



Presents...

RETELLING

YOUR STORY

STORY JOURNAL

RETELLING YOUR STORY



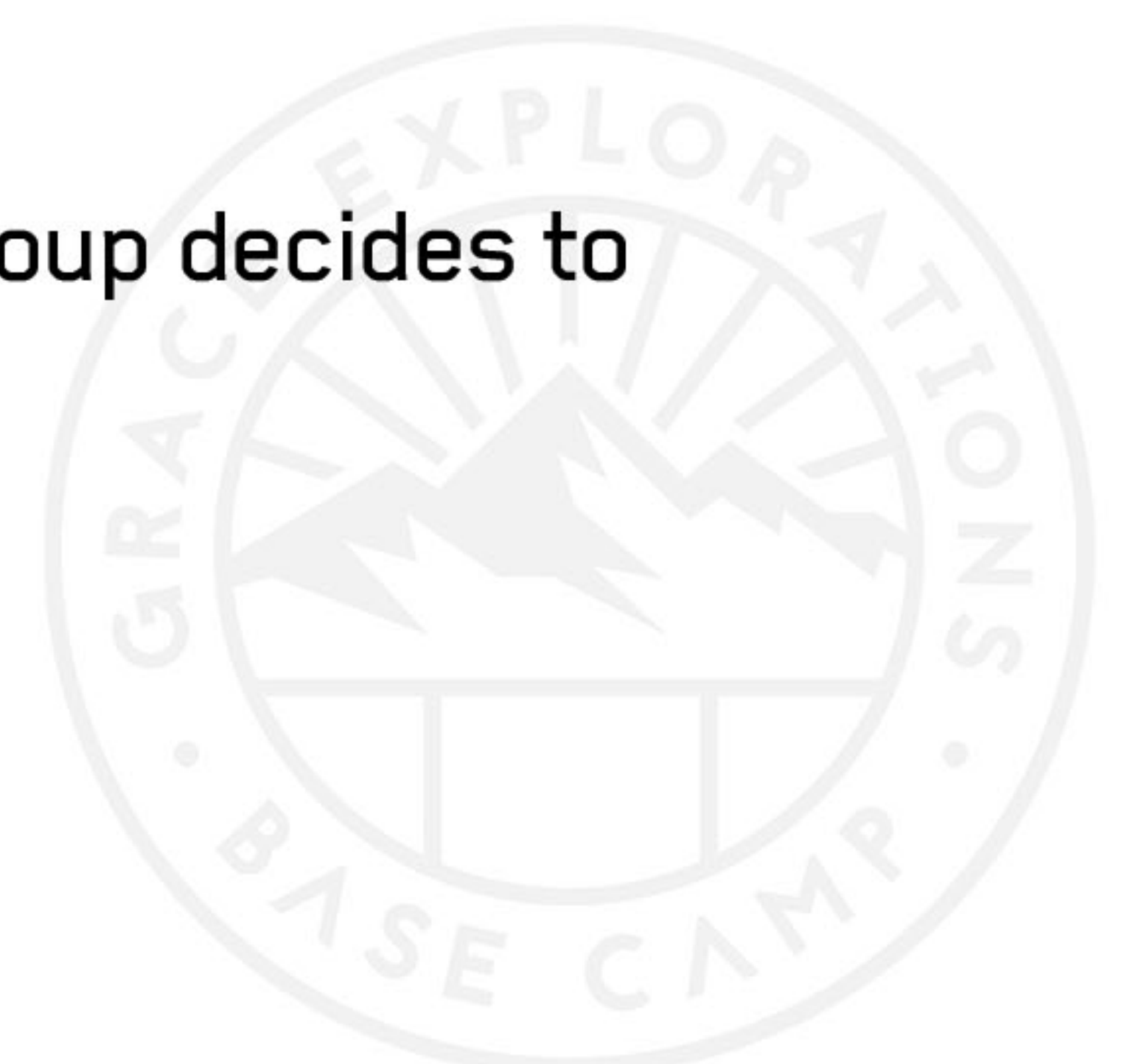
SESSION INTRO

NAVIGATING A STORY GROUP

The foundation of a story group is connecting and feeling known. As a participant in this group, there are things you can focus on that will help to make this a reality. At the beginning, group members are deciding if this group is going to work for them. They are sizing each other up trying to figure out what this is all about.

As a first step toward creating the environment in your group where something great can happen, consider these suggestions. Come up with some of your own as well. It's your group...

- **Be curious instead of judgemental.** Being curious about our stories encourages conversation and growth, judgmentalism shuts it down
- **Agree to confidentiality.** Assure your group members that what is said in the group will stay in the group.
- **Take time to respond.** Every time a story is shared, let the storyteller know you were listening by sharing how their story impacted you. Ask yourself how the story landed in your own heart and offer that to the storyteller.
- **Listen more than you speak.** Receive each story as a gift. Don't steal the spotlight from the storyteller, and when you respond, speak in sentences not paragraphs.
- **Don't treat each other as a problem to fix.** No excessive teaching, advice giving, prying, over spiritualizing, or interrogating.
- **Show up for each other.** Agree to being there every time your group decides to meet.



WHAT'S THE POINT OF A STORY GROUP?

Exploration: Surveying the road we have travelled in our story to put words to the painful experiences of our lives where we were hurt, betrayed, abandoned, and forgotten. A wound unopened is a wound that will not heal.

Excavation: Digging up the lies and messages we have received about ourselves, God, the world, and others that have impacted our lives and kept us feeling fearful and alone.

Interpretation: Deciphering and being honest about the ways we have mishandled these messages to try and secure our world, avoid pain, and make our life work apart from the grace of God.

Reinterpretation: Discovering the places where God has been active in our stories, and opening ourselves up to a new understanding.

