

# CLARITY • IN AN • UNFAMILIAR LANDSCAPE



Although this part of my story began several years ago and it's completion, I dare say, is nowhere near to being discovered, I want to share a little of the chapter I find myself in now. I am somewhere in the murky, swamplike middle... wading my way through unclear waters. I know why I'm here and I know that crossing this terrain is crucial for reaching the desired destination, however, being here is becoming disorientating. At times I feel I am just treading water, other times like I've seen the same tree 5 times already. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a purpose for navigating through this marshland swamped with heart motives. This is a short, current, raw, snippet of my story; [An attempt to put words to how the Spirit has been wrecking and renewing me.](#)

This year has been a year of change. We spent all of last year preparing to leave Adelaide, to make the move to Seattle for 2 years. I had been offered a great opportunity, pretty much everything that I had been aiming for since 2009. But God graciously saved me from myself, showed me my true motives and shifted our plans drastically [[you can read the full story here](#)].

One of the biggest and unexpected changes that the spirit made clear to us, was opposite to where I thought He "should" lead. It was into an unfamiliar landscape for an unknown amount of time. This came in the form of stepping away from full-time ministry/leadership and focusing on the unseen and unnoticed discipleship of my family. It may have been obvious to everyone around us, but somehow I had missed the fact that in my leading bible studies, running worship nights, holding mission discussions, organizing day training, etc. Michelle and I never got the chance to grow as one, as a couple, at the same pace. I had always been out the front, heading things up or teaching, but never sitting and learning shoulder to shoulder. It was for this reason that the Spirit told me to stop leading things and start learning together.

I thought, "well yeah, obvious right. Stop doing stuff, easy, I can do that."



Now, six months into the "doing nothingness"... I can say it is, in fact, *not easy* at all. I seem to be at a loss of who I am or where I even fit into things. It is unclear what my next step is or even how long this season is for. In this process, I been stripped of some really good things that, unbeknownst to me, I have turned into idols.

My significance, my sense of worth, my value has been wrapped up in really "good" things that God actually desires us to be part of; running bible studies with action plans, speaking at conferences and camps, being part of the Adelaide missional discussion, facilitating Christ-centred conversations, running missional communities, training and coaching life on life discipleship. I frothed off the idea that people would come to me for advice! I found joy in discipling guys because it made me feel needed.

And now God has put all of that on hold. I don't have and can not do any of that, and it frustrates my self-identity.

It is as though I have convictions that God has given me (make disciples, live missional, opening the home to others...) but no way to put them into practice at this stage. But through it all, the Spirit has been graciously and lovingly showing me my heart.

When I take an honest and hard look at why I am frustrated at the lack of these things in my life, I see an ugly truth. My sense of emptiness is not found because I'm missing the outcomes of these good things, but because I feel like I'm failing everyone's expectations, even my expectations. My motives for doing Godly things, virtuous and biblical things, even direct commandments from Jesus, have been self-motivated and subtly self-glorifying. But the scary thing is that *because they are good and decent things, I can easily fool myself into thinking I'm following Jesus well*, and arrogantly thinking I am doing better than others.

Only by God's grace can I see this now, and I know he is just scratching the surface of my heart. I see so clearly in this uncomfortable place, that he is stripping things away because loves me. He has been wrecking me big time! And gently renewing me.

It was because of this slow paced, drudge through a swamp of now obvious rotten fruit, that Spirit allowed me to hear an even deeper issue in my heart.

I caught myself thinking (or more likely the Spirit revealed a blind spot) that, as one of God's children, I know He loves me and sees me as He sees Jesus. I know the Bible tells me that what God thinks about me matters most....

But here's the kicker. *I don't often BELIEVE it's enough.*

I hadn't realized this until maybe a month ago, so this is fresh, But I would rather everyone around me to see me the way God sees me, instead of just God valuing me!



What the Heck! When I say it out loud it sounds idiotic.

"MY OPINION OF GOD'S OPINION OF ME, IS TOO SMALL."

As the mist slowly fades from my peripheral vision, I recognize the same small bolder, broken branches and greeny brown quagmire.

"I have been here already. You've already addressed this haven't you God?"

Then a wave of warm sunlight, ruptures the cold air, cutting through the fog and reinterpreted the uninviting environment. I start to see the real landscape, without the haze of deceit covering my eyes. Those convictions that God planted in my heart and His Spirit stirs up in me, are actually being lived out here and now. *They are just not on a grand scale.*

In His wisdom, He has prevented me from being noticed, seen or admired. He ripped that option away.

See, for the first time in our marriage, *Michelle and I have been discipling each other.* She has completely blossomed into this amazing, discerning, Spirit craving women... I had just been getting in the way for so long, I had been crippling her. The wisdom and profound insight she has shed into situations these last few months have been so helpful. Even in these last 3 weeks, I am reminded of several times her words refreshed and encouraged me.

God is so faithful. We are growing together in him!

*He is wrecking and renewing me as I am DISCIPLING and being DISCIPLED BY my family.*

His clarity in this time is overwhelming. God has been weaving into these past 6 months (and probably the last 20 years), two obvious points about my identity. Two truths that have only become reality because of the power and person of Jesus, my Lord. These truths are beautiful, life changing and great news for me today, even in this very hour.

- I am eternally **Valued** because I'm part of his church, his body, his bride!
- I am **Significant** because I am his child (full stop!)

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