



Today

Jan/Feb 2026

refresh, refocus, renew

A New Year,
A New Work

ALSO: PEOPLE OF PEACE

Dear Friends:

At the beginning of a new year, lots of people make resolutions to “reinvent” themselves. But trying to become a “new and better person” is really difficult, if not impossible.

In January, Pastor Darrell Delaney reminds us about the meaning of true change. First, we need to recognize our need for spiritual change, and then, by God’s grace, we need to turn to Jesus to find our identity in him alone. Following Jesus doesn’t merely change us; it transforms us into a new creation, oriented toward glorifying and desiring God.

Then, in February, Pastor Beth Fellingner challenges us to think of connecting with other people as an opportunity to share the love and peace of God for the sake of his kingdom. Think of the many people we meet while shopping, traveling, working, going to events, or just walking a dog in the neighborhood. There are all kinds of ways in which we encounter strangers. These encounters can open doors to meet sisters and brothers in Christ, and they can provide us with opportunities to share the love of Jesus with people who are seeking peace in their lives.

As you read these devotions, may you be refreshed, refocused, and renewed in God’s Word!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Selles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kurt Selles

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"A New Year, A New Work"
Darrell Delaney



"People of Peace"
Beth Fellingner

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january

A New Year, A New Work

Darrell Delaney

In January we find ourselves standing at the edge of something new. The calendar turns, the page flips, and hope rises with the dawn of a new year. Whether or not we make resolutions, most of us feel a pull toward change—toward starting fresh, letting go of the old, and stepping into something better.

I have learned what it feels like to long for newness—not just in circumstances but deep in the soul. I've wrestled with my past, questioned my identity, struggled to let go, and hungered for transformation. And in that wrestling I've encountered the grace of God in powerful and personal ways. I've seen how the gospel doesn't just improve us—it makes us new.

In this 31-day journey let's walk through the process of spiritual renewal. My prayer is that you will recognize that you are seen, known, and invited to trust, hope, and believe more deeply and strongly in God's power to make all things new—including you.

Rev. Darrell Delaney is a cohost of ReFrame's podcast ministry *Groundwork*, and he serves as lead chaplain with Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry in Michigan. He aims to create and facilitate life-giving environments in which people can thrive and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Darrell and his wife, Kia, have three children. He enjoys spending time with family, walking, reading, and playing basketball, chess, and video games.

EMBRACING CHANGE

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! . . ."
—Isaiah 43:18-19

Change has a way of making us feel uneasy. It often comes with the uncertainty of the unknown and the discomfort of moving away from what we've always known.

I remember a time when I faced a significant change—leaving a job I had held for years. It was a step into uncharted territory—and, if I'm honest, fear gripped my heart. The comfort of familiarity had a strong pull on me.

But I've learned something invaluable over the years: God doesn't just call us to new things; he prepares us for them. In Isaiah 43:18-19, God calls us to let go of the past and recognize that he is always doing something new. God promises to make a way for us in the wilderness and to provide streams in the wasteland. Though the path may seem unclear, God is already at

work before we even realize it, and he has our best interests in mind.

Embracing change isn't always easy, but it is always good when we trust that God is leading us. We don't have to have all the answers, because God holds the future. When we lean into his promises, we can take that next step in faith, knowing that God is with us in every change.

God, help me to trust you in all the things you are doing in my life. Give me the strength to let go of what is familiar and to embrace the new things you have for me to do. In Jesus, Amen.

A NEW IDENTITY

If anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here! —2 Corinthians 5:17

I have always loved the idea of starting fresh, shedding old habits or mindsets that no longer serve well.

I remember the first time I truly felt like I was walking into a new identity. It wasn't something I could see right away, but as I look back, I can see that was a turning point in my life. I had come to faith in Jesus, but the real transformation didn't come from that—it came from the Holy Spirit's work in me to let go of the old and walk in the new.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that anyone who is in Christ becomes a new creation. The old self—the shame, the regrets, the wounds—are gone. We often try to hold on to old identities, old mistakes, or old labels that others have put on us. But the truth is that when we are in Christ, we have a new identity. We are

not defined by our past. We are not what we did before. We are who the Lord says we are now.

It can be hard to accept this truth, especially when we are so used to carrying the weight of our past. But the good news of Jesus calls us to walk in the freedom of our new identity. And today we can take that step. We can embrace the fact that the old is gone, and the new has come!

