

the 30-Day Alcohol Challenge

For those walking through The Alcohol Experiment



JACOB'S WELL
CHURCH



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While *The Alcohol Experiment* is dedicated to Jesus and a powerful tool for changing your relationship with alcohol, it doesn't draw on Scripture or spiritual reflection. This devotional was created to walk alongside the book, bringing biblical and spiritual depth to the same 30-day journey.



You are holding something written for exactly where you are right now – curious, maybe a little uncertain, and brave enough to ask honest questions about your relationship with alcohol. This devotional was created as a companion to The Alcohol Experiment by Annie Grace, bringing a biblical and spiritual dimension to her curiosity-based, science-grounded 30-day program. The two speak the same language: wonder, honesty, and the deep belief that lasting change comes from the inside out.

If you live in Wisconsin or anywhere that drinking is woven tightly into the fabric of community and every season of life you may find that some of these reflections hit closer to home than you expected. The supper clubs, the tailgates, the long winters, the sense that refusing a drink is refusing belonging all of that is named here, because it deserves to be.

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

Each day contains six elements: an opening silence, a key Bible verse, a short reflection, Ponder questions, a closing Prayer. The whole practice takes 8-10 minutes. The devotional moves through three phases: **Days 1-10** focus on Mindset and Awareness, **Days 11-20** on Heart and Healing, and **Days 21-30** on Renewal and Freedom. If you miss a day, pick up where you left off. This is not a test. It is an experiment.

Three Ways to Walk Through This

There is no single right way to go through The Alcohol Experiment. Here are three options — choose the one that fits your life right now:

- **On your own or with a friend.** Simply pick up the book, open this devotional, and walk through the 30 days at your own pace. Even one trusted person alongside you makes a significant difference.
- **With Annie Grace's online community.** The Alcohol Experiment is also available as a free online program with daily videos and a global community of people doing the experiment at the same time. You can join at:
thisnakedmind.com/alcohol-free-online-communities.
- **With Jacob's Well.** Join our Jacob's Well Alcohol Experiment group beginning June 2nd in the evening — a local community to walk through this together with spiritual support, honest conversation, and people who get it. Sign up at:
jacobsowellchurch.church/support-groups.

JOURNAL THROUGH IT

Keep a journal alongside this devotional. Writing is one of the most powerful ways to move something from the surface of your mind into the deeper places where real change happens. Use the Ponder questions as starting points, and write whatever comes up — especially if it surprises you. The pages of a journal are a safe place to be completely honest, and honesty is where freedom begins.

TALK IT THROUGH WITH OTHERS

This devotional was designed with community in mind. There is something uniquely powerful about saying out loud the things you have only thought quietly — and hearing someone else say “me too.” Consider working through this with a trusted friend, a small group, or a spiritual director. You do not need all the answers before you share. Showing up with questions is often more powerful than showing up with conclusions.

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.

BE AN OBSERVER — KEEP DATA

You are a scientist running an experiment on yourself. Throughout these 30 days, track what is actually happening — not what you think should be happening, but what is. Consider keeping notes on:

- **Energy levels and sleep quality** — are they changing, and in what direction?
- **Emotional highs and lows** — what triggers them, and how long do they last?
- **The arc of motivation** — notice when the initial excitement fades.
- **Moments of unexpected clarity or peace** — write them down before they fade.
- **Cravings** — what time, emotional state, or situation tends to precede them?

The goal is not to grade yourself. The goal is to see yourself clearly. Data without judgment is one of the most compassionate things you can offer yourself.

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, and drinking can be part of that avoidance. The silence interrupts that noise and invites you simply to be.

OPENING SILENCE – ARRIVING

- 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

You do not have to be certain how this will go, simply be here for the journey. You just have to be willing to show up for 30 days and pay attention. God meets us in the middle of experiments — present in the journey itself, in the questions, in the slow and ordinary work of one honest day at a time.

Welcome to the experiment. We are glad you are here.

Days 1 – 10
Mindset &
Awareness

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 you took a single step toward change, God already knew you completely — your habits, your hiding places, the quiet longing underneath it all. This experiment is not about proving something to Him but about clearing space to hear what He has always been saying. If you grew up in Wisconsin, drinking probably wasn't just something you did — it was part of how life was structured: fish fries, brandy old fashioned at the supper club, a cold one at the game. The next 30 days are an invitation to slow down and get curious, not to shame yourself or your culture, but to pay honest attention to what is actually going on inside you when you reach for a drink. God is not surprised by what you will discover. He has been waiting, with patience and love, for exactly this moment.

PONDER

- How did drinking get normalized in your family or community growing up — and did you ever question it?
- When you imagine God already knowing everything about your relationship with alcohol, does that feel comforting or unsettling — and why?

PRAYER

Lord, you know me fully and love me anyway. Give me the courage to be known more deeply by myself over these 30 days. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

A NEW WAY OF THINKING

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

Wisconsin consistently ranks among the heaviest-drinking states in the country, and that is not a coincidence — it is a culture. Taverns outnumber churches in many communities, and drinking gets reinforced at every milestone: graduations, weddings, funerals, first days of deer season.

