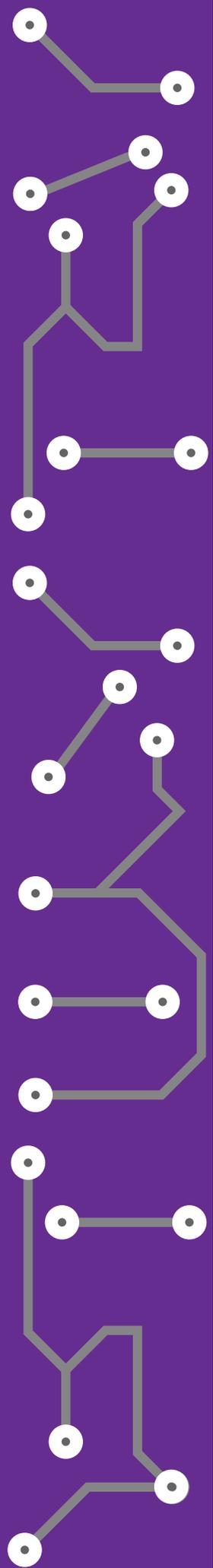
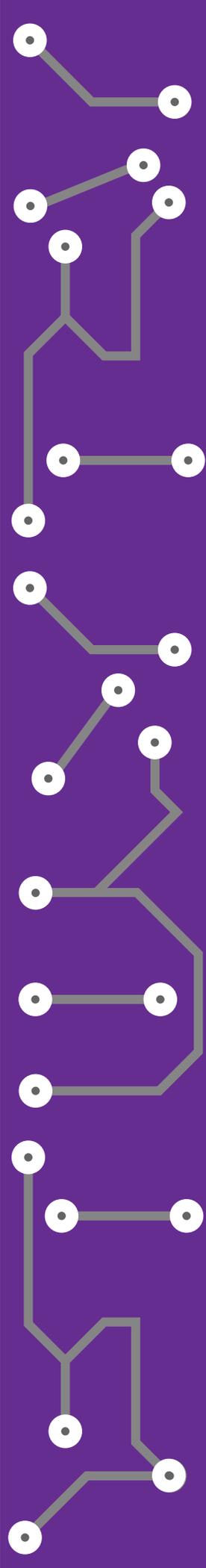


# **THINK**, Volume 4 Relationships & Sexuality

Jake Kircher



Dedicated to my amazing wife.



# THINK, Volume 4

## Relationships & Sexuality

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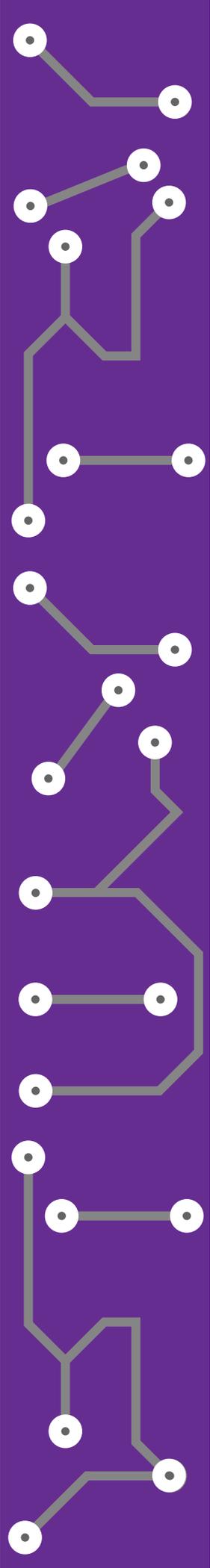
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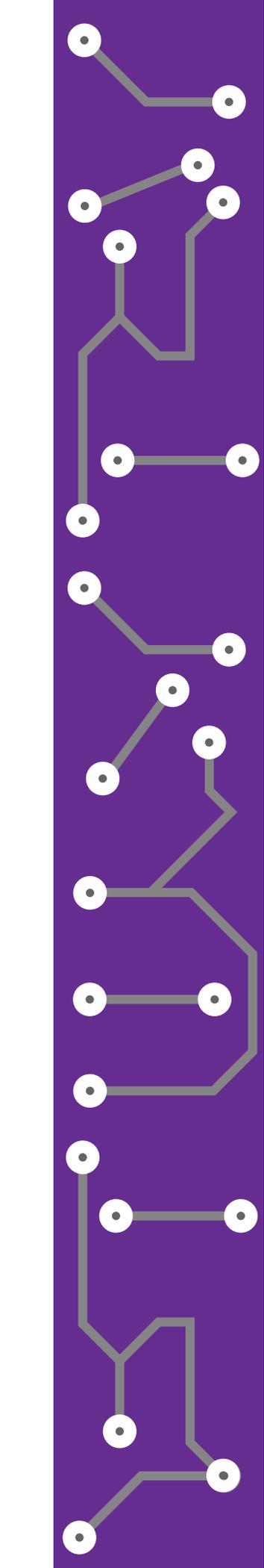
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## How to Use the **THINK** Series

The studies within the THINK series are different from many Bible study resources in that they aren't intended to be "taught." Instead, **the role of the youth worker, small group leader, or volunteer is that of a facilitator.** Believe me, it's hard to stay in that role—especially for those who are gifted teachers. I still struggle with doing this myself!