Restoration: Seeing our story through the lens of the Gospel as we repent of our self protective ways and return to a Father who loves, accepts us, and wants to redeem our story.

LET'S GET STARTED!





SESSION 1: Recalling Kairos Moments

“Many lives have a mystical sense, but not everyone reads it right; more often than not it is given to us in cryptic form, and when we fail to decipher it we despair because our lives seem meaningless...The secret of a great life is often a man’s success in deciphering the mysterious symbols vouchsafed to him, understanding them, and so learning to walk in the true path.” Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

NOTES

What is a “Kairos Moment”?

What are two types of wounds?:

GROUP SESSION

Reflect back and explore 4-5 Kairos moment stories from your childhood that involved hurt, betrayal, fear, or abandonment. Journal out these stories around the following questions and give each man 15 minutes to share a few of the most impactful Kairos moments with the group.

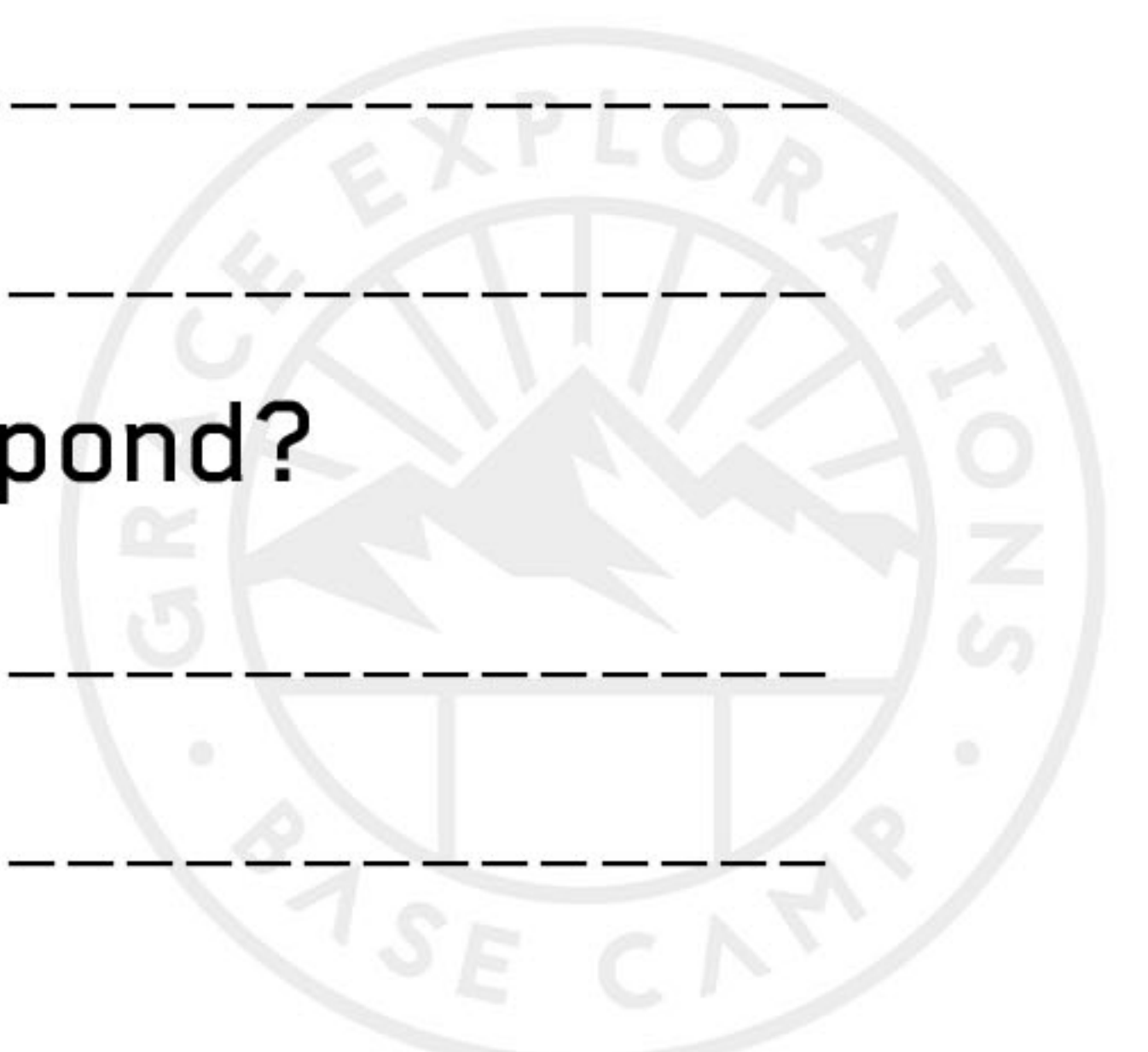
STORY 1:

What happened? _____

Who was there? _____

How did it feel? _____

What did I do with this story? Who have I told, and how did they respond?



STORY 2:

What happened? _____

Who was there? _____

How did it feel? _____

What did I do with this story? Who have I told, and how did they respond?

STORY 3:

What happened? _____

Who was there? _____

How did it feel? _____

What did I do with this story? Who have I told, and how did they respond?

STORY 4:

What happened? _____

Who was there? _____

How did it feel? _____

What did I do with this story? Who have I told, and how did they respond?

