Golden Memories: Discovering Divine Moments in Storyline of Your Life

We navigate life with a collection of moments, some fleeting, others etched deeply into our souls. Among these, there are those rare and precious experiences I call *Golden Memories*. These are not merely nostalgic recollections; they are pivotal moments that have shaped our life stories, molded our identities, and even refined our character. They are actually the threads of providential divine interaction woven into the fabric of our existence.

This ebook has 7 brief sections: Scriptural Foundations, The Heart's Transformation, Defining Golden Memories, Listening for God's Commentary, Recognizing God's Faces, Embedding the Gold, and The Outcomes. The book ends with a poem I've crafted that captures many of these main themes. It is an invitation to embark on a journey of discovery, to delve into the depths of your past and uncover the hidden treasures of your *Golden Memories*. We will explore how these moments serve as conduits for experiencing God's presence, revealing his love, and helping to unveil his purpose for your life.

MS **by Michael Sullivant**

"We love Him because He first loved us."

- 1 John 4:19

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

- Romans 12:21

1. Introduction: Scriptural Foundations

The concept of Golden memories is rooted in the understanding that God has been intimately aware and involved in every aspect of our lives. Let's examine several key Scripture passages that illuminate this truth.

God's Meticulous Attention to Detail

> Psalm 139:16: "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."

This verse in Psalm 139 (do meditate on the entire Psalm!), which was not only true of King David, speaks to God's meticulous attention to detail. Before we were even formed, he knew us, planned our days, and orchestrated our journey. This underscores the profound truth that our lives are not random occurrences but meaningful narratives superintended by a loving Creator. Consider the implications: Every seemingly insignificant moment, every fleeting thought, is known to God.

known *me*.

2 You know my sitting down and my
rising up;
You understand my thought afar of

3 You comprehend my path and my
lying down,
And are acquainted with all my
ways.

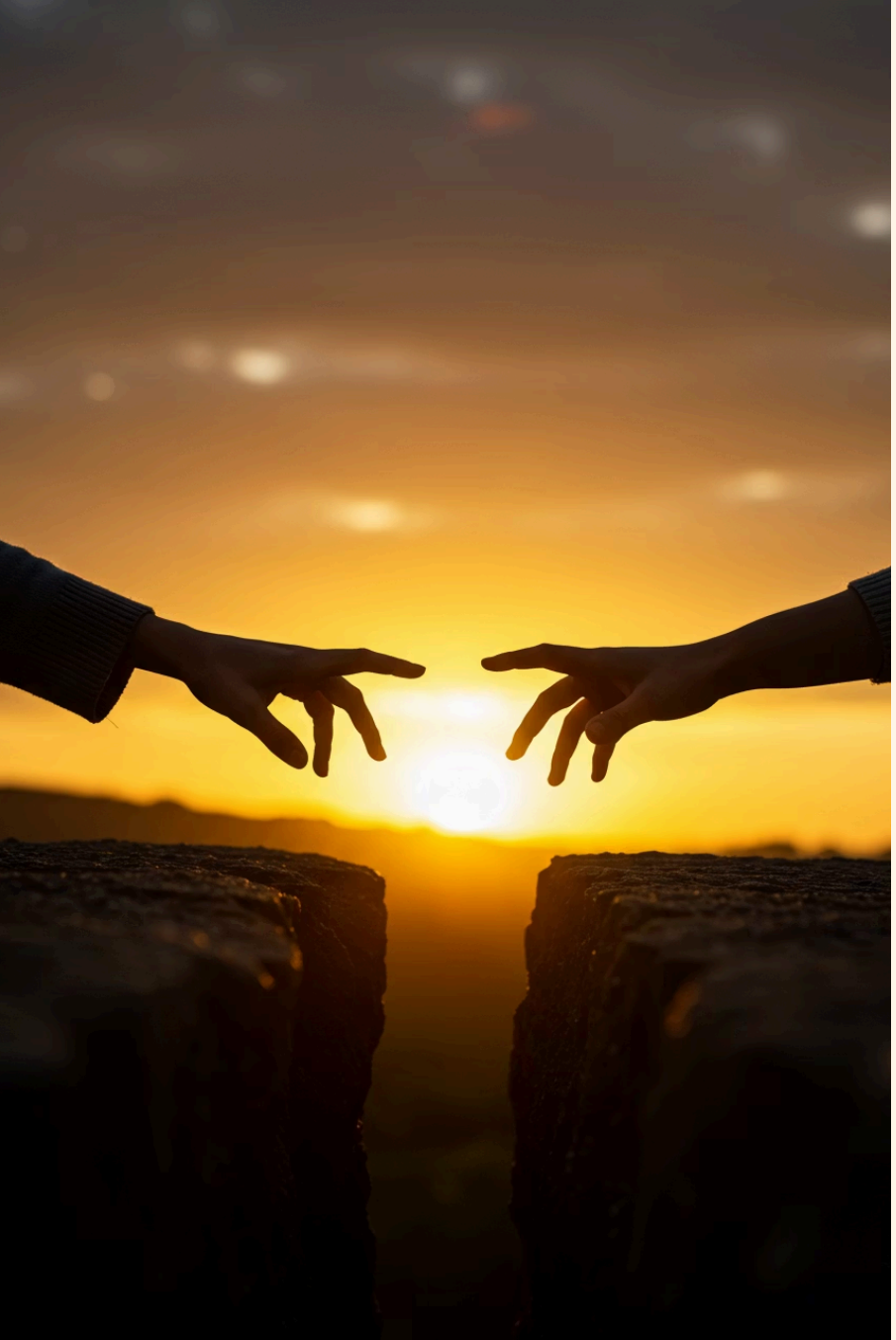
4 For *there is* not a word on my
tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it
altogether.

God's Desire to Be Found

> Acts 17:27-28: "That they should seek God, in the hope that they might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being."

The apostle Paul, sharing the gospel of Jesus for the very first time in Athens, reveals God's heart for humanity. He desires to be found, even by those who are groping in the dark. He is not distant or aloof but intimately present in the very moments of our lives. This means that even in our times of doubt or confusion, God is nearby, waiting to be sought after and engaged. Paul, under scrutiny, just as Socrates was condemned to death 399 years before this on the very same Mars Hill, shares that God has a hope in his heart that people will "grope for him and find him." It seems that God plays *peekaboo* with humanity, hiding and showing his face, a curious and repeated divine rhythm in his ways with us. Yet, Paul states that God is "never far from each one of us (even before we put our trust in him), *for in him we live, move, and have our being*," echoing the words of their own Greek poets. All truth is God's truth! God has also been playing *hide and seek* with all humanity throughout the centuries. But, it's a serious game of life that he loves to lose!





The Divine Initiative in Salvation

> John 6:44: "No one comes to me unless the Father draws him."

Jesus's words reveal the Father's longing for us to know his dear Son. God actively *draws us* to entrust our lives to Jesus Christ. Golden Memories can be seen as part of these divine magnetic moments where we have, most often unconsciously, experienced his loving care, protection, and presence. I often ask people, "How did God win your heart to trust in Christ?" They typically refer to about 3 or 4 ways. But what if there are dozens and dozens? Would you like to know more ways that the Father did so?

