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# *Set Sail*

*“A five-step guide to winning the battle  
in our minds so we can embrace God’s  
incredible love and grace every day.”*



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# Introduction



*Dan Kliewer*

One night I was enjoying watching my 8-year old grandson play baseball. As he stepped into the batter's box his coach encouragingly told him, "Okay, just swing through the ball, you've got this!" His coach was putting strategic thoughts in his mind for success.

"Ding!" went the bat and the ball went sailing over center field for a double!

The fact is, whether we're in the batter's box or facing the many duties, difficulties and distractions in our lives, our thoughts are powerful and can really make a difference. So, what should we be thinking about?

In [Matthew 6:33](#) Jesus encouragingly tells us to, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness." Jesus is giving us a strategic thought for success, just like the coach did with my grandson.

Jesus invites us to focus our thoughts and actions on Him and navigate away from the fear, worry and darkness that's all around us. He provides the awesome opportunity for us to set our minds on Him and sail toward the incredible peace, love and light that only He offers.

Just like ships on the ocean, if we don't use our ability to navigate and set our sails toward a specific destination, we'll quickly find ourselves getting lost drifting in the wind and the waves or even shipwrecked on the beach.

In, "Set Sail," we're using a sailing theme to glide through five steps to intentionally set our sails (our thoughts and actions in each area of our lives) toward Christ's kingdom and His righteousness.

## Three Ships

There once was a young man who paused to look down over a cliff and saw the ocean.

It was a beautiful view. He thanked God for creating the sky, the water and the white sandy beach. He also noticed three ships.

One ship was directly below him. It was broken, partly on the beach and partly in the water. Obviously it was shipwrecked and he wondered how it became that way and what it would take to get it sailing again.

The second was a large and beautiful vessel floating halfway to the horizon. The sails were neatly wrapped and tied to the mast. It appeared to be just bobbing up and down, drifting in the wind and the waves.

Then there was a third ship that was sailing swiftly past. It was battle worn with scratches and patches, but its sails were strong and filled with the wind. It seemed to be determined as it purposefully cut through the water. He imagined it was sailing to an amazing place of beauty and adventure.

The young man recognized a connection between these ships and his life. Sometimes he felt like the one that was shipwrecked with mostly imagined lies and limitations holding him back from doing and becoming all that God was equipping him to do and become.

Other times he seemed to be just drifting at the mercy of the wind and the waves. His focus was on keeping everything perfectly maintained, clean and comfortable rather than using his gifts to navigate, take risks and follow the hopes and dreams that God had placed on his heart.

Then there were times when he was laser focused, on a mission toward making a dream come true. Like the third ship, he knew what it was like to be sailing right on course, navigating with a clear destination in mind.

The young man sensed that God brought him here to see the view and make a connection with his life. He decided right then and there that he wanted to be more like the third ship that was actively and intentionally sailing with a purpose. He thanked God for his mind and the ability to make choices, to take risks and take action. He surrendered each area of his life to Christ, trusting Him to help him navigate toward real purpose and fulfillment rather than a drifting or shipwrecked life.

# Which Ship Are You?

Whether we feel like we're currently shipwrecked, drifting or sailing with a clear purpose in mind, let's remember that Jesus specializes in restoring shipwrecked lives, finding purpose for drifting lives and keeping the sails full of the wind of His Spirit for those who are already sailing with Him.

Regardless of which ship we identify with, the main thing is to **start right where we are** and intentionally put Christ first in each area of our lives. That's what Jesus was referring to in [Matthew 6:33](#) when He said, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," Only then can we begin to make good decisions and set sail with courage and confidence.

## My Experience

When I was in my teens, my dad bought a windsurfer. You've probably seen the surfboards with a mast attached to a swivel at the center of the board along with a sail and a boom. I remember that there was a long learning curve of hours standing on the surfboard, using a rope to pull the sail up out of the water while draining all of the excess water out of it - again and again.

When I finally learned how to balance, I stepped over to grab the boom and WOW! The wind caught the sail and that thing really took off! It was all I could do to lean back and hang on. What a huge thrill to be gliding through the water hanging on tight carried only by the power of the wind!

Just like learning to windsurf, there's been a progression of steps for my life with Christ. When I was just four years old, my grandma passed away from cancer. Around that time I asked my mom about what happens when we die. She shared the gospel message in a loving way that even a four-year-old could understand. Within minutes I was praying with her, inviting Jesus to come into my heart and surrendering my life to Him.

That was the start of my Christian life. Of course, I had a lot of growing to do then, and I still do today. Even though I was fortunate to have Christian parents who took me to church, prayed with me and talked about God, I still struggled with how to put Christ first in my life and follow Him. I didn't know what it meant. I just wasn't putting it together.

Growing up, even through my 30's and 40's I would read my Bible, go to church and pray, but Christ still seemed distant to me. It seemed like I was just going through the motions while deep down I knew there had

to be more. I was spiritually drifting and not growing closer to Christ. Then an idea started forming in my head (that I believe was the Holy Spirit nudging me) about fearless living. Pretty soon I had a process to follow that really helped me remove the barriers of fear and open up the connection between me and Christ.

After practicing this approach to fearless living, I felt like I began to finally wake up spiritually! I was finally growing when another idea hit me (Holy Spirit again) that included sailing to islands representing different areas of my life. Soon I had a simple five-step framework for becoming more intentional and deliberate in my relationship with Jesus. He used this tool in such a powerful way for me that I began sharing it with others.

The more we align our thoughts and actions with Christ, the more fruit we will see. What I mean by, “fruit,” are things like patience, kindness, less envy & anger and more love & compassion for others. The most exciting thing for me is to see evidence of these qualities growing both in myself and in the lives of others that God has brought into my path. I’ve been seeing this again and again including mended relationships, opened doors to career opportunities and a much greater excitement about life.

## **Carl’s Transformation**

Let me tell you about Carl (not his real name). Shortly after we began meeting together I asked him how a good day is different from a bad day. Without hesitating he said, “No police and no hospitals.” Carl had been through some really rough dark times filled with anxiety, loneliness, despair and a lack of love. Months later, since he started becoming more intentional in his faith as we applied the, “Set Sail,” framework, I asked him what life was like now in the light of Christ and he said, “Joy, so much joy!” We have such an awesome God!

Carl’s results, along with the many others who have experienced miraculous transformations, made me want to write down this framework so I could share it with a wider group.

So here I am, excited to be sharing, “Set Sail,” with you. I thank God for you and that you are here. I trust that Christ will speak through these words so they become meaningful to you. Because once God’s Spirit fills our sails (our hearts and minds) we better hang on tight, just like I did with that windsurfer, as we sail ahead with His incredible power and joy.

# Accepting Christ

God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to provide the way for true success both in this life, and the life beyond (see [John 3:16](#) and [Romans 6:23](#)).

His truth is timeless and never changes. His love for us is incredible and was clearly demonstrated as He died for us on the cross bridging the gap between our naturally sinful selves and God (see [John 14:6](#)).

Our part is to accept Christ's free gift of forgiveness, not by our own works or accomplishments, but by His grace (see [Ephesians 2:8](#)). Then we have victory (see [Colossians 3:1-4](#)). Everything else pales in comparison to God's amazing love and forgiveness as we are born again.

If you haven't done this yet, you can do it now. In your own heart, simply pray, "Lord Jesus, I surrender to you and repent of my sins. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I invite You into my heart and accept You as my personal Savior and Lord of my life."

If you have prayed this prayer, then you have most definitely won in this life and can begin looking forward to your next life in heaven! Congratulations, you're forgiven and have Christ in your boat! Now, what's next?

