

# SPIRITUAL RUTS

ten

principles

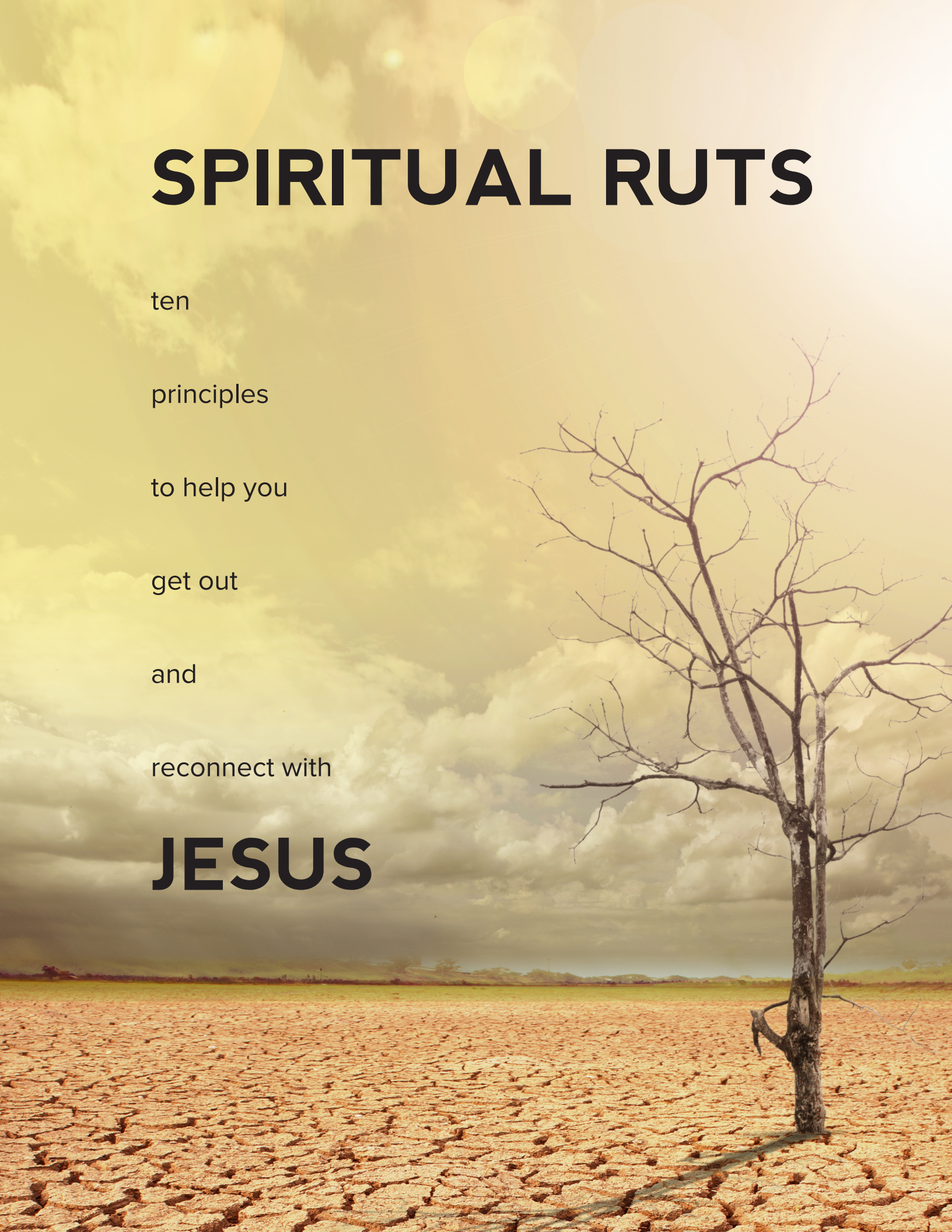
to help you

get out

and

reconnect with

# JESUS





# ARE YOU STUCK IN A SPIRITUAL RUT?

Healthy things grow, but not at a constant pace. There are good seasons of vibrant growth and challenging seasons of discouragement. These darker, drier seasons are extended when we're stuck in a spiritual rut.

The first step toward life in the rut is guilt. And guilt is not just ugly—it's powerful. It picks us up and locks us in a cage. In the rut, we see little more than our mistakes. Freedom becomes a distant memory. After a while, the un-confessed guilt leads to something worse.

Indifference.

Indifference means we stop caring about what's right and wrong. Once apathy sets in, we no longer look to serve God. Instead, we are more concerned with rationalizing our choices and inventing new entitlements.