Every Good Gift Comes From Above

> James 1:17: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

This verse reminds us that all blessings, big and small, originate from God. Golden Memories are often gifts of grace, moments of joy, peace, and love that reflect his goodness. This is what theologians call common grace.

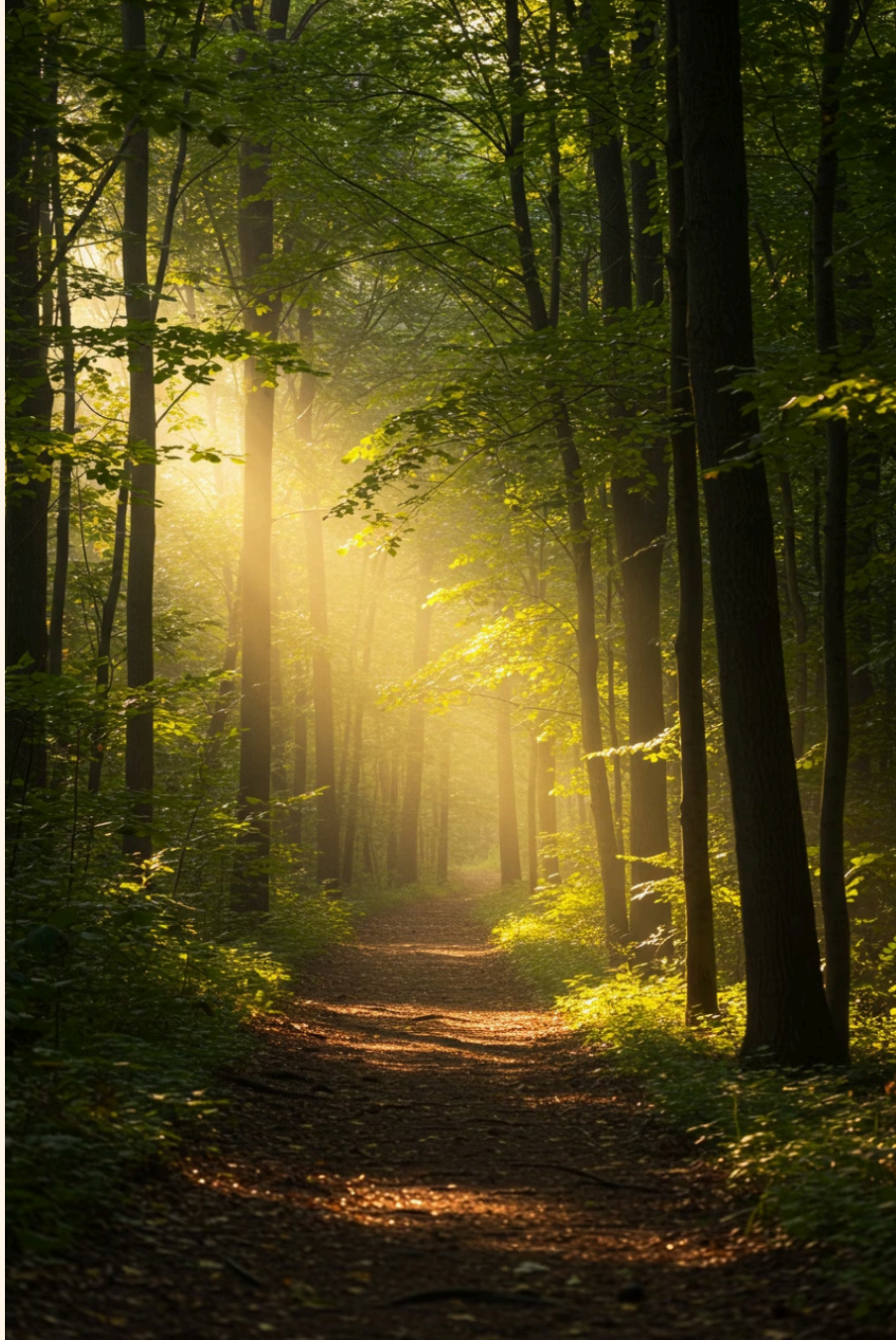
"…He gives to all life, breath, and all things." - Acts 17:25b



Trusting God's Direction

> Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths."

Acknowledging God in our Golden Memories is a way of learning to trust in him. By recognizing his hand in our lives, we open ourselves to his guidance and direction. Golden Memories connect our life experience with God's nearness, love, and magnetic attraction.





The Lord Always Before Us

> Psalm 16:8: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

We can cultivate a more constant awareness of God's presence. Golden Memories serve as reminders of his nearness, strengthening our faith and grounding us in his love. King David shows us repeatedly in the Psalms there is a way to always be conscious of God's nearness.

Reflecting on God's Presence

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your
presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You *are*
there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You
are there.
9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of
the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead
me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.

Reflection:

Take a moment to consider the implications of God's omnipresence: Every seemingly insignificant moment, each movement, every fleeting thought, is known to God. How does this make you feel? It made King David feel *special* to God rather than intimidated or over-controlled.