Lord, thank you for giving me a new identity in you. Help me to let go of my old self and to walk confidently in the new creation you have made me to be. Amen.

LETTING GO OF THE PAST

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal. . . .

—Philippians 3:13-14

It's easy to get trapped in the past, isn't it? We hold on to things we wish we could undo, replaying those moments in our minds again and again. It's as if we are carrying a heavy bag full of regret, guilt, or past mistakes—constantly reminding ourselves of our shortcomings. I know I've struggled with that—especially when I have wished I could turn back time and do things differently.

But here Paul reminds us that the past is behind us, and that dwelling on it doesn't help us to grow. In fact, that can hold us back from the new things God wants to do in our lives. There's a freedom in forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, just as Paul describes in this passage.

God is calling us to press on—to pursue the goal he has for us. This doesn't mean forget-

ting the lessons of the past, but it does mean no longer letting the past define our future. There's a prize ahead, and it's waiting for all of us who are ready to leave our old life behind.

Let's press on toward the newness that God has for us, not letting our past mistakes or regrets hold us back.

Lord, help me to let go of the past and to press forward into the future you have called me to. May I strain toward the prize you have for me, trusting that your grace is sufficient. Amen.

COMMITTING TO THE JOURNEY

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will . . . make your righteous reward shine like the dawn. . . .
—Psalm 37:5-6

There's something sacred about starting a journey—even more so when we commit it to the Lord.

I remember a season when I launched into a new role that felt bigger than me. I had my doubts, my fears, and even a few naysayers in my ear. But I also had a quiet confidence—not in myself but in the One who had called me to it.

Committing your way to the Lord isn't just a one-time declaration; it's a daily surrender. It involves waking up and saying, "God, I trust you more than my own understanding." The beautiful thing is that when we commit to trust in the Lord, he doesn't just point us in the right direction—he walks with us.

Psalm 37 reminds us that trust and commitment go hand in hand. It's not about having all

the answers or never feeling uncertain. It's about choosing to put your plans, goals, and hopes into the hands of the faithful God who knows what's best.

The road might be long, but we don't walk it alone. And every step we take with God is a step toward becoming who he made us to be.

Lord, I commit my path to you. Help me to trust you in every twist and turn, knowing that you are guiding me for my good and for your glory. Amen.

LETTING GO OF THE OLD

You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
—Ephesians 4:22-24

There comes a time when carrying the baggage of our old life just weighs too much.

I remember a season where I kept rehearsing past failures, clinging to shame like a heavy coat in summer. I knew God was calling me to move forward, but it felt safer to stay in the familiar—even if it was painful.

Ephesians 4:22-24 hits home here. Paul reminds us that the old self—the habits, thought patterns, and lies we've believed—must be put off. Like clothing that doesn't fit anymore, we're meant to take it off so that we can live in the freedom God offers.

Letting go isn't always a dramatic moment. Sometimes it's just quiet and deliberate. It includes choosing not to respond the way we used to. It means surrendering a mindset that has held us captive. It in-

volves refusing to let guilt define us when grace is freely offered.

We can't fully embrace the new if we are still clinging to the old.

What is God inviting you to release today? Whatever it is, trust that his grace is enough to carry you forward.

Dear Jesus, help me to release what no longer serves your purpose in my life. Give me strength to let go of the old and to step into the new with you. Amen.

THE BEAUTY OF A FRESH START

His compassions never fail. They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness. —Lamentations 3:22–23

One of the most comforting things I have come to cherish is the rhythm of mornings. No matter how chaotic or discouraging the previous day was, the sun still rises each morning. It's as if God painted a daily reminder across the sky: You can start again.

During a difficult season, I struggled with feeling that I had blown too many chances. I remember sitting in silence one early morning, feeling heavy with regret. Then this passage from Lamentations came to mind: "His compassions never fail. They are new every morning." Not just once or twice, but every morning. That promise became a lifeline for me.

God doesn't recycle old grace. He gives fresh mercy for each day's needs. Even when we feel stuck, consumed, or too far gone, God shows up with

compassion that never runs dry.

You may not be able to erase what happened yesterday, but you can begin again today. Let God's faithful love reset your heart. It's not too late to take a deep breath and step forward into the life story he's still writing for you.

Lord, thank you for your daily mercy. When I feel like I've messed up too much, remind me of your faithfulness. Help me to embrace each day as a fresh start. Amen.

