



Omniallinfinitude™
begin - return - continue

Journey One

Highest Honors

*"**OMNIALINFINITUDE™** builds a bridge on which my head and my heart can shake hands. It combines deep principles with ancient practices, and is a pathway to knowing God in order to love Him. I encourage you to walk the path; cross the bridge."*

*Dr. Jim Altizer
Azusa Pacific University*

Highest Honors

journey elements

- [About the Journeys](#)
- [What Comes to Your Mind?](#)
- [Remember:](#) Psalm 145:3
- [Read:](#) Genesis 1-3, John 1
- [Journal 1.1:](#) Proof of Life
- [Analyze:](#) Color Coding
- [Journal 1.2:](#) Full Disclosure
- [Investigate:](#) Most High and Glorious
- [10 things](#)
- [Journal 1.3:](#) The Problem with the Most High God
- [Practice:](#) Solitude and Silence
- [Why?](#)
- [Journal 1.4:](#) Wrong Thinking
- [Inventory:](#) Your God History
- [Journal 1.5:](#) Right Thinking
- [Adventuring:](#) On Assignment
- [Journal 1.6:](#) Glimpses of the Most High
- [Lyrics:](#) *I Saw the Lord, Out of Time, What A Wonderful World*
- [More Cool Stuff:](#) Music and Math
- [Journal 1.7:](#) Nitty Gritty
- [Closure](#)
- [Credits](#)

About the journeys...

Welcome to **OmniInfinity™**.. a series of guided journeys leading to greater knowledge and understanding of the attributes of God and the Spiritual Practices necessary to gain this knowledge.

The only requirement is a willingness to learn and discover through a variety of activities. Some elements you may naturally be drawn to, some will challenge you, and some may be way out of the box for you. It is important to do them all, in order, completing one journey before moving on to the next.

There are twelve journeys or units, **each designed to be completed in two months** - either by yourself, with a friend or in a small group setting. It is important to remember we all start from different places, we start with what we know and move on from there, but we are all traveling together.

journey elements

The following elements make up each journey and should be completed in order. Some of the elements require some advance planning, so you might want to review the entire contents of each journey before you begin. Use the Table of Contents to check off your progress.

Remember: One or more Bible verses to memorize for each journey unit.

Read: Throughout the twelve journey units you will read some of the most profound and well loved chapters in the Bible.

Analyze: A variety of Bible Study methods will be offered to help you analyze in greater depth a section of the Reading above. The goal of this section is to familiarize you with various ways to greater understand God's Word.

Investigate and 10 things: Each journey unit focuses on a group of God's attributes, defining terms and completing a directed investigation page.

Practice and Why?: Part of growing in our relationship with God is the intentional practice of skills that have helped Christians from the beginning. Each journey unit will focus on one or more of these with instructions for developing each skill. Some Practices involve doing a specific activity, while others require we stop doing certain things.

Inventory: A personal inventory will be completed regarding areas related to the attributes and skills studied in each unit, reviewing your personal history and evaluating your current practices and beliefs.

Adventuring: This section guides you to venture out into the world with a specific assignment to observe, interact with or impact your surroundings and neighborhoods. The intent is to allow God to reveal Himself through nature, media and other people.

Lyrics: You are encouraged to read the included song lyrics as poetry for your inspiration, go online and listen to the actual recordings and then reflect on the questions that follow.

Journal and More Cool Stuff: The author has included some musings and further information pertaining to the subject of each journey unit for your consideration, personal response and reflection.

Closure: At the conclusion of each journey there is a place to recap where you've been, what you learned, new thoughts, challenges, growing pains.....

Enjoy the adventure ...

what comes to your mind?

Highest Honors

Achievement, accomplishment, victory

Bravery, sacrifice, service,

Competition, being the first, the best

Position, mastery, expertise.....

Winners, highest scores, the ability to overcome obstacles

Make an impact, leave your mark....

From valedictorians to warriors, to priests and kings,

From sports champs to Nobel Prize winners, humanitarians and local heroes

We accord them Highest Honors,

No one does it better, they've graduated magna cum laude

Sometimes what they accomplish is beyond our imagination

We wonder how they did it,

They must be smarter or stronger

have more money

more talent

more help.

We use words such as Superior! Magnificent! Brilliant! Exceptional! Impossible!

We shake our heads in disbelief,

Stand and cheer and applaud in amazement, appreciation and respect.

And sometimes we *are* them,

The best of the best, continually striving for even Higher Honors.

But, beyond all this, higher than the highest skyscraper and mountain,

farther out than the farthest star –

beyond all that man could ever achieve or imagine...

Is the One who truly deserves Highest Honors,

The One known as the Most High and Glorious.

The One behind it all.

Your turn:

What comes to your mind when you think of Highest Honors?

remember

Psalm 145:3

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, his greatness no one can fathom. NIV



Think of this exercise as a necessary foundation for future excellence – like practicing scales on the piano or doing wind sprints or swimming laps, taking your vitamins, or eating your vegetables.

We actually recall or remember all kinds of things we've memorized without really even trying. Can you think of any?

How about your phone number, email address, street address, zip code, social security number, birthday, names of your family, how to get to work, how to drive a car, that secret recipe...or how to spell or multiply, song lyrics, movie scenes, jokes, what someone was wearing, what car they drove, sports statistics, what chocolate tastes like, what the ocean smells like, and on and on.

Why do we remember what we remember?

Recollection is just the tip of the memory iceberg. Within our marvelous and mysterious brain the memory works in collaboration with us and the world – it uses all our senses and emotions. We associate smells, colors, places, rituals, symbols, landmarks, even people, with memories and when we sense the trigger, we remember.

There are tremendous spiritual benefits from Remembering Bible verses:

- Strengthens our faith
- Shapes how we view the world
- Makes God's Word immediately accessible
- Guards our minds.....and that's just for starters.

Experts say that we will forget more in the first hour after our memory event than in one day, and more in the first day than the first month...What we remember for one month, will probably stay with us.....so the idea is to remember regularly for one month and we've got it.