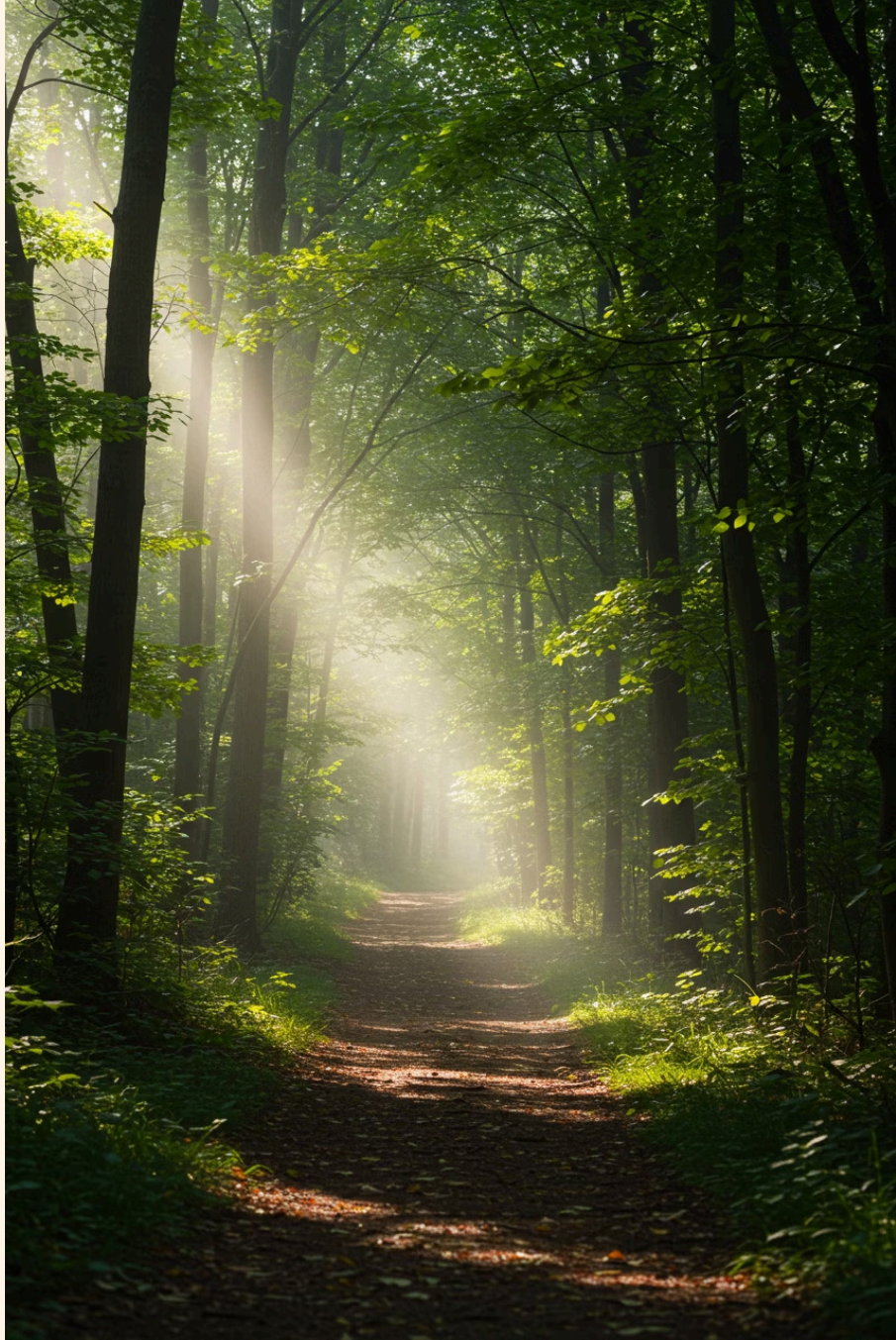
Exercise:

List three "good and perfect gifts" you've received. Were any of them Golden Memories?

Looking Deeper Into Scripture

The scriptural foundations we've explored reveal that God is not merely observing our lives from a distance. He is actively involved, orchestrating special moments that become our Golden Memories. These passages paint a picture of a God who knows us intimately, desires to be found by us, draws us to him, blesses us abundantly, guides our paths, and remains constantly by our side.

As we continue our journey through this ebook, keep these scriptural truths in mind. They provide the foundation for understanding how God uses Golden Memories to reveal himself and transform our lives and relationships.



2. The Heart's Transformation: Living from the Inside-Out

We are transformed by God's free gift of grace at the heart-level. I highly recommend a well-known book is entitled, "Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You" written by a team of nameless people. This reality is fundamental to enabling us to actually become the person God has always had in mind for us to be.



The Indwelling Presence

Through the Holy Spirit, God himself comes to dwell within us as Christ-followers. We are temples of the living God. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit have made their *home* in us, as described in the gospel of John, chapter 14 (see v. 23). This very special Greek word for *home* is where we get the English word "monastery". In Christ, we become a personal *monastery room* for the Trinity!



The New Heart

Scripture speaks of our coming to trust in Jesus as a "circumcision of the heart." It is a peeling away of our old self to reveal the new creation, our new self, in Christ.

Salvation involves experiencing a new secure and loving *relational attachment* with God to which he has bid us to yield with a child-like heart. We do not have to *teach* little infants to drink for they are designed to just do so.

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." — John 7:37-38

This new heart is thirsty, tender, receptive, and attuned to God's voice. God peels off the sinful flesh, revealing the essence of the redeemed and true person Christ has come to inhabit.

"You are more valuable than many sparrows." - Jesus Christ



The Easy Yoke

In Matthew 11, Jesus invites us to "take my yoke upon you," an idiom used by Rabbis to invite students to follow their teaching and way of life. Christ's yoke is not burdensome but liberating, a path of gentleness, humility, and rest. We find rest for our souls when we enter this yoke of Christ, to follow him and embody his gentleness and his humility.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

- Matthew 11:28



The Pyramid of Transformation



Level 3: Outward Changes

Our thoughts, words, choices reflect our transformed heart

Level 2: Inner Character Shift

We respond spontaneously with Christ's love

Level 1: Pre-Conscious Formation

God's Spirit works at a level deeper than our conscious thoughts

God's Spirit works at a level within us deeper than our conscious thoughts, shaping our identity and character. This love attachment with God is faster than we can think or choose, a bond with the living Christ, Father, and Spirit. We begin to respond spontaneously to every situation of life with Christ, allowing his love and resurrection life to flow through us. Christ wants to live our life with us and live his life through us! Then, our thoughts, words, choices, and lifestyle progressively reflect our transformed heart, flowing out from powerful *upstream virtuous motivations* such as attachment love, peace, joy, and belonging - all imparted to us by the indwelling of Jesus.

God's Initiative: The Divine Dance of Love

Our journey with God begins with his initiative. He has always been pursuing us, even before we were aware of his presence.