Paul's call to not conform to the pattern of this world was written to people who also lived inside deeply embedded cultural habits, and renewing your mind is not a self-help strategy — it is a courageous, countercultural, spiritual act. It means choosing, day by day, to let truth reshape the stories you have inherited. Transformation begins not with willpower but with simply noticing — and today, that is enough.

PONDER

- In what specific social situations does drinking feel the most expected or automatic?
- What story do you tell yourself about why you drink — and how much of that story is actually true?
- What does “renewing your mind” look like practically in your daily life right now?

PRAYER

*Father, challenge the thoughts and beliefs I've never questioned.
Renew my mind and show me a better way to live. Amen.*

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 is not an accident — it was designed with extraordinary care, including the way it processes stress, feels joy, and signals when something is wrong. In a state where drinking through every season is completely normal, it is easy to stop hearing those signals: the anxious morning after, the restless sleep, the low mood mid-week. Your body is giving you information, and that cycle is not a character flaw — it is your fearfully and wonderfully made self trying to tell you something. God called you wonderful before you changed any habit, before this experiment, before you became whoever you are hoping to grow into. That worth is the ground you are already standing on.

PONDER

- What physical effects of drinking have you normalized over time — poor sleep, anxiety, low energy — that might be worth paying attention to?
- Do you truly believe you are “wonderfully made”? What makes that easy or hard to accept?
- What would it look like to treat your body with more reverence this month?

PRAYER

God, help me see myself the way you see me — as your wonderful creation, worthy of care and attention. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHY DO YOU DRINK MORE THAN YOU WANT TO

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... For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing.

Romans 7:15, 19 (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 first thing we want to say to you clearly is this: it is not your fault. You are a human being living inside systems specifically designed by billion-dollar industries to make you drink more than you intend to, layered on top of a Wisconsin culture that handed you a drink before you ever thought to question it. The neural pathways that associate alcohol with reward were not formed by moral failure — they were formed by repetition, marketing, and real neurochemical responses. Understanding this is not an excuse. It is a map, and a map is the beginning of finding your way.

PONDER

- I wonder what systems, messages, or experiences shaped my relationship with alcohol long before I ever 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, I have done what I did not want to do and left undone what I meant to do. Thank you that your grace is bigger than the gap between my intentions and my actions. Lead me toward the freedom that understanding makes possible. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

THE STORIES YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE TELLING

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 — and most of the time we are only aware of one of them. The conscious set is articulate: I want to drink less, feel better, be more present. But underneath, largely out of view, sits a second set you did not consciously choose: alcohol helps me relax, I can't enjoy a social event without a drink, refusing a round is awkward. When these two sets conflict, that gap has a name — cognitive dissonance — and it is exhausting to live inside. Those background beliefs were not chosen on purpose; they were handed to you by culture and experience. The invitation is to bring them into the light and ask honestly: is this actually true? Did I choose this?

PONDER

- I wonder where I first learned the beliefs I hold about alcohol — can you trace any of them back to a specific person, experience, or season of life?
- What does the conscious part of you want when it comes to alcohol — and what subconscious belief seems to pull in a different direction?

PRAYER

God, there are stories running in me that I didn't choose and haven't examined. Bring them gently into the light and give me the grace to let you rewrite what is no longer true. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHO ARE YOU WITHOUT IT?

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

One of the quieter questions that surfaces during an alcohol experiment is this: who am I without it? In Wisconsin, where a brandy old fashioned at the supper club or a cold beer at the fish fry is practically a rite of passage, your relationship with alcohol can become quietly fused with your sense of identity — who you are, how you connect, how you belong. But your identity was never meant to be built on any of those things. John tells us the most foundational truth about you is this: you are a child of God, freely given, not earned, and not taken away by 30 days without a drink. You are known. You are loved. You are enough — before the drink, after it, and in the middle of figuring all of this out.

PONDER

- When you imagine yourself in your most common social settings without a drink, what feelings come up — and what do you think they are telling you?
- I wonder how much of my sense of fun, ease, or belonging I believe is connected to alcohol — and what would it mean if that connection was less true than I thought?
- What does it mean to you personally to be called a child of God — does that identity feel real and grounding, or distant and abstract?

PRAYER

*Father, remind me who I am when everything else is stripped away.
Let my identity be rooted in you and nothing else. Amen.*

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 Midwest drinking culture is the idea that alcohol is a reward — you survived the Wisconsin January, made it through deer season, endured the long week, and now you deserve a drink. But Isaiah asks a piercing question: why do you spend your energy on things that don't actually satisfy? The drink promises rest and delivers disrupted sleep; it promises ease and leaves anxiety in the morning. God offers something better — a satisfaction that goes all the way down, that doesn't wear off by dawn. Today, get curious about the reward story you carry. Where did it come from, and is it actually true?