## Keep Sailing

Even though we've already won the ultimate prize in our salvation through Christ, it's just the beginning of our eternal life with Him. So, rather than stopping, we keep sailing (learning and growing) with purpose and discipline like we're going after first place (see [1 Corinthians 9:24](#); [Acts 20:24](#)).

In order to keep learning and growing, an important step after salvation is to plug into a Bible-based church. It's a great place to learn more about God, His Word and how to serve and glorify Him as a community.

The churches that I've been a part of have definitely been learning and growing places for me, but we have to watch out for drifting while going to church as well. That was my problem. I was just going with the flow. I was involved but not being intentional and not taking responsibility for growing in my relationship with Jesus. In fact, this sounds bad but I

remember thinking I had a wimpy Spirit. I even asked God why He gave me such a wimpy Spirit!

What's it like to feel like you have a, "wimpy Spirit?" I remember feeling stale and stagnant, like I wasn't tuned in to God or what He wanted me to do. It didn't seem like I was growing in my relationship with Him and was kind of in a spiritual fog. I looked around and saw other people loving, growing and serving and I just felt like, "Ugh, why do I feel stuck."

I had too many thoughts like:

- *If I have Jesus in my heart, how come He seems so distant?*
- *If I have faith that can move mountains, how come I'm stuck on this molehill?*
- *If I'm a child of the King of Kings, why do I feel like a peon?*

Instead of focusing on myself, comparing myself to others and whining about a wimpy Spirit, I could have shifted my focus to Jesus and intentionally spent time with Him ([see John 15:4-11](#)). What I wasn't doing was deliberately opening the door ([see Revelation 3:20](#)) and letting Jesus in to share my life with Him. But once I started applying and practicing this, "Set Sail," method for inviting Him into my thoughts and actions, I quickly began seeing God's transformational power in my life.

There's no need to feel like we have a, "wimpy Spirit." We can embrace the fact that God's Spirit in us is strong and mighty! God wants us to be fulfilled and complete the mission that fits us perfectly. He gives us the power and freedom to make choices and use the talents, skills and interests that He provides for His glory ([see Matthew 25:14-30](#)). Talk about power! Talk about potential! Let's go for it!

As Jesus said in [John 10:10](#), "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." When He says, "they," He means us! We can enjoy a truly amazing and purposeful life filled with God's love and grace as we, "Set Sail," with Him every day.

## **5-Step, "Set Sail," Framework**

I'm excited to share this powerful five-step framework that God is using to transform me and others as we intentionally put Christ first, abide in

Him and sail on course even through the stormy times of life. We'll be cruising through the following five steps:

- 1. Dare to Live Fearlessly.** I practice thanking and trusting God with little problems throughout my day, then I'll be ready when a crisis comes my way (see [Psalm 37:3-5](#)).
- 2. Define What Matters.** I list each area of my life that is a high priority, then I surrender it to Christ and His authority (see [Matthew 6:33](#)).
- 3. Describe the Vision.** I visualize each area of my life as an island filled with the love and grace of Christ, then I sail with Him to fulfillment, purpose and ultimately to paradise (see [Matthew 6:21-22](#)).
- 4. Determine the Score.** I take a virtual cruise to my islands and examine how I'm doing on each one, then I turn any gaps over to Christ and see how renewal has begun (see [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) and [Colossians 3:1-10](#)).
- 5. Do and Become.** I take deliberate action to align my islands with God's loving commands, then my faith grows and my life fits perfectly into His plans (see [James 1:22-25](#) and [Matthew 25:14-30](#)).

Let's pause here before going forward to thank and praise God!

*Lord, I thank You and praise You for creating me with a mind and body that are made in Your image. I thank and praise You for the ability to think and make choices. I thank and praise You for all of the gifts, interests and opportunities that You give me. I thank and praise You for Your awesomeness, holiness and for sending Your Son so that I might be forgiven and righteous in Your sight. I thank and praise You for the opportunity to go on this, "Set Sail," adventure over the next five chapters and I trust You to lead and guide me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## **Setting My Sails:**

- *Which of the three ships have you experienced? When?*
- *What ship best represents your situation right now? Why?*

## **Scripture:**

- *Read Matthew 6:1-34. Identify the issues Jesus raises that can distract us and take our focus away from Him.*

## **Personal Application:**

- *What are two of your own examples of duties, difficulties and distractions that threaten to take your eyes off of Jesus today?*
- *If you haven't accepted Christ in to your heart, why not go ahead and accept Him now? He loves you and is waiting for you.*
- *Are you ready for a simple framework to help you fine-tune your thoughts and actions so you can be more intentional in setting your sails for a life centered on Jesus? Why?*

## Chapter 1

# *Dare to Live Fearlessly*

*I practice thanking and trusting God with little problems throughout my day, then I'll be ready when a crisis comes my way (see [Isaiah 41:10](#) and [Psalm 37:3-5](#)).*

As we start this adventure, we want to be proactive and make one thing super clear - and that is how we're going to deal with the problem of fear.

Just like worrying, fear can really get in the way. Fear is an extremely powerful emotion that can sneak up and block us from pursuing what God has put on our heart. It can freeze us in our tracks and keep us from doing and becoming all that He's equipping us to do and become (see [Matthew 25:14-30](#)).

Even though fear is natural and goes hand-in-hand with stepping out of our comfort zone, we don't have to stay that way. We can surrender it to God and trust Him to either take care of the problem or guide us in taking the right action to deal with it.

So, whether we're preparing for an ocean voyage or just another challenging day ahead, we need to know how to conquer fear, otherwise we'll find ourselves forever stuck in the harbor (or in bed) - too afraid to move. Once we put Christ first in our lives, exciting and fulfilling possibilities swing wide open, even living without fear (see [Isaiah 41:10](#)). It's a great time to pray:

*Dear Lord, too often when I'm afraid, I have trouble being thankful and remembering the many ways You have helped me in the past. Help me to be more thankful and quick to trust You when I am out of my comfort zone or afraid. Thank You for your love and faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Where's My Friend?

Let me share about a time when I was definitely out of my comfort zone and afraid. It was in 2003 and our son, Tim, was a freshman at Kansas State University in Manhattan. He had just finished an amazing year in high school including winning state championships in both basketball and tennis.

As my wife, daughter and I entered the emergency room in Manhattan, we saw Tim lying on a gurney. He was completely still. He was in an induced coma to keep his brain as quiet as possible. To me, he looked so good, so strong and athletic that it was hard to imagine that his condition was so life threatening. He had suffered a subdural hematoma which means there was a leaking blood vessel near his temple that was filling his head with blood and pushing his brain dangerously to one side.

The helicopter had just arrived outside ready to take Tim to Wichita for emergency surgery to relieve the pressure and fix the damaged blood vessel. One of the crew was asking if we would sign an organ donor release in the likely event that he didn't make it to surgery. We weren't ready to sign and instead said that we would keep in touch by phone.

A little group of six of us gathered outside in a circle to pray. We thanked God for Tim and asked for his safety and healing. Then we turned the situation over to Him trusting that no matter what happened, He would give us a good story to tell in the future about His power and faithfulness.

I have to admit that even though we were trusting God, it didn't keep the tears away as we chased the helicopter to the hospital in Wichita. When we arrived, we were relieved to hear that the surgery was already done and went well. Now it was time to wait and see how the recovery would go. A doctor warned us that Tim could have an entirely different personality - if and when he woke up.

In the meantime, prayer chains had been triggered and quickly spread to many different churches and locations. We are so thankful for the thousands of prayers on Tim's behalf as well as everyone who helped with the preparation and surgery. We were told that if the surgery would have been just five minutes later, he probably wouldn't have survived.

Tim woke up nearly a day and a half later and the first thing he said was, "Where's my friend?"