A CHANGE OF MINDSET

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. —Romans 12:2

There was a time in my life when I thought change had to begin by starting new routines, meeting new people, setting new goals, and so on.

But no matter what I tried, I kept running into the same internal roadblocks. I realized I had to change the way I thought.

Paul's words in Romans reminded me that transformation doesn't begin with behavior—it starts with belief. The renewing of the mind is God's way of helping us see things from his perspective. And that shift leads to lasting change.

I committed to meditating on Scripture daily—not just reading it but also letting it reshape how I thought about myself, my struggles, and my purpose. That daily renewal helped me to break free from old thought patterns that held me back.

Newness isn't just about doing something different—it's about thinking differently. If you want to live a transformed life, invite God to change your mind first. Let his Word speak louder than your doubts, your past, and your culture.

Jesus, renew my mind today. Replace old, harmful thoughts with your truth. Transform me from the inside out so that I can walk in your will. Amen.

LETTING GO OF WHAT WAS

Forgetting what is behind . . . I press on toward the goal. . . .
—Philippians 3:13

I remember cleaning out the garage one spring, determined to get rid of clutter. As I opened old boxes, I found items tied to painful memories—things I had held on to “just in case.” But I realized those things were taking up space, both physically and emotionally, and keeping me from moving forward.

Paul’s words hit home. He understood that looking back for too long—especially at guilt, regret, or even past achievements—can weigh us down. Moving forward in faith requires letting go of what was so that we can embrace what God is doing now.

It’s not that the past doesn’t matter, but it doesn’t have the power to define your future. Whether it was a mistake you made, an opportunity you missed, or even a version of yourself that no longer fits—God invites you to release it.

He’s doing something new, but your hands have to be free to receive it.

Start this new season with a heart willing to let go. Not because the past doesn’t matter, but because your future in Christ matters more.

Lord, help me to let go of the things that hold me back. Free me from the weights of yesterday so that I can walk boldly into what’s next. Amen.

MAKING PEACE WITH THE PAST

The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ. . . .

—2 Corinthians 5:17

I've spent a lot of time in conversations with people who are holding on to shame, anger, or deep disappointment over things they can't go back and change. I have also been there myself—replaying moments that I wish I could rewrite. But living in the past is like trying to drive while staring in the rearview mirror. You miss what's in front of you, and you're likely to crash!

The gospel doesn't ignore our past. It redeems it. Jesus meets us in the broken places of our lives and says, "You don't live there anymore." That doesn't mean we forget everything that happened, but we no longer let those moments hold power over our identity.

The apostle Paul, who wrote this passage, had a violent past. Yet he found peace and purpose in Christ. That same peace is available to us—not

because we have earned it, but because Christ has already paid for it.

Newness in Christ means learning to see ourselves the way God sees us: forgiven, free, and made new. You are not who you were. And because of Jesus, your story doesn't end in shame. It moves forward in grace.

Jesus, thank you for making me new. Help me to release the past and to embrace the freedom you've given me. Shape my future with your grace. Amen.

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

If Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.
—Romans 8:10

I used to think that becoming a new person in Christ meant I had to change myself—clean up, perform better, strive harder. But that left me exhausted and frustrated. The truth is that we're not called to muster up new life in our own strength. That's the Holy Spirit's role.

Romans 8 reminds us that if Christ lives in us, then his Spirit breathes life into places that were once lifeless. The Spirit doesn't just improve our old selves—he transforms us from the inside out. That's powerful. It means we can stop trying to force change; instead, we can be open to what the Spirit wants to do in us.

Whether you're battling old habits, healing from deep wounds, or longing to change in new ways, take heart. You

are not alone, and you are not powerless. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. That's not just motivation—it's resurrection power at work.

Let today be about surrender, not striving. The Spirit knows what needs to go and what needs to grow.

Holy Spirit, thank you for living in me and giving me new life. Help me to surrender today and to trust that you have the power to change and renew me. Amen.

RESTORING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Bear with each other and forgive one another. . . . Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love. . . .
—Colossians 3:13-14

At some point, we all face the sting of broken relationships. Whether it's because of betrayal, misunderstanding, or neglect, the pain can linger and affect other areas of our lives.

I remember a season when I carried the weight of unforgiveness toward a close friend. The more I held on to that, the more it distorted my perspective—not just about that person but about others too. My heart became guarded, and joy felt distant.

