
The Amani Pilgrimage

Kenyan Mommas Retreat 2015

Fish Eagle Inn, Naivasha, Kenya, Africa



Our Schedule*

Thursday, October 29, Meet at Fish Eagle Inn.

- ▶ 10am, Welcome with special love gifts & surprises
- ▶ 11:15am, Tea & Cookies
- ▶ Gathering, “Under the Kenyan Sky”—introduction to “The Amani Pilgrimage 2015—with worship, teaching, sharing.
- ▶ Lunch
- ▶ First Meeting, “Under the Moab Sky.”
 - Amani Walk
 - Color Your World
- ▶ Rest
- ▶ Dinner
- ▶ Second Meeting, “Under the Ephraim Sky.”
 - Prayer Dance: “Breathe,” by Stephanie Immordino
 - Star gazing
- ▶ Sleep

Friday, October 30

- ▶ 8am, Breakfast
- ▶ Third Meeting, “Under the Thebez Sky.”
 - Amani Walk
 - Color Your World
- ▶ 11:15am, Tea & Cookies
- ▶ Gathering, Pamper & Bless
- ▶ Lunch
- ▶ Rest
- ▶ Dinner
- ▶ Fourth Meeting, “Under the Thyatira & Philippi Skies.”
 - Amani Walk
 - Color Your World
- ▶ Gathering
 - Prayer Dance: “Breathe,” by Stephanie Immordino
 - Stargazing, “Time to GLOW”
- ▶ Sleep

***Times and
schedule are
subject to
change (smile).**

Saturday, October 31

- ▶ 8am, Breakfast
- ▶ Benediction & Foot Washing
- ▶ 10am, Departure

Welcome to *The Amani Pilgrimage 2015*, *Thursday morning*

“Our role in life is to bring the light of our own souls to the dim places around us.”
– Joan D. Chittister

Our Amani Word: Daniel 12:3



“Men and women who have lived wisely and well will shine brilliantly, like the cloudless, star-strewn night skies. And those who put others on the right path to life will glow like stars forever” (*The Message Bible*).

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (NIV).

Under the Kenyan Sky

We are so very happy that you are here. *This sacred space has been set apart for you to rest, receive, and ultimately, leave with a radiance that will effect everyone in your spheres of influence.*

We all have significant, God-designed, God-mapped spheres of influence.

Look at how God brought us together, *for such a time as this.*



From the
USA



From Europe



And here we are, Kenya, Africa

Our Gathering Time

During our time together, we will:

- ▶ Worship & pray.
- ▶ Grow in God’s Word.
- ▶ Share our stories.
- ▶ Color & be creative.
- ▶ Learn to worship through dance.
- ▶ Rest.
- ▶ Enjoy meals together.
- ▶ Take “Amani Walks.”
- ▶ Journal Reflection.

During our welcome time, let’s share where we were born—something about our “homeland.”

First Meeting

“Darkness deserves gratitude. It is *the alleluia point* at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in the sunlight.”

– Joan D. Chittister

“Ruth’s story is a chronicle of a walk of faith—of surrender to the Lord, of following Him and His ways. Ruth saw that the Lord is involved in the seemingly small events of a person’s life as well as the epoch-changing events of nations. She discovered this Lord to be the powerful and sovereign Lord over all nations as well as the caring redeemer of her life.”
-Life Principles from the Women of the Bible, p. 69

Under the Moab Sky, Ruth 1

“Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.’ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her” ([Ruth 1:17-18](#), NIV).

This is a simple tale of two women, Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth—two seemingly ordinary women—transformed into an extraordinary display of God’s redemption, sovereignty, and covenantal love (Hesed—lovingkindness—God’s love for humankind, Ruth 1:8). Both became a radiant influence in their family and community and ultimately, became significant in the lineage of Christ ([Matthew 1:1-6](#)).

- ▶ Context: What Do We Know? (Source: Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible)
- ▶ Author: Unknown, Rabbinic tradition suggests the prophet Samuel, but no real evidence (Talmud, Baba Bathra, 14b).
- ▶ Purpose: To demonstrate the legitimacy of David’s kingship despite his Moabite ancestress, Ruth.
 - ▶ What I love: it is a simple, direct, “quiet story of ordinary people going about their quiet lives” (Judges & Ruth, Cundall and Morris). Most importantly, this is a book about God and His supernatural care for His own.

