

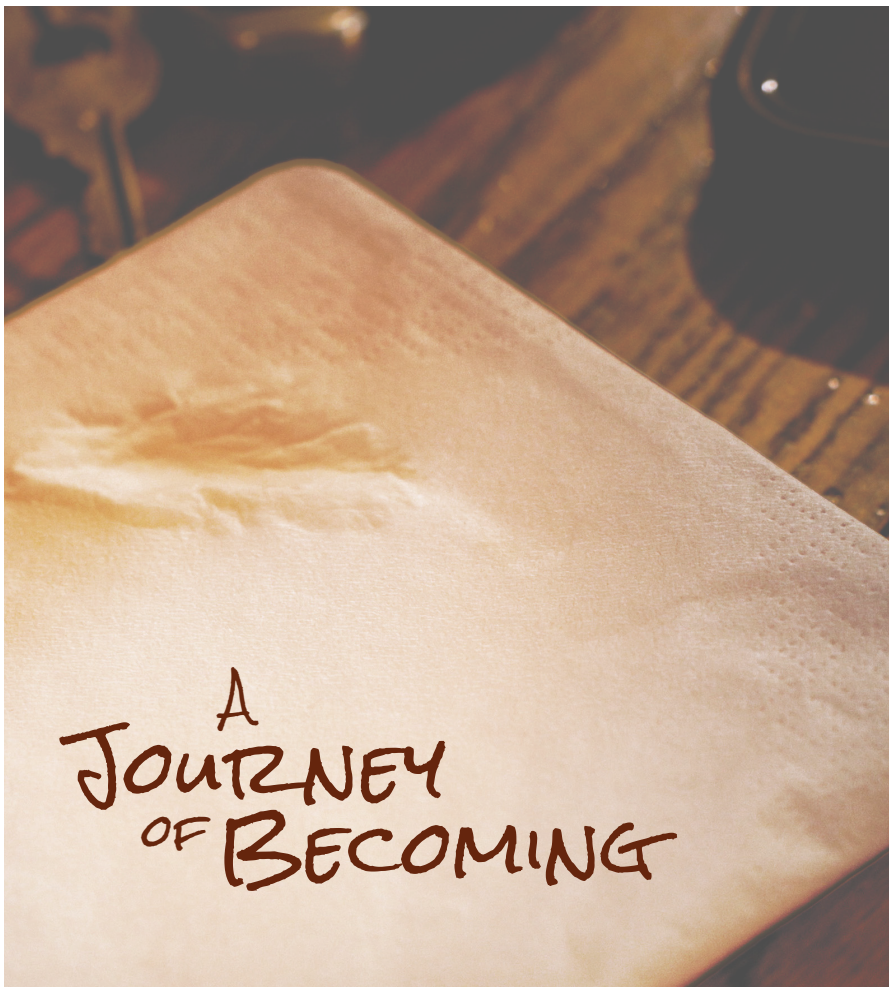
RISKY

A Journey of Becoming
30-Day Devotional



JACOB'S WELL
CHURCH

RISKY



It's risky to face and work through the things that keep us from becoming, but it is equally if not more risky not to.

"Everything is permissible" — but not everything is beneficial.

"Everything is permissible" — but not everything is constructive.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)



RISKY

Welcome to RISKY

This devotional was written for all of us — not for people who have it figured out, not for people in crisis, but for everyone. Every one of us has something we reach for, return to, or rely on in ways that may be costing us more than we realize. RISKY is an invitation to thirty days of honest, grace-filled attention — to yourself, to God, and to the community you are walking with.

*“Everything is permissible” — but not everything is beneficial.
“Everything is permissible” — but not everything is constructive.*

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)

Paul’s question is not *“is this allowed?”* It is: *“is this beneficial? Is this the most loving, most constructive thing available to me — for myself, for the people around me, and for the world I serve?”* That shift — from permissible to beneficial, from freedom for self to freedom for love — is what these thirty days are about.

Our Vision

*Wherever we are on the journey, we take steps together
to know and become like Jesus.*

Nobody here has arrived. We are all at different mile markers, carrying different things. The goal of these thirty days — and of our life together as a church — is simply to know Jesus more fully and become more like Him.

Who This Is For

The behaviors and patterns in this devotional include all of the following — and this list is not exhaustive. If you are holding something not named here, it belongs here too.

- Alcohol
- Nicotine — cigarettes, vaping, chewing tobacco
- Prescription drug misuse
- Recreational drugs, including marijuana
- Caffeine dependency
- Gambling
- Compulsive buying and shopping

continued

- Binge eating and emotional eating
- Extreme dieting and restrictive eating
- Sexual addiction
- Pornography
- Erotic content and romance addiction
- Dating app obsession
- Social media addiction
- Video game addiction
- Binge-watching
- Doom-scrolling
- Reckless adrenaline-seeking
- Workaholism
- Perfectionism

Whatever is on your list, you are not alone in it. Someone in this community is carrying something similar — and they need you on this journey as much as you need them.

How Becoming Actually Works

The habits, hangups, and hurts named in this devotional are not disqualifiers from becoming. They are the very material becoming works through. The path to knowing and growing into the likeness of Jesus does not go around the hard things — it goes through them. Not by hiding, running, managing appearances, or denying the power these things have over us, but by bringing them into the light and letting God and community do what they were always meant to do, bring healing.

You do not become in spite of your struggles. You become through them. The things that seem like obstacles to becoming are often the very doorway into it. What God does with honest struggle — in a person, and in a community — is extraordinary.