To help with this, there are a number of things I'd recommend that I've begun practicing in my own ministry:

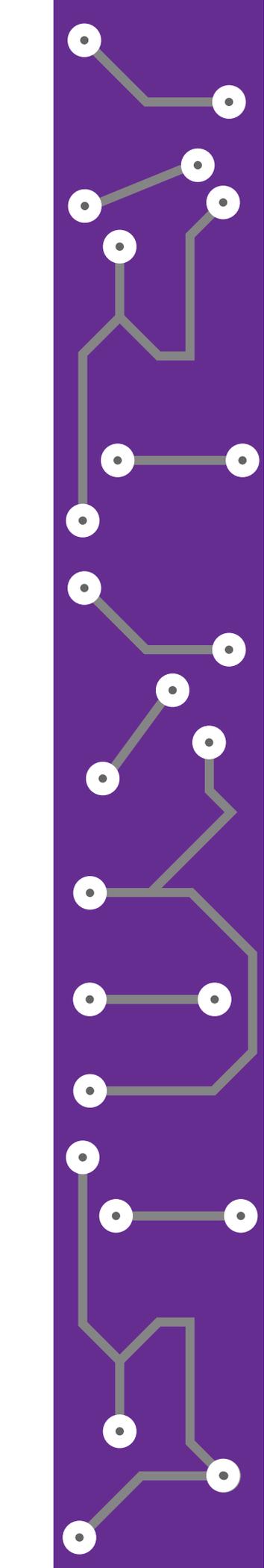
**First, learn how to be a *part of the conversation with your youth.*** Ask a lot of questions. Use the materials provided as prompts and allow teenagers to discuss and talk as much as possible. When a teen asks a good question, resist the urge to dive in and answer it. Instead, use the question to help the whole group think deeper by pulling a Jesus and turning the question back to the group. Say something like: "Great question! What does everyone else think?"

By facilitating and being a part of the group—not just teaching the group—you will not only help teenagers feel important and valuable, but you'll also be surprised about what you learn about God, faith, and the Bible. Honestly, every time I use this format rather than just teaching, I have my list of things that I want to make sure get put out there for the youth to consider. Yet, I rarely have to share those things myself because my teens bring up every point in a more natural way during the group discussion.

Now, that being said, this *does not mean* there's never a time to briefly (key word) teach or explain something to your group as part of the discussion. There will be times when, as the person who's taken the time to study the topic beforehand, you will need to explain the background of a passage you're discussing. In fact, I've provided thoughts like these throughout the curriculum (marked **NOTE**) for certain questions that are more likely to need further explanation.

The important thing to understand is that you should *always* do your best to give the youth a chance to answer first. (Always.) *Then* you can jump in and explain only when necessary. Honestly, you may be surprised how much your teens know about the historical context of the Bible. Even when they don't know, take the time to help teens figure out how to find the answers. So many great Bible tools are available for free online, and it's important that we teach teenagers how to study the Bible. Don't worry—I've helped you with this as well. At points throughout the curriculum, there are places where I encourage you to get teens to go online to different Bible resource websites such as *BlueLetterBible.com*, *BibleGateway.com*, and others.

There will be times when you ask a question and you're met with silence. When that happens, it's okay to jump in and provide some of your own thoughts. I highly recommend sharing a couple answers you've heard in response to that question—just to get teens thinking—and then turn it back to the youth and ask what they think. Another great way to handle a silent room is to prep volunteers beforehand and let one of them jump in and respond. Then you can ask the group if they agree or disagree with that response and why.



**Second, make sure multiple people get the opportunity to share.** As you facilitate conversations, you'll most likely encounter certain people who tend to dominate the dialogue. (A person or two probably came to mind as you read that last sentence.) To avoid this scenario, an easy solution is to pose questions directly to those people in the group who haven't shared yet. However, it's important to let everyone know up front that they don't *have* to share and that "I don't know" is a perfectly valid answer. Many times when you get a noncommittal response like that, there's a good chance the person is simply processing the information being shared.

**Third, *THINK* is all about challenging the typical answers.** When you're talking about a subject, don't just present your church's "correct" theological answer. Instead, do your best to stay neutral in how you present the information. When someone shares an opinion, your best tool is going to be the question "Why?" Learn to play the devil's advocate and gently challenge them to defend what they're sharing. Ask them to explain their answers and back up their statements. By doing this, you'll help teenagers really think about what they're saying and what they believe.

**Fourth, the contents of *THINK* are purposefully structured to be used as overall lessons, not single sessions.** The reason for this is that sometimes you'll need more than a week to fully explore a conversation. Honestly, for some topics you could spend your entire youth group meeting talking through just the introduction options! The goal is not to complete the materials in any particular amount of time. Allow your group to set the pace and determine whether a topic takes one week or multiple weeks to cover.