Eventually I realized that I couldn't carry that burden and walk freely with God at the same time. The Spirit nudged me toward forgiveness—not because my friend deserved it, but because I had been forgiven so much myself. It wasn't easy, but releasing that hurt made room for healing.

Forgiveness doesn't always restore a relationship to what it

was, but it does release us from the prison of resentment.

Paul's words in Colossians remind us that just as the Lord forgave us, we are called to do the same. There's a newness that comes with letting go. Peace returns; hearts soften; and the door opens for restoration.

This year, consider whom you might need to forgive—or whom you might need to ask for forgiveness. It might be the key to the freedom and newness you've been praying for.

Lord, soften my heart where it's been hardened by pain. Teach me how to forgive as you have forgiven me. Bring healing as only you know how. Amen.

RENEWING YOUR MIND

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. . . .

—Romans 12:2

Every January, people focus on external changes—better diets, improved finances, new routines. But a transformation that lasts always begins within. Our thoughts shape our actions, and our mindset affects the way we respond to life.

I used to think that change started with doing more. But I've learned that true, lasting transformation comes from aligning my perspective with God's truth instead of cultural noise. That's what Paul is getting at here. This is not just about avoiding worldly patterns; it's about inviting God to reshape how we see everything. When I start my day with Scripture instead of social media, peace comes more easily. When I focus on gratitude rather than complaints, my heart softens.

Renewing your mind is a daily choice—like resetting a com-

pass so that you don't drift off course.

God wants to guide us, but we need a clear mental space so that we can hear his voice.

Let today be a turning point: less conformed, more transformed.

Spirit of God, renew my mind with your truth each day. Clear out the clutter of fear, comparison, and negativity. Align my thoughts with yours. In Jesus, Amen.

LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND

Forgetting what is behind . . . I press on . . . to win the prize for which God has called me. . . .

—Philippians 3:13-14

Some memories cling to us like shadows—our failures, our regrets, our missed opportunities. We replay them over and over, wondering what we could have done differently.

But the truth is that we can't change the past. Even so, we don't have to let it shape our present and our future.

Paul had a past too. Before becoming an apostle, he persecuted the church. If anyone had reasons to carry guilt, it was him. But instead of being paralyzed by his past, Paul focused forward—not because he was perfect but because he was forgiven. The Lord's amazing grace gives us permission to let go.

Leaving the past behind isn't about denial. It's about refusing to let it define you. God is doing something new, and looking backward too long can

make you miss what's right in front of you.

So if you're carrying baggage from last year—or from the past decade or more—lay it down. God is not finished with you yet. In fact, he's just getting started.

Jesus, help me to let go of what I cannot change. Free me from shame and regret, and fix my eyes on what lies ahead in life with you. Amen.

THE BEAUTY OF STARTING AGAIN

Turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy . . . for he will freely pardon.
—Isaiah 55:7

There's something powerful about a fresh start. Whether it's a new year, a new chapter, or a new morning, we all long for the chance to begin again. But sometimes we wonder if God is really willing to give us that clean slate. Especially when we've messed up so many times in our lives.

Isaiah 55 reminds us that starting again isn't just possible—it's beautiful. God doesn't just tolerate our return; he welcomes it with mercy and pardon. That word is key. It means we don't have to earn our way back or prove ourselves. We just need to turn around and come home.

God is not stingy with second chances. He is generous with grace. If you have strayed, or doubted, or simply gotten stuck, this is your invitation to start again—not because you're strong, but because God is merciful.

There is beauty in starting again—not because everything in it is perfect, but because God is present in the process.

And that is more than enough.

Lord, thank you for the mercy that meets me every morning. Give me the courage to start again, trusting that in your grace you will carry me forward. Amen.

UNFAILING LOVE IN EACH NEW DAY

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
—Psalm 118:24 (NRSV)

Some mornings don't feel worth rejoicing over. The weight of yesterday's worries or the dread of today's challenges can steal our joy before the day even begins. But Psalm 118:24 gently calls us back to a deeper truth: every single day is a gift crafted by God's own hands.

When the psalmist says, "This is the day that the LORD has made," it's not just about sunny skies and good vibes. It's a declaration that no matter what the day holds, it is still God's. It means that God's love, mercy, and faithfulness are already waiting for you in this day. Even when life feels unpredictable, God's love doesn't waver.

