

UNEARTHED

Digging beneath the surface and bringing our whole selves before God.

Leah & Hagar—Unseen and Unloved

Day 1

Every day we receive messages that aim to shape how we define our worth, acceptance, and identity. We live in a culture that measures the value of an individual by certain degrees of success and productivity. Whether it's an ad for a luxury vacation or a nosy relative asking when you plan to have children, these messages all have the potential to shape how we view our worth. Social media and other digital platforms have increased the opportunities for outsiders to influence whether we feel seen and loved.

Through the stories of Hagar and Leah, we are reminded that God is not influenced by human hierarchies of ethnicity, class, and gender. Read the passages below and take note of the ways God shows up in the lives of these women. How does He make them feel seen? How does He make them feel loved?

Genesis 16:1-16, 21:8-21, and 29:1-35

What do these passages communicate to you about the character of God?

Day 2

Scripture shows us how God's love is not limited by our human definition of value and worth. Take some time to read some passages that describe the nature of God's love for us.

1 John 4:9-19

Romans 5:8

John 3:16

Romans 8:31-39

What passage impacted you most?

What do these passages say about the way God loves us?

Day 3

Today we will spend some time looking at our own stories and experiences in which we have felt unseen and unloved. Priest, author, and theologian Henri Nouwen identifies five lies we believe about our identity. Read the following phrases and reflect on how these lies have felt like truth in your life.

I am what I have.

I am what I do.

I am what other people say or think about me.

I am nothing more than my worst moment.

I am nothing less than my best moment.

- Which of Nouwen's *Five Lies of Identity* have you believed about yourself (past or present)?
- Are there times in your life when God has challenged those lies and confronted you with His love?
- Ask God to show you which of these lies still have a hold on you. Perhaps you don't believe the lie at this moment, but when you're tired or vulnerable, which lie likes to show up in your life?

"We are not what we do, we are not what we have, we are not what others think of us. Coming home is claiming the truth. I am the beloved child of a loving creator." —Henri Nouwen

Day 4

Yesterday we looked at some of the lies we are tempted to believe about our identity. It can feel easier to believe what other people think about us if we do not feel truly known by God. God is a relational being who desires to know us and to be known by us. He invites us to deepen our relationship with Him in a variety of ways.

Today we are invited to anchor our identity through two different practices that you can easily incorporate into your daily time with the Lord. The first practice is an imaginative prayer exercise called the Practice of Being Known. This practice invites us to experience what it is like to encounter and interact with Jesus. The second practice is an opportunity to engage with biblical truths by memorizing Scripture. When we memorize Scriptures that remind us of who we are in Christ, it becomes harder to believe messages that would have us believe differently. Go to pages 49-52 in the Unearthed workbook to engage in these practices.

Day 5

We are inundated with messages from the culture that compete with biblical truth to define our identity and sense of worth. Anchoring our identity in earthly values and expectations can leave us feeling unseen and unloved. The paradigms of success and worth created by humans fall short in comparison to the worth we have in God.

We each have a unique story, and part of deepening our relationship with God is taking notice of areas of our life where we long to embrace the identity bestowed upon us as adopted member of the family of God.

1 John 3:2

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Look back over your notes from this week.

What do you notice?

What new thing did God reveal to you?

How has God spoken to you through Scripture or the discoveries you've made? What's God inviting you to as a result?

Consider...

- Taking time to express gratitude for the people in your life who have made you feel seen and loved.
- Asking God to show you where He was present in times you felt rejection in your life. If you need help to process it, you might want to make a Care Appointment or find a counselor who can help you.