Here are some ideas to help you get started. We all learn differently – so don't be afraid to try some of the more unusual methods. Not only do we need to remember the verse, **we need to remember to work on remembering the verse.**

- Write the verse on several post it notes or index cards and put them where you will easily see them such as the car, the bathroom mirror, the kitchen sink, a bulletin board, your computer screen saver, your cell phone, by your bed....
- Make plans to spend five minutes, twice a day (usually as you get up and before bed) to review.
- Say the verse slowly, 15 times in a row, emphasizing each word.
- If you have already learned it in another translation, review that one. Once you know it in one, look it up in a couple of other translations to see what is different.
- Review it when you are waiting in line, or on hold on the phone.
- Sing it – make up a tune to go with it
- For extra credit, add the verse before and the verse after.

read

Genesis 1-3, John 1



Read all the chapters through completely on three separate days, the first day in a **modern translation** such as the *NIV* or *NAS*, the second in a **modern paraphrase** such as *The New Living* (NLT) or *The Message*, and then the third **with a pad and pencil** by your side as you record your thoughts and observations. It is also helpful to **read the selections aloud**. As you read, underline words that describe who God is or names He is called.

This element is about **reading what it says** – try to put aside any preconceived ideas about what you think it says, or what you may have concluded based on other studies or classes. We are not saying those ideas are not correct, but for this Element, we just want to read it as if for the first time. **Read for the storyline** – and see if you can then faithfully retell it in your own words.

First Reading: Modern Translation – which one did you use?

Second Reading: Modern Paraphrase – which one did you use?

Third Reading: Reading Notes

Genesis 1:

Genesis 2:

Genesis 3:

John 1:

Descriptions of God:

Names used for God:

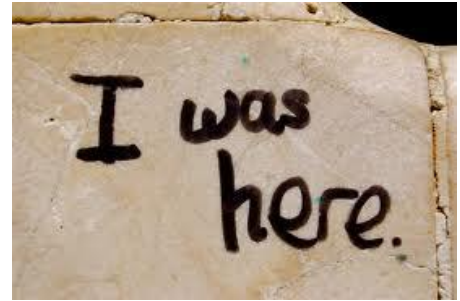
journal

1.1 Proof of Life

How would you convince someone you exist?
 Where would you start?
 What if they were blind, or deaf, or both?
 What if they didn't speak your language or understand your culture?
 What if they were physically far away from you?

How would you convince them you were real?

You would need to provide them some Proof of Life **in a way they could understand**. Kidnappers and terrorists provide proof of life as a means of obtaining ransom. They may send a picture, make a phone call, post a video or worse.....usually including news of the day to provide a time stamp. Then once the ransom payer is convinced the person is still alive, the deal can be completed.



In our daily lives we are **required to show proof** we were born and then again when we die. We've left clues of our existence all over the place, from school, medical, payroll, banking, driving and phone records.

Our travel is traced through our passports, GPS and credit cards.
 Our internet usage is tracked through chat rooms, text messaging and buying habits.
 We meet people along the way and they remember us, they are witnesses to our lives, they have personal experience with us.

We leave a trail of proof that we were here everywhere we go.

And so does the Most High.....But **He has to reveal Himself to us** because we could not have imagined Him otherwise. **Everything we know** about Him, we know because **He has disclosed** it to us.

Your turn:

List some of the things that prove you exist:

Do you believe George Washington was the first President of the United States?

Do you believe that $1 + 1 = 2$?

Why?

analyze

Color Coding

This method color codes similar words and ideas to assist in discovery of the meaning and context of the passages presented. The words have already been colored coded based on common characteristics. Because the colors stand out, it is easier to see the relationship and commonalities between the two passages.

Read the two passages below. These two passages are referred to as the Creation passages...one from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament.

What do the different colors reveal to you?

Green:

Yellow:

Blue:

Grey:

Pink:

GENESIS 1

1 **In the beginning** **God** **created** the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters.

26 Then **God** said, "Let **us** **make** **man** in **our** image, in **our** likeness, and let **them** rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So **God** **created** **man** in **his** own image, in the image of **God** **he** **created** **him**; **male** and **female** **he** **created** **them**.

28 **God** blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." NIV

JOHN 1

1 **In the beginning** was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with **God**, and the **Word** was **God**. 2 **He** was with **God** **in the beginning**. 3 Through **him** all things were **made**; without **him** nothing was **made** that has been **made**.

14 The **Word** became **flesh** and made his dwelling among **us**. **We** have seen **his** **glory**, the **glory** of the **One and Only**, who came from the **Father**, full of **grace** and **truth**.

18 **No one** has ever seen **God**, but **God** **the One and Only**, who is at the **Father's side**, has **made** **him** known. NIV

Read the passages again and consider the following questions:

1. What happened in the beginning? Who was already there?

2. What do you learn about God from these passages?

3. What was the purpose of the Word?

4. What do you learn about man from these passages?

5. What are some of the common elements or ideas that appear in both passages?

Word Study

Another way to gain more knowledge and understanding of a Bible passage is to look up the original meaning of the words used by the actual writers. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic and the New Testament was written in Greek. John uses "Word" for Jesus in John 1:1. We can gain some insight as to what he meant by looking up the Greek for "Word" which happens to be **logos** or **ho logos**. You can find these definitions in a Bible Concordance or a Bible dictionary.

LOGOS (Grk. ho logos, "the Word") A term used by the apostle John describing the mission of Jesus as the revealer of the Godhead (John 1:1, 14). Words reveal the thoughts and intents of the mind to others. In the Person of the incarnate Logos, God made Himself fully known to man. All man can know about God is disclosed by the incarnate deity. Christ as the Word constitutes the complete and ultimate divine revelation.

How does knowing the original definition clarify the meaning of these passages?

journal

1.2 Full Disclosure

It's all here, and there, and everywhere.....

All the Proof of Life we need that the Most High is real and true.

The totality of **creation** is enough to blow our minds - the **universe displays** its beauty, detail, balance and complexity. Ever advancing technology has allowed us to peek in amazement at **subatomic consistency, design and order** – beyond anything we could have ever dreamed or imagined.

From the **natural laws** of physics and chemistry to the **marvels of DNA and quarks**, facts that were once thought impossible are now accepted without a second thought.