Rejoicing doesn't mean pretending that everything is fine. It means choosing to trust the One who made the day—and who holds you in it. Each

morning brings a new opportunity to rest in God's love, to find joy not in perfection but in God's presence.

You don't have to carry yesterday's weight into today. God's love is new each morning—and it will meet you again tomorrow.

Jesus, thank you for this day and for your unfailing love in it. Help me to rejoice in your presence and to trust you in all that lies ahead. Amen.

WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. —Romans 6:4

One of the most powerful truths of the Christian faith is that we don't have to stay the same. Through Jesus, we've been given the gift of new life—right here, right now. We aren't just slightly improved versions of our old selves. We have been made new from the inside out.

Paul's words in Romans 6 remind us that just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we too are invited into resurrection living. That means the habits, thought patterns, and shame that once held us back no longer have to define us. The past no longer has the final word. Grace does.

Of course, walking in newness doesn't always feel instant. Often it means taking one small step of faith at a time. But every step forward in obedience is a declaration that you belong to the risen Christ and

that your life is a living testimony to his transforming power.

You are not who you used to be. And, by God's grace, you're becoming more of the person he has called you to be.

Lord, thank you for the new life I have in you. Help me to walk each day with purpose, knowing that I have been raised to live differently. Amen.

A NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. . . . I live by faith in the Son of God. . . .
—Galatians 2:20

When I reflect on my life and who I once was, it's easy to see how I've tried to define myself by my past, my mistakes, and the roles I've played. There were times when I thought my identity was tied to my job, my achievements, or even how others saw me. I struggled as I compared myself with others, thinking that who I was could only be measured by external success or someone else's approval.

But then I found freedom in Christ. Galatians 2:20 became a truth that I can hold on to—I no longer have to define myself by my past or even by what I've done. I am now defined by the life Christ lives in me. In him, my identity is secure. No more striving to earn a sense of worth; no more living under the weight of expectations that I can't meet. In Christ, I am a new creation.

This new identity in Christ doesn't mean I don't still struggle with old habits or old thoughts. But it does mean I have a foundation that is not built on shifting sand.

I can live with peace because the truth is that I belong to Jesus. My identity is wrapped up in his love, his grace, and the work he has done for me.

Lord, thank you for making me a new creation. Help me to live out my new identity with confidence and peace, remembering that it is no longer I who live, but you who live in me. In your name, Amen.

THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE

"I will make a new covenant with the people. . . . I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more."
—Hebrews 8:8, 12

I can still remember the first time I really understood the gift of God's grace. I had been used to the idea of "earning" favor and approval from people, and that extended into seeking approval from God. It was a familiar pattern: Perform well, and you will be rewarded. Fail, and you are left with guilt and consequences.

But grace is not like that. It depends not on our performance but on God's promises—sealed through Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews contrasts the old covenant, which was based on laws and rituals, with the new covenant of grace established by the sacrifice of Jesus. The old covenant required continuous sacrifices for sin, but Jesus, through his sacrifice of himself once for all, made it possible for us to draw near to God, being loved and forgiven.

The new covenant means that we no longer need to fear God's judgment. We are invited into an intimate relationship with God, marked not by our obedience but by God's perfect love. No matter what our mistakes are, God's grace is always greater. This is the good news of salvation—the new covenant in Jesus.

As we reflect on all this, let's embrace the freedom that comes with grace. No longer bound by old rules, we can live in hope and peace, knowing God has made a way for us to be fully loved and forgiven.

Jesus, thank you for establishing the new covenant of grace. Help us fully to embrace your love and to live in the freedom you have given us. Amen.

NEW HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
—Jeremiah 29:11

I remember a time in my life when everything seemed uncertain. It felt as though the world was moving by on fast-forward and I was left standing still. I had goals, dreams, and desires, but they seemed far out of reach. Fear and doubt crept in, and I wondered if I'd ever truly be able to step into the future I hoped for.

We all have moments of uncertainty. Maybe you are facing a challenging season or questioning where your life is headed. It's easy to forget, when we're in the midst of struggle, that God has a purpose and plan for our lives. He sees the bigger picture, and his plans are always good. In Jeremiah 29:11, God's promise to his people—despite their exile—is one of hope, not despair. It's a promise that echoes through history to us today.

