

# Unraveled

Finding Your Way in the  
Wilderness of Faith, Identity,  
and Change

Mary Herrington

# About Me

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Like the prophetess Deborah of ancient Israel, I stand at the intersection of spiritual wisdom and practical leadership. Just as Deborah sat beneath her palm tree offering guidance to those who sought clarity, I create sacred space for spiritual seekers through my words and presence.

Deborah was both judge and prophetess—a woman who heard divine wisdom and translated it into practical action for her people. Similarly, I bridge the worlds of spiritual insight and tangible results. My journey hasn't been one of perfect knowledge handed down from on high, but rather wisdom earned through walking the wilderness paths myself.

Where Deborah sang her victory song after her experience, I, too, share the spiritual lessons that emerge from living the questions. My choices have led me through trials and transformations that have become the foundation of my teaching. Like Deborah who arose "as a mother in Israel," I offer nurturing guidance that empowers rather than creates dependency.

In "Unraveled," I invite you to journey alongside me as we explore scripture's living wisdom through personal experience and reflective journaling. Just as Deborah's leadership awakened the potential in others, my work calls forth your own inner authority and spiritual discernment.

I don't claim perfect knowledge or flawless spirituality. Rather, like Deborah who served in a time of uncertainty, I offer companionship and courage for fellow travelers navigating their own sacred wilderness seasons.

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Unraveled



# Introduction

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Have you gazed upon the years of your life and marveled: "The Lord has led me through many valleys and mountaintops, yet I stand not where I expected to be"? Perhaps you wonder why the fruits of labor seem more bitter than sweet, or why the paths others tread with ease leave your spirit parched and your heart misaligned.

Who am I to speak of such matters? A vessel of clay, formed by the same Potter who shaped you. One who discovered that the secret to abundance lies not in following another's book or story, but in heeding the still, small voice within. My journey through the wilderness has been unconventional, and therein lies the wisdom I have been called to share.

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*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."*

— Ecclesiastes 1:9

I did not sit at the feet of celebrated scholars in great academies—indeed, I departed from formal learning altogether! Instead, I followed divine promptings to distant shores, never to return to the expected path. Why would I bear the yoke of debt for modest wages when the Lord had already blessed the work of my hands abundantly? This first step taught me to trust in divine wisdom rather than the traditions of men.

My journey resembles Joseph's coat of many colors: servant to those in authority, builder in new territories like those who worked on Solomon's temple, teacher of little ones, steward of prosperity in the marketplace, guide to parents with troubled hearts, provider of bread and sweet offerings, crafting provisions for those with special needs. I have studied the healing properties of plants like Solomon, who "spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall" (1 Kings 4:33), and contemplated the heavens and the divine design of humankind.

My words have reached many, like seeds scattered on fertile ground. I have spoken to assemblies about the troubled spirits of our youth and how to nourish bodies with limited resources. And yet...

Some mornings I still awaken and question: "Who am I, Lord, and what purpose have You set before me?"

Here is what the Spirit has revealed: this questioning is not evidence of being lost in the wilderness—it is proof that your soul is awake. I am like many of you: a child of God in constant communion with the Creator, following manna and pillar of cloud wherever they lead. Each experience, each apparent detour into strange lands, has been another stone in the foundation of what I now know with certainty: true prosperity comes from walking in the way for which you were fearfully and wonderfully made.

I come to you as Deborah sat beneath her palm tree, offering wisdom with humility, honesty, and joy. No pretense like the Pharisees, no falsehood—just truth about discovering the person God created you to be and building your work as a reflection of that divine image.



At the beginning of each chapter, I invite you to create a Sabbath moment in your day. Find a quiet place like Jesus sought in the mountains, with paper and pen (yes, even if it is borrowed from your child's studies). Pour yourself living water or whatever nourishes your body. We shall search our hearts together as David did in the Psalms.