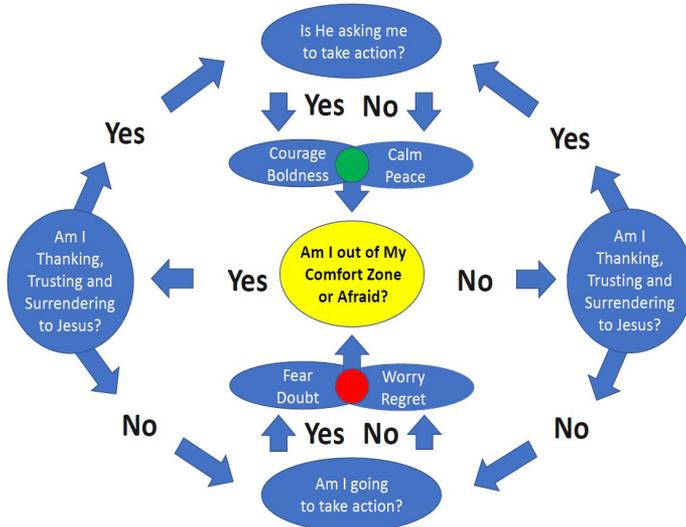
He was assured that many of his friends were just outside in the lobby and that they had been quietly checking on him as he was sleeping.

Tim insisted, “No, my friend who has been sitting with me on my bed the whole time!” But none of his friends had been sitting on his bed.

Although Tim doesn’t remember this conversation or the friend sitting on his bed, we’re extremely thankful and believe that Jesus was present in a special way to keep him calm, quiet and encouraged throughout this critical time.

We praise God for Tim and we’re thankful for this story we can share about how He is worthy of our trust to help us through times of fear. In three days, Tim was released from the hospital and took a year off from school for plenty of rest and recovery time. Today he’s doing great with an amazing wife and four precious kids. He’s living with the urgency of someone who is extra-blessed to be alive and seeking to glorify God in each area of his life.

## Fearless Living Guide



Let’s take a look at the decision guide above. Yep, I know it looks busy with all of the circles and arrows, but it’s really pretty simple and we can use this tool to help us refocus in times of fear.

The yellow circle in the center is the starting point and represents our current situation. We just answer Yes/No to the question, “Am I out of my comfort zone or afraid?”

Whether our answer is, “Yes,” or, “No,” we can take a moment to thank, surrender and trust Jesus for the future. Frequent, “heart glances,” like this can be really helpful in strengthening our relationship with Him (see [Philippians 4:6-7](#), [Joshua 1:9](#); [Isaiah 26:3](#)).

Next, we watch for Him to guide us in what action(s) to take, or to be patient and still as He works (see [Psalm 46:10](#); [2 Kings 19:35](#)).

We know that fears and troubles will continue to be a part of life, but we can quickly surrender them to Jesus and trust Him. He fully understands when we are anxious and uncertain. He is our Helper who leads and guides us. He is absolutely worthy of our trust (see [Hebrews 13:6](#), [John 16:33](#); [Romans 8:38-39](#)). As Charles Spurgeon, (1834-1892), so eloquently put it, “I have a great need for Christ: I have a great Christ for my need.”

In [Psalm 34:8](#) we are invited to, “taste and see that the Lord is good.” One of the best times to get a “taste” of God’s goodness is when things aren’t going as we expected or hoped for.

God gives us life and it’s our privilege to trust Him. We can trust Him through the toughest times. We can also trust Him through the smaller ups and downs in every aspect of our lives (see [Matthew 7:7](#)).

Trusting Christ no matter what happens, helps us break free from the fear that keeps us on the sidelines. We can step out of our comfort zone ready to face all kinds of obstacles because we’re armed with God’s grace and unlimited resources (see [Psalm 37:4](#); [Philippians 4:13](#)).

## **Submitting to God’s Will**

As we’re trusting Christ and looking to Him for guidance, it doesn’t mean that we’re expecting Him to write His plan for us on a wall or make letters appear like smoke in the sky telling us what to do next - even though He could.

Just as importantly, His will is not a complicated puzzle that He expects us to solve. Rather, by putting Him first and seeking knowledge through

His Word, prayer and our community of other believers, we can grow in wisdom and learn to make decisions that please Him (see [Psalm 111:10](#), [Proverbs 1:7-9](#)).

God is sovereign which means He is all-powerful. We can trust that He has a plan and is in control of all things, including any situation we find ourselves in. For example, in [Mark 4:35-41](#) we find Jesus sleeping in a boat during a violent storm, His disciples were worried and woke Him up. Jesus said to the waves and the wind, "Quiet! Be still!" Then it became completely calm. The disciples said, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

God is indeed in control. We don't know every detail about His plans or His will for us personally, but it really isn't a mystery. We know that His will for us includes trusting Him, walking with Him and loving others. That's our purpose which leads us to using the gifts He has given us for His kingdom (see [John 15:5-17](#)).

When our decisions come from a place of love for Him and a desire to follow His commands, we can freely and boldly make choices and plans. We can confidently move ahead fully trusting that God is in control. Then as we encounter obstacles and if (or when) our plans change, it will all work out for good (see [James 4:13-16](#) and [Romans 8:28](#)).

Do you see how important it is to get a handle on dealing with the problem of fear and what to do when we are out of our comfort zone? When we surrender to the ultimate adventure of following Christ, we know that there will be trouble. What we're doing is learning and practicing what we can do and Who we can turn to when it happens.

It's only through a close connection with Christ that we can truly refocus when drifting, repair when shipwrecked and continually re-adjust when we're sailing on course.

## Ready for Freedom?

The freedom we have in Christ is awesome! He's more than our safety net because He's right there with us. So we don't have to be afraid of using our gifts for His glory. He tells us not to worry! He wants us to be complete and fulfilled as we sail with Him, thanking and trusting Him.

I used to think that fearless living was what the Christian life was all about. And I'm still extremely thankful for God's incredible love, grace, the assurance that I'm saved and where to turn in times of trouble. But then I began to see . . .

## **THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING!**

Because once we learn to thank, trust and surrender to Jesus, we are really **READY TO LIVE!** That means to delight ourselves in Him and fearlessly follow the dreams He has put on our hearts (see [Psalm 37:4](#)).

### **Setting My Sails:**

- *Can you think of a specific time when you have experienced fear or been out of your comfort zone?*

### **Scripture:**

- *Read Philippians 4:4-9. What do these verses say we can do to replace fear?*
- *What promises and assurances does God offer us when we are fearful?*

### **Personal Application:**

- *What can you do to guard against fear and anxiety before going on an adventure such as a trip or simply getting up in the morning?*
- *Do you have a personal fear that is getting in your way that could be offered over to God so He can replace it with His Spirit of peace? If so, surrender it now and be sensitive to His leading.*
- *Try going through the decision guide on page 13 with a situation you might encounter in the near future that would take you out of your comfort zone. Maybe it's at home or maybe it's at work. Practice thanking and trusting Christ in advance as you anticipate this situation coming up.*

## Chapter 2

# Define What Matters

*I list each area of my life that is a high priority, then I surrender it to Christ and His authority (see [Matthew 6:33](#)).*

We're on a journey. Once we've surrendered our fears to Christ and accepted His amazing love and forgiveness, we can commit to putting Him first in our lives and we're finally ready to live.

That's huge! And now our focus changes to how we actually live out that commitment in our everyday lives.

How do we put Christ first when there are so many duties, difficulties and distractions constantly coming at us from every direction?

Just about anything can distract us. When I was in college I had a little sports car, a 1968 Triumph TR250. The color was British Racing Green. Man I loved that car. I spent hours buffing and waxing, adding a cool audio system and cleaning all 4 of the 72-spoke wheels. The drives with the top down through the Sierra foothills, near Reedley, CA, where we lived, were exhilarating!