A Mindset of Wonder, Not Shame

Shame is not the engine of change. Shame tells you that you are the problem. Curiosity invites you to get interested in the problem. As you move through these 30 days, lead with wonder rather than judgment. When you notice an urge, a feeling, or a pattern that surprises you, try questions like these:

- I wonder what story I carry that leads me to this habit or action.
- I wonder what is below the surface of this desire — what am I actually looking for?
- I wonder what happened to the younger version of me that formed this response.
- I wonder what this feeling is trying to tell me, rather than what I need to do to make it stop.
- I wonder what God might be inviting me into through this discomfort.

These questions create space between an impulse and a response — and in that space, something new becomes possible.

The Practice of Silence

Every day we open with two minutes of silence. This is not decoration. It is the structure that holds everything else together. Many of us have used noise and busyness to avoid sitting with ourselves. The silence interrupts that noise and invites you simply to be.

Opening Silence — Arrival

- Set a timer for two minutes so you are not watching the clock.
- Sit comfortably, feet on the floor, hands open in your lap — a posture of receiving.
- Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, release something — the to-do list, the noise.
- Be present with God. No words needed. If your mind wanders, gently return. Try phrases that bring you back to being present, *“Here I am, Lord”* or simply *“Be still.”*
- When the timer sounds, move into the day’s reading slowly — as a conversation to enter, not a task to complete.

A Word Before You Begin

What if you became the freest, most loving version of yourself — not perfectly, but persistently? And what if it wasn't just you — what if it was all of us? What if Jacob's Well became a community known for honest, humble, becoming-together life — not people who have arrived, but people on the journey together who refuse to pretend otherwise?

Dream one circle wider: what if that community started showing up differently in the Chippewa Valley — in workplaces, neighborhoods, families, and friendships. That is what we are reaching for. Not perfection. Becoming. Together.

Welcome to RISKY. We are glad you are here.

RISKY

DAYS 1-10
PERSONAL BECOMING

Seeing ourselves honestly
and beginning to move.



PERMITTED, BUT IS IT LOVING?

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“Everything is permissible” — but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible” — but not everything is constructive.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)

REFLECTION

This is the question that starts the journey. Not *“is this a sin?”* but something deeper: *“is this the most loving, most beneficial thing available to me right now?”* Paul affirms our freedom in Christ — and then presses further. Freedom is not its own destination. Freedom is for love. We are freed so that we can love more fully — God, ourselves, and the people around us. The question that opens every day of this journey is simply: is what I am reaching for helping me do that, or getting in the way? We ask it not to condemn but because we are becoming — and becoming requires honest questions, asked together.

PONDER

- What habit or pattern brought you to this devotional — and when you hold it up to the question *“is this beneficial?”* what do you honestly notice?
- What would it look like to shift your daily question from *“is this allowed?”* to *“is this the most loving thing available to me right now?”*

PRAYER

Lord, move us past what is merely permitted into what is genuinely loving — for ourselves, for the people we walk with, and for the world we serve. We are beginning. We are yours. Amen.



YOU ARE ALREADY KNOWN

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Psalm 139:1–2 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Before we take a single step toward change, God already knows us completely — our habits, our hiding places, the quiet longing underneath it all. This journey does not begin with God being surprised by what He finds. It begins with us catching up to what He already knows and loves. The Psalmist describes a God who has searched all of it and is still present, still close, still speaking. You are not beginning this journey to earn God's attention. You already have it entirely. Becoming always starts from being fully known and loved — never from shame.

PONDER

- When you imagine God knowing everything about the habit you brought to this journey, does that feel comforting or unsettling — and what does your answer reveal?
- Where do you most find yourself hiding — from God, from others, from yourself — and what would it feel like to stop?

PRAYER

Lord, you know us fully and love us anyway. Give us the courage to be known more deeply — by ourselves and by each other — over these thirty days. Amen.

FEARFULLY & WONDERFULLY MADE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*

Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Your body, mind, and soul were designed with extraordinary care — including the way you process stress, feel joy, and signal when something is wrong. Every behavior on the RISKY list works because it engages systems God built into you: the longing for rest, pleasure, connection, relief, reward. Those longings are not the problem. They are the design. The question is not why you have them — it is what you are aiming them at. God called you wonderful before you changed any habit, before this journey began. That worth is the ground you are already standing on.

PONDER

- What would it look like to treat yourself — body, mind, and soul — with the reverence due to something God called wonderful?
- What physical or emotional signals have you been ignoring or numbing that might be worth paying honest attention to on this journey?

PRAYER

God, help us see ourselves the way you see us — as your wonderful creation, worthy of care and honest attention. And help us see each other that way too. Amen.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DON'T WANT TO DO

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Romans 7:15 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Paul wrote these words nearly two thousand years ago and they may be the most honest description of the human condition ever put to paper. The gap between our intentions and our actions is not unique to you — it is universal. The neural pathways that drive compulsive behavior were not formed by moral failure. They were formed by repetition, real neurochemical responses, and pain that needed somewhere to go. Understanding this is not an excuse. It is a map. And a map is where every journey begins.

PONDER

- I wonder what systems, experiences, or messages shaped the habit I carry — long before I made a conscious choice about it.
- What does it feel like to hear that this is not simply a failure of willpower — does that bring relief, resistance, or something else?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that your grace is bigger than the gap between our intentions and our actions. Give us eyes to see clearly and hearts willing to take the next step. Amen.