But let us acknowledge the truth—I know your life does not cease for this work. You have households to manage like Martha, preparations for tomorrow like Joseph in Egypt, and evening reflections where thoughts flutter like birds in the temple courts: "Did I complete my duties? Where have I stored the documents of my agreements?"

ALL of this is part of the vessel God shaped you to be. Rather than struggling against it like Jonah fled from Nineveh, we shall embrace it. We shall discover how your unique design is actually your greatest gift for serving in the marketplace.

Are you prepared? Excellent. I am as well. True transformation occurs when we allow ourselves to be still and know. I have left space in the margins like ancient scribes for your reflections. I have also provided room to record your meditations when prompted. I shall meet you in the next chapter to begin mapping your journey to the abundant life for which you were created.

# 01 The True Self - Identity Beyond Earthly Stations

When we first ponder the question "Who am I?" we often begin with our stations in life: job title, family role, elder, friend. But here is the truth that may cause you to tremble: none of these stations truly contain your essence. They are garments you wear – important garments, yes, but not the soul the Lord breathed into you. The ancient scrolls speak of a "role" as "the function assumed by a person in the assembly of believers." Note that word: assumed. Your spirit, your true inner being created in God's image, can never be merely assumed.

If we are not defined by our stations, then who are we in the eyes of the Lord?



The answer comes in stillness, as it did for Elijah who heard not God in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in the gentle whisper. Not in the quick wisdom of Solomon's proverbs alone, but in the deep communion that happens when we dare to be still before our Creator. Who we are emerges from the fullness of our journey through the wilderness, revealing itself through:

- Visions that the Lord has planted in our hearts
- Holy desires that kindle our spirit from within
- Strengths we've developed through trials like Job
- Weaknesses that teach us to rely on God's grace

These belong to us as gifts from the Almighty. No one can take them without our surrender. While others might call me "psalmist" or "coach," those are merely outward descriptions. The deeper truth flows like living water: I am a seeker, a warrior for righteousness, a wanderer in the wilderness, and a sheep who knows the Shepherd's voice. I am one who thirsts for wisdom and works best in solitude or among the faithful few. I am a contemplative soul who yearns for covenant relationships built on righteousness and truth. I will engage in reasoning not for pride's sake, but to challenge injustice and falsehood as the prophets did.

Do you perceive the distinction?

### **The Garments We Don**

We all develop outer garments – expressions that serve our inner calling. These garments can provide us with a sense of purpose and stewardship, but they can become a snare if we forget they are merely coverings. Common garments include:



*"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

— 1 Samuel 16:7

- The Forerunner, like John the Baptist
- The Transformer, like Joseph in Egypt
- The Prophet, like Isaiah
- The Seer, like Daniel
- The Teacher, like Paul
- The Builder, like Nehemiah
- The Wise Elder, like Moses
- The Artisan, like Bezalel
- The Peacemaker, like Aaron

The wisdom lies not in casting aside these garments – they serve the kingdom purpose. The wisdom is in discerning when to wear them and, more importantly, before whom to remove them. Your true self made in God's image is not for every gathering. It is a pearl of great price to be shared selectively with those who have proven faithful with what has been entrusted to them.

## **When Garments Become Bondage**

You know you have become ensnared by a garment when:

- You feel like Saul wearing armor that does not fit
- Your offerings feel like those of Cain, without heart
- You are troubled by a spirit of unworthiness like Gideon
- You find yourself wielding authority without calling like Absalom
- You are more concerned with the praise of men than the glory of God

Let me share a testimony from my early years that taught me the power of standing in truth. I was working on a trading floor when a senior trader asked me to prepare a document of the yearly accounts. For days, I labored in the work – hundreds of Excel spreadsheets were examined, transactions were recorded, narratives were crafted, and every detail was perfected. I did everything, from initial calculations to final inscriptions. The senior trader's only contribution? His name at the heading.



When I delivered the completed document, I made a choice that would disturb the peace: I recorded myself as the author, with a simple "as commissioned by [Trader's Name]" notation. It was honest. It was true. And it caused great disturbance in the company.