PONDER

- When do you most often tell yourself you "deserve" a drink — and what is the real need underneath that feeling?
- I wonder what genuinely restores me — what two or three things leave me feeling better, not just different?
- Think back to a time alcohol delivered the reward it promised versus a time it didn't. What was different?

PRAYER

God, you offer a satisfaction that goes deeper than anything I've tried to fill myself with. Teach me to hunger for what truly feeds me. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 8, you may be noticing that stillness is harder than it looks — the silence practice feels awkward, your mind races, there is a restlessness that surfaces when you stop reaching for the next thing. Peter Scazzero writes that many Christians are emotionally stunted not because they lack activity but because they lack stillness — we are human doings rather than human beings, and alcohol quietly serves that by giving us something to hold while we avoid being present. “Be still” in the Hebrew is closer to “cease striving” — an active release, not passive waiting. The two minutes of silence you are practicing each day are countercultural acts of trust.

PONDER

- What comes up for you during the two minutes of silence before each devotional — and what do you think that reveals?
- I wonder in what ways staying busy or entertained has helped me avoid sitting with myself.
- What would it look like to build one more moment of intentional stillness into your day this week?

PRAYER

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

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHAT THE DATA IS TELLING 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

You are nine days in — a good moment to pause and look back at what you have been observing, not to grade your performance but to notice what the data is actually showing you. How has your sleep been? Your energy? Your mood mid-week? In Wisconsin, where stoicism runs deep and “I’m fine” is practically a cultural reflex, honest self-tracking can feel unnatural — but the willingness to look at your own life clearly, without defensiveness, is one of the most spiritually mature things a person can do. Take extra time with your journal today. What is God showing you through the data of your own experience?

PONDER

- Looking back at the last nine days, what is one thing that has genuinely surprised you about yourself or this process?
- What has been the hardest moment so far — and what do you think was underneath that difficulty?
- I wonder where I have noticed even a small shift — in energy, sleep, mood, or clarity — that is worth acknowledging.

PRAYER

God, give me the honesty to examine my life clearly and the grace to receive what I find without fear. I trust you with all of it. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHEN THE EXCITEMENT FADES

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Day 10 is where the initial spark often begins to quiet — the novelty has worn off, the habit is still inconvenient, and the craving still shows up at 5pm on a Friday when everyone around you is winding down with a drink. This is not failure. This is exactly what the experiment predicted. If you are tracking your motivation, you may be noticing the arc many people describe: high energy in the first week followed by flatness in the second. Paul's encouragement is directed precisely at people who are tired and still going — weariness is real and expected. Keep going. The harvest is still coming.

PONDER

- How would you describe your motivation and energy right now compared to Day 1 — and what do you think is driving that shift?
- What is one thing — a practice, a truth, a conversation — that has genuinely helped you that you want to keep leaning into?
- I wonder what it would mean to keep going not because I feel motivated, but because I trust the process.

PRAYER

Lord, when the excitement fades, let my roots go deeper. Keep me steady and remind me that the harvest is worth the wait. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES



Days 11 – 20

**Heart &
Healing**

THE EMOTIONS YOU'VE BEEN OUTRUNNING

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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

Psalm 139:23 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Welcome to the second movement of this journey. 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 often built to manage. For many people, alcohol has functioned as a lid on uncomfortable feelings: anxiety, loneliness, grief, anger with nowhere to go. In a culture like Wisconsin's, where toughness is a virtue, sitting with difficult emotions can feel foreign and threatening. Peter Scazzero's foundational insight is that you cannot have a deep spirituality without emotional health — the feelings you have been outrunning are not weaknesses, they are invitations. Today, as you sit in your opening silence, just let yourself feel what is actually there.

PONDER

- What emotions tend to surface most strongly when you don't have a drink 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.
- What feeling have you been most reluctant to sit with during this experiment, and what do you think it is trying to tell you?

PRAYER

God, search my heart and meet me in the places I have been afraid to look. I trust you with what you find there. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

GUILT AND SHAME ARE NOT THE SAME THINGS

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 healthy, corrective signal. Shame says something far more devastating: I am something wrong, not that I did a bad thing but that I am one. In Wisconsin, where drinking is so normalized, the shame is particularly cruel — you know everyone around you is doing the same thing, yet somehow you feel like the broken one for wondering if it's a problem. Paul's declaration in Romans 8 is one of the most thunderous sentences in all of Scripture: there is now no condemnation — not reduced, not with exceptions, none. Guilt can motivate change. Shame only ever keeps you stuck.

PONDER

- Can you identify a specific shame message you carry about your drinking — something that goes beyond behavior into identity? Where do you think it came from?
- I wonder what the difference is between how guilt feels in my body versus how shame feels — which one shows up more?
- What would it mean to approach this experiment from a place of “no condemnation” rather than self-judgment?

PRAYER

Father, replace every voice of condemnation with your voice of invitation. Remind me today that I am not defined by my worst moments. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 an alcohol experiment that underneath the habit is a reservoir of unprocessed loss, never fully felt because something was always there to numb it. In Wisconsin, grief often gets socialized at the bar after the funeral — and while the ritual is real and loving, it can mean the grief itself never quite gets all the way through us. God is not afraid of your grief. Today, give yourself permission to name what you have been grieving. You don't have to resolve it. Just let it be seen.