Such a marvelous creation only reveals an even more marvelous creator, **The Most High and Glorious.**

He has also **imprinted our souls** with His Proof of Life – as **we are His greatest creation** of all, stamped with His very own image. This drives us to develop and enforce **Moral Laws** which in turn determine **right and wrong behavior**. Without these we could not live together in community and benefit society.

We know some things are **just good for us** – things like life, procreation, knowledge, good health, hard work, family, reasonable conduct, justice, peace, beauty.

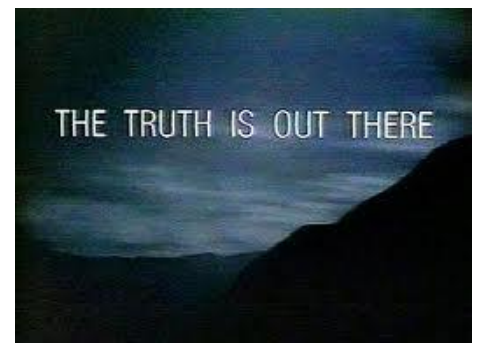
Things like the Moral Laws contained in the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. **We intuitively know** these are true, and that they benefit us. This is proof of the **stamp of His image.**

And there's **even more Proof** –

- Math and Music and Miracles,
- The creation and survival of the Bible and the Church
- The fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy
- And last but definitely not least – there is Jesus Christ!

Your turn:

List the most important proofs for you that God exists.



If you don't yet believe or know someone who doesn't – what kind of proof are you/they looking for? What is holding you or them back?



investigate

Most High and Glorious

Define: Please write a brief definition next to each of the words below using a regular dictionary, not a Bible dictionary. (Click on any word to link to dictionary.com for the word's definition)

∞ [Transcendence](#)

∞ [Incomprehensible](#)

∞ [Incommunicable](#)

∞ [Unimaginable](#)

∞ [Spiritual](#)

∞ [Triune](#)

∞ [Supremacy](#)

∞ [Majesty](#)

∞ [Greatness](#)

∞ [Glorious](#)

∞ [Most High](#)

Now write your own definition for **Highest Honors** below:

Review: Meet those who saw God. Read each reference below and note what kinds of things each person saw and their response to it.

Moses: Ex. 33: 15-23

Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1-9

Ezekiel: Ezekiel 1

Daniel: Dan. 10

Peter, James and John: Matt. 17: 1-9, Mark 9: 2-9, Luke 9: 28-36

Mary and Thomas: John 20:11-29

Saul/Paul: Acts 9: 1-19

John: Rev: 1: 9-18, Rev. 4

According to the references below, in what ways does God reveal himself to man?

Eccl. 3:11

John 1: 14, 18

Acts 17:22-28

Romans 1:18-20, Psalm 19: 1-4

1 John 4:12

***Conclude:* Compare the two references below: What are the similar attitudes and motivations in each and what was God's response? Do you see this happening today?**

Genesis 11: 1-9

Isaiah 14:12-15

10 things

Most High and Glorious

1. **El Elyon** is the Hebrew name translated God Most High. It emphasizes that God is the highest in every realm of life and cannot be matched. This transcendent quality was first used in relation to Melchizedek, the King of Salem, who was also called, "the priest of God Most High" in Genesis 14:18-20. ¹
2. **God has to reveal Himself**, because we could not have imagined Him otherwise.
3. **You can't grow** beyond what you know. Knowing God is different than knowing about God.
4. **A.W. Tozer** – "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts that are unworthy of God." ²
5. **Martin Luther** – "Your thoughts of God are too human." ³
6. **God is not a triplex**, but a triunity. Instead of $1+1+1=3$, think $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. The trinity cannot be proved by human reason, but just because it goes beyond human reason does not mean it goes against human reason. God has one essence (What) and three persons (Who). The three Who's each share the same What.
7. **David Hocking** – "If Jesus is not God, then He can't save us. He is merely a man. If he was a perfect man, he could only substitute for one person. Only God could substitute his infinite life for the sum total of all who believe in Him." ⁴
8. **A.W Tozer** – "Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control." ⁵
9. **Mankind was created** in the image of God. We must not then remake God in our image. Man can only know of God what God has reached out and communicated about Himself to man as truth. The climax of this revelation, including creation, mighty acts in history, and the scriptures, was in the person of Jesus Christ.
10. **C.S.Lewis** – "If Christianity was something we were making up, of course we would make it easier. But it is not. We cannot compete, in simplicity, with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing with fact. Of course anyone can be simple if he has no facts to bother about." ⁶

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

1.3 The Problem with the Most High God

The problem with the Most High God is that we **don't know** Him or **think rightly** about Him.

Perhaps we would be farther along in our journey with Him if we could stop, take a second to look around..... and consider the Proof of Life he has provided us. Instead it seems we find it much easier to view Him in our image; a bigger, more beautiful version of ourselves.

Some think they need to **understand** it all first,
That the Most High One needs to **answer** to us,
Fit into our box, **meet** our requirements,
Get on board with our plans.



Some believe if we can't understand something - it can't exist or be true.
Our brain then becomes the determiner, **setting the criterion** for all things and all truth.

Where do we get this stuff?

If we're honest we will admit that sometimes we simply **make it up** and hope it's true.
We indulge our own **wishful thinking** and worship our own **private idols**.

Or we might build our own **designer god** by **picking and choosing** the parts we like from various religions.

Then we incorporate whatever the **newest fad** is from popular culture.

Or we simply **do what the family has always done** or what the **national cultural tradition** dictates is appropriate.

But in the end it simply boils down to this –

We want God....

To be anything but the Most High God.

Your turn:

In what ways have you created a designer "god"?

What are some of the reasons man struggles with coming to an accurate understanding of who God is?

How do you struggle with this?



practice

Solitude and Silence

The Spiritual Practices put us in a place where we are better able to interact with our environment and God. God can then reach inside our spirits and transform them.

Just as our body needs to eat, breathe, exercise, drink, sleep, etc., so our spiritual self needs to make sure it is being sustained, cared for, and trained.