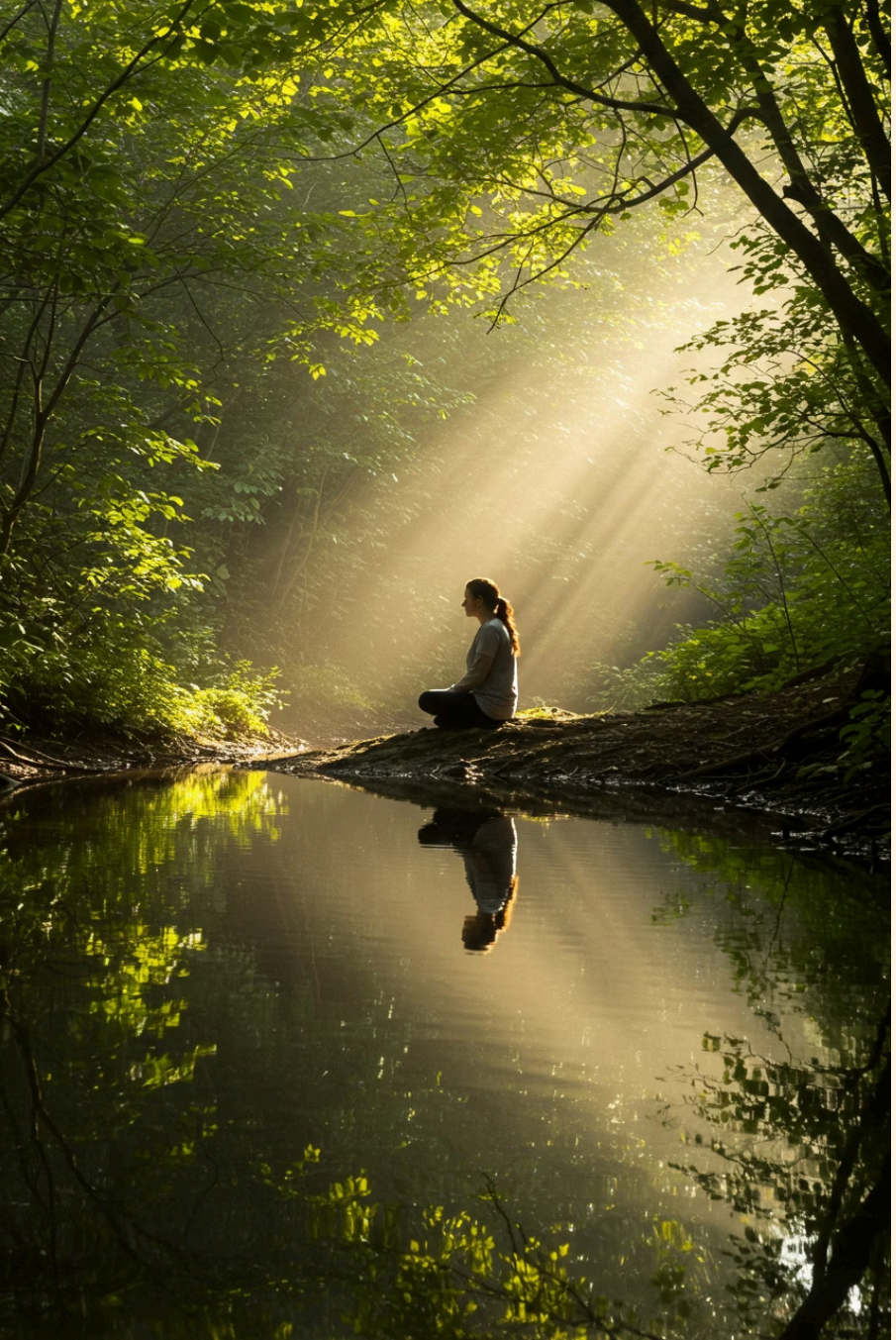


Divine Creation

All people rightly *belong* to God as our Creator. He fashioned us in our mother's wombs, knowing us intimately. This is described in much detail throughout Psalm 139.

> *"... in him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28b*





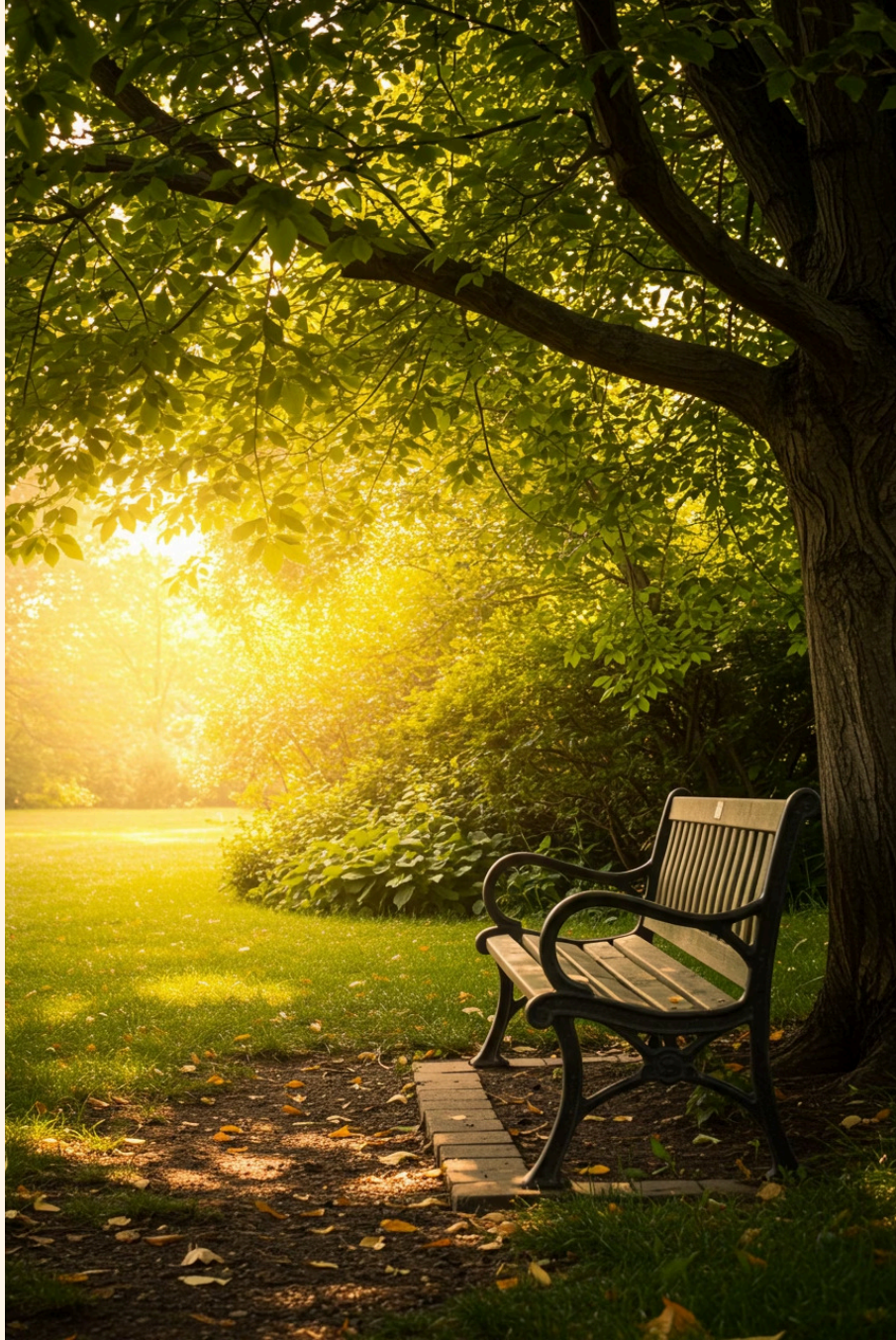
God "Presences" Us

God has always been near, even in our moments of doubt, failure, darkness, and confusion. He "presences" us, often in ways we do not immediately perceive. Living the Spirit-filled life is about learning to acknowledge, sense, and lean into God's active presence with and within us more and more.

Patient Invitation

God patiently waits for us to respond to his love, inviting us to know Him as our *Father*, not just our *Creator*. This happens when we come to believe, or put our trust, in Jesus, who he is and what he has done. This is a free gift given to us by the grace of God. It is a marvelous work of the Holy Spirit.

The primary Greek word often translated as "believe" or "trust" is "pisteuo." The meaning of "believe" in scripture is profoundly relational. Like we will sometimes say, "I give you my trust." Or, "I believe in you."



3. Defining Golden Memories: Snapshots of Divine Encounter

What exactly constitutes a Golden Memory? It is more than just a pleasant recollection. It is a moment of profound significance, a snapshot of a wondrous experience of some kind. I encourage people to think back into their childhood years as a good starting point, especially before they came to love God. This will reinforce to us that he loved us first.





A Specific Time

A moment that stands out from the ordinary flow of time that captures a unique experience.