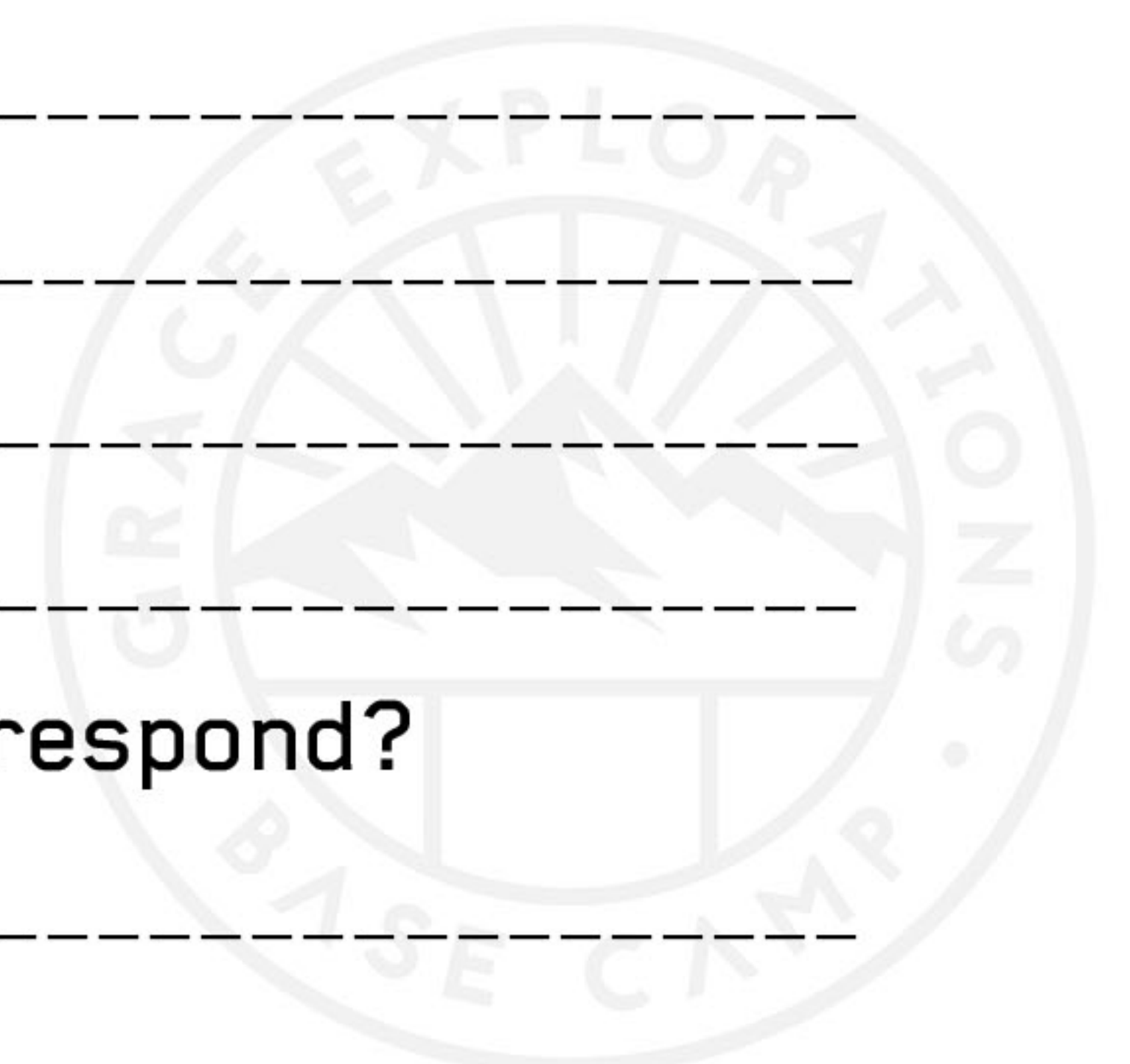
STORY 5:

What happened? _____

Who was there? _____

How did it feel? _____

What did I do with this story? Who have I told, and how did they respond?





SESSION 2: Revealing the Shame Message

"With every step of our lives we enter into the middle of some story which we are certain to misunderstand." G.K. Chesterton

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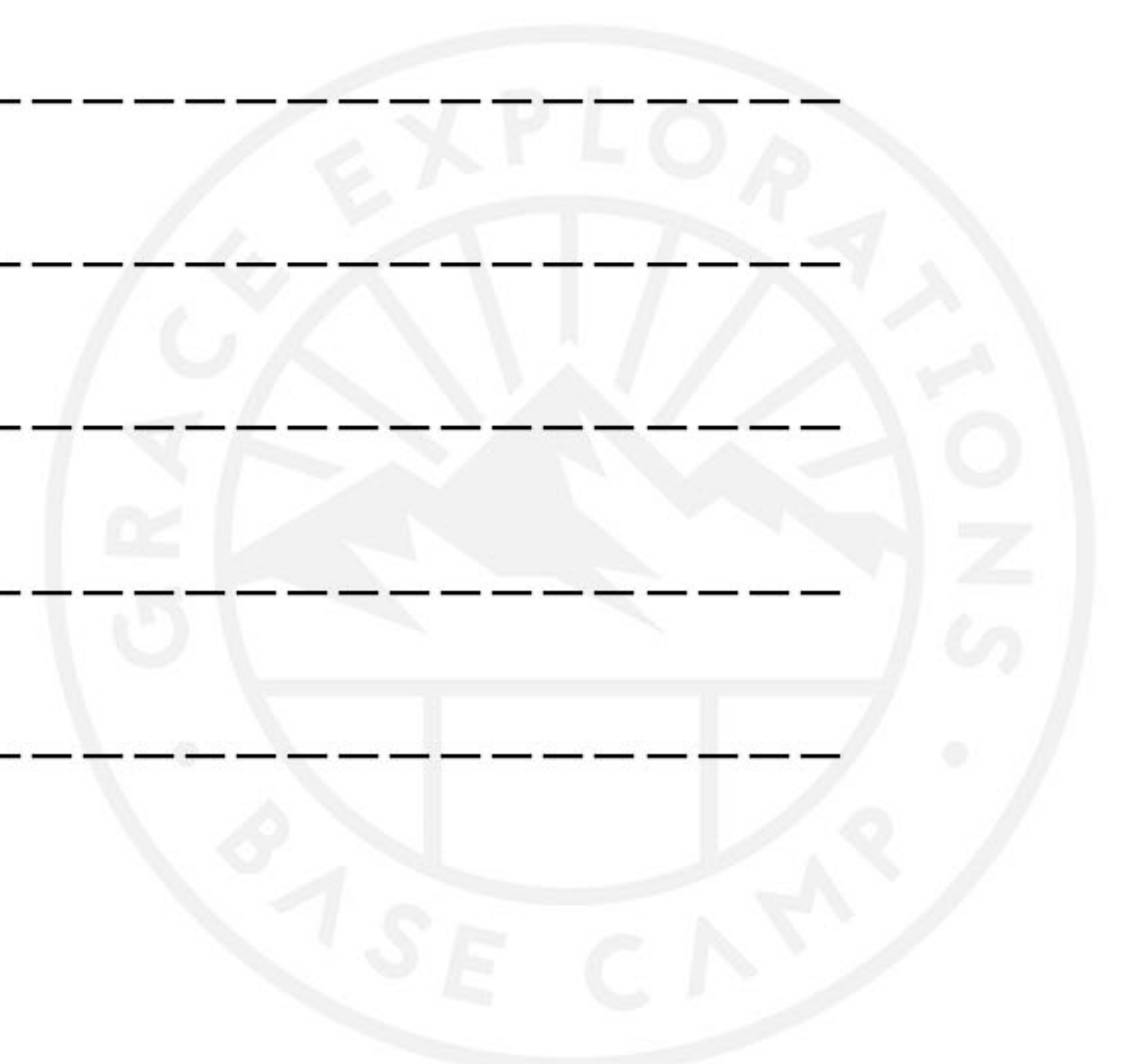
How do you define shame?