But I noticed this wonderful little car was taking up too much of my time and money with driving, maintenance and repairs. After two years I sold it and bought some very nice audio/visual equipment. God definitely blessed that change in focus by opening so many doors for service and career opportunities. Even though I miss that TR250, I'm thankful that I traded this distraction for the life I've been able to lead since then.

Cutting through the distractions in our lives can definitely be a challenge, but it's also definitely possible with Christ. We're stepping through this simple framework to give us a boost.

Using a sailing theme, we're building a custom cruise tailored for each of us. But this is no ordinary cruise. Rather than visiting islands out in the ocean, we're, "sailing," to virtual islands that represent the most important gifts and opportunities that God provides. These islands are unique to each one of us and help to make us different from anyone else.

## **The Parable of the Talents**

In [Matthew 25:14-30](#) Jesus tells us about the master who put 3 servants in charge of his goods while he went on a trip.

When he came back, the master evaluated how faithful each servant was and what profit or result came from investments they made with what was entrusted to them.

Two of his servants were regarded as faithful and he gave them a reward because they made a profit from their investments.

But the third one tried to play it safe and buried the goods that were entrusted to him. He was too afraid of what the master might do if he risked them and lost them, so he just hid them. He was regarded as wicked and lazy and was given a severe penalty rather than a reward.

We don't want to be like the third servant. We want to be faithful stewards of the resources and gifts that God has given us to use for His glory. We want to put them to use in His service and trust Him for the outcome, not bury them or sit on them.

That's the purpose of this book, to help us be more like the first two servants rather than the third servant.

We're going through five steps and the second one is coming right up.

## Step #2 of 5 - Define What Matters

We're about to **define** the different areas that matter most in our lives by making a simple list of the priorities, gifts or goods that God has provided. We'll call these our, "islands of opportunity," for our cruise.

Please find the handy, "Islands," form at the back of this book or use your own notebook or journal for making your list.

We make lists for things that are important, when it needs to be right. All the way from buying groceries to building a skyscraper, lists are essential to help us stay on track. Unlike dogs and cats, God made us humans in His own image with the ability to make plans and write it down. My wife and I recently built a new home and there were many lists such as what features we wanted, the paint colors, the appliances and many more. Lists are super helpful and essential when it really matters. We're listing what matters the most to us and it also matters to God.



As we make our list of islands, we're deliberate about recognizing that they are gifts from God and surrendering them to Him. He wants the very best for us so we're not afraid to turn each one over to Him.

Feel free to put a mark, such as a star or a cross next to each island to signify that you have surrendered it to Christ.

## Surrender vs. Commit

Let's take a look at what it means to, "surrender," our islands (areas of our lives) to Christ. I like both of the words, "surrender," and, "commit." They both work but I like the posture of, "surrender." Let me explain.

What's the usual posture when we surrender? We raise up both hands, right? Let's say somebody has a gun pointed at me. I might raise my hands signifying, "I surrender! I'm not going to fight. What do you want me to do?" That's what our posture and attitude should be toward Christ.

Does that mean that Jesus has a gun pointed at us? Absolutely not! He has open arms, ready to embrace us with His amazing grace and love. Yet, someone might say that He's threatening us with hell. But again, not at all. Darkness that leads to hell is all around, He's offering us the chance to join His flock (His team) in His light.

It's easy to choose the darkness, it's very natural, but it just leads to more darkness in this life and hell in the next life. Jesus is offering us the chance to choose His light in this life resulting in heaven in the next life.

It's our choice whether we want to navigate with Christ or let evil and darkness be our guide. "Who's navigating my ship and where's it going?" That's the choice we get to make.

If we just go with the flow and let our natural selfish selves navigate, where do you think we'll end up? What kind of navigating will happen? But if we invite Christ into our boat and let Him navigate and fill our sails, then we'll be sailing toward God's love and light and ultimately to heaven.

For awhile I didn't like the word, "surrender," because it seemed like it meant that I was quitting completely. But now I see that all we're really quitting, as we take the posture of raising our hands and surrendering to God, is our fight with Him. Then, if we listen, maybe even before we have time to lower our hands, He might tell us to, "Be still and know that I am God," (see [Psalm 46:10](#)). Or, He might tell us to get moving and take action.

I don't mean that God speaks in a loud voice. But rather, for me, it's usually more like a new perspective, new thoughts, a renewing of my mind with thoughts that I know I wouldn't have come up with on my own. God can speak to us in all kinds of ways!

I remember surrendering my grandkids to Christ. At first I felt uncomfortable because it was like I was letting go of these precious little ones when I really would rather hold them close.

But I held up my hands and said, “Lord, thank You for my grandkids, I recognize that they are gifts from You and I surrender them to You. What do You want me to do with them as their grandpa?” Immediately, the answer entered my mind and I began thinking, “Oh, You want me to love them? Be kind and care for them? Be patient with them and gently teach them? OK, thank You. I trust You to give me the wisdom and strength to follow through.”

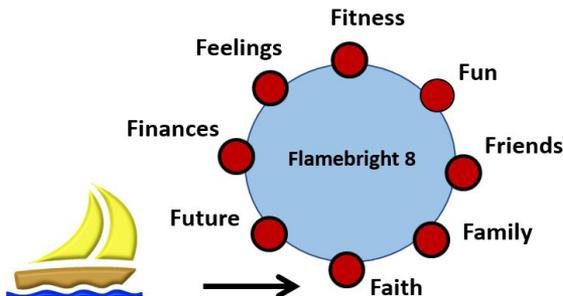
Do those thoughts sound like quitting or giving up to you? The posture of raising our hands in surrender is immediately followed by a posture of stewardship, commitment and possibly rolling up our sleeves to do the work that Christ is leading us to do. See how the word, “commit,” is used in [Proverbs 16:3](#) and [Psalm 37:5](#).

So, it's not, “surrender vs. commit,” both are involved and, “surrender,” has that special posture of raised hands. But they go together and we'll talk more about the commitment part in the chapters ahead.

## Flamebright 8

Let's get back to our islands. It's best if our collection of islands is unique to each one of us. But here's a quick list of 8 islands that can be used as a template to get started, then they can be edited to fit any situation.

We're calling this the, “Flamebright 8,” collection.



This is a list that can be used as is, or feel free to make changes as you wish or start over from scratch. Maybe the words, “Money” or “Work” sound better than, “Finances.” Or maybe you would like to add an island like, “Golf” or “Gardening” or “School” to make it yours.

Don’t worry about making it perfect and final. Keep in mind that we can always edit and make updates down the road.

Does making your list of islands and surrendering them to Christ take you out of your comfort zone? Is it too personal or too humbling? I hope it’s clear that it’s an extremely powerful step to gain the right posture, attitude and focus necessary to intentionally put Christ first in each area of our lives. It’s a good time for a prayer such as:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and forgiveness. Thank You for giving me this life with many opportunities. Right now I would appreciate Your help because, this feels a little strange to me (if it does). I’m making a list of islands that represent the areas, resources and gifts You have given me. Please guide me and help me honor You in each one. I’m surrendering my islands to You and if I need to change something, I’m open to Your will and I’ll look for Your strength to help me change my list or adjust my perspective at any time. Your love and strength empower me. I trust You to help me grow and mature in each area of my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

I have to tell you about someone I was meeting with, Tom (not his real name). We talked after he was let go (fired) from his place of work. This was the latest in quite a string of firings for Tom due to not showing up and inability to focus because of substance abuse on the weekends and evenings. He didn’t see a way out of this pattern because getting high was the main focus of his life, and it was the same with his wife and their friends. It was the only lifestyle that they knew. We prayed together and I shared about the freedom we have in Christ and how God could help him design a new life using the, “Set Sail,” framework.