A Specific Place

A location or an excursion that holds deep personal meaning, a place where you felt connected to God, creation, and/or other people.

An encounter that changed you, a moment of illumination, protection, or profound sense of connection.



A Specific Event

These events can be life-defining experiences. Sometimes they are big events and sometimes they may be small events. But, as we recall either kind, we realize that they are unforgettable, sometimes for mysterious reasons. Sights, sounds, smells, and whole environments come alive again.





Unearthing the Gold: Recalling Your Memories

Golden Memories come in many forms. Let's explore the different types of events in life that might constitute and evoke your Golden Memories.

How to Recall Golden Memories

Return to moments when:

- An indelible imprint was made upon you. Now that you recall this again, you will never forget this experience.
- Everything felt is was as it's supposed to be.
- You were "hitting on all cylinders."
- All your gifts and talents were in play and you were performing at a peak level without overthinking it.
- You felt a kind of peace and well-being that is hard to describe.
- You were elated by joy.
- You were comforted deeply in your pain.
- You were mysteriously protected or surprisingly provided for.
- You were being loved deeply by another person or pet.
- You were struck by witnessing the wonder and beauty of nature.
- You received clear guidance about a big decision and you knew what to do.
- You had a sense of a reason why God brought you into the world.
- You felt more fully alive than you normally do.
- You had a distinct awareness of the presence of God.
- You had an encounter with the invisible world.
- You shed tears of joy, wonder, and/or gratitude.
- You created something beautiful that surprised you.
- You were deeply moved by a story, a drama, a song, a movie scene, or a piece of art.
- You experienced what you sense was an iconic or defining moment.

Re-live the sights, sounds, smells, emotions, and even physical feelings you experienced in these kinds of moments.

Example of a Golden Memory

I remember the first time I came to know lightning bugs existed. I was five years old. I, along with my siblings and cousins, saw hundreds of them swarming in the side yard of our family lake cottage. I was fascinated and thrilled that there were bugs that could somehow light up their bodies. God made this memory special to me many years later. When I re-lived this memory, he whispered to my heart, "I made you to be a person who is fascinated by lights. I am the *Father of lights* (James 1:17) and I have shown you many of my lights ever since."





4. Listening for God's Commentary

Once you've recalled a Golden memory, the next step is to listen for God's commentary. This is not about waiting to hear an audible voice, but about attuning your heart to the still, small, an inner voice of the God's Spirit.

The Ears and Eyes of the Heart Opened

As Solomon prayed for God to give him a "heart with ears" in 1 Kings 3:9. Or, as Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18, ask God to open the eyes of your heart, to enlighten your understanding. This allows you to see the deeper meaning of your memories. Did you know that our hearts have ears and eyes?



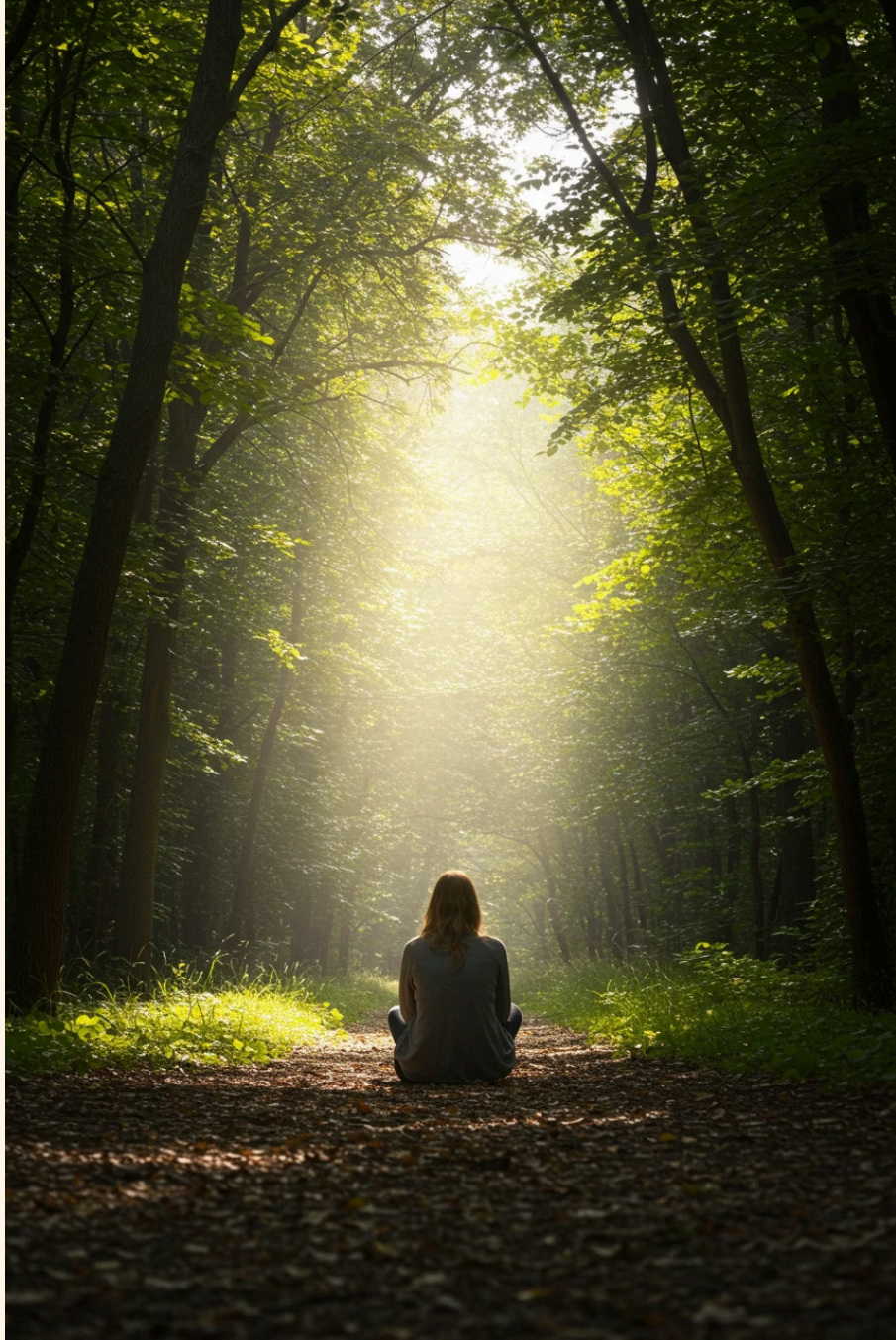
God's Version

Begin a conversation with God about your Golden Memories. Listen for his perspective, his interpretation, His deep message.



The Sound of Silence

God often speaks in the quietness of our heart, as he did with Elijah when he was on Mount Horeb in 1 Kings 19. God wasn't in the grand drama of the wind, fire, or earthquake. He was speaking to Elijah in the "sound of silence." Attune yourself to this gentle whisper.



Jesus's Presence

Look for Jesus in your memory. How is He picturing his presence to you in this scene from your past? What is he revealing to you? Ask him what he wants you to know that you have not known before?