The results include spiritual growth, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, evidence of the fruit of the spirit, and the ultimate goal, living life like Jesus did.

The Spiritual Practices are not:

- Meritorious laws that earn favor with God
- A way to show how spiritually mature we are
- Unpleasant or difficult

Instead, they are:

- Intentional
- Activities we do that when practiced allow us to do activities we cannot now do.
- Adaptable to work with our temperaments and gifts
- Adjustable according to the rhythm and seasons of our lives

There are two kinds

Practices of Abstinence - when we stop doing something that is perfectly normal to allow ourselves to focus more on God, His Word, and growing in godliness. These also help us resist our tendency toward sins of commission (when we do something we shouldn't do). We withdraw to breathe in all that God can provide to us, breaking the hold that the world has on our lives. Practices of Abstinence help ready us and create room for the Practices of Engagement.

Practices of Engagement - when we do certain activities that help us grow in Christ and obey his commandments. The Practices of Abstinence have opened up the time and broken up the preoccupations so we are now free to learn of, focus on, and practice those things that God commands us to do. These assist in keeping us from our tendency toward sins of omission (not doing the things we should do). We engage to breathe out all that God commands us. ¹¹

As their name implies, the Spiritual Practices are not one-time events, but skills to be learned and developed over time. So don't be discouraged in the beginning if you struggle with them or find them difficult. Make them a regular part of your life. In our Journeys we would rather **emphasize the actual practicing of the Practices** and not so much the reading about them.....and let you discover the benefits as they appear in your life.

Solitude

Taking a Break from the Chaos



Modern society is crowded, fast paced, techno crazed.

We rush to keep up, to live up to ever increasing higher expectations, all the while creating multiple masks just to get along. We never stop to figure out what is actually necessary and what is not.

We are slaves to the chaos.

Solitude frees us from these ever present demands, if only for a short time. We are able to slowly release the stress placed on us by ourselves, others and the world.

For a moment we no longer need to impress or are oppressed.

Human relationships are important, but our relationship with God is even more so. Solitude gives us the space to develop that. In solitude we are alone. Think of it as fasting from people.

Some of us crave this time, while others find the idea uncomfortable at best. We might discover our real selves and what is truly important. **We have space to breathe, to linger, and without distractions or demands we begin to see things we never saw before.** Who God truly is becomes clearer, we recognize His Presence is with us, as it always has been.

The seasons and rhythms of life will determine the kind of solitude we can experience. For some it may be on a literal mountain top or in a desert wilderness, for others, a chair in the den in the early morning. Others may retreat to the bathroom, while still others may walk through the woods.

Solitude leaves the busy-ness of life behind. There is a "being still" component that seeks to counteract our culture's belief in productivity as a badge of honor. Many of us are running from or avoiding some deep soul issues under the cover of being busy, busy, busy. This busy-ness may feed our ego and self-esteem in the short term, but eventually our spirits will need the eternal sustenance and lasting significance only God can provide.

There are good benefits to regular training in each of the Spiritual Practices as each one encourages growth in different areas and works on different issues. Many of them have a complementary practice that works on the other side of the human response. For example, Solitude is balanced by the practice of Community. Some of the Practices are also foundational for other practices or specific applications of other practices. Solitude precedes aspects of both Prayer, Worship and Study.

While the study and use of all the Practices are invaluable to your Spiritual Journey, for most of us, they are not a lifestyle in themselves. A few are called to lifestyles of solitude, silence, study, etc., but most of us will learn to fulfill God's purpose for our own lives through the training they provide.

Learning to Practice Solitude:

In the beginning, this may seem frustrating and pointless. Don't give up. This is a regular practice that will get easier and eventually your soul will crave this time.

1. **Set aside 30 minutes** of time to retreat to a comfortable, quiet place where you can be alone and uninterrupted. This will be your "desert" or "closet".
2. Put your gadgets on silent mode. Set a timer.
3. Turn off any music or television. Make sure to have some paper, pen and a Bible nearby. Many people find early morning or late evening the easiest time.
4. If you are stressed about doing this, start out your time of solitude writing down everything you are worried or frustrated about. Then write down what God has been doing in your life and what you have been learning. Then listen.
5. **Spend time alone with your thoughts and God.** Let the cares and busyness of your life settle. Breathe deeply.
6. Mentally converse with him. Wait on Him. What does He bring to mind?
7. **Listen – what do you hear?** Don't assume all the voices in your head are God's. This is where it's important to check the Bible and with other mature leaders.
8. Write down any thoughts that intrude so you can deal with them later.
9. Record what you hear and your reaction to this experience.
10. Make this a regular part of your spiritual journey. Don't be discouraged if in the beginning you're unable to regularly spend 30 minutes of solitude. 5 minutes is better than nothing, 10 better than 5 and 15 better than 10.

The impact of Solitude in our lives

- **Practice of Abstinence** – we refrain from interaction with others in a quiet place.
- It is the fundamental and most necessary practice of abstinence
- It frees us from societal forces that tend to squeeze us into their mold – we are breaking the world's hold on our time, preoccupations, striving, and busyness.
- **It allows us to concentrate and listen to our own soul and to God.**
- **It refocuses our perspective** – we see more clearly through God's eyes
- Supporting Scripture: Gen. 32: 24, Matt 4:1, 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:31, Luke 4:42, 6:12, Acts 9:9

Personal Reflections on Solitude:

1. Solitude is the most important practice of abstinence. Why do you think it is so hard to accomplish?

2. What excuses or rationalizations did you come up with to put it off or not do it at all?

3. What does solitude free up in your life? How does it benefit you?

Silence

Taking a Break from the Noise



It's hard to listen to our own internal voice when we are so addicted to external noise and activity. We are surrounded and participate in so much mindless chatter chasing trivial concerns.

Modern day communication proceeds at near timeless speeds, requiring instantaneous and thoughtless decisions and responses amidst an overwhelming amount of information.

We can't wait for anything. We live stream video, talk to our devices including our cars, watch the news as it occurs, make rash judgements without truth, hurry from here to there, hurry each other, never stop to listen, think, or contemplate.

We get lost in the noise of our lives.