In the spiritual life, guilt is disastrous and indifference is catastrophic.

Life in the rut is bleak, a spiritual wasteland. We settle for less than God's best for us. We stop choosing joy. Pursing our purpose is exchanged with playing the Christian game—propping up a façade to look “good” to others.

The rut is a safe place. There is little risk because we act out of our comfortable self-strength rather than Jesus-dependent faith.

On this side of heaven, we are broken and imperfect. The Bible calls this sin, which literally means to miss the mark. We fall short of our personal standards, let alone, God's standards. We disobey God, hurt others, and we even hurt ourselves. Guilt is unavoidable, but it doesn't have to take up permanent residency in our hearts.

If we do not return to God, temptation will continue its work in the shadow of our shame. Without confession, our spiritual rut becomes a stranglehold, choking out all life.

There is hope! There is always hope, no matter how deep the rut we find ourselves in. God's love for us is unconditional, unavoidable, and unending. His Son, Jesus, defeated the power of death and sin so that we might have life—real and abundant life.

In this devotional, you will explore ten biblical principles that will help you climb out of the rut—and avoid them in the future.

Praying for your growth,

Matt McGill

## OVERVIEW

**GIVE YOUR BEST TO GOD**

**FIRST THINGS ALWAYS**

**GET RID OF THE GUILT**

**REJECT THE RITUALS**

**DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT**

**OPEN YOUR MOUTH. OPEN YOUR EYES**

**BE DILIGENT WITHOUT TRYING TO DO IT ALL**

**STOP MEASURING GOD'S LOVE**

**REALIZE YOU'RE NOT ALONE**

**POSITION ISN'T PROGRESS**



# GIVE YOUR BEST TO GOD

***Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.***

The Creator of the universe invites us to spend time with him. He is without limits in every way we can imagine. He doesn't need anything from anyone. However, because of his love, he calls us into a relationship with him. When I remember this essential and elementary truth, I'm amazed and shocked and floored and humbled.

If you were going to a job interview, you'd show up prepared. You wouldn't be tired, unfocused, or easily distracted. You'd be fully ready and make sure you weren't interrupted. You definitely wouldn't rush the interview or hope it ended.

Getting out of the rut begins with a mind shift: if God is ranked number one in our lives, then time with God is one of the most important things we can do. God deserves our best, not our leftovers.

When you show up to church on the weekends or to your small group during the week, do what it takes to show up ready. Make sure your heart is positioned to give thanks to God and hear him speak.

## MY RESPONSE

[illegible]



# FIRST THINGS ALWAYS

***(Revelation 2:2-5)***

*What were those first things you loved to do? What would it take to live every day as if it were your first day in the faith? Rediscover the "first things" you did to grow, and pursue them with all of your heart.*

[illegible]



## GET RID OF THE GUILT

*What is one thing you need to confess to God?*

[illegible]



## REJECT THE RITUALS

***Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. (Matthew 6:1)***

*Where is ritual and obligation showing up in your life?  
What can you do to restore an authentic love for God?*

## MY RESPONSE

[illegible]



# DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

- ## MY RESPONSE

- Read a large portion of Scripture (two chapters or more) to get general ideas and thought flow
- Read a small portion of scripture and carefully digest each verse
- Occasionally make the time to read an entire book of scripture
- Read a devotional book
- Do deeper study and read some Biblical study reference materials

*Do you feel like you need more structure or less? What is one thing you could try differently for the next three weeks?*

[illegible]

# OPEN YOUR MOUTH, OPEN YOUR EYES

***Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (Deuteronomy 4:9)***

*What are ten things you can thank God for? What does the purity of your heart look like?*

## MY RESPONSE

[illegible]



## BE DILIGENT WITHOUT TRYING TO DO IT ALL

# STOP MEASURING GOD'S LOVE

# REALIZE YOU'RE NOT ALONE

***No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear... he will also provide a way out... (1 Corinthians 10:13)***

- “This doesn’t happen to others...”
- “If I was a real Christian, I wouldn’t be struggling this much...”
- “No one else can understand what’s happening to me...”
- “There is no way out, this will never end...”

*If this is your spiritual rut, who is one person you can reach out to and share about what's going on in your life?*

[illegible]



## POSITION ISN'T PROGRESS

***(2 Corinthians 10:12, The Message)***

***(Philippians 2:3–4)***

*Are you playing the comparison game? How has this impacted your faith?*

## MY RESPONSE

[illegible]