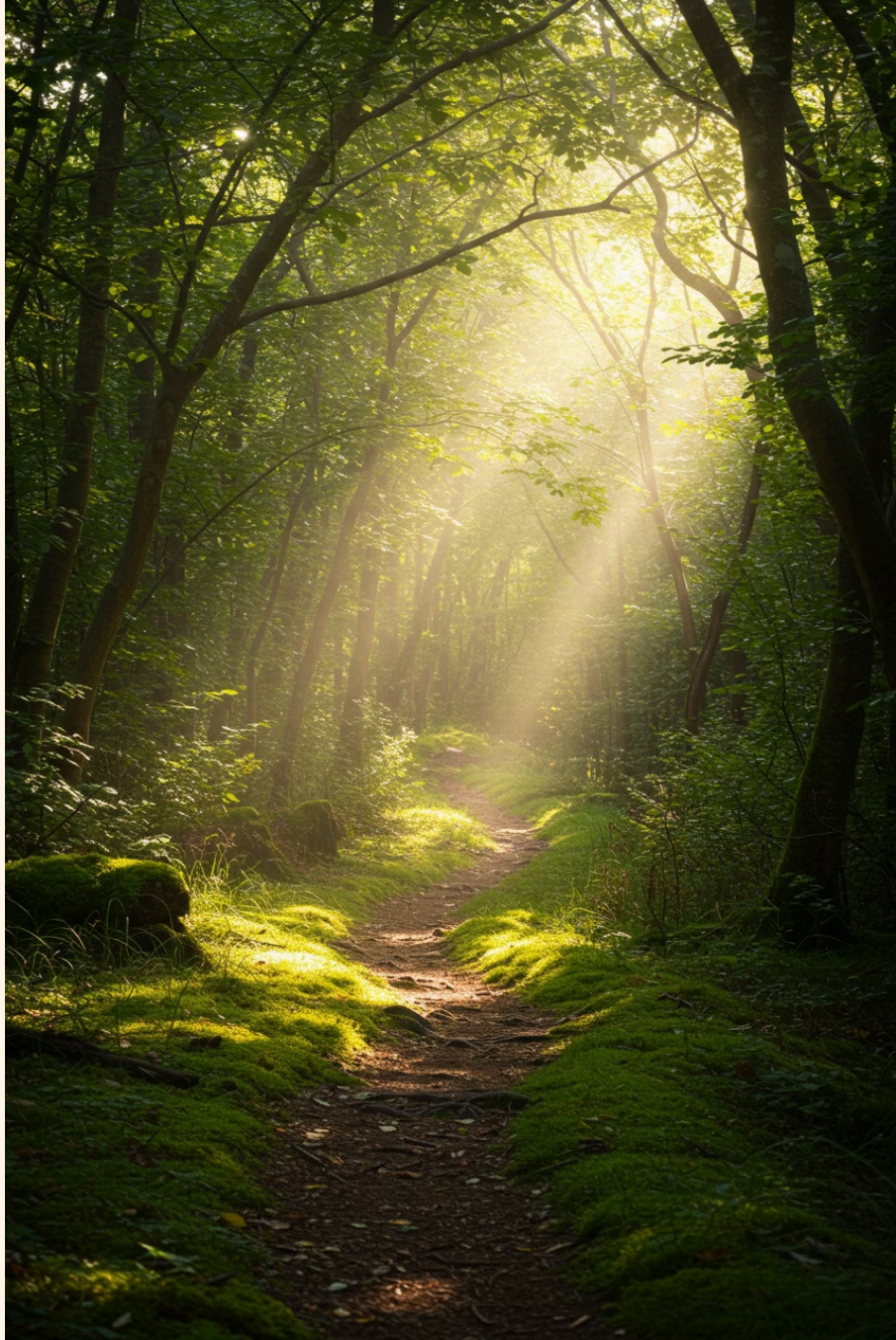
Emotional and Physical States

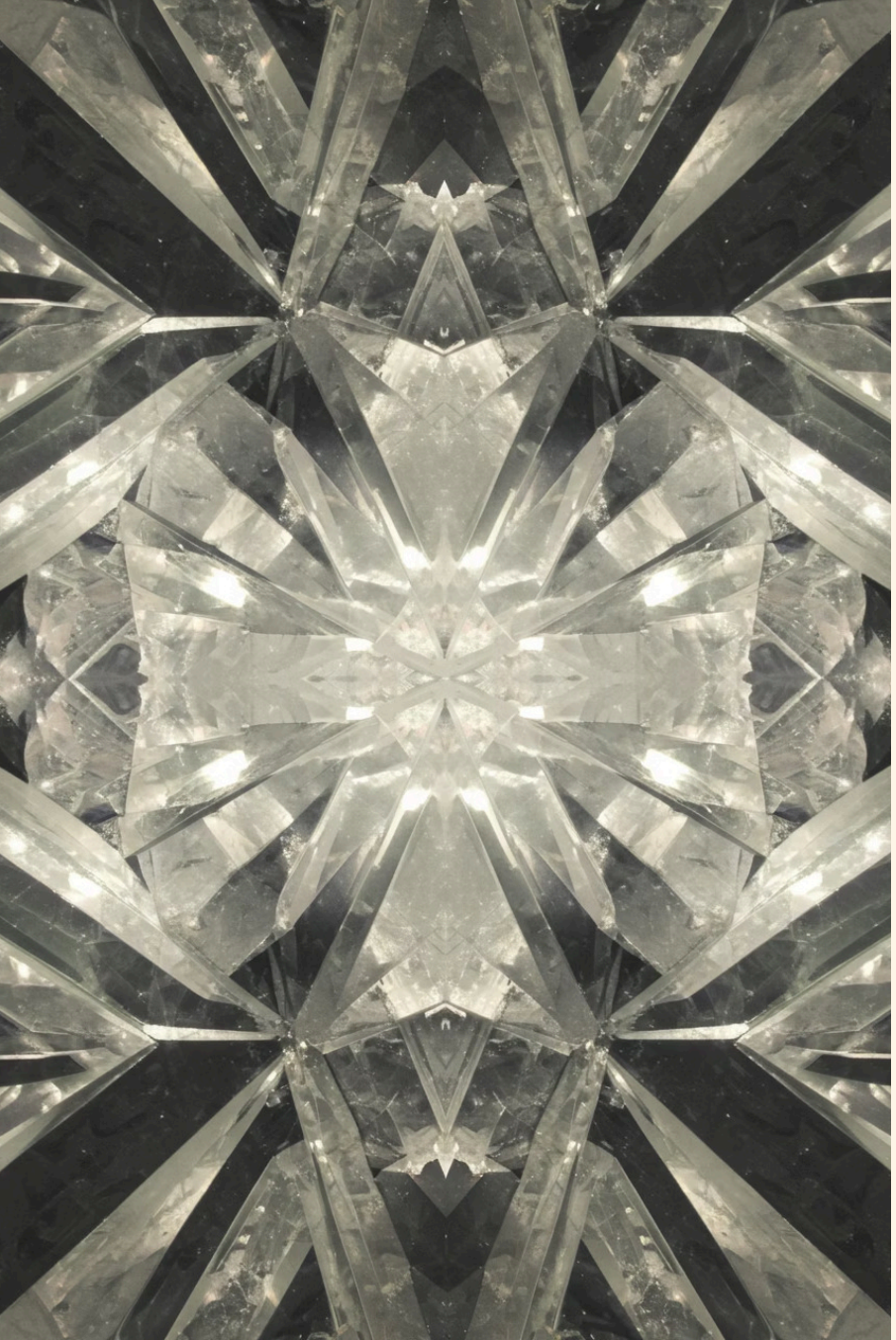
Pay attention to your feelings, both past and present; emotionally and physically. God often speaks through emotions, revealing aspects of your true identity. What is your body signaling to you?