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 some of my drinking habits — what comes up when you sit with that honestly?
- What would it look like to bring your grief to God rather than carrying it alone?

PRAYER

Healer, I bring you the losses I have been carrying quietly. Bind up what is broken in me and give me the courage to grieve well. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHERE THE WOUND BEGAN

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 alcohol has a story that predates the drinking — experiences in childhood or early adulthood that shaped how they learned to cope and what they learned to reach for when life got hard. Peter Scazzero writes about the importance of looking at our family of origin not to stay there but to understand the roots of our patterns so we can stop being unconsciously controlled by them. In Wisconsin, multigenerational drinking is genuinely common, and the relationship you have with alcohol may have been modeled long before you ever made a conscious choice about it. That is not your fault. But understanding it is part of your freedom.

PONDER

- I wonder what experiences in my childhood or early life shaped how I learned to cope with stress, pain, or discomfort — what comes to mind?
- How did the adults around you handle difficult emotions when you were growing up — and how has that influenced you?
- What would it mean to look at your own story with the same compassion you would offer a close friend?

PRAYER

God, you knew me before I was formed and you were present in every experience that shaped me. Give me eyes to see my story with your compassion. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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

Day 15 — you are halfway through, and 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 in Philippians is not based on the people having arrived; it is based on who started the work, and the one who began this in you is not going to abandon it halfway through. Take a moment today not to evaluate your performance but to notice where God has been at work — a conversation, a moment of unexpected peace, something you saw about yourself for the first time.

PONDER

- Looking back across the full two weeks, where can you see evidence of something quietly shifting — even if it is small?
- What has been the single most meaningful moment, insight, or conversation of this experiment so far?
- I wonder what I want to carry into the second half with more intentionality than the first.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for beginning this work in me and for being faithful to finish it. I trust you with the second half. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

THE GIFT OF ANGER

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Ephesians 4:26 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Anger gets a bad reputation in Christian circles, and as a result many of us have learned to swallow it, spiritualize it, or numb it before it surfaces. But Paul does not say “do not be angry” — he says “in your anger, do not sin,” acknowledging the emotion as real and valid. In Wisconsin, where stoicism runs deep especially among men, anger is often one of the last emotions to get named — it is more acceptable to drink through it than to say out loud that you are furious, hurt, or exhausted. Anger is information: it tells you where your boundaries have been crossed and where something needs to change. The question is whether you are willing to get curious about what it is protecting.

PONDER

- Is there anger in your life that you have been numbing, swallowing, or spiritualizing away rather than honestly naming?
- I wonder what my anger is actually protecting — what comes up when you sit with that question?
- What would it look like to bring your anger honestly before God rather than managing it on your own?

PRAYER

Lord, I give you the anger I have been carrying. Show me what it is telling me and help me respond to it in ways that lead to healing. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

SURRENDER IS NOT DEFEAT

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

In a culture that prizes self-reliance — and Wisconsin has that in abundance, woven into its farming roots and work ethic — surrender can feel like weakness. But Jesus reframes it entirely: *"Come to me"* is not a call to defeat, it is an invitation to relief. The burden He is asking you to lay down is the exhausting weight of managing everything yourself — including your own interior life. Many of us have been doing enormous unseen labor for years, with alcohol quietly serving as part of that management system. John Mark Comer writes about the yoke of Jesus as a posture of dependence rather than striving. To surrender is not to become passive — it is to finally stop fighting a war you were never meant to fight alone.

PONDER

- What are you still trying to manage, control, or carry alone that is quietly exhausting you?
- Does surrender feel like weakness or relief to you — and where did that association come from?
- I wonder what it would look like today to genuinely hand something over to God rather than continuing to manage it yourself.

PRAYER

*Jesus, I am tired of carrying what I was never meant to carry alone.
I come to you today and ask for the rest only you can give. Amen.*

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

LEARNING TO FEEL AGAIN

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

"The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life."

Job 33:4 (NIV)

REFLECTION

One of the things that surprises people during an alcohol experiment is the return of feeling — and how disorienting it can be. Emotions that were dialed down begin coming back online: joy feels more genuine, but grief cuts deeper; anxiety that was dulled becomes more present. This is not a problem — it is your nervous system remembering how to function as designed. Be patient with yourself, give yourself permission to feel without immediately needing to explain or fix it, and know that God is not alarmed by what you are experiencing. He made you to feel. He is present in it.

PONDER

- Have you noticed emotions returning or intensifying during this experiment — and how have you been responding to them?
- I wonder what feeling is hardest for me to sit with without reaching for something to make it stop.
- What is one small, concrete thing you could do today to care for your emotional and physical self?