- ▶ Date: c 1150-1100 BC BC. The book reports events that took place during the dark and bloody period of the judges (Ruth 1:11), approx. 1370 BC (after the time of Joshua, 1495-1385) to around 1041 BC when Samuel, serving as the last of the Judges, anointed Saul as Israel’s king, and the period of the monarch began. The events of the book of Ruth took place during a twelve year period between 1150 and 1100 BC, but the explanation of a forgotten custom (Ruth 4:7; Deuteronomy 25:7-9) indicates that the book was written significantly later than this time period.

Ruth shines the light on the power of remarkable relationships.

On that dusty road between Moab and Bethlehem Judah, Naomi and Ruth receive an expansion of capacity and purpose. As we will see, Naomi and Ruth were “unlikely prospects for any significant role in the Lord’s covenantal history”—yet, God redeems and works through each of them to fulfill His purposes and advance His kingdom on Earth.

Potential	Capacity
Root: potent, to have power; to be able. Capable of being or becoming.	The maximum amount something [or someone] can receive or contain.

Not only do they make individual decisions of faith and trust, they also make relational decisions that will effect the lineage of Christ.

We need each other. We are better together. God cares about us individually, yes, but he also cares about us corporately.

- ▶ Personal expansion of capacity and potential leads to corporate expansion which, as Christians, leads to kingdom expansion:

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

Time for a Walk

“Change may frighten us, of course, but it may just as surely free us from our old selves and freshen us for life newborn. Change dusts off our possibilities and explodes us into new beginnings. Like Naomi and the daughters-in-law, it points us up the road of reflection, where face-to-face with ourselves, our roots, our hopes, the unanswered questions of our lives as well as the inscrutable, immovable circumstances that surround us, we begin the walk to nowhere with somewhere primal in mind. And the mosaic called life shifts again as we pilgrim it, awake to possibility as we have not been for ages and attuned to the God who beckons, who companions us, on the way.”

-Joan Chittister, *The Story of Ruth*

Naomi and Ruth were indeed a radiant presence—shining stars (Daniel 12:3)—under both the Moab sky and the Bethlehem sky. As you prepare for your Amani Walk, consider the word, *know*.

- ▶ Know means “to have developed a relationship with someone through meeting and spending time with them.”
- ▶ Naomi and Ruth *must* have had a deep relationship built on trust and love. It isn’t recorded, but Ruth’s decision to follow Naomi seems to tell us that Naomi meant the world to Ruth. They had spent years in Moab together. What did Ruth “see” in Naomi? Ruth 1:17-18 clearly shows that Ruth wanted Naomi’s God to be her God. Ruth wanted to *know* Him personally.
- ▶ As you walk, spend time just “being” with your God—getting to “know” him more.

Second Meeting

Under the Ephraim Sky, 1 Samuel 1

Like the story of Naomi and Ruth, this is a simple tale of two women, too: Hannah and Peninnah, yet their relationship is *nothing like* that of Naomi and Ruth.

- ▶ Context: What Do We Know? (Source: Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible)
- ▶ Author: Unknown.
- ▶ Purpose: Sets the stage as God makes preparations for Kingship. God prepared his people for the time of the monarchy by raising the greatest judge in Israel's history: Samuel. He was no ordinary child. God exalted his mother, Hannah, through Samuel's miraculous birth.
 - ▶ What I love: this is a tale of a woman who faced physical barrenness, relational agitation, depression & despair, yet "she wept much and prayed to the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:10), ultimately seeing God's fulfillment of her dream.
- ▶ Date: c 930-538 B.C. and set in the hill country of Ephraim.

Hannah shines the light on the power of remarkable resilience.

Over and over again, Hannah is pounded by a rival named Penni (my nickname for Peninnah). Not only is she barren (which in Hannah's day brought cultural shame, 1 Samuel 1:2), she is antagonized. Multiple layers of anguish.

"Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her until she wept and would not eat" (1 Samuel 1:7).

To the naked eye, it is really hard to understand the "why" behind Hannah's pain, isn't it? Hindsight affords us the privilege of knowing her outcome. Knowing she would one day "hold her Samuel."