The business owner summoned me, his eyes reflecting both astonishment and intrigue. "You," he declared, leaning back upon his seat, "have the courage of no one I have ever seen. Do you understand you have just humbled a leader of this business by claiming this work?"

I met his gaze steadily and replied, "With all reverence, the trader humbled himself by attempting to claim it as his own. I simply recorded the truth, so I acknowledged the work."

The owner looked upon me for a moment before erupting in joyful laughter. "No one," he said, wiping tears from his eyes, "has ever spoken such truth in my presence."

I received greater responsibility. The trader lost his position. But here is the remarkable thing – I felt compassion for him as Joseph felt for his brothers. You see, I was young like David, filled with the Spirit's wisdom, and utterly unbound by the opinions of men. My understanding of who I was did not depend on titles or positions. The trader, however, had built his entire house of identity upon shifting sand. When that foundation cracked, everything crumbled.

I did not remain in that job much longer. The atmosphere turned hostile – not because I had transgressed, but because I had challenged an unspoken covenant where younger workers silently allowed others to claim the work of their hands. I had chosen truth over tradition, authenticity over advancement.

This experience revealed to me something essential about both marketplace and ministry: when you know who you are in the Lord – when your TRUE SELF is anchored in the Rock – you can face any garment others wear without feeling threatened or intimidated. You can choose righteousness, even when it costs you something. For at the end of days, you cannot lose what truly belongs to you: your integrity, your values, your authentic spirit created in God's image. Finding Your **TRUE SELF** (Transformed, Redeemed, Useful to the Lord, Eternal, Steadfast, Faithful).

True authority comes from alignment with who God created you to be. When you have discerned your God-given nature and understand the purpose of your earthly garments, fear diminishes. You realize the garment is what you do in service, not who you are as a child of God. This understanding brings a state of peace that passes understanding – what the Psalmist calls "lying down in green pastures" in business and life.

When God encounters us at the crossroads of who we think we are and who He knows us to be, transformation begins. Consider two men who stand as pillars of faith, yet whose journeys reveal the painful, beautiful process of discovering true identity.

Moses stood barefoot before the burning bush, a man divided by his past. Once a prince of Egypt with access to power and privilege, now a humble shepherd in the wilderness of Midian. Both identities—the royal and the fugitive—had shaped him, yet neither fully defined him.

"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Moses asked. His question wasn't merely about capability but identity. Notice how quickly he raised objections rooted in how he saw himself: "I am slow of speech and tongue." "They will not believe me." These weren't just practical concerns; they were identity statements.

God's response is telling. He didn't address Moses' skills or lack thereof. He didn't promise to make Moses more eloquent or impressive. Instead, He offered the only foundation for true identity: "I will be with you." In essence, God was saying, "Your identity isn't found in what you can or cannot do, but in who you are."

Like many of us, Moses had to release both the grandeur of his past status and the comfort of his current anonymity to embrace his true calling. The shepherd staff in his hand—symbol of his current identity—had to be thrown down before it could become an instrument of divine purpose. His true self emerged not through self-improvement or by reclaiming past glory, but through surrender to God's vision of who he was created to be.

Centuries later, we find Peter on a beach at dawn, the smell of fish and charcoal in the air. Just days before, he had denied even knowing Jesus—three times, just as prophesied. The identity he had built as the bold, unfailing disciple lay shattered at his feet.

Peter had returned to fishing—his old identity, his comfort zone. But Jesus came searching for him, not to condemn but to restore. "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Jesus asked three times, using Peter's birth name. With each affirmation of love, Jesus commissioned him anew: "Feed my lambs... Take care of my sheep... Feed my sheep."

In this sacred moment, Jesus wasn't asking Peter to reclaim his old identity or to overcome his failure through effort. He was inviting Peter into an identity founded on love rather than performance, on calling rather than capability. The man who had failed spectacularly was not defined by that failure in Jesus' eyes.

