to earn God’s approval.”

This performance-based mindset keeps us striving, exhausted, and never feeling “good enough” for God’s love.

Scriptural Truth: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV). God’s love is a gift, not a wage. We cannot earn what has already been freely given.

“I’m invisible and insignificant.”

This message tells us we don’t matter, that we’re easily forgotten, just another face in the crowd.

Scriptural Truth: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29-31, NIV). God’s attention to detail regarding your life is staggering—you are seen, known, and cherished.

“My past defines my future.”

This lie chains us to our history, convincing us that yesterday’s failures determine tomorrow’s possibilities.

Scriptural Truth: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV). In Christ, you are not defined by your past but by God’s redemptive power. Isaiah 43:18-19 declares, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”

“I’m not good enough to be loved.”

This whisper of shame convinces us that we must earn acceptance, that our flaws disqualify us from genuine connection and belonging.

Scriptural Truth: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV). Your worth is not determined by your performance or perfection but by God’s unfailing love for you. Ephesians 3:17-19 reminds us that you are “rooted and established in love,” able to grasp “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.” You are loved not because you deserve it, but because you are his.

[[LINK to Lies We’ve Believed](#)]



Rest: Experience the peace of being fully known and fully loved

“During that prayer, I just felt this warm sensation from the top of my head, all the way through my body, just going slowly, slowly down all the way to the tips of my toes. And that, to me, just felt like God ... just blessing me. ... I was gonna make it through this, whatever was ahead.”

—Rick

Step 4: Rest

Life at its best: consciously resting the full weight of ourselves on the big, steady heart of the God who loves with a wild, unhesitating, all-out kind of love. This. Is. Living.

Rest is the daily rhythm of seeing, meditating on, and accepting the truth of God’s radical love as the grounding framework for our lives. It’s not passive but active—a conscious choice to live from the reality of being fully known and fully loved.

Jesus offered this invitation: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NIV). This rest is what enables us to live lives of radical love for others, because we’re operating from the abundance of God’s unconditional love for us.

When we embrace this truth for ourselves, we’re freed from spending our days scraping

around, trying to find something (or somebody) to fill our longing for love, acceptance and value. Our hearts become fully satisfied, enabling us to give love away freely.

Practices for experiencing rest:

- *Sabbath rhythms: Set aside regular time (whether a day, an evening, or even just an hour) to step out of the rush of life and the struggle of trying, choosing to simply enjoy God’s presence and gifts.*
- *Gratitude practice: Begin each day by expressing thanks to God for his goodness to you. This orients your heart toward reception rather than achievement.*
- *Releasing control: When anxiety arises, practice consciously releasing your concerns to God, remembering that you are held with love even in uncertainty.*

Journal Prompt: In what areas of your life do you find it hardest to rest in God’s love? What would it look like to release the weight of self-sufficiency in these areas?

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Your Next Step

You've explored the SMAR framework—a pathway to experiencing the wonder of God's love.

But understanding the framework intellectually is just the beginning. Real transformation happens when you move from theory to practice, from concept to lived experience.

We'd love to walk with you on this journey.

When you join our welcome email series, you'll begin a simple journey, with each email building on the previous one, creating a gentle progression toward the freedom of being fully known and fully loved. You'll move from

observing God's character to experiencing his presence, from intellectual understanding to heart-deep transformation.

This isn't about adding more spiritual information to your already-overwhelmed mind. It's about discovering the clarity that comes from seeing God as Jesus revealed him—wildly loving, radically forgiving, and passionately pursuing relationship with you.

Ready to begin? Visit loveshaped.life/subscribe.



Wherever you might find yourself at this moment, we want to remind you of these words: "They will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). This God loves you, right in this moment, right in your mess, exactly as you are and with wild abandon. His greatest dream is to be with you. Now. We think it's worth leaning into that. Every. Single. Day.

Secrets for a Loveshaped Life, pg. 61.



About Loveshaped Life

At Loveshaped Life, we're committed to creating a movement of people who see God's beauty with ever-increasing clarity, experience his presence with ever-deepening wonder, and live everyday lives of radical love.

Our mission is to help spiritual seekers discover the freedom of being fully known and fully loved in a world of conflicting voices.

Our approach honors both the integrity of Jesus-centered spirituality and the legitimate questions of contemporary seekers. We invite you to experience the transformative love Jesus revealed.

Resources to support your journey:

- **Loveshaped Moments:** *Weekly reflections and practices for experiencing God's love in your everyday life*
- **Journey to Oneness Cohorts:** *Small group experiences that dive deeper into the SMAR framework*
- **One-on-One Coaching:** *Personalized guidance for your unique spiritual journey*

- **Online Community:** *A safe space to connect with others pursuing a love-shaped life*
- **Podcast and Blog:** *Regular inspiration and teaching to support your journey*
- **Print and Digital Resources:** *An expanding catalog of powerful tools for love-shaped living*
- **Courses:** *A growing library of self-paced and live courses to help you live your best life now*

Visit loveshaped.life to learn more.

We'd be honored to walk alongside you as you discover the wonder of being fully known and fully loved.

—Bob & Nathan, Founders of Loveshaped Life

Ready to take the next step? Join our weekly email series, *Loveshaped Moments*, for simple insights and practices that will help you experience God's love, everyday. Sign up at loveshaped.life/subscribe