Hannah finally held in her hands what she held in her heart."
-Candace Rardon

Hannah shines the light on:

- ▶ Welcoming God into our why's.

- ▶ Believing God even when the barren places of our hearts and souls leave us parched.
- ▶ Knowing that our God is a trustworthy God—leading us to walk closely with him, even to the point of “weeping and praying much.”
- ▶ Surrendering our deepest dreams and desires into the hands of a loving, caring Father, because ultimately, it isn’t about us, it is all about HIM.
- ▶ And, Hannah’s story teaches us the power of spiritual resiliency: “Spiritual resilience is simply not recovering from adversity. It is about bouncing back in a way that deeper knowledge of both God and self may result. With the right guidance, during difficult times and periods of confusion, pain, and stress, we have a unique opportunity to nurture our relationship with God and enable it to grow in surprising ways” (Robert J. Wicks, *Spiritual Resilience*).
- ▶ *The Three-fold Cord of Resilience Training:*

Spiritual	Mental	Physical
Simple daily practices where we collect strength which leads to living from a heart at rest. A heart at rest is a heart at its best.	Daily, minute-by-minute choices to change/transform emotion-driven behaviors—the key here being: emotional regulation. Emotions are God-given, yet we are not to be ruled by them.	Learning to take care of our “temples” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). What does that look like in your very busy days?

A woman’s greatest gift to everyone in her spheres of influence is first and foremost spiritual maturity and then, emotional health and wholeness. Our emotional health is intrinsically linked to our spiritual lives (see Proverbs 4:23) and has to be nurtured. *That is why we are here.* In the states, we have a saying, “If Momma ain’t happy, nobody is happy.” We can’t control our circumstances, but we can, with God’s help, control our thought life, as written by Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

Time for a Walk

Hannah was a radiant presence—a shining star (Daniel 12:3)—under the Ephraim sky. As you prepare for your Amani Walk, consider the word, *listen*.

- ▶ Listen means, “To give one’s attention to a sound; take notice of and act on what someone says; be alert and ready to hear something.”
- ▶ As you walk, *listen closely*. Is there “a barren place” in your life that is causing you the same pain as Hannah? Like Hannah, *pray to God*. Let him lift that burden from your weak shoulders onto his strong shoulders.

Barren	Fertile
Unproductive; lifeless; bleak.	Fruitful; productive; high-yielding

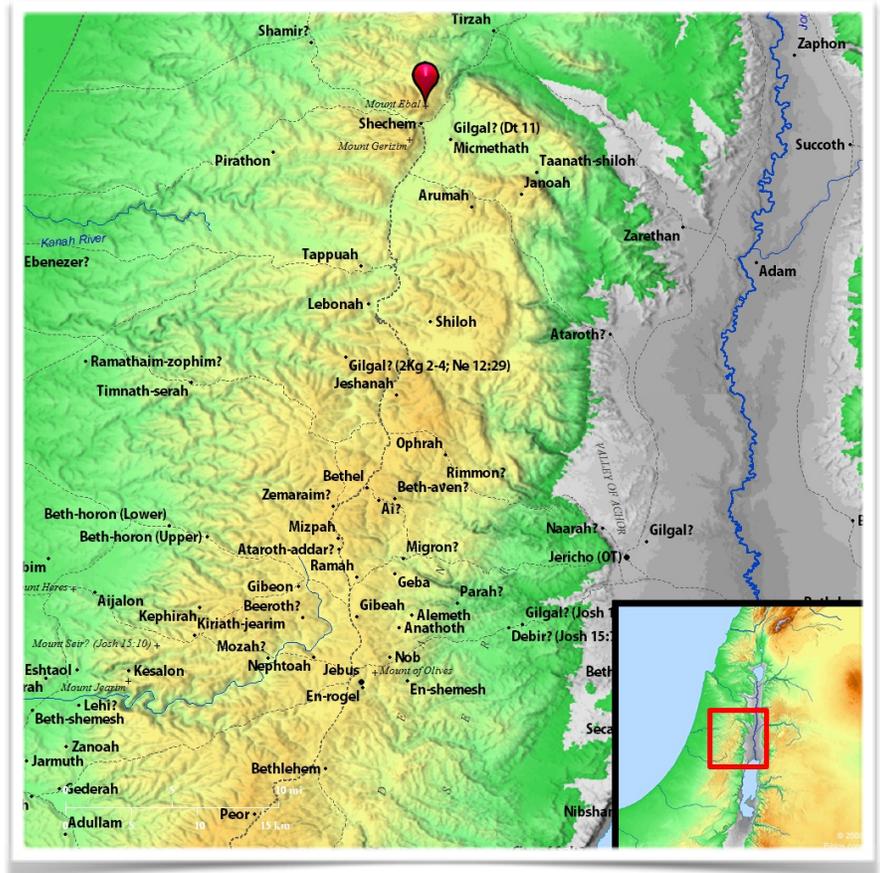
- ▶ Believe for your Samuel. One day you will hold in your hands what you hold in your heart.