The Practice of Silence helps us to wait, to listen, to understand, and to focus on God and other people. Our communication will improve as we learn to speak what is important and necessary.

We will learn to recognize His Voice and hear it more often.

Learning to Practice Silence:

1. Silence is as a separate Spiritual Practice from Solitude. Solitude by definition will include lack of speaking and noise. For our purposes, we will practice Silence separately from Solitude in order to experience the listening and understanding components.
2. As you practice Silence, make sure you are engaged in activities that would normally call for casual conversation. The emphasis is not only on seeking to be surrounded by quiet, but on ourselves being quiet.
3. Pick at least a couple hours (or a day) and try to not to talk at all. Instead, listen, observe and pay attention to people.
4. Do not initiate conversations or phone calls, and let your phone take a message. Speak as little as possible.
5. Also, refrain from email, texting, or social media, as these are also forms of communication. Do not read or write any emails or text messages for one day.
6. Record your experiences.

why?

Solitude and Silence

Richard Foster – “The purpose of silence and solitude is to be able to see and hear. Control rather than no noise is the key to silence....we learn when to speak and when to refrain from speaking.”⁷

Dallas Willard – “The normal course of day to day human interactions locks us into patterns of feeling, thought, and action that are geared to a world set against God. Nothing but solitude can allow the development of freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God’s order.”⁸

John Ortberg – “Solitude is the one place we gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us.”⁹

Henri Nouwen – “In solitude I get rid of my scaffolding.”¹⁰

Jesus began his ministry with 40 days of solitude in the desert and concluded it with one night of solitude in the garden. In between he often withdrew by himself and encouraged his disciples to do the same. He is our model.

Much of God’s glorious creation is only truly appreciated in silence and solitude. We must stop and look and listen.

Solitude not only allows us to see and experience God as He truly is, it allows us to see how He is changing us.

Clearing your head, sharpening your focus, seeing the big picture, catching your breath, realigning your priorities, calming the emotions, relocating your foundation, greater sensitivity to others, as well as connecting with God, all are results of time spent in silence and solitude.

Solitude to your life is like a tune up to your car.

Solitude is like resetting your clock when it gets five minutes slow.

Richard Foster – “The tongue is our most powerful weapon of manipulation. A frantic stream of words flows from us because we are in a constant process of adjusting our public image. We fear so deeply what we think other people see in us that we talk in order to straighten out their understanding...silence puts the stopper on self justification.”¹¹

Silence teaches us how to truly listen and understand.

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

1.4 Wrong Thinking

We know we've done it.

How did we get so far off track?

It all sounds so good, we all agreed, we voted, majority rule - doesn't that make it true?



It's always difficult to turn around and **start to undo everything our confused, wrong thinking** has accomplished.

But if we never start, we never get started.

So let's start....start undoing our wrong thinking about the Most High God.

If we're honest with ourselves, we will admit that at some point we have wished or tried to manage the Most High to further our own purposes, dreams, provide for all our needs, right now. This is so much easier for us to get our head around. We believe in God, or at least the idea of God, isn't that enough?

But our god is often too much like us and not at all like the Most High.

So we end up with a **god in a box** – and we don't want to let him out. Our words may sound good, but our deepest motivations and actions point to a totally different kind of god.

Here's a list of many of the popular misconceptions about God in today's world.

- **Santa Claus** - Giver of gifts, but only if we're good
- **Super Hero** - When we're in need of assistance whether good or bad
- **Wizard** - Supernatural power provider
- **King** - Sovereign manipulator
- **Ruthless Warrior/General** – leading us to battle, giving victory over our enemies
- **Judge/Sheriff** – law maker and enforcer
- **Banker** - Keeper and provider of the allowance
- **Divine Repairman/Deliveryman** - at our beck and call
- **Force** – Divine energy to master for our own use
- **IT**- somewhere out there doing whatever
- **Grandpa** – Comforter and Treat provider
- **The Man Upstairs** – watching and waiting to drop the other shoe
- **Puppet Master** – controlling our every move for his entertainment
- **Bigger projection of Ourselves** - in all our glory
- **Taskmaster** – Big Boss in the Sky
- **User friendly cosmic Puppy Dog** – gets stuff for us, lets us pet him and adore him
- **Scapegoat** – someone to blame when things go wrong
- **Lifeguard** – plucks us from danger at the last minute

And so we continue....with our journey of discovery.

The journey to thinking rightly about God.

Your turn:

What three popular misconceptions of God (listed above) have you ever considered as true?

What did you base your belief on? Where do these misconceptions come from?

inventory

Your God History

Take some time to answer the following questions about your own personal God History. You may not have answers to all the questions right away – so take some time to think about them. Answers will come to you over time. Remember there are no wrong answers, only honest answers.



What was your first sense that there is a supreme being?

How old were you? How did it make you feel?

Did this cause any reaction or response from you towards God?

When you think about God, what mental image pops into your mind?

Has your concept of God changed over time? In what way?

Have you ever been angry at God? What happened?

God created man in His image. We easily fall into the trap of creating gods in our image...gods like us. In what ways do you view God in your own image?

What things do you find hard to understand about God?

What freaks you out about God?

What do you love about God?

What do you hope is true about God?

journal

1.5 Right Thinking

The best place to start **right thinking** about the Most High God is to **begin with His attributes – things that are true about Him**. These are the answers to the questions:

What is God like?

What has He disclosed about Himself?

There are two kinds of attributes; **incommunicable and communicable**. Incommunicable ones are simply beyond our comprehension. They are only applied to God and only describe God. Because.....

God ≠ man

God > i

Because He is so incomprehensible and transcendent we are overwhelmed and seek to define these attributes in terms we can understand, knowing this **only provides a shadow** of the true nature of the Most High.

Communicable attributes are easier to understand because we receive the potential to display these very same attributes in our own lives, even if in an imperfect way. Why can we do this? Because we are stamped with the image of the Most High God.

The attributes are all true, all the time and each applies to **all the other attributes** as well as to **all of God** (the three persons of the Trinity). And, they absolutely **never contradict or conflict** with each other. That alone is mindboggling. This is why wrong thinking is easier – still wrong, but easier.