PRAYER

Spirit of God, you made me to be fully alive. Give me the courage to feel what is real and the grace to trust you in the middle of it. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 drinking — and one of the hardest to admit, especially when you are surrounded by people. You can be at a crowded Packer watch party or a noisy family gathering full of laughter and still feel profoundly alone. Alcohol creates a sense of connection, but it is often a counterfeit of the real thing, which requires a vulnerability that goes much deeper than not drinking. The loneliness underneath so much drinking is not a sign something is wrong with you — it is a compass pointing toward something real and available.

PONDER

- Have you ever felt lonely in the middle of a social situation — and what did you do with that feeling?
- I wonder what genuine belonging would look like in my life right now — what comes up when you sit with that question?
- Who in your life knows the real you — not the performing you — and how did that depth of relationship form?

PRAYER

God, you made me for genuine belonging. Lead me out of loneliness and into the kind of community where I am truly known and loved. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 — look at how far you have come. You have sat with emotions you used to outrun, questioned stories you never examined, practiced silence, kept data, and kept showing up even when motivation was low. Paul's declaration is one of the most hope-saturated sentences in the New Testament: the new creation has come — not will come eventually, but has come, already here, already underway in you whether you can feel it or not. Take a moment in your journal to write down one or two things you have seen differently over the last twenty days — not what you want to be true, but what you are beginning to actually believe.

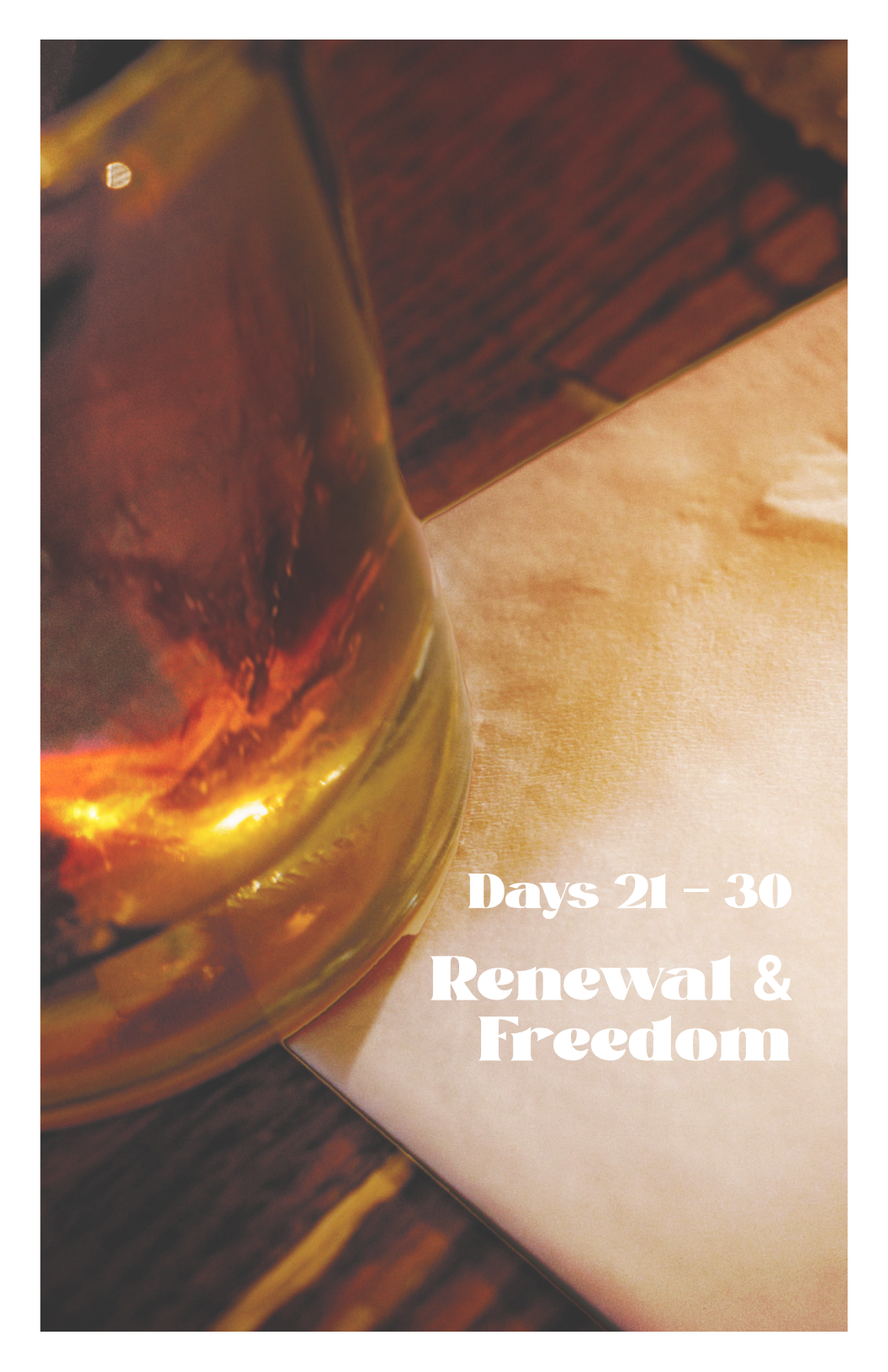
PONDER

- 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 it did on Day 1 — and what has replaced it, even partially?
- What does “new creation” mean to you personally right now — not as theology, but as lived experience?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that the old is gone and the new is here. Keep doing in me what only you can do, and let me trust the pace of your work. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES