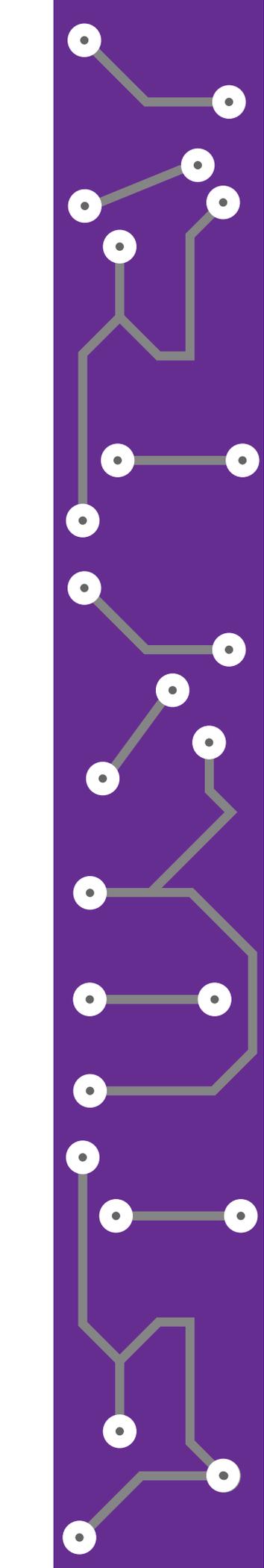
You can decide in which order you want to have the six conversations as well. You can use a particular lesson as a standalone conversation and then come back to the other ones another time, or you can do a series and go through the entire book, picking and choosing which order to do them in.

**Fifth, avoid forcing a linear discussion based on the materials provided. Instead, allow your group to naturally direct the flow of the conversation.** If you're discussing a Scripture passage and a teenager shares some thoughts that jump to a point made later in the materials, go with the flow and circle back later. Sometimes I don't have to be the one who circles back, as the youth will often do it on their own.

**Sixth, *THINK* discussions are designed to leave people hanging.** This will probably be the most difficult thing you have to do while using this curriculum. But when the conversation is nearing an end, resist the urge to reveal which answer is the "right" one. Instead, challenge everyone to keep wrestling with the issue. Utilize the Going Deeper handouts that include suggested Bible readings, books, articles, or websites that will help them continue processing the topic at home. Teach parents to carry on the dialogue after youth group and follow up with their teens to continue the conversation.

Please don't hear what I'm *not* saying. I'm *not* saying you should never take a theological stand from your perspective or never share your opinion. Again, this curriculum is designed to help adolescents think through their own beliefs, and sometimes one of the best ways to do that is by allowing them to hear different opinions—including yours.

However, I've found it's better not to share my perspective until someone specifically asks for it. Or I may wait to do it until I'm talking with a teenager one-on-one. The reason I do



that is because too often when a pastor or ministry leader shares his or her opinion, the conversation and thinking in the group tends to stop. Sometimes it's because of *how* we share it, but sometimes it's just because the teenagers assume the answer has been found and there's no more work to do.

When sharing our opinion isn't our primary mode of teaching, what we think about a given topic still tends to flow naturally into the conversation. This gives space for young people to process—as well as question—the perspective we're offering.

As far as a format for *THINK*, these materials could be used in almost any setting. You can use many of these prompts during one-on-one meetings with teens, but the materials will also work great in small groups. You can even use this curriculum in larger group settings, such as a church service, by simply allowing for interaction from the audience. (Check out this example of how it can be done: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UTXdlGxlko](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UTXdlGxlko).) Or you can have the youth break off into smaller groups or just turn to the person sitting next to them and discuss something for a few minutes.

You'll find that the materials in each lesson are chock-full of ideas, prompts, and possibilities. Some of them will work well with your group, and some won't. That's okay. Again, the goal is simply to foster great conversation. So use what works for your group dynamics or setting, and ignore what doesn't.

Because it's ultimately the job of the Holy Spirit to bring about change, clarity, and conviction, I highly recommend putting together a prayer team of three to five people to lift up your group each week. This is a great way to get more people in your church, who may not have the time or desire to attend meetings and work hands-on with teens, involved with your ministry.

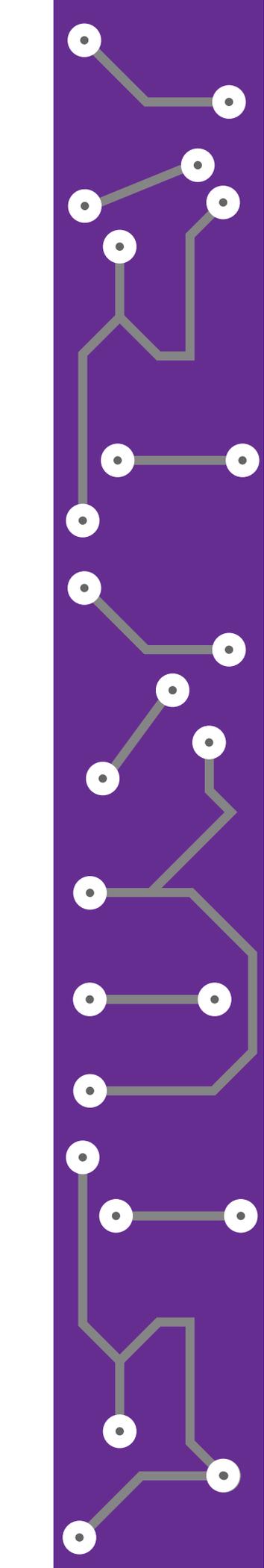
Once you have a team in place, simply send out an email each week with a brief recap of what happened the previous week, a description of the topic you'll be discussing in the coming week, and some specific prayer requests concerning your group's dynamics or specific teenagers.