True Identity and Divine Whispers

God whispers truths about who you are, your authentic essence, your purpose, and your belovedness. He is transforming you into the person he created you to be. These Golden Memories are like hidden pictures, revealing God's messages embedded within your life experiences. Look for metaphorical word pictures that carry profound meaning.

> Example: "As I recalled the moment, I saw a picture of Jesus standing beside me, his hand on my shoulder. I felt his peace wash over me."





5. Recognizing God's "Faces"

The next phase is to recognize and associate your Golden Memories with the "faces" of God, the facets of his nature.

A Facet of God's Nature

God was shining a facet of his nature upon you in that Golden Memories moment.



The "Faces" of God

In Hebrew, the word "face" is always plural, signifying the many aspects and expressions of personality. Examples include El Roi (the God who sees), Jehovah Jireh (the God who provides), Jehovah Rapha (the God who heals), and Emmanuel (the God who is present).

El Roi

The God who sees

Jehovah Jireh

The God who provides

Jehovah Rapha

The God who heals

Emmanuel

The God who is present

Facial Recognition

God designed us to recognize faces, and He communicates with us through his "face," his attributes and character. He quietly shows his "face" by many ways including meaningful images, metaphorical word pictures, a sudden knowing, a whisper to our heart and mind, or an association with something familiar to us. He knows the "language of our heart!"





Providential Experiences

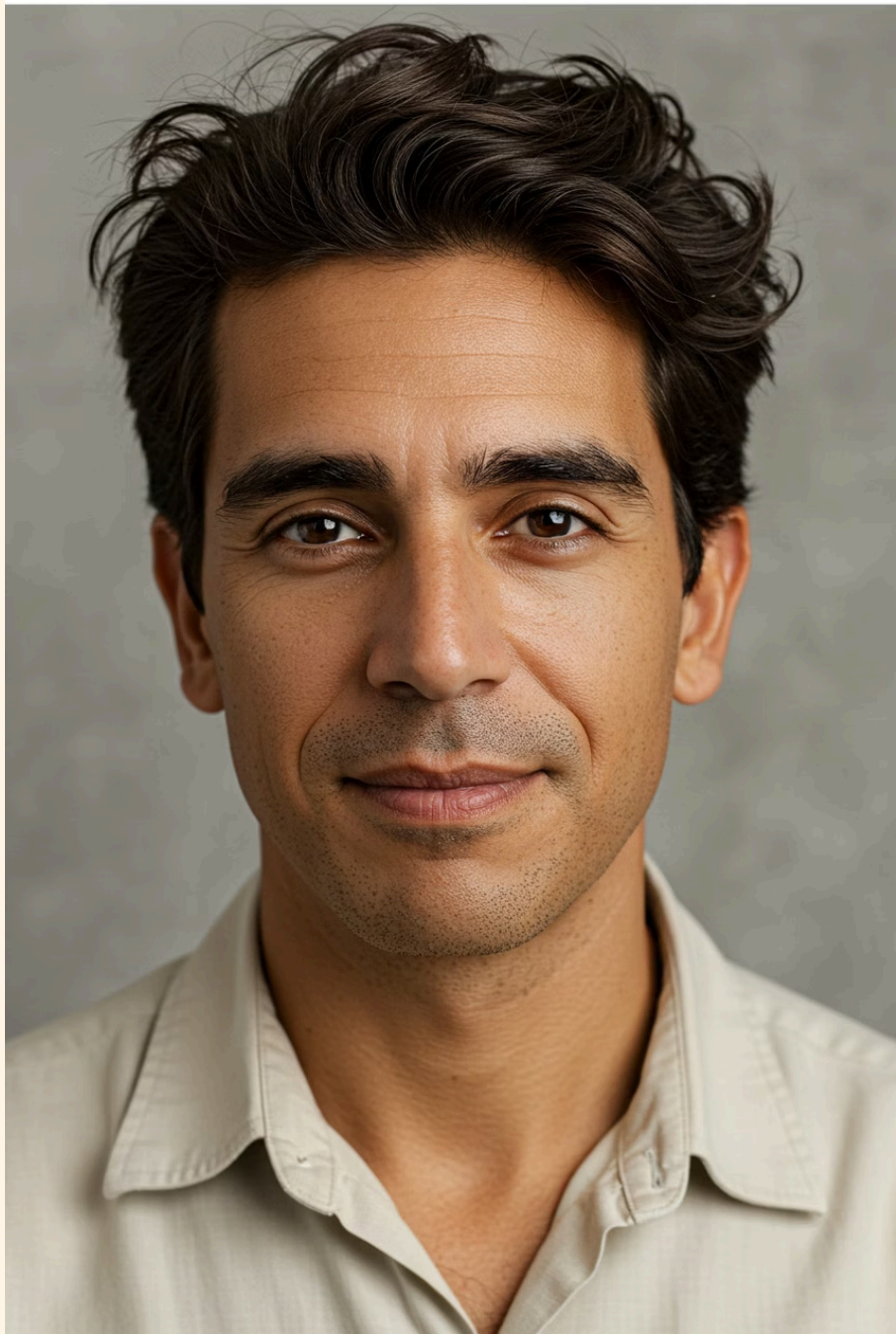
These significant, though sometimes subtle, moments are not accidents but providential experiences orchestrated by God to reveal your true identity.

Deep Messaging and Exercise

God is living with us through these arranged moments, embedding divine messages within them.

Exercise:

After recalling a Golden Memory, ask yourself, "Which face of God was shining upon me in that moment?"





6. Embedding the Gold: Living in Remembrance

To fully integrate your Golden memories, embed them in your life through various practices.

Journaling

Write down your memories, crystallizing the insights about God's presence. Give them short nicknames and keep a list. When you later see the list, you will experience instant reconnections to those moments and all the messaging associated with them.



Visual Reminders

Create tangible reminders that evoke the memory and make it visible.



Share Your Story

Tell your stories to others, this will cause the message of the Golden Memories to stick with you like glue in the deepest regions of your heart and mind.



Golden Memory Worksheet

Create a "Golden Memory Worksheet" with prompts for journaling, reflecting, and identifying God's presence.