WIRED FOR MORE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Every behavior on the RISKY list works because it engages a reward system God built into you. Dopamine — the brain's primary reward signal — is not the enemy. It is the design. God wired you with a deep, persistent hunger for more — more joy, connection, meaning, more of Him — because He intended you to pursue those things wholeheartedly. The problem is not the hunger. The problem is the shortcut. Every behavior on this list delivers a hit of that reward signal without the relationship or genuine satisfaction the system was designed to lead you toward. And here is something beautiful: genuine community — honest, present, loving connection — is one of the most powerful natural sources of the reward your habits have been counterfeit-delivering. We are neurologically wired for each other, not just spiritually.

PONDER

- I wonder what genuine deep need is underneath the habit I most struggle with — rest, connection, relief, significance? What am I actually hungry for?
- What in your life actually delivers the satisfaction your habits promise but don't provide?

PRAYER

God, you set eternity in our hearts — a longing nothing in this world fully satisfies. Teach us to aim that hunger at you and at the community you have placed us in. Amen.



THE STORIES RUNNING IN THE BACKGROUND

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Every one of us carries two sets of beliefs simultaneously. The conscious set is articulate: I want to be free, to love well, to become more like Jesus. But underneath sits a second set we did not consciously choose — handed to us by culture, family, and experience: this is the only way I relax; I can't handle this without it; this is just who I am. These background stories drive behavior far more powerfully than our conscious intentions. Paul calls us to the renewing of the mind — not just a change of behavior but a transformation of the stories we are living inside. That renewal begins with the courage to ask honestly: is this actually true? Did I choose this?

PONDER

- I wonder where I first learned the beliefs I hold about my habit — can you trace any of them back to a specific person or season of life?
- What is one background story you have never seriously questioned — and what happens when you ask “*is this actually true?*”

PRAYER

God, bring the stories running in us gently into the light. Renew our minds, rewrite what is not true, and free us to live from a truer story. Amen.

THE REWARD THAT ISN'T

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.”

Isaiah 55:2 (NIV)

REFLECTION

One of the most embedded stories in compulsive behavior is that it is a reward. You survived a hard week — you deserve a drink. You got through a stressful day — you deserve to scroll. Isaiah asks a piercing question: why do you spend your energy on what does not satisfy? Alcohol promises rest and delivers disrupted sleep. Pornography promises intimacy and delivers isolation. Social media promises connection and delivers comparison. Workaholism promises significance and delivers exhaustion. Every item on the RISKY list makes a promise. The question worth asking honestly is whether it keeps it.

PONDER

- When do you most often tell yourself you “*deserve*” your habit — and what is the real need underneath that moment?
- I wonder what genuinely restores me — what two or three things actually leave me feeling better, more alive, more connected?

PRAYER

God, you offer a satisfaction that goes deeper than anything we have tried to fill ourselves with. Teach us to hunger for what truly feeds us. Amen.



WHO ARE YOU BECOMING?

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12 (NIV)

REFLECTION

RISKY invites us to ask not “*who am I?*” but “*who am I becoming?*” Identity is not a fixed point — it is a direction. Many of our habits quietly shape that direction without our conscious awareness. When a habit becomes habitual enough it begins to fuse with our sense of self — and the question of who we are without it can feel genuinely threatening. But your identity was never meant to be built on any of those things. John tells us the most foundational truth: you are a child of God. That is the identity from which becoming flows — not the destination we are working toward, but the ground we are already standing on.

PONDER

- When you imagine yourself without the habit you are examining, what feelings come up — and what do they reveal about where your identity has been anchored?
- I wonder what becoming more like Jesus looks like practically and specifically in the area of your life this devotional is touching.

PRAYER

Father, root our identity in you — and let everything we are becoming flow from that unshakable ground. Amen.

THE COURAGE TO BE STILL

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

REFLECTION

By Day 9 you may be noticing that stillness is harder than it looks. The silence feels awkward. Your mind races. There is a restlessness that surfaces when you stop reaching for the next thing. That restlessness is not a problem — it is information. Many compulsive behaviors function precisely as mechanisms for never having to be still. Scrolling, binge-watching, overworking, the drink that fills the silence — these are all answers to the discomfort of stillness.

“*Be still*” in the Hebrew is closer to “*cease striving*” — an active release. What becomes available in that stillness — the knowledge that God is God, that we are held — is exactly what most of our habits are trying to counterfeit.

PONDER

- What comes up for you during the opening silence each day — and what do you think that reveals about what you have been avoiding?
- I wonder in what ways staying busy or stimulated has helped me avoid sitting with myself — and what I might find there if I stopped.

PRAYER

Lord, teach us to be still — not just in body but in soul. We release our striving today and trust that you are enough. Amen.



WHAT THE JOURNEY HAS SHOWN YOU

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Ten days in — a good moment to pause and look back, not to grade your performance but to notice what is actually happening. Honest self-examination is not self-criticism. It is one of the most spiritually mature and generous things we can do — for ourselves and for the community we are becoming in. When we see ourselves clearly we bring something real to the people beside us on this road. The becoming is already happening. And it is never only about you.

PONDER

- Looking back at the first ten days, what is one thing that has genuinely surprised you about yourself or this process?
- I wonder where I have noticed even a small shift — in awareness, honesty, or presence with others — that is worth acknowledging today.

PRAYER

God, give us the honesty to examine our lives clearly and the grace to receive what we find without fear. We trust you with all of it. Amen.

RISKY

A close-up photograph of a wooden table with a warm, reddish-brown tone. In the upper right, two white dice with black pips are visible. A piece of light-colored, textured paper is placed diagonally across the lower left. The text is printed on this paper.