The following week Tom was excited to share his list of islands. He had also been praying and working on a new vision for each one. Tom said that he had visited with his wife and for the first time they were ready to embrace the freedom that God gives each one of us to choose a lifestyle that better

glorifies Him. She had already checked in to a rehabilitation center and together they committed to re-direct their lives away from drugs and focus on living for Christ. Wow, praise God!

For Tom, making that list of islands for his cruise and surrendering them to Christ opened the door to God's love and power. It was truly transformational. With a new openness to God's leading, he and his wife were finally navigating toward God's ideal and **steering away from the drifting or shipwrecked life!**

Like Tom, we want to be intentional about putting Christ first in each area of our lives, or in this case, each island on our cruise, which turns out to be the most fulfilling and purposeful way to live!

In the next chapter, we'll take it a step further and build on this list of islands by describing a clear vision of God's way for each one.

But don't worry, **we're gonna sail right through it!**

## Setting My Sails:

- *What is a list that you've made recently and why?*
- *How is the act of making a list evidence of being made in the image of God?*
- *Why is it good to, "chart a course," when setting out to sea?*

## Scripture:

- *Read Matthew 25:14-30. What did the master expect the servants to do with the talents/gifts he entrusted to them?*
- *Read Romans 8:28. Is it possible for us to fail if we attempt to put our gifts and resources to use for God's glory?*

## Personal Application:

- *In the story of the talents, which servant do you identify with most? Why?*
- *If you haven't completed your list of islands yet, why not go ahead and do it now? Simply list 3-5 areas of your life or gifts that God has provided. If you feel stuck, try turning off the distractions, grab a pen and paper; start the timer for 10 minutes and see how God leads.*
- *As you review your islands, do any of them stand out as needing some attention with God's help? If so, take note and make sure that you surrender them to God. Then pay attention to see if your thoughts or perspective changes as He renews your mind. We'll dive deeper into this in the coming chapters.*

## Chapter 3

# Describe the Vision

*I visualize each area of my life as an island filled with the love and grace of Christ, then I'll sail with Him to a life of fulfillment, purpose and ultimately to paradise (see [Matthew 6:21-22](#)).*

We're already on Step #3 of this five-step journey

### Review:

In Step #1 we learned about how to live fearlessly. Then we defined our priorities by making a list, which became our islands of opportunity for our cruise.

As we made our list of priorities (islands), we surrendered each one to Jesus (see [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)).

This means we're done fighting with God, He is in control and we want to glorify Him in each of our islands (see [James 4:13-16](#)).

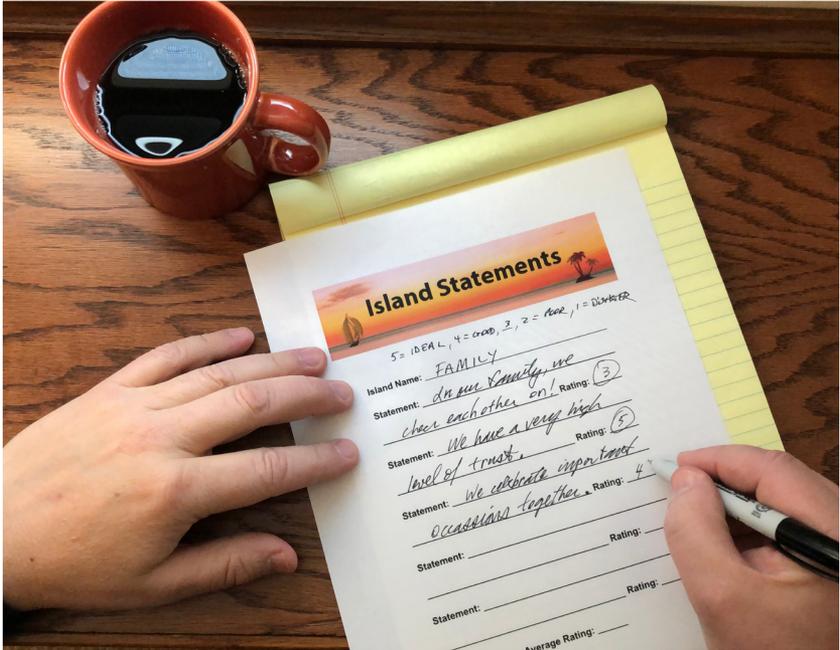
By continually putting Christ first in each area of our lives, we unlock tremendous power and freedom to fearlessly move ahead using the strength and gifts that He provides for His glory (see [Philippians 4:13](#), [Matthew 25:14-30](#)).

Now we're ready for the 3rd step.

### Step #3 of 5 - Describe the Vision

The islands on our cruise can be seen as opportunities for maturity and growth. We need to be intentional as we set sail for each one.

In order to chart a course for maturity and growth, we simply make 2-3 statements that describe where God is leading in each of our islands. While doing this, we're doing our best to align our vision with God's loving will and His commands. Remember that He gives us tremendous freedom within His will. Use your journal or the, "Island Statements," form at the end of this book to write down your descriptive statements.



This is a perfect time to thank and trust Jesus. We can use the incredible mind that He has given each one of us to sort out His truth from the lies and describe our islands. It's a good time for a prayer such as:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and the opportunities to share Your love with others every day. I love You and trust You with my future, including the goals and dreams I believe You have put on my heart. Help me to replace any lies in my head with Your truth. I recognize that You are ultimately in control and the future results are up to You, not me. Please help me put the gifts that You have provided to good use for Your glory. Help me to be sensitive to Your leading and guidance as I describe each island in a way that is within Your loving and generous will and commands. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Since we have surrendered our islands to Christ and listened for any marching orders He might give us, we can write our descriptions with courage and confidence.

As we write our descriptions, each one is written as if it were already true. We're painting a picture with words, a picture of where God is leading. For example, let's say one of our islands is Finances.

On my Finances island . . .

- I thank God and recognize that all of my money and resources are gifts that He has entrusted to me and I put them to good use for His kingdom (see [Matthew 25:14-30](#)).
- An important habit for me is to share what I have with others (see [2 Corinthians 9:7](#)).
- Obedience to God is my focus, rather than selfish gain (see [Psalm 119:36](#)).
- Giving is becoming more important than receiving to me (see [Acts 20:35](#); [Mark 12:41-44](#)).
- I thank God for my work and my pay (see [Colossians 3:17](#)).

Maybe another island would be Family. On my Family island . . .

- I see all the members of my family trusting each other and keeping our promises (see [Proverbs 11:3](#)).
- I do all I can to provide for the needs of my immediate family and relatives rather than leaving them for others to take care of (see [1 Timothy 5:8](#)).
- Our family gets together frequently and we enjoy each other's company.
- My spiritual family and church community are important along with my physical family (see [Matthew 12:48-50](#)).
- The love in our family shines bright through both happy and troubled times.

The above are examples. Your descriptions might be totally different. We're being intentional and strategic about shaping our thinking. As Pastor and Author Chuck Swindoll wrote, "Thoughts are the thermostat that regulates what we accomplish in life. If I feed my mind upon doubt, disbelief, and discouragement, that is precisely the kind of day my body will experience. If I adjust my thermostat forward to thoughts filled with vision, vitality, and victory, I can count on that kind of day. Thus, you and I become what we think about."

Swindoll goes on to say that this isn't just what writers about positive thinking say, it's also what the Bible says, "For as [a man] thinks within himself, so he is" ([Proverbs 23:7](#)). "Therefore, prepare your minds for action" ([1 Peter 1:13](#)).

I love seeing top athletes like golfers, Olympians, or other performers like the Blue Angels practicing in their minds with visualizations before their physical performance. [Here is a link](#) to a video showing the Blue Angels going through their mental preparations. Sometimes they lean, twist or point where they want to go. They feel the rhythm in the classroom and see it clearly in their minds before they experience it up in the air.