What is the difference between shame and guilt?:

GROUP SESSION

Reflect back again on your story, and begin to notice some of the common themes that emerged from your wounding experiences and share them with your group.

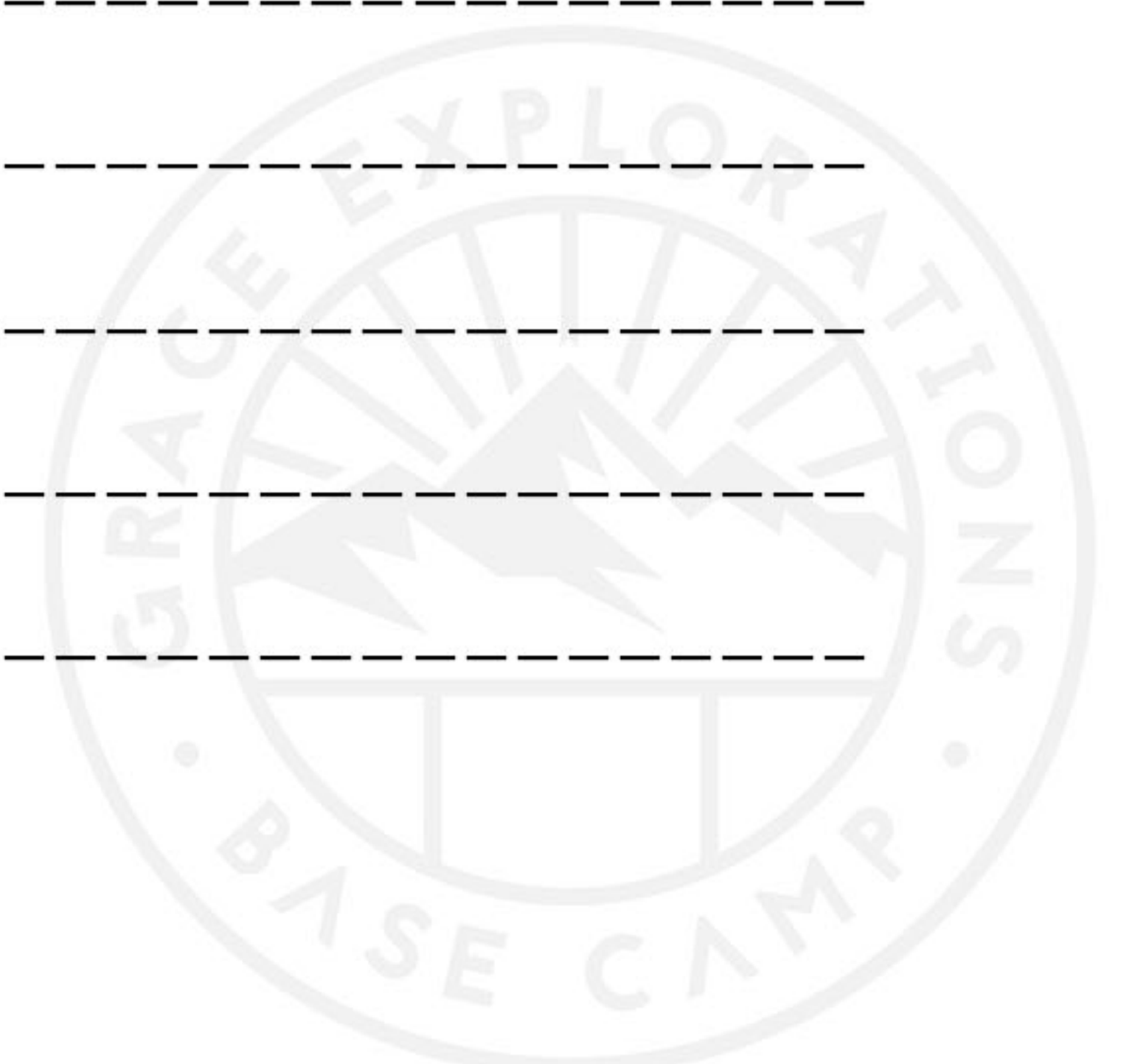
What did my wounding experiences communicate to me about me?