DAYS 11-20

BECOMING TOGETHER

**The emotional roots, and
the community that helps
us grow through them**

WHAT YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING FROM

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

Psalm 139:23 (NIV)

REFLECTION

If the first ten days were about waking up to patterns and stories, these next ten are about going deeper — into the emotional landscape those patterns were built to manage. For many of us compulsive behaviors function as a lid on uncomfortable feelings: anxiety, loneliness, grief, anger with nowhere to go. Whether the substance is alcohol or the behavior is pornography, gambling, or compulsive eating, the emotional function is often remarkably similar. We reach for the thing because something underneath is asking to be felt. The feelings we have been outrunning are not weaknesses — they are invitations. And this phase of the journey asks one thing above all: bring what you have been running from into community.

PONDER

- What emotions tend to surface most strongly when you don't have your habit to take the edge off — and what do you usually do with them?
- I wonder how emotions were handled in my family growing up — and how that has shaped the way I manage my own feelings today.

PRAYER

God, search our hearts and meet us in the places we have been afraid to look. We trust you with what you find there — and we are learning to trust each other with it too. Amen.

GUILT & SHAME ARE NOT THE SAME

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Guilt says I did something that conflicts with my values — a corrective signal that can lead to change. Shame says something far more devastating: I am something wrong. Guilt can motivate becoming. Shame only ever stops it. Shame thrives in isolation, and one of the most powerful things a community can do is refuse to let it operate unchallenged. When someone tells their honest story and is met with grace instead of judgment, shame loses its grip — not just for them, but for everyone who needed to see that happen. There is now no condemnation. Not reduced. Not with exceptions. None.

PONDER

- Can you identify a shame message you carry about your behavior — something that goes beyond what you've done into who you believe you are? Where did it come from?
- What would it mean for Jacob's Well to be genuinely known as a place where shame loses its power — and what would that require of you personally?

PRAYER

Father, replace every voice of condemnation with your voice of invitation. We are not defined by our worst moments — help us be that reminder for each other. Amen.

THE WOUND BENEATH THE HABIT

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Every person who develops a complicated relationship with any substance or behavior has a story that predates the habit — experiences that shaped how they learned to cope and what they learned to reach for when life got hard. The child who learned that food was comfort. The teenager who discovered that a screen made loneliness bearable. The young adult who found that alcohol dissolved social anxiety. These are not moral failures. They are the nervous system’s best available answer to pain it didn’t know how to process another way. God knew you before any of those experiences shaped you. Understanding where we came from — with compassion, not blame — is part of how we move through.

PONDER

- I wonder what experiences in my early life shaped how I learned to cope with stress or pain — what comes to mind when you sit with that honestly?
- What would it mean to look at your own story with the same compassion you would offer a close friend?

PRAYER

God, you were present in every experience that shaped us. Give us eyes to see our own stories with your compassion — and ears to hear each other’s with grace. Amen.



WHAT YOU ARE GRIEVING

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Grief is not only for funerals. We grieve relationships that ended badly, childhoods harder than they should have been, versions of ourselves we thought we'd become. Many people discover partway through this journey that underneath the behavior is a reservoir of unprocessed loss, never fully felt because something was always there to numb it. The gambling that started after a marriage fell apart. The drinking that escalated after a career disappointment. The perfectionism that was really grief over never being enough. Grief that is honored loses its grip. Grief that is numbed goes underground and keeps driving. God is not afraid of your grief — and neither is this community.

PONDER

- What losses — big or small, old or recent — have you never fully grieved? What got in the way?
- I wonder what grief might be sitting underneath my compulsive habits — what comes up when you sit with that honestly?

PRAYER

Healer, we bring you the losses we have been carrying quietly. Bind up what is broken in us and give us the courage to grieve well — and the community to grieve with. Amen.

HALFWAY THERE - AND EXACTLY HERE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Fifteen days. Whether these two weeks have felt like a breakthrough or a grind, you showed up and kept going. Most growth does not feel like growth while it is happening — it feels ordinary, sometimes tedious, occasionally discouraging. Paul's confidence is not based on the people having arrived or their feelings being consistent. It is based entirely on who started the work. The one who began this in you — and in this community — is not going to abandon it halfway through. Look for evidence of what God has been doing. It is probably quieter and smaller than you expected. Look for it anyway.

PONDER

- Looking back across the first two weeks, where can you see evidence of something quietly shifting — even if it is small?
- Who in your community have you been honest with about this journey — and what has that conversation made possible?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for beginning this work in us — in each of us, and in all of us together. We trust you with the second half. Amen.



LOVE AS THE LOUDEST VOICE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8 (NIV)

REFLECTION

The question that opened Day 1 was aimed inward. Today we turn it outward. Our habits do not only affect us. The drinking affects the people at the table. The erotic material affects the intimacy we are trying to build. The workaholicism affects the children who needed us present. The doom-scrolling affects the conversation we are only half-present for. When love becomes the loudest voice in our decision-making — louder than craving, louder than habit — something shifts. Not just in us, but in the people around us. This is one of the most important reasons we journey in community: the people beside us are the ones most affected by who we are becoming.

PONDER

- How has the habit you are examining affected the people closest to you — and what does honest reflection on that bring up?
- I wonder what it would look like for love to be the filter through which I make decisions today — not just about my habit, but in every interaction.

PRAYER

God, let love be the loudest voice in us — for you, for the people you have placed beside us, and for the world we serve. Amen.



WE DON'T BECOME ALONE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NIV)

REFLECTION

The writer of Hebrews is not making a suggestion. He is describing the architecture of transformation. Deep, lasting, character-level change does not happen in isolation — it happens in the presence of people who are honest with us and spur us on not with judgment but with love. The early church devoted themselves to this together, and the result was a community so compelling that people were drawn to it daily. A community of people genuinely spurring each other toward love and good deeds — not performing wellness at each other, but actually walking the road together — is one of the most powerful and countercultural things we could become.

