



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!

THE SWEETEST GIFT OF GRACE: REPENTANCE

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

TAKE THE MASK OFF – SWEET GIFT OF GRACE: REPENTANCE

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE BROKENNESS** → Repentance is a gift of God's grace because your repentance resolves nothing without grace. Grace alone resolves sin. Only the power of the cross can break a pattern of sinful behavior.
2. **POWERLESS** → Repentance isn't doing something about our sin; rather, it means admitting that we *can't* do anything about our sin. Sin cannot be managed. Willpower is no power. The *intention* not to sin is not the same as the *power* not to sin. God did not design us to conquer sin on our own. To think we can is an incalculable *undervaluing* of sin's power combined with a huge *overvaluing* of our own willpower! Jesus condemns the legalistic Judaizers and Pharisees for trusting in themselves and having contempt for others (Luke 18:9-14).
3. **RESOURCE** → A sin management system shuts off the *only* resource that can deal with sin: our *trust* in who God says we are, attracting the *power* of his *grace*. Agreeing that we have done something wrong is NOT the same as trusting God with what we have done. Sin is resolved when we are cleansed of it, and only dependence upon the cross of Jesus cleanses us from sin (I John 1:6, 7). There is power in the cross of Jesus!

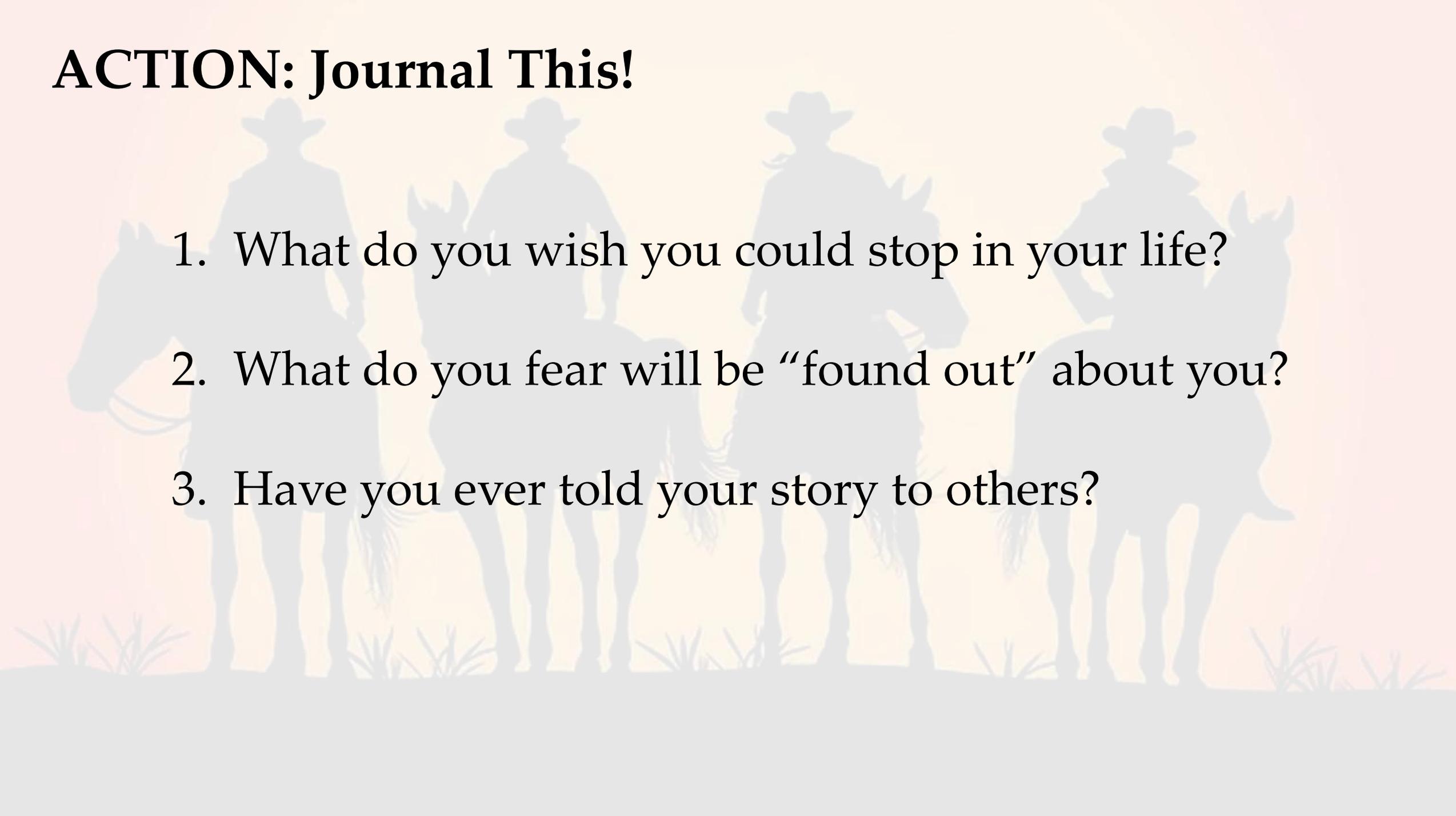
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4. **REDEMPTION** → We can do absolutely nothing to make provision for our sin. Every act of repentance depends on an act of redemption. Repentance is about trusting, not willing. If our motive is determined straining to please God, all our striving will be a pile of filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Willpower, no matter how sincere, cannot buy you freedom. *To redeem* means “to liberate by payment or to release from debt or blame” (Col. 2:6, 7). When we repent through trust, it is exclusively and entirely a gift of God’s grace (Titus 3:3-8).
5. **INHIBITORS OF REPENTANCE** → Three common inhibitors of repentance are:
 1. **Isolation** = When we repent in isolation it proves we still favor presenting a nicely packaged life to others (II Cor. 7:8-13 and James 5:16).
 2. **Pride** = Trust in others, not God. Pride will do what sin does. It destroys (Proverbs 16:18).
 3. **Wrong Motive** = To make God happy with us (Romans 2:4).

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6. GRACE IN ACTION → In a grace-filled community, a different view of life in God biases the whole culture toward repentance. This community *expects* and *anticipates* imperfection. We honor others in the community of saints, but we also face the reality of each other's sin. We applaud vulnerability and view godliness as something much more than the presence of good behavior and the absence of bad behavior. The individuals in this community trust God to mature them from the inside out, by the power of His Spirit ... in His timing. No one feels a need to hide, for no one's parading his own righteousness. Everyone feels safe to be real and alive. In this community, repentance is as accessible to its members as fried chicken to a southerner. Into the community of grace comes a hurting, tired broken-down man who has may have spent all his Christian life in a community of folks with good intentions. When failing strivers stumble into a community of grace, safety, and vulnerable repentance, freedom awaits. When repentance becomes a constant, recognizable part in an environment, a man in that culture experiences freedom they never knew. A man is set FREE TO BECOME THE MAN GOD DESIGNED HIM TO BE! WELCOME!

ACTION: Journal This!

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- The background of the slide features a soft, warm sunset gradient. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of four cowboys riding horses, facing right. The cowboys are wearing wide-brimmed hats and long coats. The horses are also silhouetted, and there are some small, spiky plants visible at the bottom of the frame.
1. What do you wish you could stop in your life?
 2. What do you fear will be “found out” about you?
 3. Have you ever told your story to others?