Days 21 – 30
Renewal & Freedom

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

Welcome to the final movement of this journey. If the first ten days were about waking up and the second ten about going deeper, these last ten are about stepping forward into the freedom that has been quietly taking shape. You are not the same person who opened this devotional on Day 1. For those of us who have used alcohol to manage the anxieties of daily life, walking in the Spirit offers a genuine alternative: not suppression or white-knuckling, but a real and available source of peace and steadiness. The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you — that is not a small thing to carry into a Friday night in Wisconsin when everyone around you is reaching for a drink.

PONDER

- What does “walking in the Spirit” look like practically in your daily life — what rhythms, practices, or postures help you stay connected?
- I wonder what it would look like, in the moments when I most want to reach for a drink, to pause and turn toward the Spirit instead.
- How has your sense of what you need to get through the day shifted over these 21 days?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, teach me to walk with you — slowly, steadily, one step at a time. Be my pace and my companion in everything today. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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. The fruit of the Spirit is not a checklist of behaviors to perform but the natural outgrowth of a life staying connected to the vine. Perhaps there is a little more peace in the mornings, a little more patience with someone who usually exhausts you, a moment of joy that surfaced where you might have numbed through before. In Wisconsin, where we tend to measure progress in concrete visible outcomes, this quiet interior fruit is easy to overlook. But it is real, and it is growing.

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?
- I wonder where I have noticed a small but real shift in how I respond to people or situations that used to trigger me.
- What would it look like to actively tend to the fruit that is growing rather than taking it for granted?

PRAYER

God, grow in me what only you can grow. I want my life to bear fruit that lasts — not through striving, but through staying connected to you. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 changing your relationship with alcohol is the need to replace ritual with ritual. Drinking is deeply ritualistic — the sound of a can opening, the moment in the evening when the first drink signals the day is done — and simply removing those cues without replacing them tends to leave a gap that eventually pulls you back. God is a God of new things, and the question is what new rituals might serve the same genuine human needs — to mark transitions, signal rest, celebrate — without the costs alcohol carries. Some people find a particular non-alcoholic drink that feels ceremonial; others build a walk, a song, or a moment of prayer into the end of the day.

PONDER

- What are the two or three most specific drinking rituals in your life — the times, places, or triggers that are most automatic — and what need does each one meet?
- I wonder what new ritual might genuinely serve that same need in a healthier way.

PRAYER

Lord, you make new things in wilderness places. Show me the new paths you are creating and give me the courage to walk them. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

THE BODY COMING ALIVE

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 24, many people begin to notice something they didn't expect — they feel genuinely, physically better. Sleep is deeper, the morning fog has lifted, and energy arrives earlier and lasts longer. This is your body doing exactly what it was designed to do when it is no longer processing a depressant night after night. Paul's reminder that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit is not primarily a prohibition — it is a declaration of worth. In a culture where drinking through every season is the default and physical health is often secondary to toughness, choosing to care for your body well is quietly countercultural. Let the physical evidence of this experiment be its own kind of encouragement.

PONDER

- What physical changes — in sleep, energy, mood, or clarity — have you noticed over the course of this experiment?
- I wonder how it sits with me that my body is described as a temple of the Holy Spirit — does that feel meaningful, or is it hard to receive?
- What is one way you want to continue honoring your body after this 30 days is over?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, thank you for making your home in me. Help me honor the body you dwell in — not out of obligation, but out of gratitude. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHO YOU ARE BECOMING

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Transformation is almost always invisible while it is happening — like the slow turning of a Wisconsin season, where you don't notice the days getting longer until suddenly it's light past six and something has quietly, irreversibly shifted. Paul's description is remarkably patient: we are being transformed, present continuous, not in a moment but gradually as we keep turning our faces toward God. This experiment has been one act of turning your face — the silence, the honest journaling, the questions you've been willing to sit with. All of it has been part of the slow, faithful process of becoming more fully who God created you to be.

PONDER

- In what specific ways are you a different person today than you were on Day 1 — in how you think, feel, or respond to the world around you?
- I wonder what it means to me that transformation is gradual and ongoing rather than instant — does that feel discouraging or freeing?
- What do you most want to carry forward from this experience into the person you are still becoming?

PRAYER

Lord, keep transforming me — slowly, faithfully, completely. I want to reflect your glory more fully with every passing season. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

James 5:16 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Healing is rarely a solo project — James connects mutual confession and prayer directly to healing itself. We are not meant to carry our struggles alone, figure out our patterns alone, or grow into freedom alone. One of the quiet gifts of doing this experiment alongside others is discovering that you are not as alone as you thought, and the shame that kept your story private begins to lose its grip the moment you say it out loud to someone who receives it with grace. In Wisconsin, where privacy runs deep, this kind of vulnerability can feel enormously risky. But if you have been doing this devotional alone, today is a good day to share some of what you have discovered with someone you trust — not the polished version, the honest one.