What did my wounding experiences communicate about where I belonged?

What did my story communicate about my significance, value, and worth?

Based on my wounding experiences and the shame communicated to me, how would I finish the phrase "I AM _____."





SESSION 3: Reactions to Shame

“What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous. THOMAS MERTON

NOTES

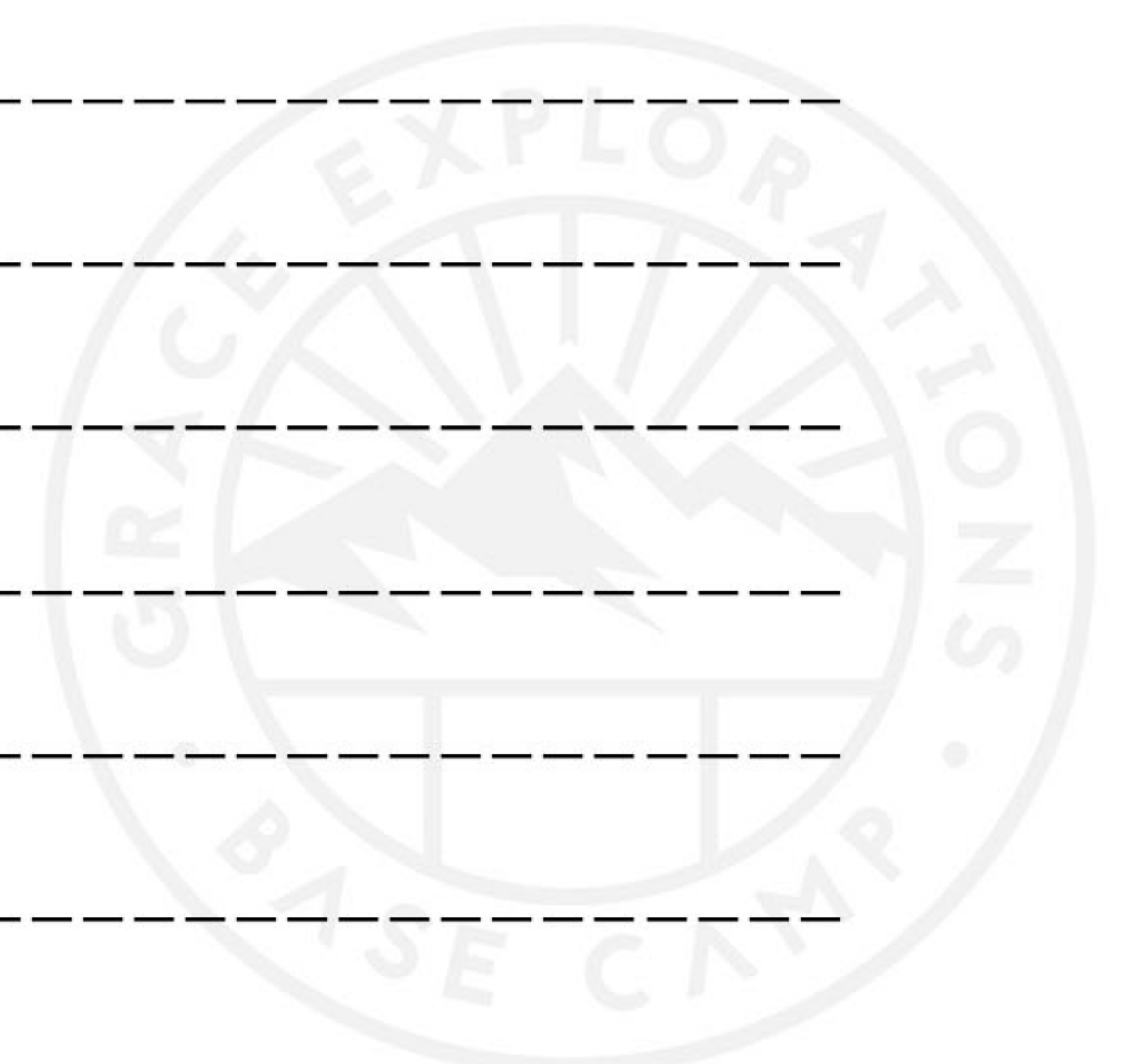
What two things does shame produce?

In what three ways do we hide our shame?

GROUP SESSION

Continue to excavate your story. Share some thoughts with your group about the ways you have responded to your shame message. Use the following questions to help you organize your thoughts.