Lastly, before you dive into discussions with your group, it will be very important that you establish some ground rules prior to your conversation—*especially* for the more controversial topics. The best way to do this is to allow your group to collectively come up with the rules before you begin the series. (Honestly, it would be a little weird if you started working your way through a curriculum that's all about fostering interaction and discussion by dictating the rules to the group.)

However, here are some rules that I suggest your group consider when making up their list:

- 1. Listen first, speak second.** (See James 1:19.) Part of thinking critically is learning how to really listen to other people and process what they're saying, rather than just waiting to jump in with your own opinion.

- 2. Be tolerant and respectful of each other's views.** This in no way means that members of the group have to act or talk like everyone's opinions are *right*. The word *tolerance* has been badly misused in our culture today, coming to mean that every opinion needs to be



affirmed as being “right for you,” even though viewpoints may contradict one another. When I was in college, I had the opportunity to spend a couple days with John Perkins. He’s known for his amazing work with racial reconciliation in the South, and he worked with Martin Luther King Jr. During one of our conversations, he bluntly shared that true tolerance is when, “You believe what you believe; I’ll believe what I believe; and we won’t kill one another.” That has stuck with me. Teenagers should challenge and push one another’s viewpoints, expressing when they disagree and think someone else is wrong. However, there’s a respectful and loving way to do this. We don’t need to model the poor response of some Christians who resort to name-calling, Bible-bashing, and writing someone off solely because they have different opinions.

**3. Emotions are okay but keep them in check.** With a few of the topics being covered, discussions could get heated. Keep in mind that emotions are good and God created them for a reason. On the one hand, you should challenge your group to be sensitive when someone gets emotional. There’s a *reason* why our emotions come out of us. Oftentimes, yet probably unknown by the others in the room, a teen may be wrestling with a personal situation that’s connected to a particular topic. So tread lightly and with love.

On the other hand, sometimes a person’s emotions can hit a point where they aren’t helpful to a conversation. If a teenager gets too emotional, give him or her permission to step out of the room for a bit or leave the gathering altogether. Sometimes thinking critically involves some necessary alone time in order to process what’s going on beneath the surface. When a young person does need to leave, make sure a trusted peer (I highly encourage letting the youth minister to one another whenever possible) or a trusted adult, like you, reaches out to that teenager later on in the week to follow up. Perhaps it would be helpful to meet one-on-one to talk things through.

**4. Don’t gossip about what’s shared during youth group.** Sometimes in the midst of these discussions, teens will share why they believe certain things, and personal experiences or situations will also be shared. It’s important to create an environment where the youth know they can safely share without fear of a certain story or information winding its way around school the next day. This means everyone must agree to show respect when others are being vulnerable.

I’m sure your group can come up with many more ground rules besides these four!

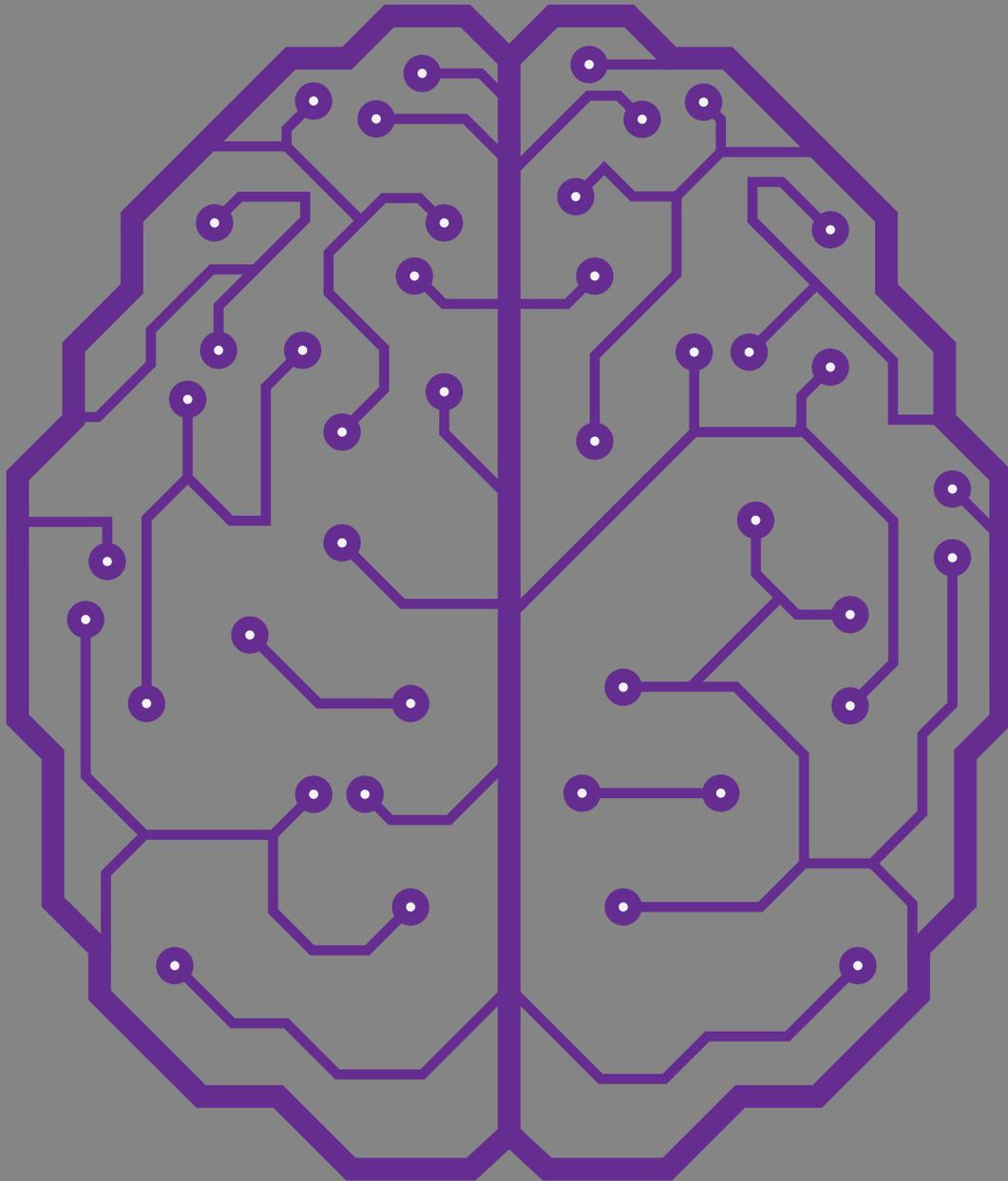
However, on top of coming up with some rules, it’s also helpful to come up with the consequences if a particular rule isn’t followed. This isn’t to make the process legalistic, but simply to ensure the health of group discussions and protect personal feelings. As a good starting point for your broken-rule protocol, I recommend using the format for conflict resolution that Jesus lays out in Matthew 18:15-17.

