

# THE ABUNDANT PATH

LEARNING TO WALK IN CONTENTMENT, FULFILLMENT AND HOPE

*Field Guide*



GENUGROW.COM



Welcome to *The Abundant Path* series.

You're here because you long for deeper spiritual growth. Or, you're here because you were nagged into showing up (I'm so sorry). Either way, welcome to the journey.

You rarely recognize important moments or transformational seasons when you're living them. I didn't realize that in the Summer of 2014, the Lord was luring me into a journey that would shape my life in meaningful ways. The thoughts I will share with you over the coming weeks are from my lived experience.

This journey I've been on, which I'm calling *The Abundant Path*, has helped me overcome struggles with anxiety, insecurity and despair. It's helped me walk in contentment, fulfillment and hope. It's given me a framework to identify and face challenges in my relationships with others and God. And, it's given me a deeper love and appreciation for Jesus, the Spirit and the Father.

My hope for you:

- You will identify and overcome core areas of struggle
- You will deepen your love for Jesus
- You will engage in biblical exercises that expand your heart for God
- You will understand the Scripture and watch it come to life
- You will find this series to be real and practical
- You will deepen friendships with others on the journey

This field guide is designed to provide you with key thoughts along *The Abundant Path*. You'll notice some icons that identify the type of thought you're encountering:



*Scripture Thought:* God's Word is our guide. You might consider rereading the Scripture thoughts throughout the week. Write or print them out and put them on a mirror or in your phone for when you'd otherwise check social media.



*Discussion Question:* A prompt for dialogue in your group and for consideration after you leave.



*Abundant Thought:* Shift your mindset to the mindset Jesus possessed.

It's going to be a good experience. Welcome, and I'm so glad you're here.

Gratefully,

Tommy Brown  
Pastor for Spiritual and Community Formation

## Part Two: Embracing Abba's Voice



How did last week's session play out in your life this week?

Matthew 3:1–15 (ESV): In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,<sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”<sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”<sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.<sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him,<sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”<sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.<sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.<sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.<sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”<sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.<sup>16</sup> And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

*Insight:* That phrase *fulfill all righteousness* is an interesting one. Jesus is not baptized for his own sin, but to wrap up in himself the people of Israel and to fulfill to the utmost extent everything that was expected of them.



*This is my son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased* is how the last phrase in the passage is often translated.

*Background:* Jesus and John would have recognized these words as echoes from the Old Testament:

- LXX Jeremiah 38:20: *Ephraim is a beloved son; a child pleasing to me.*
- Isaiah 42:1: *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him...*

Jesus is identified as the faithful servant of the Lord, upon whom is the Spirit of God, and this servant is the true Son of the God, which is how Israel is referenced in the Old Testament. Jesus is the new Moses. Jesus is the true Israel.



Talk about good words that someone said about you as a child. Any impact?

Realize two things: (1) The good words of God come before the temptations and (2) The good words of God come before Jesus's ministry.

(1) The good words of God come before the temptations:

You can lay the good words at the baptism right on top of the temptations.

*Recap:* The three temptations are to (1) strive, (2) perform and (3) gain power/control, which hit at humankind's three core needs: (1) security, (2) approval and (3) control.

T1: Since you are the Son of God, turn these stones to bread: hits at our need for security. When we understand that we are children of God, we are confident that God - like any loving parent - will provide.

T2: Since you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the Temple: hits at our need for approval. When we understand that God is pleased with us, we need not perform.

T3: Bow down and worship and I'll give you all these kingdoms: hits at our need for control. When we understand that we are God's beloved, we don't have to be in control - we receive love from Love itself. Love doesn't control.



The greatest temptation we will ever face is to believe that we are not who God says we are.

(2) The good words of God come before Jesus's temptation.

Before Jesus begins his ministry, calls disciples, casts out demons, heals the sick, Jesus is identified as the Son of God, the Beloved, with whom God is pleased.



"The empire knows you as a number but Jesus knows you by your name" (Jason Upton).



Brian Zahnd says, "God is like Jesus. God has always been like Jesus. There has never been a time when God was not like Jesus. We haven't always known this, but now we do."

When you've heard the good words of Abba, you never need to look to anyone or anything else to define who you are.