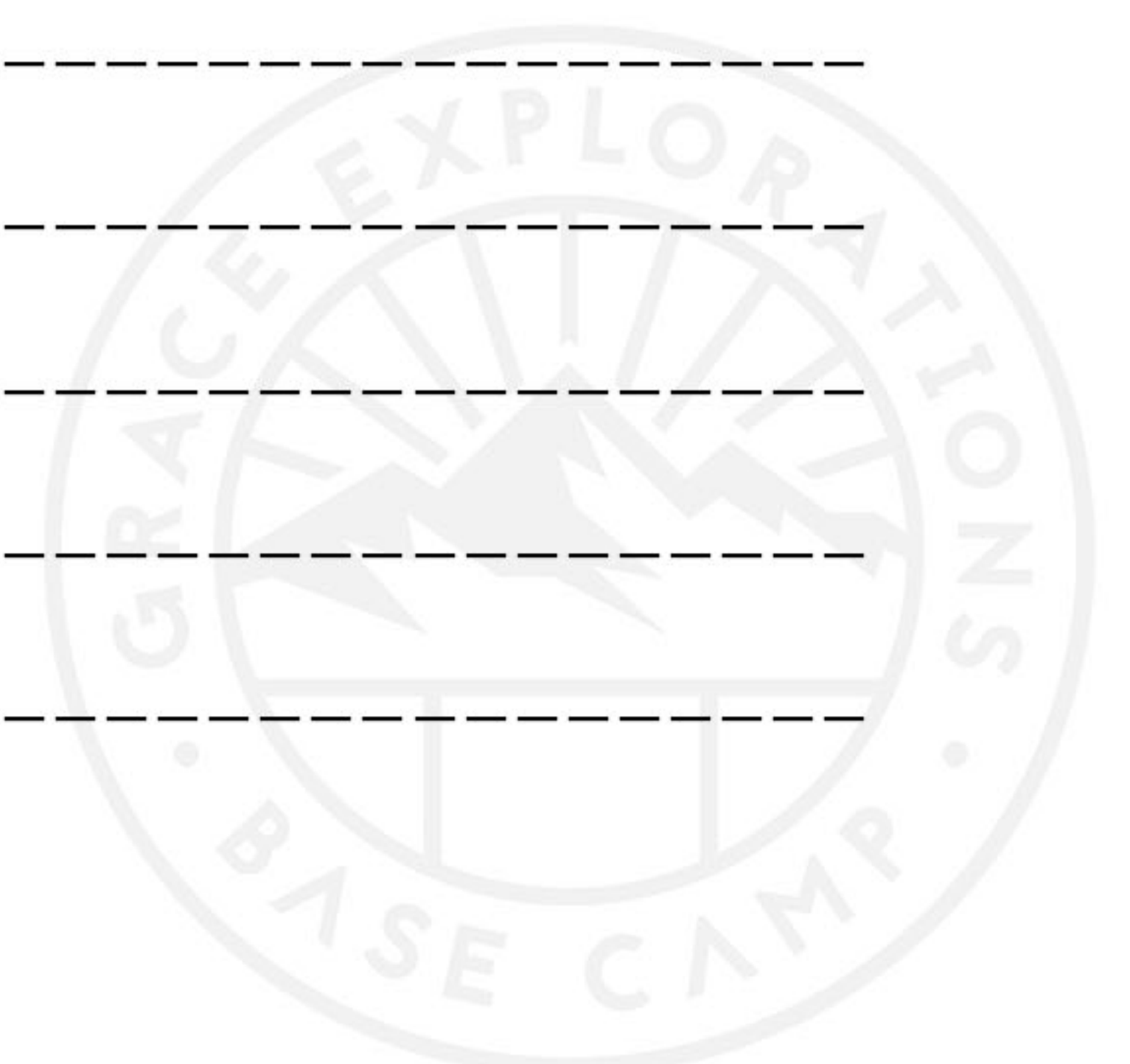
When in your life do you feel fearful? What circumstances leave you feeling exposed?



How do I fight against the message of my wounds? Am I prone to drivenness, anger, or a grasping for control?

How do I wear the message of my wounds? Am I prone to passivity, self-hatred, and comparison? Do I shut down and disappear when I'm fearful?

How do I avoid the message of my wounds? Am I prone to numbing, checking out, and just acting like everything is fine, even when it is not?





SESSION 4: Realizing the Damage

"Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering." AUGUSTINE

NOTES

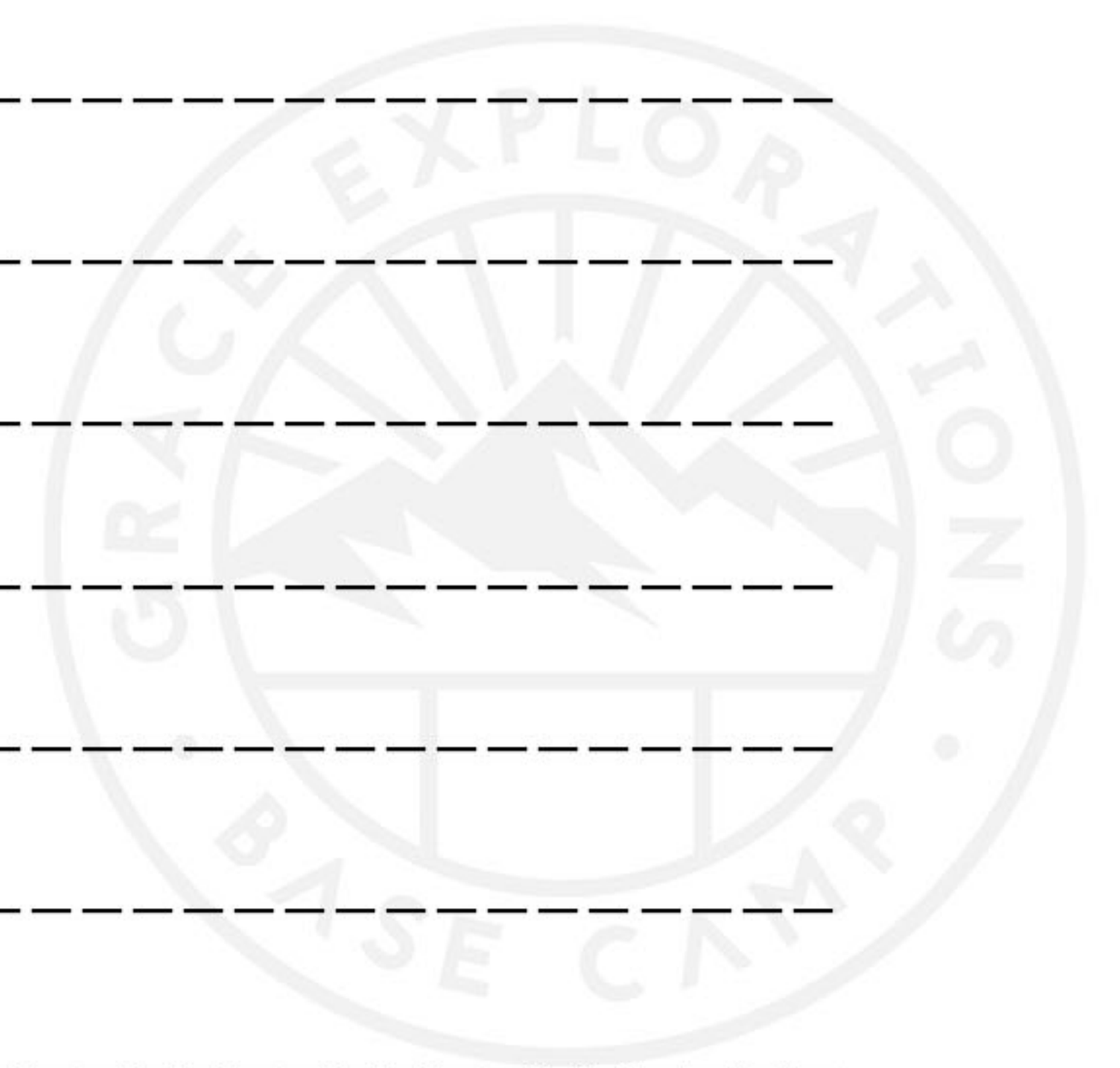
What creates the lens that we filter our lives through?