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

All right, so now with all of that preliminary stuff out of the way, let’s dive in...

# Lesson 1

## THINK IV: What Does It Mean to Love Myself?



## Lesson 1

**THINK:** What Does It Mean to Love Myself?

When it comes to having healthy relationships in our lives, there is a core foundation that I think lots of people miss pretty easily. We talk a lot about serving, self-sacrificing, giving, and putting other people's needs above our own. Yet, when you look at what Jesus says when he talks about The Greatest Commandment, there is a crucial word at the end that many people overlook: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as *yourself*" (Matthew 22:37-39, emphasis added).

Put another way, Les and Leslie Parrott say the following in their book *Real Relationships*, "If you try to find intimacy with another person before achieving a sense of identity on your own, all your relationships become an attempt to complete yourself."

Really, if you look closely, you'll see this all over your youth ministry. How many of your group's relationships and interactions are actually rooted in their own self-worth or process of self-discovery? How many of your teens start dating someone as an attempt to make themselves feel good? Or popular?

Yes, putting someone else's needs above our own is important to healthy relationships, but the reality is when we don't have good self-worth and love ourselves, it's actually impossible to serve and give to others. Every action will actually have its root in selfishly wanting something for ourselves. This lesson sets a foundation for entering into relationships by talking about how we love ourselves first. Specifically, we'll discuss finding self-worth and what it means to take care of ourselves.

**NOTE:** This lesson overlaps with some of *THINK Volume 3: Who Am I?* If you want to explore the topic of self-worth much deeper, you can use that volume in place of Lesson 1 of this series and then proceed to Lesson 2.

## Before Your Meeting

### Study Materials

Here's a list of great resources and Scripture passages for you to familiarize yourself with as you prepare to facilitate your group's conversation. It will be important for you to purposefully explore some materials that hold a different viewpoint than yours.

### Scripture Passages

Genesis 1:26-27

Genesis 2:15-24

Psalms 139:13-18

Jeremiah 1:5

Matthew 22:37-39

Luke 5:16

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 2:1-10

### Helpful Websites

[www.positivelypresent.com/2010/02/love-yourself.html](http://www.positivelypresent.com/2010/02/love-yourself.html)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/features/22198-starving-yourself-for-love](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/features/22198-starving-yourself-for-love)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/stop-defining-yourself-what-you-don%E2%80%99t](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/stop-defining-yourself-what-you-don%E2%80%99t)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/stop-beating-yourself](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/stop-beating-yourself)

[www.robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-7-changing-the-tapes](http://www.robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-7-changing-the-tapes)

<http://ubdavid.org/advanced/practical/practical-christian5.html>

### Book

If you're going to read one book, I recommend you read this one:

*The Search for Significance* by Robert S. McGee (Thomas Nelson, 2003)

### Other Great Options

*Boundaries* by Henry Cloud (Zondervan, [1992] 2002)

*The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brené Brown (Hazelden, 2010)

*I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't)* by Brené Brown (Avery, 2007)

*In the Eyes of Your Creator* by David L. Fontes (Ancient Faith, 2015)

## Promoting Your Meeting

### Text/Twitter Prompts

Use these to help promote the upcoming conversation with your youth group.