PONDER

- Who in your life is currently spurring you on toward love and good deeds — and who are you doing that for?
- What would it cost you to be genuinely honest with one person in this community about where you are — and what might it make possible?

PRAYER

Lord, teach us to spur each other on — with honesty, with grace, with the love that refuses to let each other settle for less than becoming. Amen.



OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

REFLECTION

“Come to me...” is not a call to defeat — it is an invitation to relief. The burden Jesus asks us to lay down is the exhausting weight of managing everything ourselves — our interior life, our habits, our image, our becoming. Many of us have been doing enormous unseen labor for years, with compulsive behavior quietly serving as part of that management system. To surrender is not to become passive. It is to finally stop fighting a war we were never meant to fight alone — and to discover that the community we have been keeping at a careful distance was part of the rest Jesus was offering all along.

PONDER

- What are you still trying to manage or carry alone that is quietly exhausting you?
- I wonder what it would look like today to genuinely hand something over — to God, or to someone in your community — rather than continuing to carry it yourself.

PRAYER

Jesus, we are tired of carrying what we were never meant to carry alone. We come to you — and we come to each other. Teach us the relief of surrender. Amen.

THE LONGING BENEATH THE LONELINESS

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing.

Psalm 68:6 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Loneliness is one of the most underacknowledged drivers of compulsive behavior — and one of the hardest to admit, especially when you are surrounded by people. The screen creates a sense of connection that is a counterfeit of the real thing. The drink takes the edge off a loneliness that goes unexamined. The pornography fills a space where genuine intimacy feels too risky. The loneliness underneath so much compulsive behavior is not a sign something is wrong with you. It is a compass — pointing toward genuine belonging, genuine intimacy, genuine community with God and with the people He has placed around you. The answer is closer than you think.

PONDER

- Have you ever felt lonely in the middle of a social situation — surrounded by people but not truly known? What did you do with that feeling?
- I wonder what genuine belonging would look like in my life right now — and what one small honest step toward it looks like this week.

PRAYER

God, lead us out of the isolation our habits have created and into the genuine connection we were made for. Amen.



You ARE NOT WHO YOU WERE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Twenty days. We have sat with emotions we used to outrun, questioned stories we never examined, practiced silence, and begun to be more honest with ourselves and each other. The new creation has come — not will come eventually, but has come, already here, already underway, whether we can feel it or not. Take time today to name one or two things you actually believe differently about yourself than you did on Day 1. Not what you hope will be true. What you are beginning to actually believe. The becoming is real. And it belongs to all of us.