If healing is not the resolution of our story, how do we experience healing?

GROUP SESSION

Seek to build an understanding of the lens you have used to interpret your story. Share some thoughts with your group on how it has impacted your life and relationships.

How have you felt sifted? How did you respond? When have you been confronted with your own brokenness, leaving you exposed and fearful?



What vows and strategies have you created for yourself to avoid dealing with the pain and shame in your story?

How are these strategies working for you?





SESSION 5: Receiving a New Identity

"Healing comes when our story is raw, bone-deep, and full of hunger for what only Jesus can offer"

DAN ALLENDER

NOTES

Why do you think Peter went back to fishing?

What is the difference between coming to God with a clenched fist, as opposed to an open hand?

GROUP SESSION

As you reinterpret your story and begin to see it through the lens of the Gospel, share some experiences where God has met you in your story. Maybe take some time to get alone and ask God to reveal the places where he wants to teach you, show you something, or give you new insight. Spend some time looking at redemption stories in the Bible like King David's or Mary Magdalene's. Read Psalm 139 and then bring these questions to Him and journal what lands in your heart.

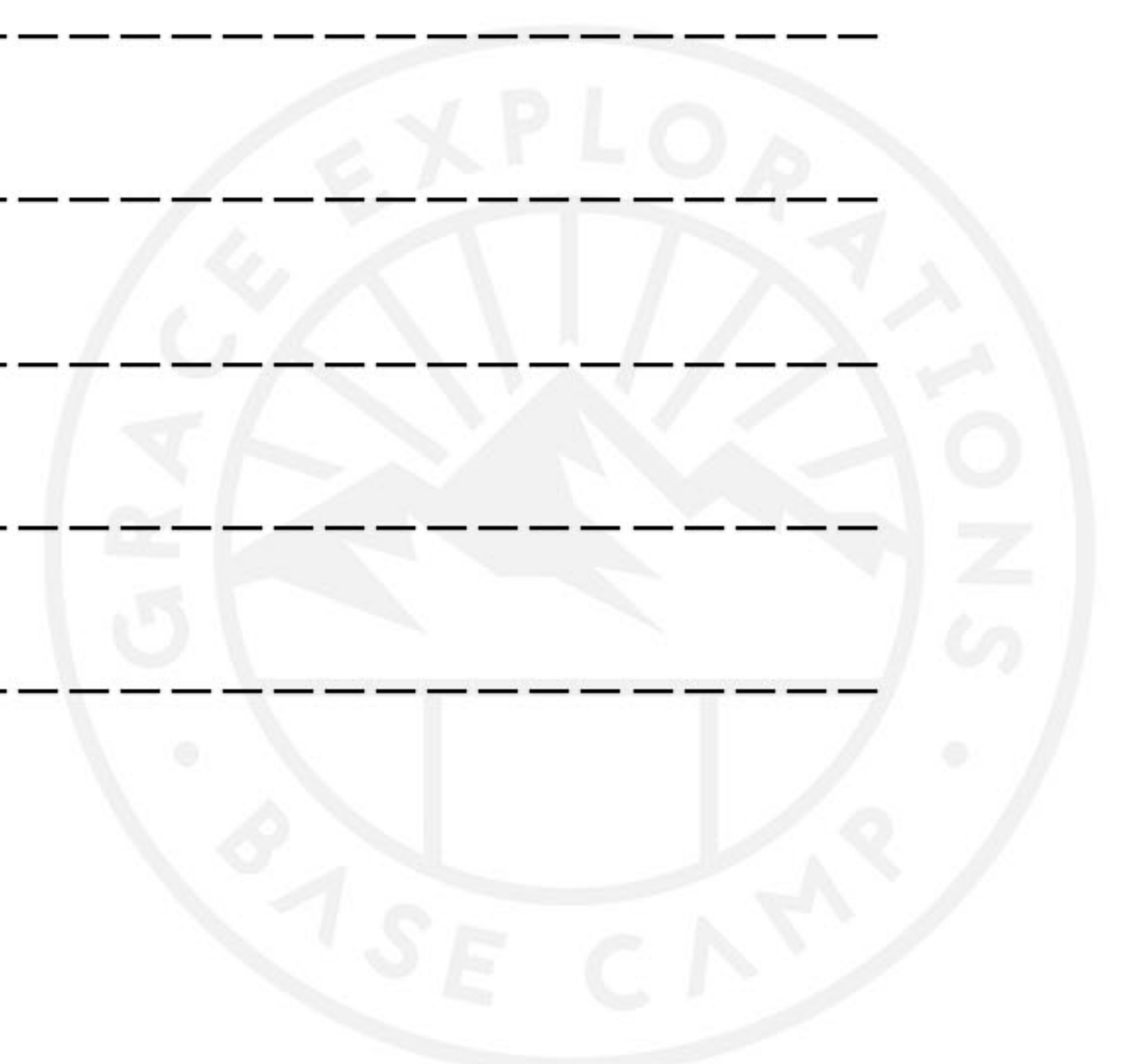
God, who am I to you?