Like Peter, many of us alternate between pride in our successes and shame in our failures, believing either could define us. We cling to titles, achievements, and roles, or we hide behind our mistakes,

weaknesses, and regrets. Yet our TRUE SELF emerges when we allow God to define us beyond both our glory and our shame.

The wilderness between who we once were and who we're becoming can feel disorienting. Moses spent forty years as a shepherd before the burning bush called him to something more. Peter spent three days in the agony of his denial before the risen Christ restored his purpose. These wilderness seasons aren't detours—they're the very path through which our authentic identity in God is formed.

What parts of your identity—whether impressive or shameful—are you clinging to that might need to be released? What divine invitation awaits beyond your current self-definition?

Remember, transformation doesn't mean becoming someone else entirely; it means becoming more fully who God created you to be all along.

Your Wilderness Journey of Discovery

Take a moment now. Find a quiet place as Jesus sought in the garden. Pour that cup of living water we discussed. It is time to explore who you truly are beneath the roles and expectations of this world.

## **Sacred Reflection Questions:**

### **Your Decision Pillar**

1. How do you discern when something is aligned with God's will for you? Mark the pattern that most resonates:
  - Immediate knowing in the spirit with bodily awareness, like Daniel
  - Clear discernment that reveals itself upon meditation, like Solomon



- Patient waiting that emerges over days, like Moses
- Counsel that brings clarity through godly conversation, like the disciples
- Spirit-led alignment that guides your path, like Philip

## 2. **Your Garment Inventory**

- The Forerunner, like John the Baptist
- The Transformer, like Joseph in Egypt
- The Prophet, like Isaiah
- The Seer, like Daniel
- The Teacher, like Paul
- The Builder, like Nehemiah
- The Wise Elder, like Moses
- The Artisan, like Bezalel
- The Peacemaker, like Aaron

Which three garments from the list above do you wear most often in service?

a.

b.

c.

When do you feel most able to stand unveiled before the Lord?

What fruit of the Spirit manifests when you do?

### 3. Your Authority Source

In seasons of your greatest fruitfulness, from where did your sense of authority flow?

When you've felt most aligned with God's purpose, what was different about how you made decisions?

How would your work in the marketplace change if you led from this emerging gift?

Remember: There are no responses unworthy of consideration. Your initial resonance with any of these questions is a seed planted by the Master Gardener. Nurture it, water it with prayer, and observe how it grows into your unique calling in both ministry and marketplace.

Take time with these questions. Return to them as you grow in faith. Your understanding will deepen as you walk with this.

## Prayer of True Identity

Heavenly Father,

I come before You as Your child, not defined by the roles I play or the labels others give me. Thank You for seeing me as I truly am—known, loved, and purposefully created. When I forget who I am, remind me that I am Yours.

Help me to recognize the masks I wear and to set them aside in Your presence. Give me courage to be authentic, to stand in truth even when it costs me something. May I find my identity not in what I do, but in who I am.

Lord, reveal to me the person You created me to be—transformed, redeemed, useful for Your purposes, eternal in Your sight. Grant me wisdom to discern Your voice from the many that compete for my attention.

May I walk in the freedom of being fully known and fully loved, neither hiding behind accomplishments nor shrinking from my true calling. Let my life reflect the beauty of Your design, not as a perfect vessel, but as one shaped by Your loving hands.

In the name of Christ who makes all things new, Amen.

# Chapter Two: Provision - Beyond Earthly Treasures

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

— Matthew 6:33

Let us speak of provision – and no, I will not claim that you can summon abundance merely through pleasant thoughts, as the false prophets suggest. That is not the way of the kingdom. What I will share is something of greater value: how to understand your genuine relationship with the Lord's provision, especially wealth, and how that understanding can transform both your work and walk with God.

## **Breaking the Ancestral Yoke**

Allow me to share my testimony. I come from a lineage with complex inheritance, like the northern tribes who labored under taskmasters, where obedience was the only path to survival, and like the mixed multitude who left Egypt, where afflictions of the mind and spirit were buried beneath the burden of daily bread.

