



**FREE TO BE A MAN**

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## TAKE THE MASK OFF AND RIDE THE OPEN ROAD OF GRACE!

Many men try to hide and pretend they are not broken. But this only leads to more hiding, pretending, and despair—and nothing ever changes. We fear that God is almost never pleased.

This study will lead us into the light between two very different underlying motives: our determination to please God or to trust him. One results in a striving that never feels it has done enough to please him. The other results in a trust that experiences his full pleasure.

Our motives as Jesus followers will either keep us enslaved in our hiding or free us into God's Adventure for our lives. Let's discover the Open Road of Grace together!

**Ride ON!**

## GIFT OF GRACE: LOVE

*Galatians 5:1    Romans 5:20, 21    Ephesians 2:8-10*

# TAKE THE MASK OFF – GIFT OF GRACE: LOVE

When you enter *The Room of Grace*, Jesus has some gifts for you. For every issue, every unresolved sin, every wound, God has created a gift specifically to meet that need, resolve that sin, and heal that wound. In God's world, receiving love comes *before* love (I John 4:19). When we are ready to receive love, we will know, because we will begin to experience a process with the following steps:

1. **NEEDS** → I understand that I have needs. A need is something required and indispensable—a must. We often overlook or avoid the basic requirements for our health and maturity—our needs. We may see our needs as weakness. If we see our needs and limitations as weakness, we will hide our needs and call it self-reliance, or independence, or over-spiritualize and call it maturity.
2. **EXPERIENCE** → I realize that having my needs met is experiencing love. Without needs we cannot experience love—we cannot know when we are being loved. Every day we need to be loved. Every day God is committed to meeting our needs for attention (John 13:5-20), acceptance (Rom. 5:5-8), security (Zeph. 3:17), trust (Lam. 3:32-33), truth (Heb. 6:18), protection (Hos. 11:1-12), significance (I Tim. 1:12). If we cannot identify our needs, we cannot know love.

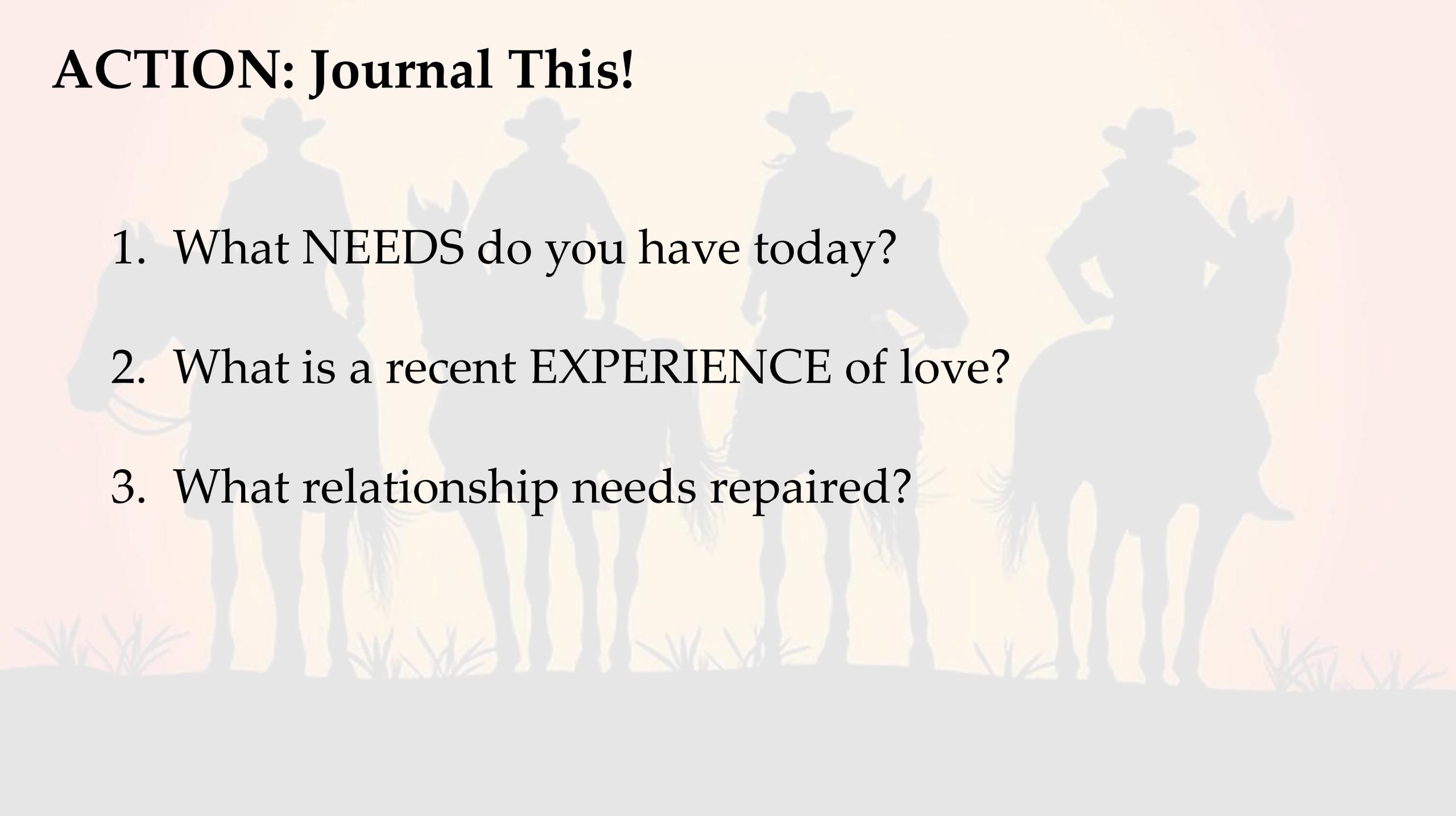
# TAKE THE MASK OFF – GIFT OF GRACE: LOVE

3. **DESIRE** → I freely admit that I desire to be loved. Many of us have spent years perfecting our self-protection routines. We have carefully, stone by stone, erected a drafty castle that we thought would safeguard us from the pain of broken relationships. Our only companions become Shame, Blame, Fear, Denial, and Anger.
4. **CHOOSE** → I choose to let you love me. We cannot let another person love us unless we trust the person (I Sam. 18-19). Grace, when it is conceived in trust, brings about astonishing resolution, healing, maturity, and powerful influence.
5. **HUMILITY** → I let you love me – on your terms, not mine. Humility is required. Learning to let others love us on their terms is part of what it means to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:18-21). They will not do it perfectly. Learning to love perfectly or trust perfectly is not the point; rather, it’s learning to receive love, and that requires *humility*.

# TAKE THE MASK OFF – GIFT OF GRACE: LOVE

6. **FULFILLED** → I am fulfilled when I experienced love. Trusting God leads us into The Room of Grace where we gradually receive the supreme gift of grace--love. When we are loved, we feel fulfilled.
7. **LOVE OTHERS** → I am now able to love others out of my own fulfillment. To fulfill means “to meet the requirements of, to satisfy.” This fulfillment produces inward peace, contentment, and healing for our wounds and FREES US TO LOVE OTHERS.

# **ACTION: Journal This!**

The background of the slide features a soft, warm sunset gradient. Overlaid on this are the silhouettes of four cowboys riding horses. The cowboys are wearing wide-brimmed hats and are positioned in a line across the middle ground. The horses are also silhouetted, and their legs are visible. At the bottom of the image, there are small, dark silhouettes of grass or brush.

1. What **NEEDS** do you have today?
2. What is a recent **EXPERIENCE** of love?
3. What relationship needs repaired?