Let me tell you the secret of how I would win free-throw contests in high school. I almost felt like I had an unfair advantage because of my technique. Here's my secret, before taking the shot I would simply look at the rim and think, "Swish, right through the hoop." I would see it and then my body would do it. I made over 90% of my free-throws!

We're doing the same thing with each area of our lives. We're practicing seeing God's plan and intentionally thinking strategic thoughts to help us stay focused on God's ideal for each one. This also helps us replace any lies about us with God's truth because it's what God says about us that matters. We want our islands to echo what God says about us and how He is leading.

Over time, we know that our thoughts will shape our actions, our actions will shape our habits and our habits will shape our future. So, one powerful way to ensure that we will grow and mature in our relationship with Christ tomorrow, is by carefully scripting our most dominant thoughts to be full of the light of Christ today (see [Romans 12:2](#) and [Philippians 4:8](#)).

If we aim for 2-3 descriptions for each island with 10 islands on our cruise, we'll have around 20-30 descriptive statements in total.

## It Takes Courage

Writing our descriptions might be the toughest step in the process. It takes courage to imagine the ultimate because it might be different from what we're experiencing today. It also takes humility to admit that we have room to grow and mature. But this shouldn't be cause for despair. Rather, it's an opportunity to trust God to help us grow in specific ways!

As we begin to use the, "Set Sail," framework to put Christ first, we want to make sure that we take each step with love. We can apply a, "love filter," to our vision based on [1 Corinthians 13](#) known as the, "Love Chapter of the Bible." We want our vision to include patience, kindness and other attributes of God's amazing love.

## It's Exciting

To be partnering with our awesome God is exciting! We're fine-tuning our vision and designing our future together with Him! At the same time, we're open to God changing our plans. We know that as we encounter twists and turns along the way, **it's all good** for those who love the Lord and put Him first (see [Romans 8:28](#)).

Working on our island descriptions takes effort and might feel overwhelming at first, but there's no need to get discouraged. We just keep it simple and relax knowing that we can make adjustments along the way. Updates also help to keep it fresh, rather than growing stale or stagnant.

Many people begin each day without any clear targets to navigate to. They can quickly end up drifting or shipwrecked.

However, we are clarifying our targets and aligning with God's will as best we can in order to **stay on course** right through the wind and waves of life's daily demands, distractions and disappointments.

## Friend Check

To sharpen our perspective and insight, we can share our islands and descriptions with a trusted friend or mentor. It could be a family member, someone from church, possibly a pastor, or another person that truly cares and seeks to put Christ first.

The next chapter is about setting out and sailing on a custom cruise that reflects God's love and light. Get ready to cruise to a clear set of islands of opportunity that are aligned with Christ and His Spirit within!

### **Setting My Sails:**

- *When following a leader, do you like to work with a set of clear expectations, or fuzzy ones?*
- *When going on vacation, do you like to have a direction in mind or just drive?*

### **Scripture:**

- *Read James 4:13-16. Does James say that we shouldn't make any plans? Or does he say that we should hold our plans and expectations loosely, recognizing that Christ is in control?*

### **Personal Application:**

- *As you are describing the visions and dreams that God has put on your heart - are you sensing that He is leading you to use any of these gifts in a new and different way? If so, write it down now.*
- *If you haven't described where God is leading in each of your islands yet, why not do it now? Simply make a couple of statements that reflect God's love and light for each one.*

## Chapter 4

# Determine the Score

*I take a virtual cruise to my islands and examine how I'm doing on each one, then I turn any gaps over to Christ and see how renewal has begun (see [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) and [Colossians 3:1-10](#)).*

Welcome to Step #4 of this five-step journey, "Set Sail."

### Review

We're on our way! After learning about how to live fearlessly, we made a list of islands representing the most important areas, interests or gifts in our lives and surrendered each one to Christ. That alone is a huge accomplishment, but we didn't stop there.

For each island, we listed 2-3 descriptive statements that represent our best effort to clearly visualize God's truth and His will for our lives.

Our overall motivation for building our cruise is the desire to love God more than anything else and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Also, we don't want to be like the 3rd servant in, "The Parable of the Talents," who buried his gifts rather than putting them to use for God's kingdom and His glory.

Oswald Chambers, in his book, *My Utmost for His Highest* (devotional for March 17) encourages us to develop the habit of intentionally evaluating ourselves to make sure we are keeping our main ambition focused on God's approval. He says, "Once a week at least take stock before God and see whether you are keeping your life up to the standard He wishes."

One thing I like about golf is keeping my individual score, it's a real measure of how I'm doing on the golf course, and it can be very different from day to day! Keeping score not only helps make the game interesting, it's a way to measure how I'm doing and growing. This can also apply to other areas such as business and each area of our lives.

With our cruises we're investing time and effort to design a way to examine ourselves in God's light. We seek harmony with His will and His commands so we can cheerfully please Him (see [2 Corinthians 5:9](#) MSG).

## Freedom

We know that God gives us tremendous freedom to live and follow the dreams He has placed on our hearts. He wants us to exercise our freedom and dance in the amazing light that He provides, rather than being distracted and tempted by the darkness.

Remember the freedom that Adam and Eve had in the garden? They were living in a true paradise. But they chose to focus on the one thing God told them not to do, rather than on all of the wonderful things that they could do!

We are deliberately and intentionally focusing our thoughts and actions on Christ and the freedom we have while staying close to Him.

By continually and strategically filling our minds with the good stuff, we eliminate space for the bad stuff. We don't want to have any room left for lies, thoughts or actions that are apart from Christ (see [Philippians 4:8](#)).

What's next? We're going to set sail for our islands!

## Step #4 of 5 - Determine the Score

It's cruise time, Bon Voyage!

We're about to cruise to each of our islands and determine how close we are to reaching God's ideal for each one. It's a good time for a prayer such as:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me daily strength as well as the freedom to make choices. I have a vision for each island on my*

*cruise that I am confident is within Your light and Your love, but I'm also aware that Your thoughts are higher than my thoughts and that no matter what happens, You are in control and the ultimate outcomes are up to You. Help me to adjust when I need to, and help me to keep growing and maturing in all of my islands as I sail with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

As we virtually sail toward our first island, **we're thankful** for the opportunity to cruise with Christ to a beautiful collection of islands full of God's love and light.

As we arrive at our first island, we **begin rating** each description using a rating scale of 1-5 with 5 being highest, according to how true it is:

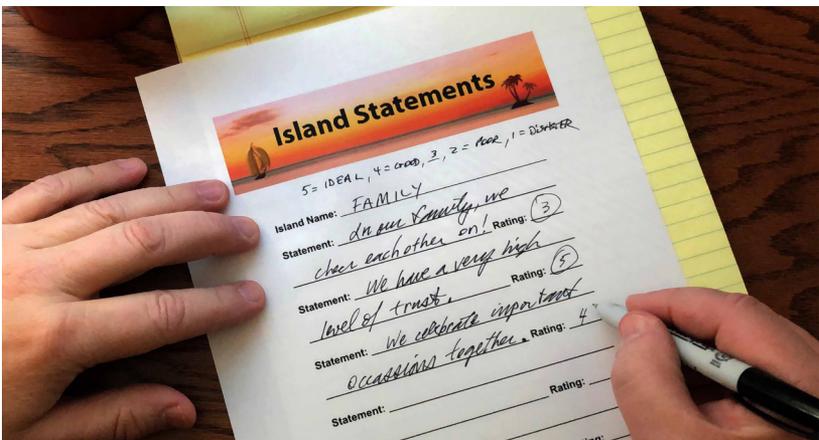
**5 = True** (our description has become our reality, it's now true)

**4 = Usually** (our description is usually true, or we're getting close)

**3 = Sometimes** (we are on our way, or about halfway there)

**2 = Rarely** (our description is rarely true, or we are just starting to make progress)

**1 = False** (our description is not true yet, but we're trusting God to lead us where we need to go)



## Focus on God's Ideal

While cruising from one island to the next, we want to focus on picturing God's ideal as clearly as we can. We humbly thank Him for the opportunity, trust Him for the outcome, delight in Him and surrender our plans for each island to Him (see [Psalm 37:3-6](#); [Proverbs 16:1-3](#)).