Third Meeting

Under the Thebez Sky, The Woman of Thebez

This is the tale of one mighty, nameless woman.

- ▶ Context: What Do We Know? (Source: Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible)
- ▶ Author of the book of Judges: Opinions vary from the book was written by Samuel to the hypothesis that it was written late in the post exilic period. It is possible that its final form resulted from a compiler or compilers completing an earlier version of the book.
- ▶ Purpose: To establish Israel's need for a godly king from the line of David.
- ▶ What I love: An unknown woman courageously fights for her community.
- ▶ Date: c 1000-583 B.C. Our particular story takes place in the city of Thebez.



The Woman of Thebez shines the light on remarkable courage and strength.

Years ago, I discovered a powerful account in Judges 9:50-55. It tells of a remarkable woman locked away in a strong tower in the middle of a city named Thebez. When the news that Abimelech, a Philistine ruler and enemy of Israel, and his army were en route to destroy the city, all the inhabitants of Thebez raced to the tower for safety. Locking the door behind

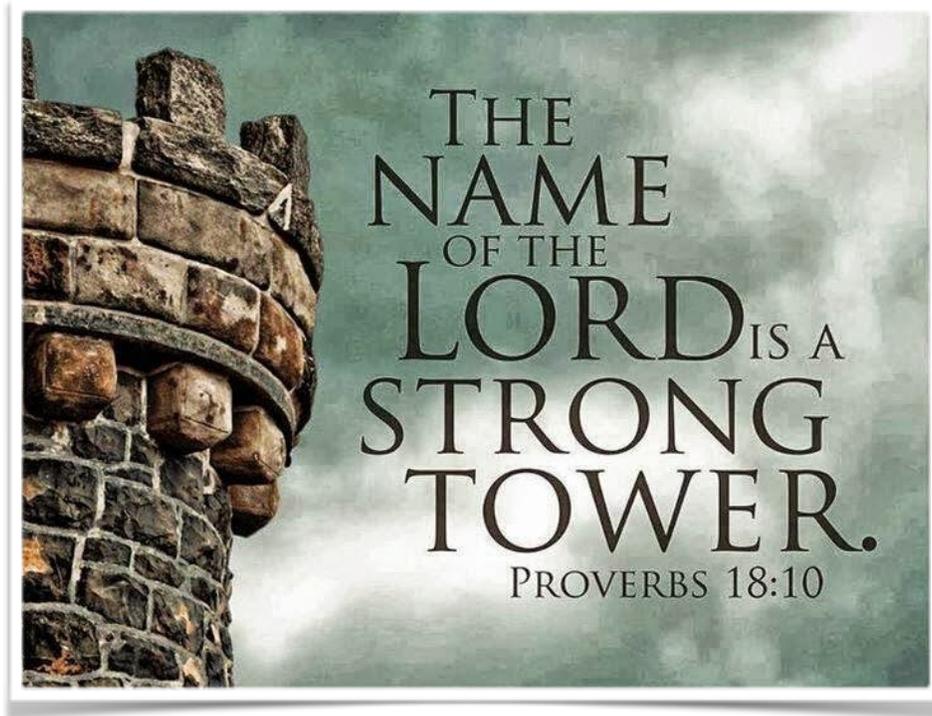
them, they all headed to the roof. As Abimelech came to the entrance to set the tower on fire, therefore destroying all the men, women and children of Thebez, this remarkable woman dropped a millstone on him, crushing his head. Abimelech, not yet dead, commanded his armor bearer to slay him so it wouldn't be said of him that he died at the hand of a woman (see "Rock-Solid Families," pp. 7-9).