Memory	God's Presence	Divine Facet	Message Received
Beach Sunset	Deep Peace	Prince of Peace	I Am With You Always
Birth of Child	RelationalJoy	Creator	I Create With You
Healing Moment	Comfort in Pain	The God Who Heals	I Restore the Broken

7. The Outcomes: Transformation and Courage

The process of recalling, listening, recognizing, and embedding Golden Memories leads to profound outcomes.



Identity Transformation

Seeing Christ in your history transforms you, revealing your true identity as a child of God. We progressively become our "post-resurrection" self!



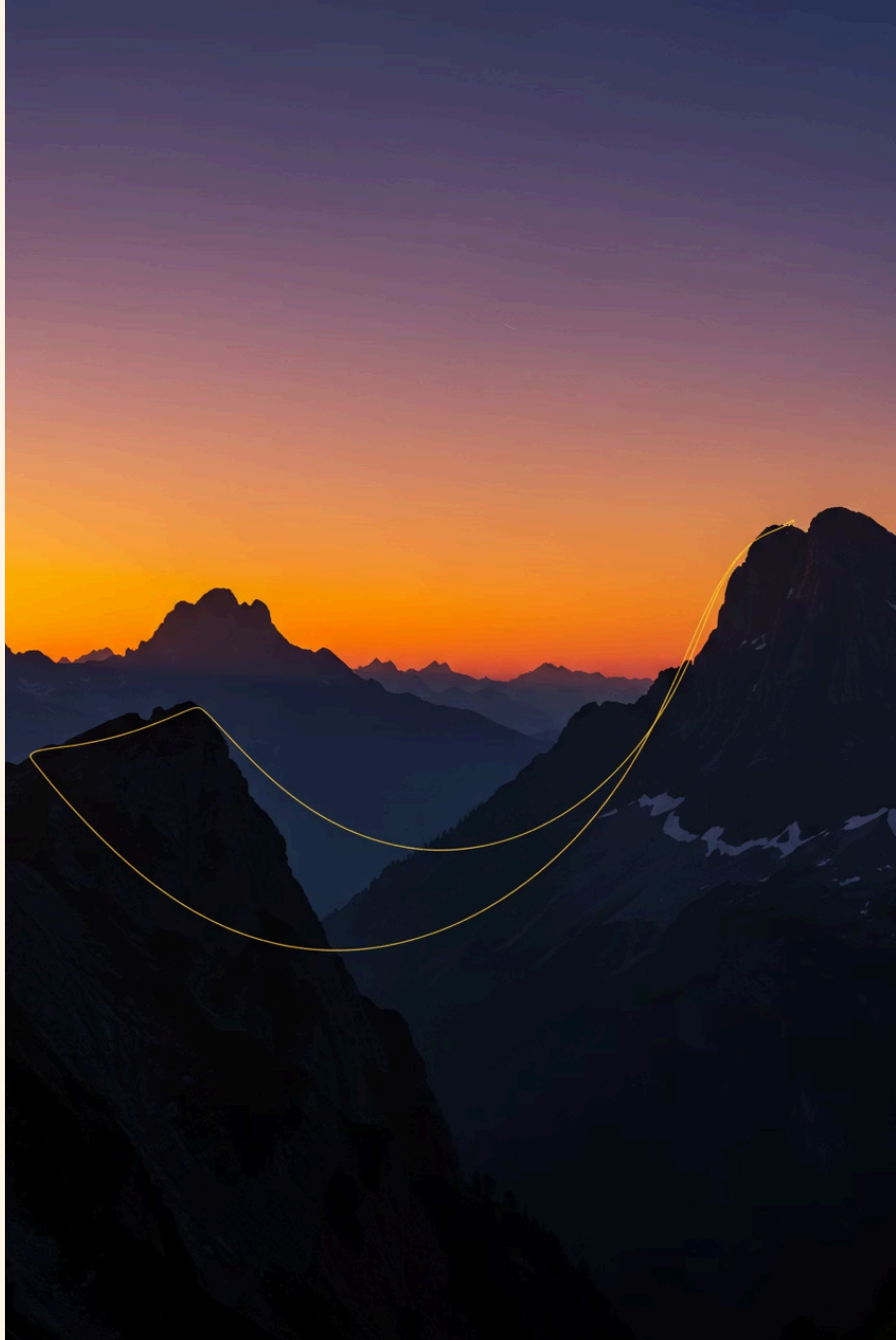
Character Formation

Character is defined as spontaneous Christlikeness, acting in real-time with Christ within you without having to over-think how to be and do and work.



Courage for Today and Connection Through Time

Draw strength from remembering God's faithfulness, finding courage for the present and future. See the consistent thread of God's love throughout your life story.



Helping Others and Good Works

Help others recognize God's presence in their lives, becoming instruments of his love and joy. As Psalm 139 reminds us, our days were written in God's book, and we are living out that drama with him.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." -Ephesians 2:10



Conclusion

Golden Memories are not just relics of the past; they are living testimonies of God's presence and love. By uncovering these treasures, we open ourselves to a deeper understanding of his purpose and a more intimate connection with him. May you embark on this journey of rediscovery and find the gold that God has hidden within your life story.



Working with Golden Memories

Recalling Golden Memories in God's interactive presence also lays the groundwork for resolving past pains and traumas of life. Once we dwell in them for some time, we can ask Jesus to take us back to past moments in our lives when we were upset or wounded. He will guide us to those moments as well in order to tell us his version of these unfinished stories. There is a bigger and better reality for us to know than we have thought, for our Immanuel God was with us in those bad and scary times as well. In our Life Model relational network, this is called *Immanuel Healing*, but this is a topic for another ebook!

Previous Love

By Michael Sullivant

Once upon a moment I recall just a glimpse
With the eyes of my heart widely open
To what my life means in heaven's eyes
I just need to put paper with pen

With my hand in His I am transported back
To a place and a time laced with wonder
When it seemed that I felt more fully alive
Wings of silver had gathered me under

The first time around it happened so fast
I breezed past it without much reflection
The pressures of life all too swiftly mount up
It's so easy to miss the connection

I return to commune with God and myself
The past beauty envelops my heart
We call it shalom because we're not alone
He was present right there from the start

The sights, sounds, and smells come back to life
All pointing to some constant Good
It feels I am touched with my reason to be
I can taste of the fruit that's true food

In that moment of joy the weight didn't land
Of this transforming bid from above
Rehearsing the memory is what it takes
For my heart to hear whispers of love

The Father was drawing me to his dear Son
By his Spirit though yet in the dark
This previous love from God's generous heart
Was in motion to grace-stamp its mark.

Lord, help me attune and notice the scene
Larger than I could ever conceive
You were nearby as the Sculptor of life
Crafting forms I now come to receive

Re-live this good story animated by God
It's no fantasy, he was right there
He loved me first so I could return
Love for him and my neighbor to share

Authorized and revised my identity true
Is embedded like never before
So now I live out of a preconsciousness
With Christ Jesus alive in my core

God's image I bear is being refined
As I trust him for all that I'm worth
The beauty and joy help us bear the pains
Foretastes of new heavens and earth