Our mind's eye is extremely powerful and important (see [Matthew 6:21-22](#)). We want to keep checking to make sure that our vision for each island reflects God's goodness, love and light.

As we complete our cruise and head for home, the last thing to do is average our ratings for each island. To make them easy to see at a glance, we can put them on a chart. Please use your journal or the, "Chart," form in the back of this book to create your chart.



## Welcome Home!

After completing our cruise, we can **embrace the greater clarity, confidence and courage** we now have to do and become all that God is leading us to do and become.

We feel renewed, refreshed and full of hope after intentionally setting our sails (our minds) for God's ideal on each of our islands (see [Colossians 3:1-17](#)).

Take a moment to celebrate after completing this first cruise! Thank God for His leading and let Him know you are trusting that He will continue to guide your steps.

We'll wrap it up in the next chapter on what to, "Do," with our results.

### **Setting My Sails:**

- *What is an example of using your mind's eye to visualize a desired outcome?*

### **Scripture:**

- *Read Matthew 6:22-23. Where should our eyes be fixed in order to fill our body with the light of Christ?*
- *Read 2 Corinthians 13:5. How can we test ourselves to make sure we're putting Christ first in each area of our lives?*
- *Read Colossians 3:1-17. What are the positive virtues we are to focus on as we live for Christ?*

### **Personal Application:**

- *If you haven't rated your descriptions yet, and transferred the averages to a chart, why not do it now? If you feel stuck, tune out the distractions, set your timer for 10 minutes and see where God leads.*
- *Does your chart of islands reveal a particular island of importance that could use more compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, patience and/or love? If so, write down one action step He's leading you to take. (This will be our focus in the next chapter.)*

## Chapter 5

# Do and Become

*I take deliberate action to align my islands with God's loving commands, then my faith grows and my life fits perfectly into His plans (see [James 1:22-25](#) and [Matthew 25:14-30](#)).*

Welcome to Step #5 of 5!

Step #4 was huge. We've come a long way!

## Review

First off, we learned about fearless living. Then we made a list of islands representing the most important areas of our lives and surrendered each one to Christ.

For the third step, we made descriptive statements representing our best effort to clearly visualize God's will for each of our islands.

In Step #4 we went on a cruise! We prayerfully went virtual **island hopping** to evaluate how close we are to reaching God's ideal for each island on our custom cruise.

After completing our cruise, we averaged our ratings for each island and clearly displayed them on a chart.

At this point, let's be sure to keep in mind that we have the privilege of looking forward to spending eternity with Christ only because of what He did for us, rather than what we do for Him (see [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)).

We have to watch out for that little word, “pride,” that might creep in after completing our cruises. As C. S. Lewis says in his book, *Mere Christianity*, “Pride is a spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.”

Lewis goes on to talk about how to handle receiving a compliment, “The trouble begins when you pass from thinking, ‘I have pleased him; all is well,’ to thinking, ‘What a fine person I must be to have done it.’ The more you delight in yourself and the less you delight in the praise, the worse you are becoming.” Lewis is saying that we should delight in the praise, but not in ourselves. Our focus is not on pleasing ourselves or others, but rather on pleasing God.

Each cruise is designed to help us intentionally direct our focus on pleasing God. Oswald Chambers in his book, *My Utmost For His Highest*, says our true purpose is found in [2 Corinthians 5:9](#) (KJV), “Wherefore we labour that . . . we may be accepted of Him.” There is our purpose. Chambers uses an example of the Apostle Paul, “Paul is like a musician who does not need the approval of the audience if he can catch the look of approval from his Master.”

So, whether we’re a musician, an office worker or even a church planter, the feedback we receive from our, “audience,” (including social media) is not the real measure of how we’re doing. Sure, we appreciate the positives, and the negatives might hurt, but the approval and acceptance from God is immeasurably more important.

With our cruises, we’re focusing on God’s ideal (which pleases Him) for each area of our lives. It’s not that we’re trying to, “earn,” our way to heaven with high scores or even by realizing the vision for our islands. Instead, out of love and thankfulness, we’re responding to Christ’s love and grace by doing all we can to glorify and honor Him (see [Romans 12](#)).

## **It’s Good to Grow**

Looking at our chart, we remember that we want to grow and mature, and in order to grow we need to have some room to grow.

Lower scores are not to be feared or frowned upon. They are opportunities to surrender to God while thanking and trusting Him for the future. Whether we’re talking about a tree in the forest or a child of God created in His own image, it’s important to grow (see [James 1:2-5](#)).

Sometimes when I'm doing yard work I might spray some, "weed and grass killer," to kill some weeds around our house. It's interesting that the active ingredient printed on the label of the container is, "glyphosate," and when I do a search on how it works I find that, "It prevents the plants from making certain proteins that are needed for plant growth." The glyphosate stops the weeds from growing and what follows is that they quickly wither and die. Let's grow as Christians or we'll end up like the weeds sprayed with glyphosate!

Our cruises help us grow by highlighting our room for growth. So, a big congratulations on your high scores - and your low scores! It's all good. We can be thankful for them all (see [Romans 8:28](#)).

Now we're ready for the 5th and final step.

## **Step #5 of 5 - Do and Become**

Based on the results from our cruise, we take notice of any gaps between where we are and where we believe that God is leading. Then we surrender the gaps to Him. As we lean on Him and center our lives on Him, He will give us the desire and strength to do and become all that He is equipping us to do and become (see [Romans 8:5-6](#); [James 1:19-27](#)).

Trusting Christ in our weaknesses, like when we're out of our comfort zone, opens the door for Him to come in and share life with us (see [Revelation 3:20](#)). We can pray:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your guidance in developing and taking this cruise. I trust You in each area of my life. I want to grow and mature in each area as I trust You to guide me day by day. Thank You for giving me the strength to step up and do what You're leading me to do, with love toward others. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

If we sense that God is leading us to take action, we jot down exactly what we plan to do and when. Then we roll up our sleeves and get to work fully knowing that our plans and results might change (see [Proverbs 19:21](#)). Please use your journal or the, "Action," form in the back of this book to clearly record what you plan to do and when.

Of course following through with the, “doing,” can be a challenge. But we are in a better position to knock it out after completing our cruise because we now have improved:

- Clarity of direction and purpose.
- Confidence that comes from Christ’s leading and strength.
- Courage to take strategic steps forward because we know that all things will work together for good as we sail with Him.

We’re making progress! We now have a custom cruise we can use several times a day, or whenever we like. Our cruise helps us set our mind on what the Spirit desires so we can experience real life and peace (see [Galatians 5:16-23](#)). Please find the, “Journal,” form in the back of this book or use your own journal or notebook for logging your thoughts, experiences and signs of transformation.

## **Our Lives Matter**

Our lives are precious. God made us on purpose for a purpose. Our lives and what we do with them, really matter!

At the same time, our lives are busy and full of duties, difficulties and distractions.

But even though our lives can be very messy at times, our cruises can help us navigate through it all as we focus on putting Christ first and putting our gifts and resources to use for His glory.

The purpose of, “Set Sail,” is less about closing the gaps between our reality and our vision, and more about closing any gaps that exist between us and Christ. Our cruises are simply a tool we can use to help us abide in Christ and shine bright with His love and joy. Then we will bear much fruit as we, the branches, are connected to Christ, the Vine (see [John 15:1-17](#)).

