

What Do You See?

An Invitation to the Valley

Introduction

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If you are holding this book, there is a good chance you know something about valleys.

Perhaps you are walking through one now or have recently emerged from one. Perhaps you are carrying wounds that nobody else can see and grief has become a familiar companion. Perhaps a relationship has fractured and hope feels more difficult than it once did. Perhaps life has not unfolded the way you imagined, if so, you are not alone.

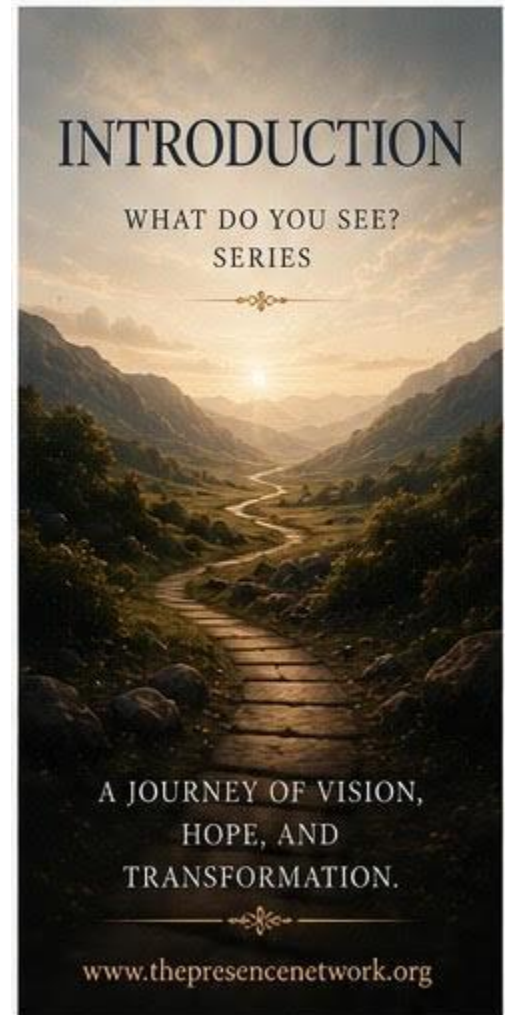
For thousands of years, human beings have stood in valleys asking the same questions: *Can things ever change? Can what has been broken be restored? Can what seems dead live again? Can hope return?*

Ezekiel encountered those questions in one of the most remarkable visions found in Scripture: standing among a valley full of dry bones, Ezekiel was confronted with a scene that appeared beyond recovery. Everything visible suggested death, everything visible suggested finality, yet the Creator asked a question: *“Son of man, can these bones live?”*

The more I have reflected upon that passage, the more convinced I have become, that the question was never really about bones, it was about perception, it was about vision. *The true question was about whether Ezekiel would define reality solely by what he could see, or remain open to what his divine Creator, the Eternal Source of all things could see.*

That same question confronts each of us today. When we stand in the middle of grief, *what do we see?* When relationships fracture, *what do we see?* When addiction takes hold, *what do we see?* When our dreams collapse, *what do we see?* When families become estranged, *what do we see?* When hope feels distant, *what do we see?* This book was born from those questions.

Over the years, I have sat with countless individuals and families navigating some of life’s most difficult valleys. As a pastor, counselor, chaplain, bereavement coordinator, and fellow traveler, I have witnessed extraordinary pain. I have also witnessed extraordinary resilience.



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I have watched people who believed their story was over discover new beginnings. I have watched grieving hearts find breath again. I have watched fractured relationships experience reconciliation. I have watched exhausted caregivers rediscover strength. I have watched people stand again after believing they never would, not because life became easy, but because something changed in how they *saw or perceived what they saw*.

This book is not a promise that every circumstance will unfold exactly as we desire. It is not a formula or a guarantee. This book is an invitation to walk into the valley, to tell the truth, to examine the stories we tell ourselves, and to notice the rattling before the resurrection.

This book is an invitation to receive breath, to rediscover purpose, and to pursue reconciliation. Most of all, this book is an invitation to become aware of The Presence.

One of the most beautiful truths in Ezekiel's vision is this:

God (The Presence) never asks Ezekiel to leave the valley before encountering Him.

The Presence is not waiting at the end of the journey; The Presence meets him in the middle of it.

Perhaps that is where you find yourself today, not on a mountaintop or a finish line, but somewhere in the valley, if so, take heart, you are standing on holy ground. Before we go any further, I would like to ask you the same question God asked Ezekiel, not as a test or a challenge, but as an invitation. Take a moment, look honestly at your life and your life-wounds; look honestly at your hopes and your fears, and then answer: ***What do you see?***

Let us begin the journey together...