PONDER

- Who in your life knows what you have been doing over these 30 days — and who might need to know?
- I wonder whether something I have discovered during this experiment might be lighter if it were shared.
- What kind of community do you want around you as you continue this journey beyond Day 30?

PRAYER

God, thank you for the gift of community. Give me the courage to be known and the grace to truly know others. Heal us together. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

REST AS A SPIRITUAL ACT

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 modern Wisconsin life, where the work ethic is fierce and rest can feel like falling behind. Into that gap, alcohol has often stepped as the closest available approximation — something that signals the end of the workday and gives permission to finally exhale. But God Himself rested before the fall, before anything was broken, and He built it into the fabric of creation as a gift. The Sabbath is a declaration that you are more than what you produce. John Mark Comer writes that Sabbath is one of the most subversive spiritual practices available precisely because it refuses the logic of a culture that measures worth in output.

PONDER

- What does genuine rest look like for you — and how often do you actually experience it?
- I wonder in what ways alcohol has functioned as a substitute for real rest in my life — and what real rest might require instead.
- What would it look like to build one Sabbath practice — however small — into your regular rhythm going forward?

PRAYER

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

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

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 Friday night in February when everyone around you has a drink and you realize, with mild surprise, that you are genuinely fine. Not white-knuckling, not performing — just present, at ease, yourself. Paul's warning to stand firm is not a threat but a pastoral plea from someone who knows how easily we drift back toward the familiar, even when familiar means constrained. You have spent 28 days choosing something different. Honor that cost and stand firm in the freedom you are beginning to know.

PONDER

- Have you had a moment during this experiment where you felt genuinely free rather than just abstinent? What did it feel like?
- I wonder what specific situations or emotional states put me most at risk of drifting back toward old patterns — and what I will do in those moments.
- What does “standing firm” look like for you practically — not as rigidity, but as a rooted, settled choice?

PRAYER

Christ, you set me free for freedom itself. Help me stand firm in what you have given me and never mistake the familiar for the good. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

WHAT YOU WILL CARRY FORWARD

OPENING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.

Philippians 4:11-12 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Paul's contentment was not a personality trait — it was a learned skill, forged through actual experience of both scarcity and abundance. You have been in a curriculum for 29 days, not a comfortable one, and through it you have learned things that are now yours: the awareness of what you actually feel when you stop numbing, the experience of mornings that feel cleaner, evenings more present. Tomorrow is the last day — but these 30 days are not an ending, they are a beginning. Take your time today with your journal. Write down what you are carrying forward. Be specific. Be honest. Be grateful.

PONDER

- What are the three most significant things you have learned about yourself over these 29 days — the things you most want to remember?
- I wonder which practices — silence, journaling, community, physical care — I want to intentionally continue after Day 30.
- What does contentment look like for you — not as settling, but as a rootedness deep enough that circumstances stop having the final word?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for what these 29 days have taught me. Root me deeply enough that what I have learned becomes the ground I stand on. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES

THIS IS NOT THE END

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 is one of the oldest in human history, spoken over God's people moving through the wilderness, not yet arrived but not where they started — which is exactly where you are today. There is no Day 31 in this devotional, but there is a Day 31 in your life, and all the ordinary days still ahead. The experiment is over. The life is just beginning. Go well.

