Sweet Dreams Reflection

“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you.” — Ephesians 5:14

Discovering the Story I've Been Living

1. The Story I Tell Myself

Long before we consciously decide who we are, our experiences, relationships, and interpretations begin shaping our sense of identity. Over time, repeated thoughts can become familiar stories about ourselves. Some reflect truth. Others may be conclusions we formed in moments of fear, disappointment, rejection, or uncertainty. The first step toward change is becoming aware of the stories we've been rehearsing.

Take a moment to reflect:

When I think about who I am, what words or descriptions come to mind?

What is something I've believed about myself for so long that I've rarely questioned it?

When I feel criticized, overlooked, rejected, or misunderstood, what do I tend to believe about myself?

2. What Am I Protecting or Pursuing?

Three important concerns often influence how we understand ourselves: **safety, significance, and destiny/purpose.** Each reflects a genuine human longing. Yet the ways we seek to satisfy these longings can reveal where we've placed our trust, found our worth, or anchored our identity.

SAFETY — Will I be okay?

We seek protection, stability, and belonging through money, control, approval, or religious certainty.

What do I rely on to feel secure? What happens within me when that security feels threatened?

SIGNIFICANCE — Am I valuable?

We seek to matter through achievement, recognition, status, or being needed.

What makes me feel valuable or important? How do I respond when my contributions go unnoticed or I'm no longer needed?

DESTINY/PURPOSE — Will my life amount to something?

We seek direction and impact through controlling our future, pursuing a mission, or building a legacy.

What do I believe makes my life meaningful? How do I respond when my plans, expectations, or sense of purpose are disrupted?

Deeper Questions:

*When my sense of safety, significance, or purpose feels threatened, **who** do I become?*

Who would I be if I no longer needed to earn my worth, secure my future, or prove that my life matters?

What if the very qualities I've used to protect or prove myself are the qualities God wants to transform and use for His purposes and my good?

Awakening to a Renewed Identity

3. Who Are You, Lord?

On the Damascus Road, Paul's encounter with Yeshua challenged everything he thought he understood. His understanding of God, others, and himself would never be the same. Sometimes the stories we believe about ourselves are connected to what we have assumed about God.

What have I believed about God that may have influenced how I see myself?

What might change if I began seeing myself and others through the eyes of Messiah?

4. Rehearsing a New Way of Being

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." — Romans 12:2

Renewal involves learning to think, imagine, and respond differently. We can begin by recognizing an old narrative, examining it in light of truth, and mentally rehearsing a new response. An example:

> **Old story:** "I have to keep everyone happy to be loved."
>
> **Renewed perspective:** "My worth is not determined by another person's approval. I can love others while remaining honest about my needs and boundaries."
>
> **New response:** Imagine someone expressing disappointment with you. Instead of immediately apologizing or abandoning your own needs, picture yourself listening calmly, responding with kindness, and communicating honestly.

Now consider your own story.

An old belief or narrative I am ready to question:

A renewed perspective I want to begin embracing:

Close your eyes and imagine a familiar situation in which your old story usually influences your response. Then picture yourself entering that same situation with your renewed perspective.

How do you stand, speak, listen, and respond? What changes when you no longer need to prove, protect, or perform in the same way?

What did I notice?

5. Dream Forward: One Step Toward Wholeness

If I truly believed what God reveals about who I am, what might become possible in my life?

One small action I can take this week to practice living from this renewed perspective:

What might become possible if I stopped rehearsing who I thought I had to be and began living as the person I am becoming in Messiah?

Can I rest in who I am in Messiah, even while I am still becoming?

"When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet." — Proverbs 3:24