- What's the secret to having great relationships? See you tonight as we start to unpack this deep question together.
- What would it mean and look like to fully love yourself? Looking forward to seeing you at group to discuss this important topic!
- What does it look like to serve others AND take care of yourself at the same time? Is that possible?
- What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Do some thinking before you come to group and be ready to share your thoughts.

### Email to Parents

Here's a sample email you can rework to suit your own group, and then use it to let parents know about your upcoming conversation:

*Dear Parents,*

*We're excited to start a brand new series on relationships and sexuality, no doubt a series that our teenagers put quite a bit of thought into. As we start this first week, we want to look at a core foundation that we think lots of people miss pretty easily. We talk a lot about serving, self-sacrificing, giving, and putting other people's needs above our own when it comes to relationships. Yet, when you look at what Jesus says when he talks about The Greatest Commandment, there is a crucial word at the end that many people overlook: " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as **yourself**' " (Matthew 22:37-39, emphasis added).*

*Put another way, Les and Leslie Parrott say the following in their book Real Relationships, "If you try to find intimacy with another person before achieving a sense of identity on your own, all your relationships become an attempt to complete yourself."*

*Yes, putting someone else's needs above our own is important to healthy relationships, but the reality is when we don't have good self-worth and love ourselves, it's actually impossible to serve and give to others. Whether we are aware of it or not, every action will actually have its root in selfishly wanting something for ourselves. This lesson sets a foundation for entering into relationships by talking about how we love ourselves first.*

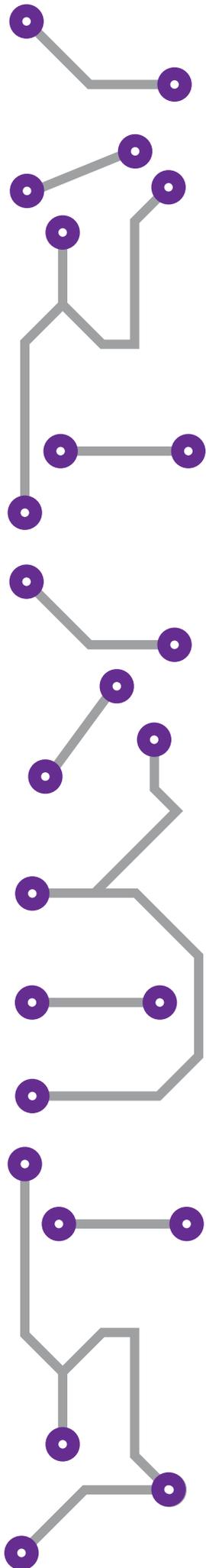
*As always, we want our discussion to be complementary to any conversation you've had or will have with your children. I've found these youth group discussions can really open up a door for more family dialogue. That's why we challenge you to ask questions about what we discussed. Here are some suggestions:*

- Do you feel like you love yourself? Why or why not?
- What would change about yourself if you could? Why?

- Are there things you could do to love yourself more? How can I help you do that?

*We understand it may be difficult for you to hear some of the things your child may share, especially if they open up about not having a very good self-worth. But we challenge you to be “slow to speak and quick to listen” (James 1:19) as your child responds to your questions.*

*Please feel free to email or call me if you'd like to talk before our group meeting.*



## Starting Your Meeting

### Setting the Tone

Before you dive into the conversation, I recommend starting with something like the following:

*We're excited to start a brand new series as we'll spend the next 6 weeks or so on the topics of relationships and sexuality. As we start this first week, we want to look at a core foundation that we think lots of people tend to overlook. We talk a lot about serving, self-sacrificing, giving, and putting other people's needs above our own when it comes to relationships. But there is another factor that isn't discussed as much as it should be that we are going to dive in to tonight.*

After you set the tone, take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to be present in your conversation, for peace and love to be at the forefront of the discussion, and for God to lead everyone in the room to his truth and no one else's.

**REMEMBER:** As you dive into the content, **your job is to facilitate**, not teach the whole time. Do your best to ask a lot of questions and use some of the tips suggested in the Introduction. Also, please remember it's okay to jump around and not follow the curriculum linearly. Take the time to be extra sensitive and allow conversation to develop. If you need to carry the discussion over more than one week, that's totally okay.

### Conversation Starters

Use one of following suggestions to help start the conversation. If any of the links don't work, follow the Google Search prompts, where available, to try to find the suggested materials. Instructions for discussion follow each option.

As you ask discussion questions, you can either have teens respond to the whole group, break your group into smaller groups to discuss, or have them pair up. (A great option that helps promote listening skills is to pair up your group, let them share their thoughts one-on-one, and then have them report back to the group what their partner said—not what they personally said.)

**NOTE:** If you go with the pairs option, it can really help build listening skills. It's important not to warn the group ahead of time that that's how they'll be asked to report what was shared. Part of the impact is the "Oh shoot, I didn't really listen" realization. Obviously, you'll also want to make sure that partners give permission for their responses to be shared with the whole group.

### Video Option

Show this video to your group and then use any of the questions below to get the conversation started.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlcx\\_q8u\\_YI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlcx_q8u_YI)

Google Video Search: How the Blind See Beauty (BuzzFeedYellow)

### Discussion Questions

1. Do you think you tend to look at beauty and self-worth as something that is external or internal? Why?
2. Do you look at others differently than how you look at yourself? Why or why not?
3. One of the men suggests “a person is beautiful because they are true to themselves.” What do you think he means by that? And do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. How can two people look at the same person and one declares the person beautiful and the other says they aren't?