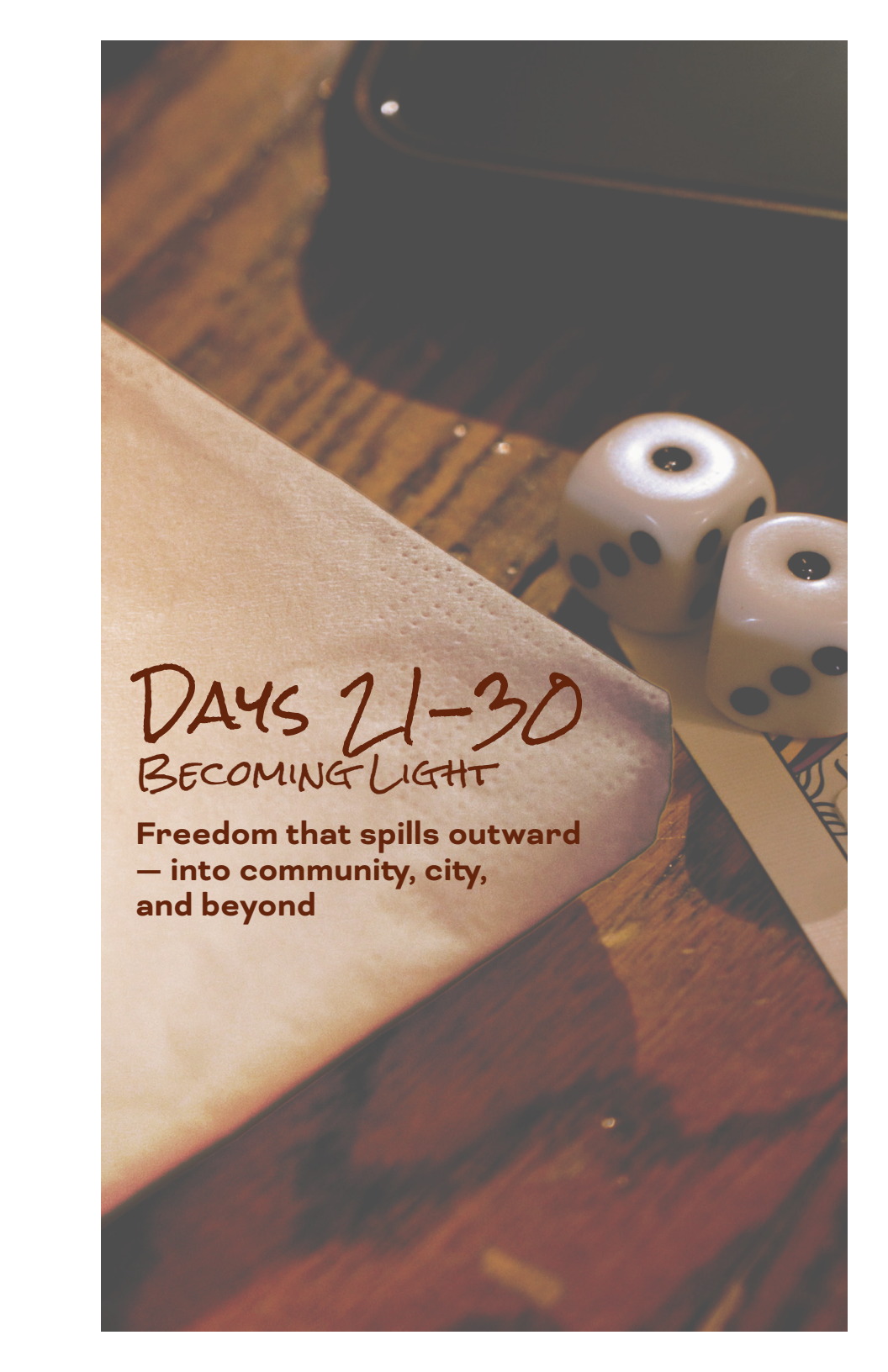
PONDER

- What is one thing you have seen about yourself over the last twenty days that you had never been willing to look at before?
- I wonder what old story or pattern feels less true to me now than on Day 1 — and what has contributed to that shift.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that the old is gone and the new is here. Keep doing in us what only you can do — in each of us, and in all of us together. Amen.

RISKY



DAYS 21-30

BECOMING LIGHT

**Freedom that spills outward
— into community, city,
and beyond**

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

So I say, walk in the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

REFLECTION

You are not the same person who opened this devotional on Day 1. None of us are. Walking in the Spirit is not a metaphor for trying harder. It is a description of a different kind of life — one where the impulse toward the old habit is met not with gritted teeth and willpower, but with a genuine and available alternative. The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you and in this community. That is not a small thing to carry into the moment when the craving calls — and it is not something you carry alone.

PONDER

- What does walking in the Spirit look like practically in your daily life — what rhythms or postures help you stay connected to God and community?
- I wonder what it would look like, in the specific moments when I most want to reach for my habit, to pause and turn toward something or someone that actually helps.

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, teach us to walk with you — slowly, steadily, together. Be our pace and our companion — and let us be that for each other. Amen.



THE FRUIT THAT IS GROWING

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Fruit does not appear overnight. It grows slowly, through seasons of rain and waiting, and it is often hard to see until one day you look up and notice something is actually there. Perhaps there is a little more peace in your mornings, a little more patience with someone who usually exhausts you, a moment of genuine joy where you might have numbed through before. This quiet interior fruit is easy to overlook. But it is real, it is growing, and it is often visible to the people around us before we see it in ourselves.

PONDER

- Which fruit of the Spirit do you most sense growing in you right now — even slightly — and where do you see evidence of it in your relationships?
- I wonder where the people closest to me have noticed something different about me over these weeks — and whether I have asked them.

PRAYER

God, grow in us what only you can grow — not through striving, but through staying connected to you and to each other. Amen.

REWRITING THE RITUAL

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

REFLECTION

One of the most practical aspects of becoming is the need to replace ritual with ritual. Every compulsive behavior is deeply ritualistic — the cigarette at the same time of day, the glass of wine that signals the workday is done, the phone that appears in your hand before you are aware you reached for it. Simply removing these rituals without replacing them leaves a gap that eventually pulls you back. God is a God of new things. The new rituals He makes possible are not lesser substitutes — they are the real thing the old ones were always pointing toward: genuine rest, genuine connection, genuine presence.

PONDER

- What are your two or three most automatic behavioral rituals — the times and triggers most ingrained — and what genuine need does each one serve?
- I wonder what new ritual — practiced alone or with someone else — might genuinely serve that same need in a way that actually satisfies.

PRAYER

Lord, you make new things in wilderness places. Show us the new paths and give us the courage — and the company — to walk them. Amen.



LOVING OTHERS BETTER

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

John 15:12 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Freedom from compulsive behavior creates capacity. When we are no longer spending energy managing, hiding, or returning to a habit that takes more than it gives, that energy becomes available for other people. The person no longer numbing out is present to their family. The person freed from perfectionism can celebrate someone else's good work. The person no longer compulsively checking their phone can look someone in the eye and actually be there. Becoming is not only for us. We become so we can love. And loving better is what makes the outer circles of this vision possible.

PONDER

- Where have you noticed, over these last weeks, an increased capacity to be present or loving toward someone in your life?
- I wonder what one relationship would most benefit from the freedom I am beginning to walk in — and what one step toward that looks like this week.

PRAYER

Jesus, let the freedom we are finding become fuel for love — in our homes, our friendships, our community, and the world we serve. Amen.

WHAT JACOB'S WELL COULD BECOME

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:14 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Jesus is not speaking to individuals in Matthew 5. He is speaking to a community. You are the light — plural, collectively, together. What one person becoming more like Jesus makes possible is significant. What an entire community becoming more like Jesus together makes possible is something the Chipewewa Valley has not yet seen. Imagine Jacob’s Well as a congregation known for honesty about struggle, for grace toward the person still on the way, for the kind of belonging that holds people instead of performing for them. That is the vision. And it starts with the thirty days you are in the middle of.

PONDER

- What do you think it would take for Jacob’s Well to genuinely become a community known for honest, grace-filled becoming — and what is your part in that?
- I wonder what one person in my life outside our church might be drawn toward Jesus by simply seeing what becoming is producing in me.