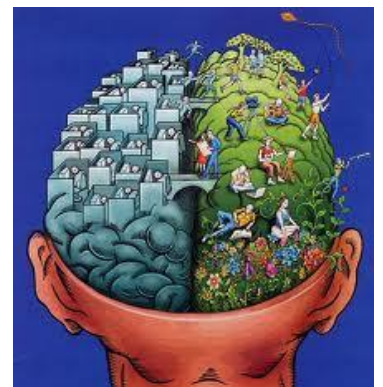
The Holy Spirit ultimately reveals knowledge of God. The more we learn the more we realize how much we don't know and the journey continues.

Your turn:

Why do you do what you do and believe what you believe?

List some examples from your experience, where you use, enjoy, trust your life to, depend on something or someone – without a second thought to understanding of the intricacies involved behind the scenes.

Why do you think you do this?



adventuring

On Assignment

Schedule a time to go out of your home or office and into the world for one hour by yourself in the daytime.

Make sure to go by yourself to a place where you can sit and observe people. Do not plan to walk around, or bring a friend, your dog, your computer, a book, or work to do. Put your phone on silent. Ignore text messages. Have a drink or a meal if necessary.



Some ideas for places to go where people would normally be hanging out include: Restaurants, coffee houses, museums, parks, hotel lobbies, airports, food courts, etc.

Watch the people but do not engage them. What are they doing, not doing, feeling, how are they relating or not relating to each other? Pretend you are on assignment for a newspaper, or a private eye on a stakeout.

- During this time, just practice observing what is going on around you.
- Write down what impacts you the most.
- Look for God to reveal things to you about Himself

Where did you go?



What did you observe?

What did God reveal to you about Himself?



journal

1.6 Glimpses of the Most High

Perhaps you've heard the story of the **Blind Men and the Elephant**.

One blind man touched the side and exclaimed with conviction,
Why, an elephant is like a wall!
 Another, feeling the tusk disagreed. He shouted his truth:
An elephant is round and smooth and sharp. An elephant is like a spear.
 Another, trying to get hold of a writhing trunk,
decided that an elephant is like a snake.
 Another, feeling a leg and knee,
was convinced that elephants are like trees.
No, no, no, said another who was enjoying the breeze from a flapping ear:
An elephant is like a fan.
 Another, who was holding onto the tail, argued
that it was more like a rope
 and still another, whose cheek felt the swish of the tail's tuft, argued,
Elephants are like paint brushes.

Not one of us, from our limited vantage points, can grasp the whole – but **we can catch glimpses and explore facets** of the Most High God.

When we initially respond to God and begin our journey with Him, it is usually because we have been attracted to one of His attributes. This may be because of our personalities, our strengths, our needs at the time, but this then becomes our primary picture of all that God is.

We will be in trouble if we stay there, and unfortunately many of us do. Some of His attributes we like and can relate to and some we don't understand, don't like and then reject altogether. Yet we know what the blind men did not know – that each of us possesses only a sliver of the truth.



God is bigger than what we can get our hearts and minds around.

He is the Most High – transcendent above all, truly receiving the Highest Honors.

This has been our first attribute to study, the fact that He is totally unique, so far beyond what we can imagine, so amazing in quality, so high and lifted up.

He is unfathomable and yet He wants to journey with us. To try to live on your own without God will lead to wrong thinking. **Does it matter?** Join our quest and find out.

Your turn:

Give an example from your own life where you had limited information about something and it distorted your ability to see what was really going on OR to respond appropriately.

lyrics

You might wonder why lyrics are included in a study like this.

I believe lyrics, or poetry put to music, as well as the accompanying music, have always been used by the Most High to impact our hearts and minds –

either by **our part in its creative process** –

or through **our participation in its expression** –

or through **our pleasure as a recipient** of its sensory benefits.



Please try to listen to the musical versions on your own - **iTunes** and **youtube** are great online resources. **If you are using the PDF version of this study and connected to the internet, clicking on the song title will open a music video.** The lyrics presented will not always be spiritual in their original context – but much can still be gained from applying them to how they describe and point to the Most High God.

I Saw the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIP2hHAQh44>

Lyrics and music by Dallas Holm
c. 1981 by J.T. Benson Publishing Company

The place was white as snow and pure as finest gold.
It had the look of new, yet had the look of old.
I felt like I was home, but felt so far away,
In fear I thought to leave, but felt the urge to stay.

And then a silence fell like none I'd ever known.
I stood among the millions, I stood there all alone.
His face was like the sun, His eyes were like the sea,
His voice was like the thunder rolling through eternity.

And... I saw the Lord
He was high and lifted up
and rightfully adored

And... I saw the Lord
and He saw me

And then from sleep awakened, I looked into the night.
The darkness overtaken, by a bright and shining light.
I couldn't understand it, I couldn't reason how,
And then my eyes beheld Him, I wasn't dreaming now

And... I saw the Lord
He was high and lifted up
And rightfully adored,

And... I saw the Lord ¹⁵

Your turn:

What does it mean to you to lift up and adore someone? What kind of person would you lift up and adore? How would you do it?

Out of Time

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7v4m8FwNqY>

**Lyrics and music by Matthew West and Helen Darling
c. 2004 by Word Music**

So, you're hungry for a taste of the other side,
Where the grass is thick and green,
But your feet are on familiar ground, Frozen and afraid of what you might lack,
Oh, if that's all that's holding you back

[Chorus]Come on, step out of time, Fall out of line
Leave a mark they can't erase, Find your heart and lose your mind
Watch the journey unwind
And let it be a new day - Out of time

How's your story gonna read
When they call your name and it's all there in black and white? Will you follow?
Or will you lead? Will you quietly disappear?
Or is this whole world gonna know that you were here?

It's time to be free, It's time just to live what you believe
What you gonna do with the life you're living?
What you gonna make of the time you're given?
When you are free, you have been forgiven
Now come on and step out of time

Once you go you're gone forever
Don't you know it's now or never
But I can feel a change in weather
Now come on and step out of time ¹⁶

Behind the Song: [Matthew 4:18-20](#)

"I love the story of Jesus calling out to Peter and Andrew while they were fishing in their boats. He said, "Come, be my disciples, and I will make you fishers of men!" Now, Jesus wasn't just calling them to go to lunch together, or maybe a weekend trip. He was calling them to a totally different way of life - a new path - and for some of them it was a complete u-turn! And when he called them, their reply was simple: "they left their nets at once and went with Him."