### Embarrassing Moment Option

Ask your group to share some of their most embarrassing moments.

### Discussion Questions

1. What makes a moment embarrassing to begin with?
2. Over time, do you feel like a moment that was embarrassing at the time stays embarrassing every time you tell the story or does another feeling take over? Why or why not?
3. Is it possible to never be embarrassed by anything? If so, what makes that possible? If not, why not?
4. Does self-worth and self-confidence impact whether a moment is embarrassing or not? Why?

### Price Tag Option

**NOTE:** If you want a hands-on aspect to use for this conversation starter, pick up a pack of price tags like these and hand them out to your group: [www.amazon.com/Avery-Marking-Strung-1-093-Inches-12204/dp/B001E682C2](http://www.amazon.com/Avery-Marking-Strung-1-093-Inches-12204/dp/B001E682C2)

Ask your group to think about the following question for a few minutes:

*Pretend for a moment that you are an item for sale in a store. What would your price tag read?*

### Discussion Questions

1. How much would you be worth and why?
2. What are things that could happen in your life that would lower or raise your price?
3. Beyond your price, what do you think your market value would be? In other words, would you fly off the shelf at the price you set or do you think you would sit on the shelf for a while? Why?
4. How much do you think your self-worth impacts your relationships? Why?

## Diving In

Now that your conversation is going, you're ready to dive into some specific issues about what it means to love yourself.

Say something like:

*At one point, some religious leaders ask Jesus what the greatest commandment is. Honestly, they are trying to trick him. There were so many rules and dos and don'ts in Jewish customs, and they are trying to get Jesus to pick one, which would just offend others and create a snowball effect of outrage. But Jesus rises above all that and answer brilliantly in Matthew 22:37-29: " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as...'" (Matthew 22:37-39, emphasis added).*

Leave that last part hanging and give your group a chance to finish the sentence.

*Many people look at these verses, and talk a lot about "love God, love others." But I think the "as yourself" is equally important. What do you think it means to "love your neighbor as yourself"?*

### Questions to Take This Deeper

1. Jesus could have finished that sentence in a number of ways:
  - Love your neighbor. Period.
  - Love your neighbor as you love God.
  - Love your neighbor better than yourself.

But he doesn't. He says to "love your neighbor as **yourself**." Why do you think Jesus makes this choice?

2. What do you think loving yourself has to do with loving others? Why?
3. Can you think of examples of what happens in relationships when one person involved has a very low self-worth?

### Where Do We Find Self-Worth?

Say something like:

*To begin to understand where we can find self-worth, let's go right to the beginning and look at Genesis 2:15-24 together.*

Have your teens look up the passage in their Bibles and ask for a volunteer to read it out loud.

*This passage is used a lot at weddings to talk about why people get married. We'll explore that element of these verses in a few weeks, but I actually think there is something deeper going on in this passage and what God does. Let's dig into it a bit...*

First, you'll want your group to notice who it is, as the man is placed in the Garden, who

acknowledges that is not good for him to be alone.

### Questions to Take This Deeper

1. Why is it significant that God acknowledges this and not man?
2. What does that say about how man felt in the Garden initially?

Second, you'll want your group to take notice of what's going on when it's said.

### Questions to Take This Deeper

1. Who is with the man?
2. Why is that significant?
3. What does that say about the man's supposed contentment and the fact that he didn't even realize his need for other people?

### What Does God Say About Our Worth?

Say something like:

*God created us to need relationships, however that need isn't to complete ourselves or define our worth. God wants us to find that in him, so let's take a look at some verses that help us understand what God thinks about each of us.*

Have your group split up into small groups. You'll want at least four—one each to look at the following verses—but if you have a large group, you can have multiple groups discuss the same verses. Assign one of the following verses to each group and ask them to discuss what each says about loving ourselves:

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Psalm 139:13-18
- Jeremiah 1:5
- Ephesians 2:8-10

After 5 minutes or so, ask each group to share some of their observations about the verses they looked at.

### Questions to Take This Deeper

1. How do God's words make you feel about yourself? Do you believe you are a "masterpiece" in God's eyes? Why or why not?
2. How does understanding these truths about how God see us impact our relationships?
3. Les and Leslie Parrott say the following in their book *Real Relationships*, "If you try to find intimacy with another person before achieving a sense of identity on your own, all your relationships become an attempt to complete yourself." Do you agree with that quote? Why or why not?

4. How can we see ourselves the way God sees us on a regular basis?
5. Have your group look up Romans 12:1-2. What does it mean to allow God to “change the way we think”?