PRAYER

*Lord, make us light — not a performance of light, but the real thing.
Let Jacob’s Well become what you intended a community to be. Amen.*



OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

1 Corinthians 6:19 (NIV)

REFLECTION

By Day 26 many people begin to notice something physical. Sleep is deeper. The morning fog has lifted. Energy arrives earlier and lasts longer. The anxiety that seemed like a baseline begins to ease. For those stepping back from substances the neurochemical shift is real. For those stepping back from behavioral compulsions the nervous system's recovery is quieter but equally real. The same Spirit that hovered over the waters at creation and raised Jesus from the dead makes a home in this body. Caring for it well is not vanity. It is worship.

PONDER

- What physical changes — in sleep, energy, mood, or clarity — have you noticed over the course of this journey?
- What is one concrete way you want to continue honoring your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit after these thirty days are over?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, help us honor the bodies you dwell in — not out of obligation, but out of love and gratitude. Amen.

REST AS RESISTANCE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

Genesis 2:2 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Rest is one of the most countercultural things a person can practice in a world that measures worth in productivity and fills every silence with noise. Compulsive behaviors have often stepped into that gap as the closest available approximation of rest. But God Himself rested before the fall, before anything was broken, and He built Sabbath into the fabric of creation as a gift — a declaration for everyone: you are more than what you produce. More than what you consume. Genuine rest is a form of trust. And rested people love better.

PONDER

- What does genuine rest look like for you — and how often do you actually experience it?
- I wonder in what ways my habits have functioned as a substitute for real rest — and what genuine Sabbath rest might require of me practically.

PRAYER

God, you rested and called it good. Teach us to rest without guilt, to stop without fear, and to trust that you hold what we release. Amen.

WHAT FREEDOM ACTUALLY FEELS LIKE

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

REFLECTION

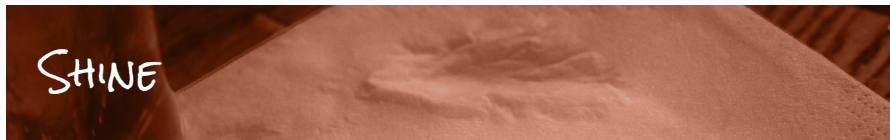
Freedom tends to arrive quietly. Sometimes it feels like a moment when the usual trigger appears and you realize, with mild surprise, that you are genuinely fine — not white-knuckling, not performing, just present, at ease, yourself. The craving came and went without you becoming it. The impulse rose and you simply observed it. That is not nothing. That is twenty-eight days of honest work beginning to show. Stand firm — not as rigidity, but as rootedness. Not white-knuckling alone, but standing together on ground that has been hard-won.

PONDER

- Have you had a moment during this journey where you felt genuinely free rather than just holding on? What did it feel like — and what made it possible?
- I wonder what situations or emotional states put me most at risk of drifting back — and who in my community I want to be honest with about that.

PRAYER

Christ, you set us free for freedom itself. Help us stand firm — not alone, but together, rooted in you. Amen.



 OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

REFLECTION

This is the outermost circle of the vision we have been building toward. You became. We became together. And now the becoming spills outward — into the Chippewa Valley, into workplaces, neighborhoods, families, and friendships. The light Jesus describes is not a performance or a strategy. It is simply what happens when people who are becoming more free and more loving show up in the world. They are more present, more patient, more honest, more capable of genuine joy not dependent on a substance or a screen. That quality of presence — in a world increasingly fragmented, numbed, and distracted — is genuinely remarkable. It shines. Not because you are trying to, but because you are becoming.

PONDER

- Where in your daily life do you sense the most opportunity for the freedom you are finding to shine outward?
- I wonder what one person most needs to see what becoming looks like — and what it would mean to simply be present and honest with them this week.

PRAYER

Father, let what you have done in us shine — not to draw attention to us, but to draw people to you. Let Jacob’s Well be light in this valley. Amen.



OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24–26 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Thirty days. You made it — and more than made it. You showed up, paid attention, let yourself be known, and kept going even on the days when none of it felt like enough. The Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6 was spoken over God’s people moving through the wilderness — not yet arrived, but not where they started. Which is exactly where we are today. There is no Day 31 in this devotional, but there is a Day 31 in your life, and in ours together. The question, the community, the vision — all of it belongs to every day that follows. We are not finished. We are becoming. And we are doing it together.