This "shining star" woman of Thebez made me ask:

- ▶ Who was this courageous and strong woman?
- ▶ What gave her the physical strength and spiritual fortitude to stand against such a terror, Abimelech? How on earth did she pick up the heavy millstone?
- ▶ Why her? Why did *she* drop the millstone? Scholars suggest it was to further crush Abimelech's pride—to be killed by the hand of a woman was a disgrace.
- ▶ What on earth led her to take such action? Did she have children? Or perhaps word had spread of Abimelech's rampage, killing over 1,000 people in the nearby town of Shechem (Judges 9:49).

Time for a Walk

The Woman of Thebez was a radiant presence—a shining star (Daniel 12:3)—under the Thebez sky. As you prepare for your Amani Walk, consider the word, *follow*.



- ▶ Follow can mean several things. Today, we consider it as, “To move or travel behind; to act according to the lead or example of; to pay close attention to.”
- ▶ As you walk and consider this courageous woman’s act in light of John 10:7-9 (see Amani Walk of Peace Guide). It seems this woman *must* have been a follower of God—the supernatural source of her courage and strength. In order to follow God in our daily lives, we have to “watch” and “guard” the cycle of thoughts that go through our minds.
- ▶ Note any “inefficient” thoughts that might be hindering your ability to trust God—worry, doubt, fear, insecurity, _____?

Worry/Panic	Courage/Trust
“A cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear.”	“A cycle of efficient thoughts whirling around a center of faith.”

Fourth Meeting

Under the Thyatira & Philippi Skies, Lydia (Acts 16)

When we first hear of Lydia, she is referred to as, “a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira”—a city about 30 miles SE of Pergamum, known for its dye industry and the purple dyes it produced (such as royal purple)—(see Acts 16:14).

- ▶ Context: What Do We Know? (Source: Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible)
- ▶ Author: Luke, a physician and companion of Paul, wrote the Acts of the Apostles.
- ▶ Purpose: To guide the church in its continuing mission by describing how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to spread their witness (Daniel 12:3) on Christ’s behalf to the Gentile world.
 - ▶ What I love: this is a tale of an influential, seemingly bold woman—a worshipper of the one, true God—gathering other women together to worship and study the Scriptures.
- ▶ Date: c A.D. 60-64



Lydia shines the light on the power of remarkable radiance.

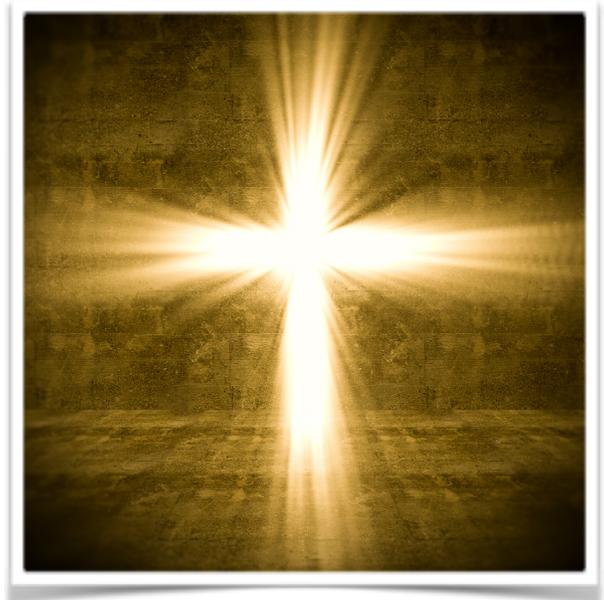
Lydia was a remarkable woman living out Daniel 12:3, our Amani scripture:

“Men and women who have lived wisely and well will shine brilliantly, like the cloudless, star-strewn night skies. And those who put others on the right path to life will glow like stars forever” (The Message Bible).

“Stars are a powerhouse of energy—with gigantic cores of fusion reaction that causes energy to be released and sent out into the universe as light” (Cain).