Sometimes God calls us away from the comfort we create in our own little worlds. This song is a call to ditch the usual and to step into the unknown. Nobody ever makes history by staying where it's comfortable. I don't remember reading stories in my high school history books about boring people who never took chances. Now is your chance to follow your heart and leave your mark on this world. How's your story gonna read?" - Matthew West ¹⁶

Your turn:

What *one thing* do you need to step out of right now?

What *new thing* would that allow you to step into?

What is stopping you?

What A Wonderful World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFoXcO8IINI>

Performed by Eva Cassidy and Katie Melua
Written by Bob Thiele (as George Douglas) and George David Weiss
c. 1968 by Memory Lane Music Group, Carlin Music Corp, and Bug Music, Inc.

I see trees that are green, red roses too,
I watch them bloom for me and you.
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

I hear babies cry, I watch them grow.
They'll learn much more, than I'll ever know.
And I think to myself, ooh what a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces of the people passing by.
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?"
But they're really saying, "I love you".

I see trees that are green, and red roses too,
I watch them bloom for me and you.
And I think to myself, ooh what a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky,
Are also on the faces of the people passing by.
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?",
But they're really saying, "I love you".

I see trees of green, and red roses too.
I watch them bloom for me and you.
And I think to myself, ooh what a wonderful world.

I think to myself, ooh what a wonderful world.

Intended as an antidote for the increasingly racially and politically charged climate of everyday life in the United States in 1968, this song has a hopeful, optimistic tone with regard to the future. After Tony Bennett turned it down, it was offered to Louis Armstrong, who sold over one million copies in 1969. The song has become somewhat of a cliché in film and television because of its frequent use in an ironic way playing over a montage of bombings and other violence as in such films as *Good Morning Vietnam*, and *Dr. Strangelove*.

It's popularity is further illustrated by the many superstars who have recorded their own versions, including Celine Dion, Natalie Cole, Tony Bennett, Diana Ross, LeAnn Rimes, Michael Bublé, Sarah Brightman, Rod Stewart, Stevie Wonder, Kenny G, Joey Ramone, Coldplay, Anne Murray, and B.B. King.

Your turn:

Before we can see, we have to look.....what keeps you from looking?

List some wonderful things.

How could appreciation of these things change you?

more cool stuff

What about Music and Math?

Are they proof of God?

Music is defined as the art of arranging sounds in time so as to produce a continuous, unified, and evocative composition, as through melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre, or simply put, organized sound.

Where did it come from?

Robert Doolan presents an answer in his article, "Music – Evidence of Creation":

"It came from God. It was given to man at the moment of creation when 'the morning stars sang together' (**Job 38:7**). The Bible alone provides an acceptable explanation for the origin of music and musical instruments. We read in Scripture that God surrounds Himself with angelic choirs and the songs of the redeemed sinners (**Rev. 14:2-3**). A heavenly choir of angels sang at the birth of Christ. We are told to 'sing to the Lord' as His saints, to 'praise His holy name' (**Psalms 30:4**). Again, we are exhorted to 'sing joyfully to the Lord' and to 'praise the Lord with the harp', 'make music to Him on the ten-stringed lyre', 'play skillfully and shout for joy' (**Psalms 33**). The purpose of music was, and is, to praise God.



Music provides joy because music has been provided by God. The theory of evolution can never postulate even a faintly satisfactory explanation for the origin of music or why it affects us. When we realize that God wants us to worship Him through music we see God as the Master Musician ... the conductor of all life. Musical instruments are mentioned early in the Bible. We are told in **Genesis 4:21** that Tubal was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Without the Bible we are unable to identify the first musician or the earliest instrument makers.

It also tells us, in the words of David the musician: 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God' (**Psalms 14:1**). Serious reflection on the origin and nature of music may yet redeem many such fools." ¹³

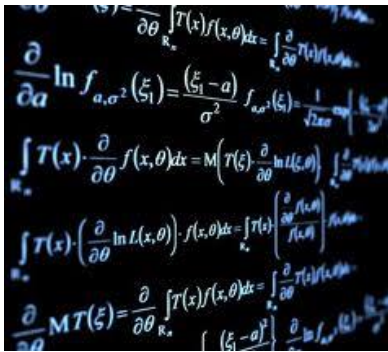
Your thoughts:

Math is described as the study of the measurement, properties, and relationships of quantities and sets using numbers and symbols. It is the science of structure, order, and relation that has evolved from counting, measuring, and describing the shapes of objects. It deals with logical reasoning and quantitative calculation.

Where did these relationships and properties come from?

In his March, 2006, article in Christianity Today, Charles Edward White describes the elegance and serendipity of high math proofs:

“The number i is a relative latecomer, proposed in the 1600s as an imaginary number and defined as the square root of -1 . It was proposed to help solve equations like $x^2 + 1 = 0$, but today it is useful in science and engineering. George Gamow, in his book *One, Two, Three ... Infinity*, even uses i to locate buried treasure with an outdated map.



The idea that these two irrational numbers should combine with an imaginary one to yield so utilitarian a result is breathtaking. It is like deconstructing a chemical necessary for life (salt) and finding that it consists of two deadly poisons (sodium and chlorine). That these three strange numbers with such diverse origins should work together to produce a result so basic to mathematics argues that there is a profound elegance or beauty built into the system.

The discovery of this number gave mathematicians the same sense of delight and wonder that would come from the discovery that three broken pieces of pottery, each made in different countries, could be fitted together to make a perfect sphere. It seemed to argue that there was a plan where no plan should be.

Because of the serendipitous elegance of this formula, a mathematics professor at MIT, an atheist, once wrote this formula on the blackboard, saying, "There is no God, but if there were, this formula would be proof of his existence."