Even when the path ahead seems unclear, we can hold on to the assurance that God is at work, weaving the pieces of our lives together with purpose. The future may not always look the way we might expect, but in God's hands it will always be better than we could have imagined.

In this new year and every year, we can move forward with confidence, knowing that God is leading us toward a hopeful future.

Lord, thank you for your promise of a hopeful future. Help me to trust you with the unknowns and to rest in the assurance that you are guiding me. Amen.

NEW STRENGTH FOR NEW CHALLENGES

Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
—Isaiah 40:31

The challenges of life can feel overwhelming at times. I remember when I was faced with a difficult decision that required more energy and wisdom than I felt I had within me. I tried to rely on my own strength and resources, but it quickly became apparent that I was running on empty.

This is where God's promise of renewal comes in. It's not about having strength to do it all on our own; it's about trusting in God, whose strength is limitless. In the same way that an eagle soars with ease, we have the strength to rise above our struggles when we hope in God. We don't have to fight through our challenges on our own power. God equips us with what we need for the journey ahead.

As we step into the newness of each day, let's remember that we don't need to face life's challenges alone. The Lord's

strength is made perfect in our weakness, and he promises that when we place our trust in him, he will renew our strength and empower us to face whatever comes our way.

Lord, thank you for renewing my strength when I feel weak. Help me to trust in your provision and power as I face the challenges ahead each day. Amen.

BUILDING A NEW FOUNDATION

Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
—Matthew 7:24-25

When I reflect on times in my life when things seemed uncertain or challenging, I realize that what truly made the difference was the foundation I had. Often I had tried to stand on shaky ground—things like my own abilities, opinions of others, or fleeting circumstances. But none of those things provided a solid foundation. I always fell.

Building on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ is essential. Jesus didn't promise that storms wouldn't come, but he did assure us that when we build on him—the Rock—we will stand firm. Just as a house built on rock will stand against winds and floods, when we place our trust in God's Word and live according to his teachings, we gain the strength to withstand life's difficulties.

The newness God offers is not just about external changes; it's

about laying a fresh foundation within ourselves—one that is grounded in his truth, grace, and love. As we build this foundation, we can trust that he will see us through any storm.

Lord, help me to build my life on the solid foundation of your Word. May I always stand firm, trusting in your strength to carry me through the storms. Amen.

LIVING OUT A NEW PURPOSE

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
—Ephesians 2:10

As I think about the new year and fresh starts, I'm reminded of the deep truth that each one of us has a purpose—a purpose that was ordained by God long before we even knew it.

There's a sense of peace that comes with knowing that we are not just random beings, that our lives are filled with intention. But the real challenge is in living out that purpose, day by day.

I've often thought about what it means to live out my calling. The truth is that it's not always easy. Distractions, fears, and doubts often come up and get in the way of living as God intends for us. But one thing I know for certain is that the work God has set before me is good work. And the same is true for you.

God calls us to live not just for ourselves but for others, to do

the work he has already prepared for us to do. And in embracing the newness of life in Christ, we are also embracing the mission God has prepared for us. Our purpose in him brings fulfillment, direction, and joy.

Lord, guide me in discovering and living out the purpose you have prepared for me. Help me to engage in the good works you have set before me, and to work at them with courage and joy. Amen.

LET GO OF FEAR, EMBRACE NEWNESS

The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. —2 Timothy 1:7

Fear is one of the greatest obstacles to embracing newness. It can hold us back from stepping into the new chapters of our lives, from trusting God's promises, and from becoming the people he has created us to be. Fear often whispers to us that we are unqualified, incapable, or unworthy of the changes that God wants to make in us.

But the Bible tells us that fear is not from God. Instead, God has given us his Spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. It's not about us having enough courage on our own; it's about relying on the strength and presence of the Holy Spirit. When we lean into God's power, we can face the unknown with confidence, knowing that the Lord is already ahead of us.

I've had many moments in which fear has threatened to paralyze me from pursuing

something new. Yet in those moments I've come to realize that God's "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). Embracing God's Spirit within me means rejecting the lies that fear tries to tell me, and walking forward in the boldness of new life that God provides. Surrounded by God's love, we can let go of fear and walk into the space God has provided for his new work in our lives.

Lord, thank you for your Spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. Help me to let go of my fears and to embrace all the new things you have in store for me. Amen.