Let’s talk about stars: Stars don’t start as stars. A few “natural” facts about stars from my novice research. Please “listen between the lines” of these natural facts for the incredible truths that bring to life Daniel 12:3:

1. Stars are actually little suns in the same way the sun is star. Balls of glowing plasma.
2. Each time we see the radiant light of a star—we are seeing a star’s past. They release stored energy that has made its way to the surface.
3. The gravity of a star is very intense. They are held together by their own gravity. Stars are continually crushing themselves inward, and the gravitational friction causes the interior to heat up (universe.com).
4. The number and brightness of a star depends on “geography”—crowded city < star power; open sky > star power.
5. Stars come in all sizes—some are incredibly large, some are very small, some have shorter lifespans, others exist for a longer period of time.
6. In simplest terms, a star “shines” or “releases energy” or “emits light” when it travels at a specific speed and then suddenly is blocked or hits something...we actually see the moment each “little sun” releases their energy that had been waiting and fighting to get outside of itself.



Lydia, the radiant shining star of Philippi, “shines” and “shows” us what it means to be a radiant, powerful influence “under the skies” of our lives—in each and every sphere of our influence.

Radiant	Influence
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sending out light;</i> shining or glowing brightly. Psalm 34:5, “They looked to him and were radiant.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The <i>capacity</i> to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something.” Latin root, <i>influentia</i>, meaning, “stellar emanation.” Synonym for emanation: RADIATE!</p>

Talk about being in the right place at the right time. Because Lydia and her group of women decided to “gather” on the shores of that river, they were strategically, with God-designed, “God-mapped,”* intention, positioned to meet the apostle Paul.

*Note: “According to Jewish law, at least ten men were required to establish a synagogue. Failing that, a place of prayer could be established outdoors and preferably near water. Lydia and her band of influencers met informally to read and study the Scriptures, and they looked for the assistance of any Jewish teacher who happened to visit there.”-*Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible, p. 1784.*

From these five scriptures, Acts 16:11-15, Lydia gives us five traits of influencers:

1. Influencers *know and gather* with other influencers.
2. Influencers “*listen* between the lines of their lives” in order to *follow* the leading of the Holy Spirit.
3. Influencers have open hearts that are *receptive and willing* to move outside their comfort zones.

“One’s comfort zone refers to the set of environments and behaviors with which one is comfortable, without creating a sense of risk. A person’s personality can be described by his or her comfort zones. Highly successful persons may routinely step outside their comfort zones, to accomplish what they wish. A comfort zone is a type of mental conditioning that causes a person to create and operate mental boundaries. Such

boundaries create an unfounded sense of security. Like inertia, a person who has established a comfort zone in a particular axis of his or her life, will tend to stay within that zone without stepping outside of it. To step outside a person's comfort zone, they must experiment with new and different behaviors, and then experience the new and different responses that then occur within their environment.”

