

# 25-0910, Engagement Project, Tour 2

## The Engagement Project

### Tour 2, Part 2: Fall, the River of Death

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#### Navigating the River of Death

##### Unpacking the Fall's Lasting Echoes in The Engagement Project

In a world that often feels like it's adrift on turbulent waters, Del Tackett's *The Engagement Project* offers a lifeline—a series of worldview tours designed to anchor us in the unchanging truths of Scripture. As a continuation of his acclaimed *Truth Project*, this 10-tour journey invites believers into a profound quest: seeking the face of God and glimpsing the "Crown Jewel" in His nature—His redemptive love. Tour 2, "Fall: The River of Death," plunges us into the sobering aftermath of humanity's original rebellion, exposing how the Fall unleashed a cascade of brokenness that still shapes our lives today.

Yesterday, on September 10, 2025, teacher Scott led a compelling session on Part 2 of this tour, building on the cosmic battle between truth and lies introduced in Part 1. Drawing from biblical depths, poignant personal stories, and vivid vignettes, Del doesn't just diagnose the problem; he charts a path back to God's flourishing design. If you've ever wondered why self-focus leaves you empty, why connections feel superficial, or why freedom often feels like chains, this session is a wake-up call. We'll explore these themes, weaving in the session's insights to inspire actionable transformation. Let's wade into the river—not to drown, but to emerge renewed.

#### The All-About-Me Trap: When Personal Scripts Eclipse God's Story

At the heart of Part 2 lies the first devastating consequence of the Fall: self-centeredness. When Adam and Eve traded God's metanarrative—the grand, purposeful story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration—for their own "scripts," they invited a lie that echoes through every human heart. Del roots this in Genesis 3, where Satan's whisper promises godlike autonomy: "You will be like God." It's the ultimate bait-and-switch—chase your own fulfillment, and you'll find significance. But as Del unflinchingly points out, this path delivers only "death emotions": frustration bubbling into anger, worry gnawing at peace, a hollow ache that no achievement can fill.

Imagine a family vignette Del shares, where each member clutches their script like a sacred scroll. Dad's buried in work for that elusive promotion; Mom's curating a perfect Instagram life; teens scroll endlessly for validation. The result? A home fracturing under unspoken resentments, dinners devolving into monologues, laughter replaced by sighs. This isn't hyperbole—it's the chaos of lives untethered from God's purpose, where "me first" erodes the bonds meant to reflect His relational glory.

Then comes the story of Ralph McLean, a POW whose tale pierces the soul. Returning home shattered, he's met by a little girl's innocent query: "Would you do it all over again?" His response? A tear-streaked "Yes—for you." In that moment, McLean embodies the futility of self-scripts and the quiet heroism of surrender. Del uses this to pivot: True significance isn't self-manufactured; it's discovered in yielding to God's larger narrative, where our stories interlock like threads in a divine tapestry.

Theologically, this self-centered drift mirrors Eden's temptation—a bid for independence that breeds barrenness. As Del emphasizes, Satan's counter-narrative thrives on isolation from God, promising life but yielding spiritual sterility. Yet hope glimmers: By rejecting these personal plots, we step into the freedom of Proverbs 16:9, where we plan our ways, but God directs our steps. God's script isn't restrictive; it's liberating, inviting us to co-author eternity.

## **The Silent Epidemic: Isolation in a Hyper-Connected Age**

If self-centeredness is the Fall's spark, isolation is its smoldering fire—the second consequence that turns inward focus outward in the worst way. Del paints a stark modern portrait: We boast billions of "friends" on social media, yet surveys reveal record loneliness. Why? Because Satan's lie fosters suspicion—everyone's a "salesperson with a hidden agenda," peddling their script at our expense. Relationships, designed as God's antidote to solitude (Genesis 2:18), become battlegrounds of guarded hearts.

Interviewees in the session echo this ache: One describes scrolling feeds at midnight, surrounded by pixels but starving for presence; another mourns lost church connections amid pandemic isolation. It's a paradox Del ties to the Fall's relational rupture—Adam and Eve's shame drove them to hide, and we still do, behind screens and facades.

Enter Jesus' parable in John 12:24: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Del unpacks this gem: Fruitful community demands death to self—surrendering agendas for vulnerability. The family vignette returns here, its second act a tender symbol: A little girl, tired of discord, burns her mother's script in a backyard fire pit. Flames consume the paper ego, and in the ashes, arms open for embrace. It's poetic justice—rejecting self-focus paves the way for restoration.

Scripture bolsters this: Isaiah 46:9-10 declares God's sovereignty, reminding us His plans prevail over our fragmented ones. Jeremiah 29:11 seals it with *shalom*—not mere peace, but wholeness, flourishing in covenant bonds. Del contrasts this with Satan's isolating whisper: "You're better off alone." But God's design? Interdependence, where vulnerability begets strength, as in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12's cord of three strands. Del urges us to audit your connections. Are they transactional or transformative? The river of death flows lonely, but God's current carries us together.

## **Chains of Dependency: Trading Freedom for Control**

The third ripple of the Fall? Dependency—a subtle tyranny where Satan's power grab stifles God's distributed design. Del contrasts Eden's mandate (Genesis 1:28) for humanity to subdue and flourish through diverse gifts with the enemy's centralization scheme. Power consolidates—in states that micromanage families, churches where leaders hoard pulpits, workplaces breeding passive cogs. The result? Stifled creativity, fruitless lives, a world of takers not makers.

Examples abound: A church where the church leaders horde responsibility instead of equipping the congregation for ministry; the nanny-state bureaucrats growing the power of government by unilaterally creating & imposing restrictive regulations. Del warns this isn't benign—it's barrenness, echoing the Fall's curse of toil without yield.

Ephesians 4:11-12 flips the script: Leaders "equip the saints for the work of ministry," not perform it solo. God's economy? Distributed power, where every believer's talents ripple outward, like stones skipped across still water. Del's Air Force simulator analogy drives it home: Check your "gauges"—anger flaring? Worry spiking? Chronic complaining or controlling? These red lights signal Satan's narrative at the helm.

Satan's slyest trick? Tolerating our religiosity. Attend church, pray, read Scripture—but if no "downstream life" flows (disciples made, justice pursued, love multiplied), we're adrift. Genesis 3's root temptation—elevating desire over will—fuels this; John 12:24 counters with self-death for abundance; Isaiah and Jeremiah promise sovereign *shalom*.

In practice, this means empowerment: Mentor a newbie at work, delegate in your small group, release control in marriage. I've wrestled this in leadership roles, hoarding tasks until burnout hit. Learning to equip others? It multiplied impact, freeing me for what only I could do. Del's challenge: Identify your dependencies. Surrender them. Watch freedom bloom.

## **From Death's Current to Life's Overflow: A Call to Engagement**

Part 2 culminates not in despair but defiance. Del rallies us: Examine your life for these markers—self-scripts scripting strife, isolation insulating hearts, dependency dimming lights. Reject Satan's hollow vows; embrace God's meta-narrative through surrender, connection, and empowerment.

Actionable steps emerge: Journal "death emotions" to trace lies; schedule unscripted coffees to forge bonds; invest in one person's growth this week. Matthew 22:39 commands neighbor-love—not optional, but oxygen for the soul.

In conclusion, Tour 2's "River of Death" isn't a dead end; it's a divine detour, redirecting us to redemption's shore. Ralph McLean's "yes, for you" echoes Christ's cross—death birthing life. As Del prays, may we transform, rippling God's glory into a weary world. Dive in. The water's life-giving.

**Join a group studying *The Engagement Project*—it's more than lessons; it's launchpads for legacy. What's one script you'll burn today?**