### Taking Care of Ourselves

Say something like:

*Part of loving ourselves is actually making it a priority to take care of ourselves. Sometimes Christians seem to downplay this as we emphasize giving and serving others. That is obviously important, however the problem with always giving and doing for others is that if we're not careful we'll end up burning out.*

You can illustrate the above using this object lesson: Fill a pitcher with water and then grab a stack of paper cups. Put a sticker on the pitcher that says “God.” Then on one of the paper cups, write “me” and on 10 or so cups write “others.” Fill your “me” cup up with water and then place the 10 “other” cups in a line. Explain:

*When we give to others, we pour out some of our energy and love that we have stored up. [As you say that, slowly pour a little bit of the water from the “me” cup into a couple of the “other” cups. Keep filling as you explain.] As you give, eventually you will need to fill yourself back up, and the only way to do that is to go back to the source: God. Until you care for yourself and fill yourself back up, you won't be any good to anyone else. [When you're “me” cup is empty, make a show of trying to pour into an “other” cup and then go back to the “God” pitcher, fill your “me” cup back up, and then continue to fill the “other” cups.]*

*This was actually something that Jesus himself exemplified as Luke 5:16 tells us that, “Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness.”*

*So, what does it look like to love ourselves by taking care of ourselves?*

Have your group brainstorm a number of ways that we can take care of ourselves. This can include, but is not limited to, things like:

- Regular time with God
- Journaling
- Having healthy boundaries
- Saying no sometimes
- Exercising
- Eating Healthy
- Getting enough sleep

**Questions to Take This Deeper**

1. Does taking care of yourself look the same for everyone? Why or why not?
2. How do you know if you are taking care of yourself or not?
3. How do you figure out what things you need to do to take care of yourself?
4. Where is the line between taking care of yourself and being selfish?
5. What things do you do right now to take care of yourself?
6. What things should you be doing to better take care of yourself?

## Closing Out Your Meeting

Just as it was important to set a good tone as you started the dialogue, it's equally important to set a good tone as your meeting comes to a close. As a reminder, your goal here should not be to jump in and tell your group the "correct" answer, but encourage teens to continue wrestling with Scripture and questioning Jesus about his opinion on this issue.

I've provided a Going Deeper handout you can give to your youth as they leave. It's purposefully in a Word document format so you can add or subtract suggested resources—ending up with whatever is most applicable and challenging for your specific group. Again, your goal with these is to push, question, and stretch your teens' viewpoints; so don't just play it safe.

Beyond the handout, here are a couple of closing activities you can use to bring the current conversation to an end. To transition into the closing time, you could say something like this:

*I hope you all have gotten a lot out of our discussion on loving yourselves. Again, it can seem counter-intuitive, but it really is crucial to all the other relationships in our lives. As you leave, I have a handout I'd like to give you that lists some websites, a video, a podcast, and a book suggestion to help you continue the process. If any of you would like to talk with me, or any of the other adult leaders, about things going on in your life, please just ask! We'd love to take you out for coffee or a slice of pizza and talk more with you and help you process. In closing, I'd like to...*

### Video Option (5 minutes)

*...I'd like to watch a music video and then close in prayer.*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldiEOAtTKU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldiEOAtTKU)

Google Video Search: "Through My Father's Eyes" (Official Music Video) – Christian Singer, Holly Starr

After the video, close in prayer, asking that God would help your group see themselves through God's eyes.

### Looking at the Good (10 minutes)

*...I'd like to do an activity to help us see some of the things we should love about ourselves. Within our culture, we tend to spend a lot of time focusing on the things we perceive to be negative and it's important to make time to do the exact opposite. I'm going to give each of you a piece of paper and I'd like you to take some time alone to simply make a list of as many things as possible that you love about yourself. More so, I would encourage you all to pray before you start and ask God to specifically bring things to mind that he loves about you too.*

Take a moment to pray for your group, that they might hear from God.

**NOTE:** Be prepared for the fact that some of your teens may have a difficult time with this activity. Pay attention if someone is getting emotional or sitting and staring at an empty



## Going Deeper Handout: What Does It Mean to Love Myself?

As you utilize the following resources to further educate yourself in this issue, don't just read the things you know will support your current opinion. Instead, purposefully read some things from different viewpoints that will help refine and challenge what you currently believe.

Here is a list of the main Scripture passages addressing the issue of loving yourself. Read them in your own Bible and wrestle through them. Look them up on Google and find some articles to see what others think about them. A great website is [BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com), where you can find links to articles (as well as commentaries and other resources) to help you think through the passages more deeply.

### Scripture Passages

Genesis 1:26-27

Genesis 2:15-24

Psalms 139:13-18

Jeremiah 1:5

Matthew 22:37-39

Luke 5:16

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 2:1-10

### Helpful Websites

[www.positivelypresent.com/2010/02/love-yourself.html](http://www.positivelypresent.com/2010/02/love-yourself.html)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/features/22198-starving-yourself-for-love](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/features/22198-starving-yourself-for-love)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/stop-defining-yourself-what-you-don%E2%80%99t](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/stop-defining-yourself-what-you-don%E2%80%99t)

[www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/stop-beating-yourself](http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/whole-life/stop-beating-yourself)

<http://ubdavid.org/advanced/practical/practical-christian5.html>

### Video You Could Watch

*LOVE YOURSELF: God Loved You First (Part 1)* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgxTFPXhO0c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgxTFPXhO0c)

### Podcast You Could Listen To

[www.robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-7-changing-the-tapes](http://www.robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-7-changing-the-tapes)

### Book You Could Read

If you're going to read a book, read this one:

*In the Eyes of Your Creator* by David L. Fontes (Ancient Faith, 2015)