THE POWER OF A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

—Colossians 3:2

In the hustle and bustle of life, it's easy to become consumed by the distractions and stresses of the world. Our focus often shifts from eternal perspectives to temporary, earthly matters. We become fixated on problems, failures, and the pressure to perform, but all of that can limit our vision and steal our peace.

The apostle Paul encourages us to set our hearts and minds "on things above, not on earthly things." When we do, we gain a new perspective. We are reminded that our identity is in Christ and that our hope is in the Lord, who rules over all things in heaven and on earth. The troubles of today become smaller when we shift our gaze upward, realizing that we are citizens of a kingdom that is unshakable.

I remember a time when I was overwhelmed with anxiety

about my future and the things I could not control. But when I started to focus on God's promises and his eternal plan, I could put my worries into perspective. Life became less about immediate outcomes and more about fulfilling God's purpose. It was a powerful shift, giving me peace in the midst of chaos.

God, help me to focus on you and the eternal promises you have given me. Shift my perspective so that I can embrace the newness you are bringing into my life. Amen.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN CHRIST

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"
—Revelation 21:5

Have you ever felt like you've missed an opportunity or that life has passed you by? Maybe you have faced setbacks, disappointments, or closed doors. It can be easy to feel that your chances for new beginnings are over, but the truth is that, with God, there is always an opportunity for something new.

In Revelation 21 we get a glimpse of the ultimate renewal God has in store: "a new heaven and a new earth." And even today God is at work making things new in our lives. Whether it's a new relationship, a new calling, a new season of growth, or even a new perspective on the circumstances we find ourselves in, God is always offering new opportunities.

I remember a time in my life when everything seemed to be falling apart. Relationships

were strained, work was stressful, and I felt as if I had nothing left to offer. But in the midst of that I felt a deep pull to start fresh, to rebuild, and to pursue something new. As I stepped out in faith, God opened doors that I never expected, and he renewed my heart, mind, and spirit in ways that I could not have imagined.

If you feel stuck or as if the best parts of life are behind you, know that God is the God who makes all things new. His opportunities never run out, and his plans for you are always fresh and full of hope.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the new opportunities you bring into my life. Help me to trust you and to embrace the newness you have in store for me. Amen.

NEW STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

—2 Corinthians 12:9

Life has a way of humbling us. Whether that takes place through physical illness, personal struggles, or unexpected challenges, we often find ourselves in places where we feel weak and incapable.

But in those moments of weakness, God's power is made evident.

I've learned that in times when I feel I have nothing left to give, God's strength rises within me. I remember a situation in which I was trying to balance my personal life, work, and ministry, feeling overwhelmed and worn out. I wasn't sure how much longer I could keep going.

Yet, through prayer, God reminded me that in my weakness, he could show his power. Instead of pushing through on my own, I began to lean into God's strength, trusting that he would carry me.

When you feel weak, remember that God doesn't expect you to be strong on your own. His grace is more than enough. His strength in your weakness is the very thing that will carry you through and make you stronger than you ever imagined.

Holy Spirit, thank you for being my strength in times of weakness. Help me to rest in your power and trust in your sufficiency. Amen.

GOD'S TRANSFORMING WORK IN US

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.—Philippians 1:6

When we set out on a new journey or season, it can be easy to feel discouraged, as if the process of change is taking too long or the work isn't happening quickly enough. Sometimes we wonder if the growth we desire in our lives will ever truly take place.

I've been there—often questioning if I would ever truly grow past certain struggles. But Philippians 1:6 is a reminder that God is not finished with us yet. He began a good work in us, and he is faithful to complete it.

This reminds me of a time in my life when I was overwhelmed by all the changes that I felt were needed in my life. I tried to rush things, but the harder I pushed, the more frustrated I became. It was during those moments of struggle that God gently reminded me that he is the one doing the

work, not me. God's timing is perfect, and he works in ways that I can't always see or understand.

Take comfort in knowing that God is working in you. Your transformation might not happen overnight, but God will complete the good work he has started in you. Trust in his process and know that, as you walk with him, you will become the person he created you to be.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the work you are doing in me. Help me to trust your timing and to believe that you are faithful to complete what you have started. Amen.

NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

If anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here! —2 Corinthians 5:17

Becoming a new creation in Christ is one of the most beautiful transformations we can experience. But it doesn't always feel like a sudden change, does it?