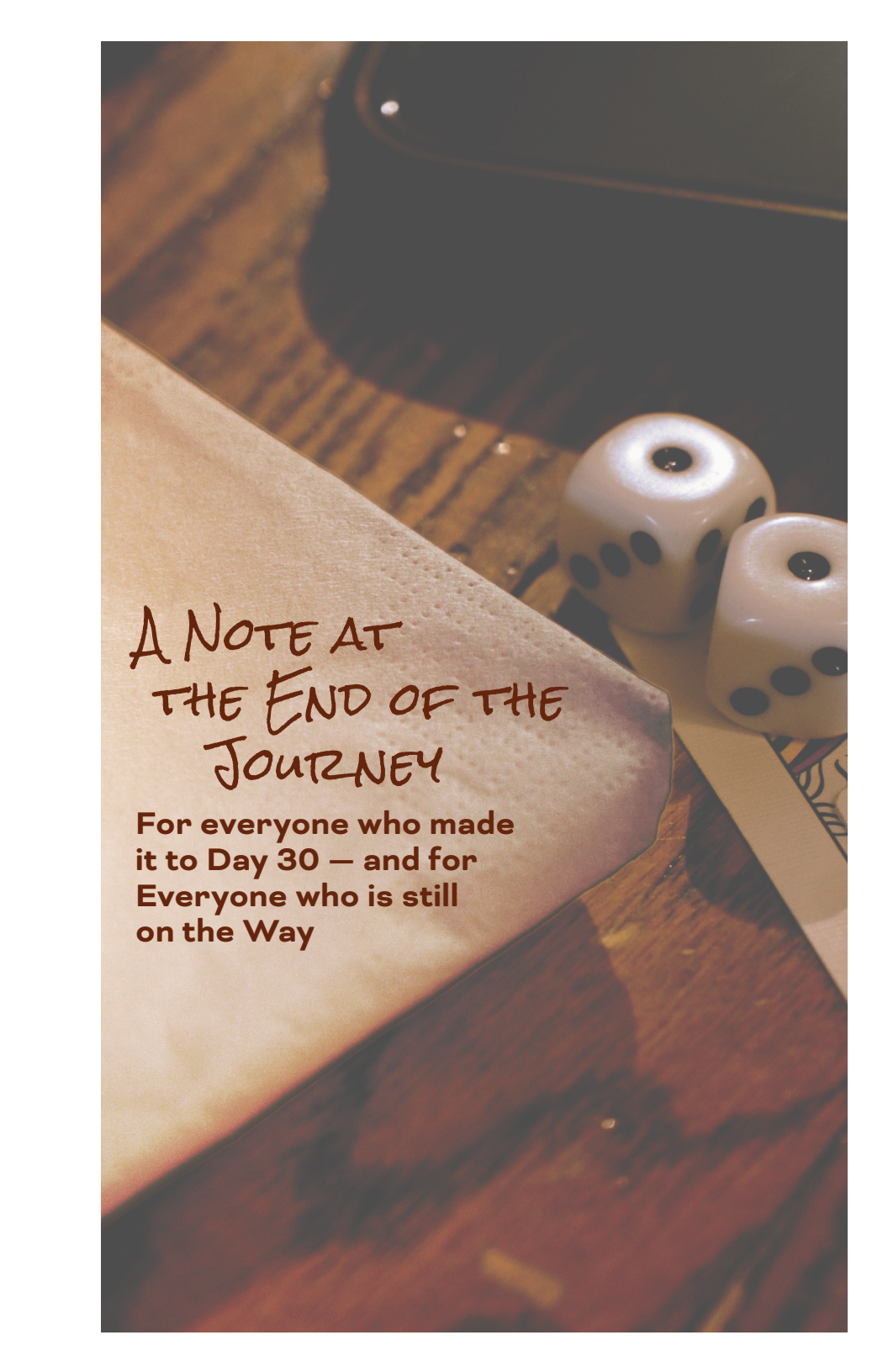
PONDER

- What is the single most important thing this journey has given you — the insight, the practice, the relationship, or the freedom — that you most want to carry forward?
- I wonder where God is inviting me next on this journey — and who I want to walk that next stretch of road with.

PRAYER

Lord, bless us and keep us as we step forward. Make your face shine on us, be gracious to us, and give us the peace that only you can give. We are not finished — and neither are you. Send us out together. Amen.

RISKY



A NOTE AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY

For everyone who made
it to Day 30 — and for
Everyone who is still
on the Way

You Did Something Brave

Thirty days ago you picked this up and decided to pay attention. In a culture that discourages honest self-examination — where the easier path is always to reach for the next thing, numb the feeling, and keep moving — you chose to stop and look. You chose two minutes of silence every morning. You chose to write the hard things. You chose to ask questions you might not have liked the answers to. And if you chose to do any of this alongside someone else in this community, you chose vulnerability — which is one of the most courageous things available to a human being.

What Just Happened

In the first ten days you woke up — you began to see the habits and patterns of your life not as fixed features of who you are but as things worth examining honestly in the light of one question: is this the most loving, most beneficial thing available to me? You questioned stories you had inherited without examining and practiced the countercultural discipline of stillness.

In the middle ten days you went deeper — into the emotional landscape beneath the behavior, the wounds that preceded the habits, the grief and anger and loneliness that had been looking for somewhere to go. You began to let community in. You sat with shame and heard that there is no condemnation.

In the final ten days you turned toward the light — and you began to see that what you are becoming is not only for you. It is for the people beside you on this road, for Jacob's Well becoming the community God intended, and for the Chippewa Valley. The becoming was always pointed outward.

The Journey Continues

The thirty days are over. The journey is not. The question that started this — is this the most loving thing available to me? — belongs to every ordinary day that follows. The silence belongs to every morning. The wonder questions are yours to keep asking for the rest of your life. And the community belongs to every day most of all. We were never designed to become alone.

What to Do Next

- Stay connected to the people you have been honest with. The conversation that started here is worth continuing.
- Consider working with a therapist, counselor, or spiritual director if these thirty days surfaced things that feel too big to process alone. That is wisdom, not weakness.
- If your habit involves a substance or behavior with a clinical dimension, speak with a doctor or licensed addiction counselor. Professional support is faithful stewardship of the life God gave you.
- Keep journaling. Even one sentence a day. Honest self-observation, once begun, is one of the most spiritually formative habits a person can build.
- Come back to this devotional in six months or a year. You will be a different person, and the same words will meet you differently.

One Last Thing

You are not who you were on Day 1. The work done in you over these thirty days is woven into you now — part of the new creation God has been building, one honest day at a time. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. That promise has not expired. And you are not walking toward that completion alone. Stay on the road with the people of Jacob's Well. Every one of them is somewhere on the same road, carrying different things, becoming more like Jesus at a pace only God knows.

We are so glad you were here. Go well — and go together.

*The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24–26 (NIV)

RISKY

A Journey of Becoming
30-Day Devotional



JACOB'S WELL
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