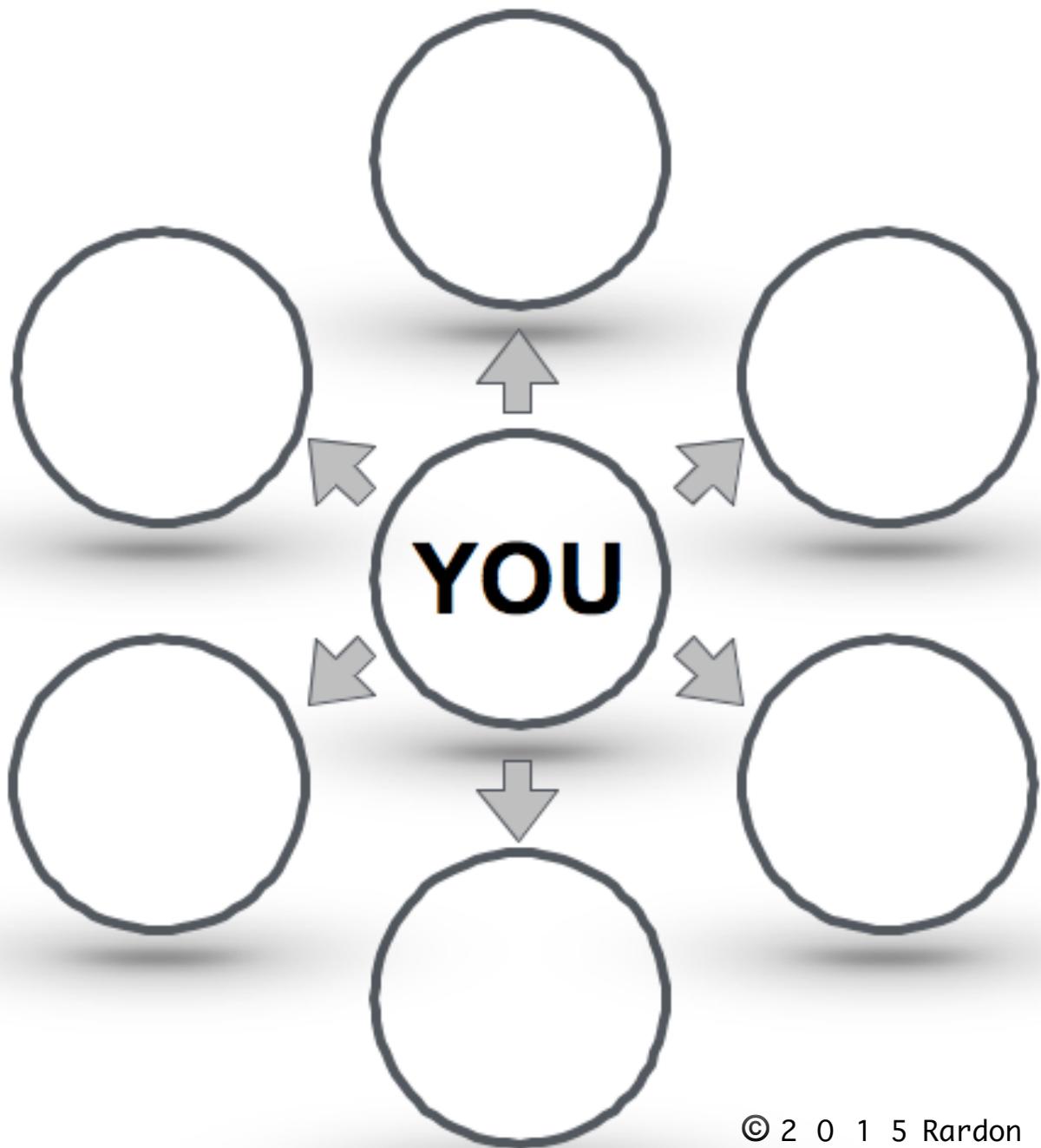
Each one of us has stepped outside our comfort zones to be here today, haven't we? The reward far outweighs the risk.

4. Influencers respond with time, talent, treasures and truth.
5. Influencers extend the divine invitation—which they have received—to others. They want others to know their God. They become a “radiant”—a Daniel 12:3 shining star in the skies of their lives, i.e., in every sphere of their influence.

Lydia was positioned “outside the city gate” with her small gathering of influencers, meets Paul and the disciples, hears and responds to his teaching, hungers for more, invites Paul and the disciples to her home...and the rest is history: the church of Philippi is born.

Who is in “your sky?”

Matthew 13:43 (AMP), “Then the righteous [those who seek the will of God] will shine forth [radiating the new life] like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear and heed My words.”



Time for a Walk

Lydia was a radiant presence—a shining star (Daniel 12:3)—under both the Thyatira and Philippi skies. As you prepare for your Amani Walk, consider the word, *radiant—and abundance*. They truly go hand-in-hand.

- ▶ Refer back to our definition of radiant, meaning, “Sending out light; shining or glowing brightly” and influence, meaning, “The capacity to have an effect on the character development, or behavior of someone or something.”
- ▶ As you walk, *reflect*. God has strategically, God-planned and God-mapped your life. To whom are you called to influence?
- ▶ What would becoming “a Daniel 12:3 Shining Star”—a radiant presence—look like to you?
- ▶ Does it look like “being perfect?”
- ▶ Soak in this precious quiet time. One of my favorite authors writes, “Women need solitude in order to find again the essence of themselves” (Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift of the Sea*).