# Faith and French Fries

One day my first grade granddaughter requested that we stop for some French fries when I picked her up after school.

I was glad she asked and pulled into a nearby fast food place. We got the fries, plenty of ketchup and sat down at a booth.

Sounds pretty cool right? Just just the two of us together and the chance for me to ask, "How's it going?" All I wanted was to hear about her day and what's on her mind. Well, and I also wanted her to enjoy the fries, which she did!

It hit me that God wants the same with us! He gives us all kinds of gifts, interests, desires and sometimes just what we ask for, like French fries. What He wants is that we put them to use and enjoy them with Him as we spend time together.

Jesus promised in [John 15:1-17](#) that if we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit. We don't have to pay attention to the fruit, the fruit appears when we intentionally and regularly take the time to connect with Him.

In [Revelation 3:20](#) (KJV) Jesus says that He is standing at our door and knocking. He waits patiently for us to open the door and let Him come in and, "sup," with us which means to share supper (or French fries) with us. What goes on at supper? Basically sharing food and conversation! He's genuinely interested in how it's going in our lives and what kinds of requests we might have.

Let's take Jesus up on His offer. Our cruises give us an outline for having a conversation with Him. We can share how it's going in each area of our lives so we can receive navigational guidance and adjust accordingly. Our conversations with God might be mostly one-sided with us sharing about our lives, but that's perfectly okay as long as we pay attention when He speaks.

Our main purpose is not to live a, "happy-go-lucky," life. Our cruises help us focus on our main purpose. Oswald Chambers says, "Continually restate to yourself what the purpose of your life is. The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health but holiness," (see [1 Peter 1:16](#)). We move closer to holiness as we focus on Christ's kingdom and His righteousness ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

We're wrapping up this five-step plan for putting Christ first and sailing with Him to a life of fulfillment, purpose and ultimately to paradise.

If we feel like we're already sailing right on course, He can help us stay on course with humility and love for others. If we feel like we're stuck drifting, He can give us direction and fill our sails with the wind of His Spirit. If we feel like we're shipwrecked, He can provide restorative healing and help us set sail again.

The Apostle Paul writes in [Colossians 3](#) about how to embrace our new nature in Christ. He tells us to put aside any dark and toxic thoughts from our old nature and set our minds on things above. We can invite Christ right into our messy lives with all of the daily duties, difficulties and distractions. He will help us cultivate the right thoughts so we can learn to look at life from His perspective and glorify Him with our thoughts and actions.

We simply can't spend any more time drifting out on the water or shipwrecked on the beach. With God's grace, we can confidently sail with Him to islands that are filled with His love and light.

I pray that God will bless you as you, "Set Sail," on your custom cruises designed to help you prepare in this life, for the next life with Him. I also pray that you'll continually experience **more and more** of the fullness and richness that only Christ can so lovingly provide - which is even more than we can imagine (see [Ephesians 3:20-21](#)).

### **Setting My Sails:**

- *Is it really essential for us to grow in our faith and relationship with Christ? Why?*
- *Would you say that it's necessary for us to step out of our comfort zone in order to follow Christ? Why?*

### **Scripture:**

- *Read Mark 8:34-35. What are we to do as followers of Christ?*
- *Read Colossians 3:12-17. What are the positive, "clothes," we are to put on as we strive to live for Christ?*

### **Personal Application:**

- *Is Christ leading you to do something that is out of your comfort zone? If so, put on the clothes of His love, take action and do the work. Then watch and see how He uses your actions for good.*
- *Once you have completed this process for yourself, God might lead you to become a mentor or coach for someone else. If so, write down their name and surrender them to God. If you get the opportunity, consider using this, "Set Sail," framework to come in and share life with them. Then hang on tight as God fills their sails, and yours, with the wind of His Spirit!*

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The following pages contain helpful forms for designing custom cruises and logging about insights and experiences along the way. Feel free to print them as needed or use a separate journal.

Please visit [flamebright.com](http://flamebright.com) for encouragement and more resources.

The, "Islands," form is for listing the different islands of opportunity on our cruise. First, we name our cruise. Normally it will be a cruise for ourselves so we simply write our own name. But it could also be a name for a family, group, organization or a special project. Then we list our islands (areas of importance). Keeping the Parable of the Talents in mind, we surrender each island to Christ, ready to put them to use in ways that honor Him.



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) \_\_\_\_\_

The, "Island Statements," form is for describing where God is leading us for each island. We write our island statements in an, "as if they were already true," fashion painting a clear picture in our mind of God's ideal for each one. We use this form for each island on our cruise. The, "Rating," space is used for giving each statement a score of 1-5 with 5 being true and 1 being false (see page 32). Notice the space at the bottom for recording an average score for each island. These averages can then be transferred to our chart.



**Island Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Rating:** \_\_\_\_\_

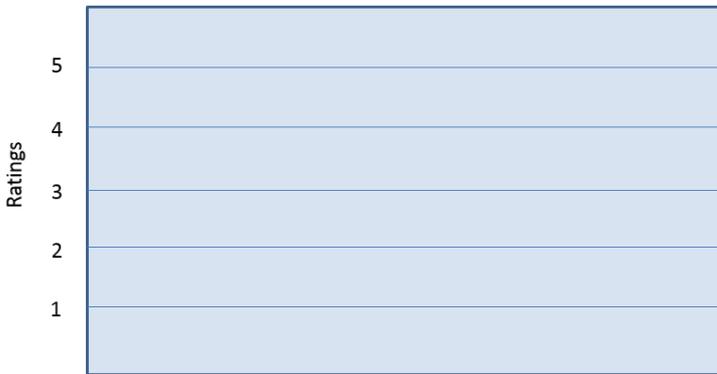
**Average Rating:** \_\_\_\_\_

The, "Chart," form is for viewing our cruise results at a glance. We place the name and date of our cruise at the top, then we begin listing our islands on the X (bottom) axis and place a corresponding dot or a column that reaches the appropriate average rating on the Y (vertical) axis for each one. This provides an accurate picture of how close we are to reaching God's ideal for each island on our cruise. We keep in mind that lower scores are simply opportunities to grow. Once we identify our opportunities for growth, we can surrender them to Christ and then watch and see how He continues to transform us.



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



Islands

The, "Action," form is for listing and scheduling any action steps needed for closing the gaps between our current reality and the vision that God has placed on our hearts. Our chart of cruise results will clearly display those gaps. Intentionally choosing to seek God first sparks a flame and our action fuels the fire.



**Action:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The, "Journal," form is for recording how God is showing up in our lives. We can write down any thoughts, experiences, scripture verses, commands or promises that are especially meaningful. It can be powerful to log our growing insights and signs of transformation along the way because it's easy to lose sight of how God is changing both our hearts and our circumstances.



Date:	Entry:



“Our lives are busy with hectic schedules. Pressures and demands pull us in every direction. Like ships on the ocean, we are at risk of becoming lost drifting in the wind and the waves or even shipwrecked on the beach. Once we put our faith in Christ, we can confidently set sail with Him toward doing and becoming all that He is equipping us to do and become in each area of our lives. Real change starts on the inside. We grow closer to Christ as we set sail for His way in each of our islands of opportunity.



*Set Sail* is a powerful tool for discipleship and transformation. Based on an island cruise theme, we take a step by step approach to clarifying our priorities, surrendering them to Christ and sailing with Him to an exciting life of fulfillment and purpose. We identify our strengths as well as our opportunities for growth. Then we schedule action steps for making the greatest positive difference while documenting our progress along the way.

It's easy to cruise to our islands of opportunity - but it's also easy not to. By choosing to be intentional about growing in each area of our lives, we can embrace Christ's love and power to prepare us for the next phase of eternity with Him.” - Dan Kliever