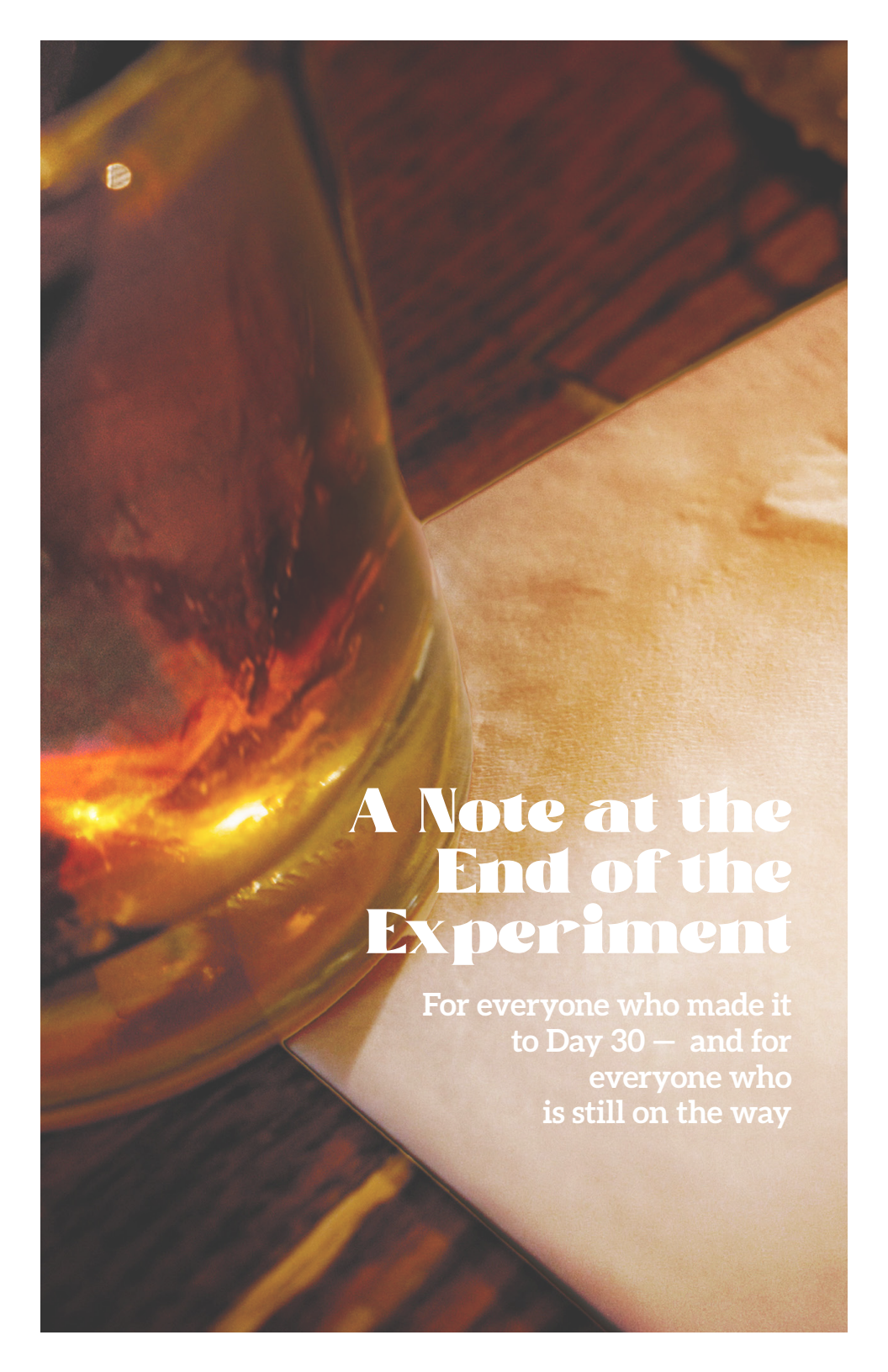
PONDER

- What is the single most important thing this experiment has given you — the thing you most want to protect and carry forward?
- I wonder what my relationship with alcohol looks like going forward — and what I want it to look like. Are those the same answer?
- Where do you sense God inviting you next — what is the next step of this ongoing journey of freedom and becoming?

PRAYER

Lord, bless me and keep me as I step forward from here. Make your face shine on me, be gracious to me, and give me the peace that only you can give. I am not finished — and neither are you. Amen.

CLOSING SILENCE • 2 MINUTES



A Note at the End of the Experiment

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 pour another drink and move on — you chose to stop and look. You chose silence. You chose to write the hard things. You chose to ask questions you might not have liked the answers to. That took courage, well done.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED

In the first ten days you woke up — you saw the culture you swim in not as neutral backdrop but as a powerful shaping force, questioned stories you had inherited without examining, and began practicing silence. In the middle ten days you went deeper — sitting with grief, anger, loneliness, and shame that was never yours to carry, looking at the younger version of yourself with something closer to compassion. In the final ten days you turned toward the light — noticing fruit growing, rewriting rituals, feeling your body come back to life, standing in the slow reality of being transformed.

THE EXPERIMENT NEVER REALLY ENDS

An experiment is not a verdict — it is a beginning. The 30 days are over, but the experiment continues. Your life is the ongoing laboratory, and everything you have learned is now a tool you carry. The silence practice, the journal, the wonder questions — I wonder what is below the surface, I wonder what God is inviting me into here — are yours to keep asking for the rest of your life. Two minutes of silence is available to you every morning and evening from here forward. It costs nothing. It requires only a willingness to stop, breathe, and be present with the God who has been present with you through every one of these thirty days.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

- Keep going with The Alcohol Experiment if you haven't finished it — Annie Grace's community is rich and worth staying connected to.
- Find a person or small group to continue the conversation with. Healing happens in community.
- Consider working with a therapist or spiritual director if the last 30 days surfaced things that feel too big to process alone. That is wisdom, not weakness.
- 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.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT WISCONSIN

Wisconsin is a place of extraordinary beauty, fierce community, and deep loyalty. The drinking culture here is real — but it is not the deepest thing about this place or its people. What you have done over these 30 days is not a rejection of your roots. It is a deepening of them — because you have chosen to show up more fully, more honestly, more present than before. The people who love you deserve the fully awake version of you. And so do you.

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 in you, 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. Go well — into your day, into your life, into the glorious and still-unfolding story of who you are becoming.

We are so glad you were here.

*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)