I've found that, at times, I don't always see the immediate evidence of my transformation, and that can lead to discouragement. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking, "I'm still the same person I was before."

But here's the truth: When you come to faith in Christ, you are a new creation, and that is the beginning of a radical shift. The old ways, the old habits, the old mindset—these things begin to fade away. You are not just improving on who you were; you are becoming someone entirely new.

I remember when I first came to this realization. I was trying to change my behavior to match what I thought Christ

wanted from me. But it wasn't until I embraced my new identity in him that I started to experience real change. Instead of striving in my own strength, I learned to rest in the truth that Christ had already made me new.

Embrace your new identity in Christ. When you're tempted to go back to old patterns, remind yourself that the old has passed away. The new has come, and you are a new creation in him!

Lord, thank you for making me a new creation in Christ. Help me to fully embrace my new identity in you and to live out the transformation you have begun in me. Amen.

THE NEW COMMAND TO LOVE

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

—John 13:34-35

When Jesus gave this new command to his disciples, he wasn't simply telling them to show kindness or to be nice to each other. No, Jesus was calling his followers to something deeper—a radical, sacrificial love that mirrors his own.

This is a love that goes beyond feelings and extends into actions. Jesus' love is the kind of love that says, “I will put your needs above mine, even when that is difficult.”

Think about how often we hear of “love” in the world today. It's talked about in the context of self-love, romantic love, and the love we feel for family and friends.

But what sets the love of Christ apart is its foundation in sacrifice. Jesus loved us to the point of laying down his life for us all. This is the love he calls us to show to others.

This command is new in the sense that it is not about loving people as we want to love them, but as Jesus loved us—unconditionally and without limit. It's a love that challenges us to love the unlovable, to forgive when that is hard, and to extend grace when it seems undeserved.

When we walk in the love of Jesus, we bear witness to the world about who Jesus is and the transformation he brings.

Let's love as he has loved us.

Jesus, thank you for showing us what true love looks like. Help me to love others with the same sacrificial love you have shown me. And may my actions reflect your love. Amen.

NEW JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.
—Psalm 126:5

The journey of life isn't always easy. We face struggles, setbacks, and moments where it feels like our efforts are in vain. But the beautiful truth of Psalm 126:5 is that God does not waste our pain. The tears we shed are never in vain, for they are like seeds being sown for a harvest of joy.

I remember a time when I was going through a season of difficulty. It felt like everything was falling apart, and I couldn't see how any good could come from it. Yet, looking back, I realize that those moments of struggle were the very things that cultivated a deeper joy in me. God used the pain to refine me, teach me, and ultimately bring me to a place of greater peace and happiness.

We are promised that, even in our sorrow, God will bring forth joy. The joy doesn't always come immediately, and

at times we have to endure some hard moments. But when the harvest comes, it's sweeter than we could have imagined. It's a joy that only God can bring—a joy that comes from knowing that he is with us through it all.

As we walk through life, let's remember that the joy that follows the tears is a new joy. It's a joy that comes from trusting God with our struggles and waiting patiently for his work to be completed in us.

God, thank you for the promise of joy in our life's journey. Help me to trust you through the difficult times and to hold on to the hope that we will be filled with joy in you. Amen.

THE NEWNESS OF ETERNAL LIFE

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
—John 3:16

The newness we celebrate at the start of each year pales in comparison to the ultimate newness we receive through Christ. Eternal life isn't just about a future promise; it's about a present reality that transforms how we live today. When we embrace the newness of eternal life, we accept that we are part of something far greater than ourselves—an unshakable kingdom that will never fade.

I remember when I first understood this truth fully. It wasn't until a hard season in my life that I truly grasped what it meant to have eternal life through Jesus. I realized that no matter what happened in the world or in my circumstances, the gift of eternal life could not be taken away. This profound shift in perspective gave me the peace that surpasses understanding. I knew I

had a hope beyond what this world could offer.

Eternal life changes everything. It shifts our values, our priorities, and even the way we see hardship. Each day becomes a step closer to the fulfillment of God's promises. So when the trials of life come, we can face them with the confidence that we are secure in the love of God, which never ends.

As we conclude this devotional journey, let's remember that the newness we experience now is just a foretaste of the life we have in Christ that will never fade but last forever!

Lord, thank you for the gift of eternal life. Help us to embrace your love and the hope you have given us, trusting in your promises. Amen.

NOTES

NOTES



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