

# ***SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THRIVING LIFE***

Thrive with us by following on Instagram and YouTube @FlagNazChurch, @FlagNazYouth and FlagNaz.org



What does a life without fear look like?

How does the statement “I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” change your view of life’s purpose?

Imagine you are known as the servant of God. What will you do tomorrow to bring Him honor?

**Isaiah 43:1-4** – <sup>1</sup>But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine. <sup>2</sup>When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. <sup>3</sup>For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. <sup>4</sup>Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

## **I) Staking His Claim...**

How many technologies do you use without thinking about the terms of service? You download the app, create an account, and click I Accept. You assume there is nothing serious in the document. Besides, you just want to start using the service. You ignore the fact that you have entered a formal relationship with the service provider, and it now has a claim over you. Not all providers are able to meet your expectations for the relationship, but they have a claim over you regardless. Many have learned this the hard way, having their identity stolen through some irresponsible handling of their data by the provider. In a similar way, God invites you into a relationship of His making. You just have to opt in by accepting His terms. His claim is serious, and He wants you to know His terms.

**JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

◆ **Origins:** Much as some disregard or deny the truth of what personal data is collected and sent to providers when we use apps, you can disregard or deny God's declaration of your origins. Even so, it is the basis of all the rest of His terms. His invitation to you begins, "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel... (Isaiah 43:1)." This is an invitation to reestablish your portion in the name Israel. If you do, you accept that He created and formed you. Everything about you belongs to Him. You are His craftsmanship. Collectively, those of us who opt in are the measure of His creative work.

◆ **His choice:** You turn to technology providers to do what you cannot on your own. It is their choice to create and offer the service on their terms. God has done something you cannot. Those who falsely claim His name without accepting His terms will be destroyed. To those who accept His terms, however, He says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine (v1)." He makes you worthy of His name by choosing you. When you accept His choice, you accept that you are His handiwork and grant Him permission to perfect His creative expression in you. You have nothing to fear because the burden of perfection is His. He chose you.

## II) Going Together...

Most service providers remain distant from you. The app is in your hand, but the provider takes no responsibility for whether it works for your good. The illusion of collaboration is a deception. Our God is the opposite. He commits to you as His beloved creation, promising to work for your good even when you are irresponsible. As long as you continue accepting His terms, He is going together with you. His truth is that He never left you, even when you rejected His terms. Now that He has redeemed you, you are invited to feel His presence again.

◆ **Through the deep:** Consider your map app. You put no effort into knowing your way. If the app fails, you will be lost—maybe in the middle of a lake. The app is your servant, and you tell it where you want to go. It better know how to get you there. God's terms are very different. He has already made it clear that He formed you. You are His. Not His servant—His glory. He will lead you and go with you. The way the rest of creation perceives Him all ride on what they observe of you. You may not choose a challenging path, but He tells you that "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you (v2)." He shows out by leading you through the deep.

◆ **Beyond impossible:** You get upset if the app leads you into a traffic jam. You want to throw your device when it leads you into a dead end. The places you want to go are accessed by passable roads with clear markings. God transforms you into someone who entirely delights to show His love and power by bringing you to and through unmarked, hidden passages that seem completely impassable. Only by thriving as you move through unimaginable situations is His majesty apparent to all. He does not say if, but "when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you (v2)." God's terms require following Him beyond impossible. You will go together.

## III) Picking Up the Tab...

Has an app ever brought you to a restaurant that cost more than you were prepared to pay? The terms of service are clear: the provider will not go with you, and you are responsible for the entire cost. You blindly go alone into an uncertain situation. God's terms are also clear. He leads you in wisdom and love, goes with you, and brings His wallet. He will pay your way if only you accept His terms. Be His, bring Him honor, and tell the world how good a God He is. Do not waver as you pass through and beyond impossible. Trust Him to do as He has said, and delight in all that He has made.

◆ **He's got it:** The problem with your relationship to the app is you do not know what is best. Sometimes you pay for a wonderful experience by sacrificing your future. Debt, obligations, trouble, pain. The app will not rescue you and does not care that it led you to destruction. It just did as you asked. God makes an entirely different claim. He invites you to follow Him "For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (v3)." He will lead you well. He brings His wallet. He's got it. "I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you (v3)." He will pay for your miracles with those He created who refuse to acknowledge Him.

◆ **Hard currency:** The app provider gains nothing by your good time. The ratings you give the restaurant and driver, the service provider gains nothing by them. It is removed from the transaction. God is the one transacting with and for you. He created you as the vessel to offer Himself to the universe. For this reason, "you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you (v4)." Precious, honored, and loved because you bear the name Jesus. He will pay for you with hard currency. "I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life (v4)." Opt in as one chosen by God and let Him lead you, go with you, and pay the cost to be glorious.