God, what are you trying to show me in my story?

God, where have you been at work in my story?

God, who have you used in my story to show grace and speak truth to me?





SESSION 6: Rejecting God's Story

"The story of your life is a long and brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows who you could be and fears it." JOHN ELDRIDGE

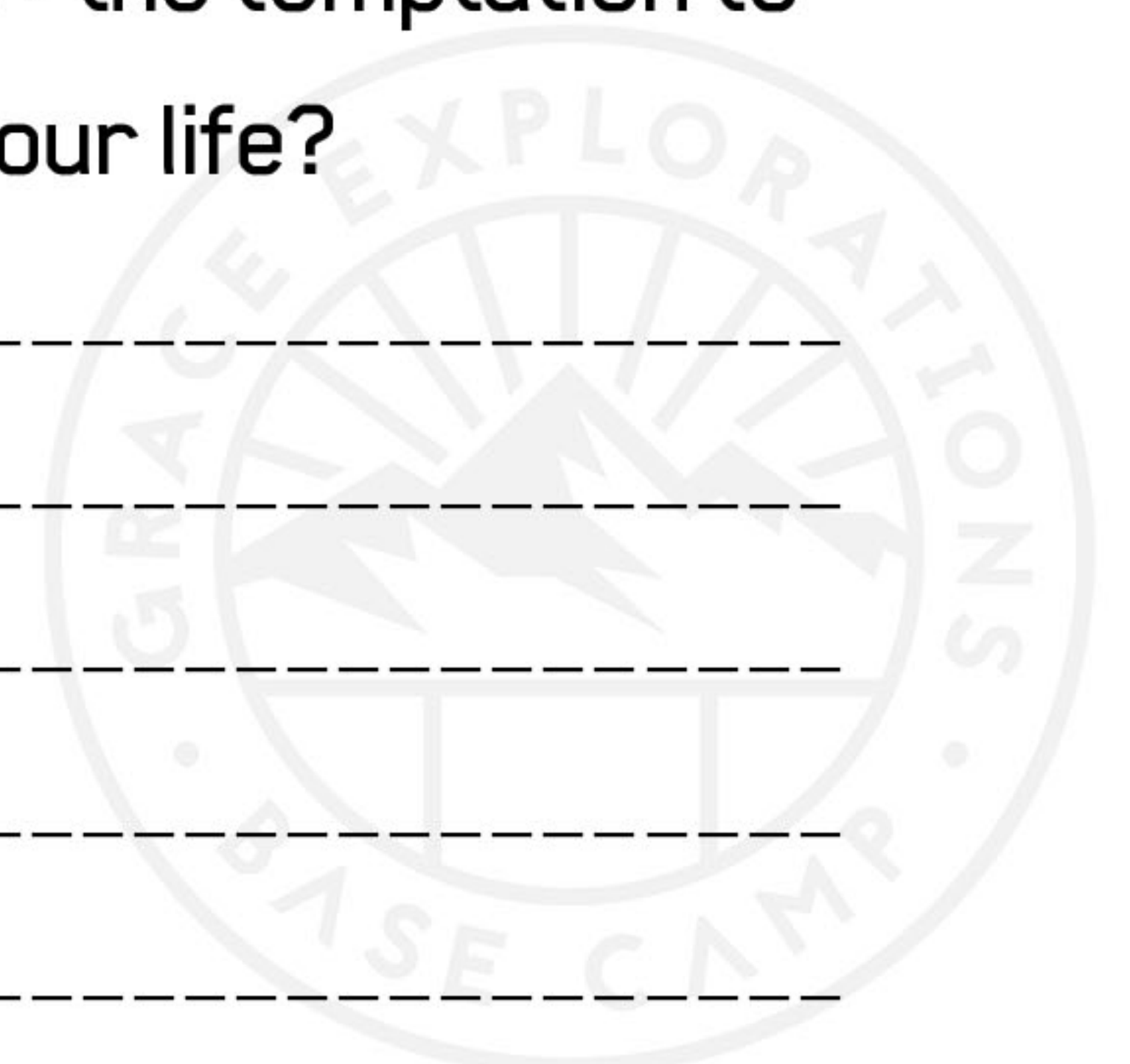
NOTES

What do the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represent?

GROUP SESSION

The struggle doesn't just go away. Interpretation and reinterpretation in your story is important, but the enemy will always try and pull us back. Share with your group about where the battle has been for you lately. Also share some places where you have made the choice to trust God's story in the midst of the battle, instead of writing your own story.

When do you feel caught between the two trees mentioned in the video - the temptation to write your own story instead of trusting the story God is writing with your life?



What typically happens when you get pulled back into writing your own story?

How have you seen God working as you choose to trust Him and live dependent on Him and others?





SESSION 7: Returning to God

*“Take seriously the story God has given you to live.
It’s time to read your own life, because your story is one
that could set us all ablaze.” DAN ALLENDER*

NOTES

What does the parable of the lost son show us about the heart of God?

What do the robe, ring, and feast represent?

GROUP SESSION

As we seek restoration in our stories and we begin to see our stories through a Gospel lens, it is good to consider what has changed. Share some of the changes you have seen in yourself, and bless some of the changes you are seeing in your group members.

How have I viewed God in the past based on my story, and how has that changed?