Today, numbers from astronomy, biology, and theoretical mathematics point to a rational mind behind the universe. To be sure, they do not point to the personal God of the Bible as such. Yet they are not inimical to the biblical God, either. The apostle John prepared the way for this conclusion when he used the word for logic, reason, and rationality—*logos*—to describe Christ at the beginning of his Gospel: "In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God." When we think logically, which is the goal of mathematics, we are led to think of God."¹⁴

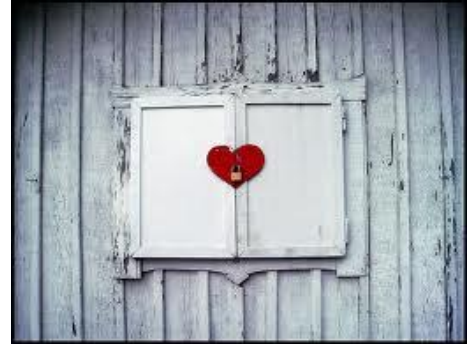
Proof of God is all around us...especially in the areas that boggle our minds...

Your thoughts:

journal

1.7 Nitty Gritty

The term **Nitty Gritty** means to get to the heart of the matter, the basic essentials or realities of something. The concepts below are the main points or the Nitty Gritty of the **Highest Honors** journey you have almost completed. Take some time to review them.



1. **An attribute** is something that is true about God.
2. **Everything we know** about God we know because He has disclosed it to us.
3. **Proof of Life** for the Most High includes creation, natural laws, moral laws, music, math, miracles, the Bible, the Church, fulfilled Biblical prophecy, Jesus Christ and you.
4. **Wrong thinking** about God creates faulty and incomplete views and beliefs resulting in our creating gods in our image.
5. **We want God to be** everything else but God. Holding an incorrect view of God is idolatry and is forbidden by God. It dishonors God and obscures His glory.
6. **God is not equal to man**. He is transcendent to all His creation, which includes us. We will never fully understand, although the Holy Spirit will reveal truth to us as we journey.
7. **For Further reading:** Isaiah 55: 8-9; Jeremiah 33:25; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:18-28; Exodus 20:3-7; I Corinthians 13:12.
8. **Extra Credit Reading Recommendation:** [Soul Cravings](#) by Erwin McManus.

Any final thoughts?

closure

Because it matters what we think about God

We have come to the end of **Highest Honors**, the first of the 12 OmniInfinity™ Journeys. This journey has caused us to **Remember** "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, His greatness no one can fathom." (Psalm 145:3) and **Read** Genesis 1-3 and John 1.

We **Analyzed** by Color Coding and **Investigated** the Most High and Glorious as well as **Practiced** Solitude and Silence. We also took **Inventory** of our God History and went **Adventuring** On Assignment. It has challenged and intrigued us with the **More Cool Stuff** of Math and Music and has spoken to our souls as we pondered the Most High through music and **Lyrics**.

The **Journal** guided us through discovering **Proof of Life** – both ours and the Most High's, as well as our tendency to **Think Wrongly** about Him by creating designer gods. It helped us to understand why we do this and then how to **Think Rightly** about the Most High.

We were challenged to get Him out of the boxes we confine Him in and investigate all His Attributes, not just the **Glimpses** we readily see and like. We now know He is bigger than what we can get our hearts and minds around. He is transcendent above all. We also know we have just begun our journey and have many questions and much to learn and discover.

Now it's time to **think back** over this part of your journey and **reflect** on what you have discovered and learned. The categories below may help jog your memory. **Describe** the details of any areas that **apply** to you.

New Things I Learned

Old Things I was reminded of

Questions I have

Areas I was challenged in

First steps I took

Areas I would like to study more

“AHA!” moments

Dreams and visions



credits

1. Ann Spangler, Praying the Names of God, Grand Rapids: Zonderan, 2004, page 294. This book is a wonderful presentation of the history behind the names used for God in the Bible and works well as a daily devotional.
2. A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1961, page 3. This is one of the classic concise explanations of the attributes of God. A must read for those who want to grow in their knowledge of God.
3. Written by Martin Luther in a letter to the learned and scholarly Dutchman, Desiderius Erasmus in the early 1500's.
4. David Hocking, The Nature of God in Plain Language, Waco: Word, Inc., 1984, page 80. Another classic, easy to read and understand.
5. A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1961, page 8.
6. C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, New York; MacMillan Publishing, 1952, page 145. Another wonderful classic.
7. Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978, page 86. This is THE modern day classic on spiritual disciplines and practices.
8. Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988, page 160. Another wonderful writer with great insight into the nature of Christian spiritual life and growth.
9. John Ortberg, The Life You've Always Wanted, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, page 84. A very user friendly book with personal, practical modern interpretations and applications of the spiritual practices.
10. Henri Nouwen – The Way of the Heart, New York: Ballantine, 1981, page 15.
11. Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978, page 88.
12. Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988, pages 159-160 and 175-176. This is a more in depth discussion on the subject of practices of abstinence and engagement.
13. Robert Doolan, "Music – Evidence of Creation", online article first published March, 1985, www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v7/i3/music.asp.
14. Charles Edward Wright, "God By the Numbers", Christianity Today, March, 2006, www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/march/26.44.html. Charles Edward White is professor of Christian thought and history at Spring Arbor University in Michigan.
15. Dallas Holm, "I Saw the Lord" lyrics, www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/dallas_holm/i_saw_the_lord-lyrics-1195503.html .
16. Matthew West and Helen Darling, "Out of Time" lyrics, Word Music, 2004, www.jesusfreakhideout.com/lyrics/new/track.asp?track_id=1264 .

All scripture references noted by NIV are taken from The Holy Bible, The New International Version, by International Bible Society, 1984, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids.

so what now?

Continue your Omniainfinitude™ adventure with

- Journey Two: The One and Only**
- Journey Three: Beyond Time and Space**
- Journey Four: Large and In Charge**
- Journey Five: Faithful and True**
- Journey Six: Good and Ready**
- Journey Seven: Bright, White and Right**
- Journey Eight: Hot, Hot, Hot**
- Journey Nine: O Mercy Me**
- Journey Ten: To Die For**
- Journey Eleven: Up Close and Personal**
- Journey Twelve: Perfect Ending**