

## **Welcome to the Greater Growth 21-Day Devotional**

Bethel family!

Welcome to our Greater Growth 21-day devotional, tailored to guide you on a transformative journey towards a Christian growth mindset. Our faith teaches us that with God, all things are possible. Yet, often, we limit ourselves with self-doubt, fear, and a fixed mindset that tells us we're incapable of change or growth. But imagine if we truly embraced the boundless potential that God sees within us? This devotion is designed to reshape your perspective, using Scripture and reflection, so that you can approach challenges with faith and resilience, deepening your relationship with God, and truly understanding the growth He desires for you and our church.

Ephesians 4:15,16 says, "... we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (NLT)

During our 21-day journey together, we will focus on five pillars of a Biblical growth mindset.

1. See challenges as opportunities.
2. Willing to learn and improve.
3. Spirit of persistence.
4. Optimism and Positivity.
5. Embrace change and adapt.

We have an incredible opportunity to unite our faith together in the coming year to see GREATER GROWTH in our church, as well as in our individual lives. God has MORE for all of us. And we desire to apprehend this truth by faith and press forward to become the people He's called us to be.

Growing in Him,  
Ps Mike & Ps Julie Gowans

### **Pillar 1: Seeing Challenges as Opportunities**

These next four days are devoted to what God's Word says about our perspective when we face challenges, trials, or obstacles. Foundational to a Biblical growth mindset is a commitment to view challenges as opportunities to grow! Let's press into these four devotionals and see what the Holy Spirit will reveal to us. Lord, grow in us a biblical mindset regarding the challenges we are facing today. Amen.

### **Day 1 - Wake Up for the Day is Near**

*Scripture: Romans 13:11-14*

To begin our 21-Day devotional focus on greater growth, we turn our attention to Romans 13 where the Apostle Paul urges believers to understand the present time; a call to wake up from our slumber because the day of the Lord is nearer now than ever (v. 11). This sets the context for why it is so important for us to commit to a "growth mindset!" Let's break it down...

First, we are urged to understand the present time (v. 11). The call to "wake up from your slumber" is a reminder that our faith demands our active engagement. It's easy to become complacent, but we must recognize that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Second, the contrast of night and day with a spurring to live in the light (v. 12,13)! This imagery symbolizes the coming of Christ's return. Just as the dawn chases away the darkness, Christ's return will dispel the darkness of sin and evil. In anticipation of this glorious day, we are called to cast off the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. This armor is the righteousness, love, and grace of Christ.

Lastly, a powerful call to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ (v.14). This means to immerse ourselves so completely in Christ's character and teachings that His presence becomes evident in our words and actions. When we put on Christ, we no longer think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh, but rather we seek to fulfill the desires of the Spirit.

To summarize, let us remember that our Christian journey is one of awakening to the light of Christ and living in joyful anticipation of His return. Let us be vigilant in casting off the deeds of darkness, embracing the armor of light, and clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Take a few minutes to reflect on the questions below. Let's answer the call to greater growth and see what God will do in and through us together!

Application:

1. In what areas of your life are there signs of spiritual slumber recently?
2. What obstacles may be keeping you from walking in light?
3. How can you clothe yourself with Christ?
4. What plans will you make to prioritize this 21 day devotional and develop a Godly growth mindset?

## **Day 2 - Challenges Are an Honor**

*Scriptures: 1 Cor. 10:13; Gen 18:19*

The path of least resistance is the path of least growth, the path of least glory. The Lord works through and in the challenges of life to show off who we are. "Have you considered my servant, Job, the Lord says to satan." Maybe Job would have preferred to be left alone, but God wanted to take him further. To bring more glory out of a life that was already exemplary. The Lord brings challenge because He sees the potential in us. He wants to develop us further. He doesn't allow too much, more than we can handle according to 1 Cor. 10:13. Have you ever considered what that means about how much God thinks you can handle. When you find challenges in your life, recognize that God sees something in you and is showing His commitment to see you become the overcomer He made you to be.

Application:

1. What do you think about God's heart for you when you are facing challenges in life?
2. How have you seen God use challenges to develop you?

## **Day 3 - Challenges Grow Our Faith**

*Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Samuel 17:37*

The great trophy of life to display in the end will be our faith. The deeds done in faith are put on display in Hebrews Chapter 11, the Hall of Faith. Faith is on its fullest display in times of great challenge. But it is not just shown, it is grown. David didn't start by running at giants. God allowed a lion and a bear to attack his flock first. He had seen God give him strength to defeat those challenges and it gave him confidence for bigger things. David moved on from giants to even greater challenges as he was being chased by Saul. But in each challenge we see the shepherd boy becoming a king that trusted God more as God delivered him over and over again. In Psalm 18, David pours out praise to the God he trusts so deeply because of all He delivered him from.

Application:

1. What smaller challenges are you dealing with that you think may be preparing you for bigger things?
2. What deeds of faith in your life do you think would be on display if you were mentioned in Hebrews 11?

### **Day 4 - Challenges Teach Us About Ourselves**

*Scripture: Mark 9:24; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

One of the great barriers to personal growth is not knowing our limits and boundaries, not knowing where we need to seek the Lord to expand our hearts and strength and wisdom and courage and love. When we are challenged, we find those lines, we find our "edges." And then the Lord leads us to move beyond them. Peter thought his love for Jesus would produce more courage than it did. When Satan asked to sift Peter, the Lord allowed it for Peter's own sake, and Jesus prayed that his faith wouldn't fail, and it didn't. He got up, he came back, but he knew his self-confidence was misplaced. He wasn't the brave one. He didn't love Jesus "more than these." When Jesus restores Peter, he reminds him of what that challenge taught him, and then assured him he would still have another chance to show his love, even unto death. The next time, Peter was ready.

Application:

1. Where do you think you may have a blindspot about your own need for growth?
2. When have you needed a do-over, and how have you seen the Lord restore you?

### **Day 5 - Challenges Prove Our Love**

*Scripture: Romans 5:8; John 15:13*

"Do you love me?" Was the question Jesus repeated to Peter on the beach. Show me. Take care of my sheep. It wasn't an easy task. Shepherds lay down their lives for their sheep. Certainly the Lord gives us all assignments that test our own abilities. It is in faithfully enduring these challenges and in overcoming them that our love is shown. I will keep going for you. I will push through for you. I will try again for you. If you have trusted me with this challenge, I will take it on. Why? Because I love you. The proof that God loves you isn't that He made you, it's that He died for you. He faced the greatest challenge of our sin and overcame it by a willingness to give everything for it. Without the challenge, where's the depth of love? It is that love that moves us out of the garden of Gethsemane, through the cross and into the victory of the resurrection!

Application:

1. Have you seen people overcome challenges to love you?
2. What do challenges show you about your own love?

## **Pillar 2: Willing to Improve and Learn**

Our next four devotionals direct our focus to the importance of learning and improvement. As we get older, often we can settle into a “fixed” mindset believing that we have it figured out. A major roadblock to growth can be our pride. However, when we walk in humility, opportunities to improve and learn can take us to new levels of growth.

### **Day 6 - Willing to Improve and Learn**

*Scripture: Proverbs 15:31*

There are times when we are presented with opportunities to make necessary changes for growth, and these opportunities may come in the sometimes uncomfortable packaging of constructive criticism. The word "criticism" is not pleasant for most of us, and as soon as we hear it, regardless of the context, we may begin to shut down the notion. Constructive criticism is a type of feedback that is not disrespectful, and it does not attack a person's character but instead provides helpful information that points out opportunities for improvement.

Today's Bible verse states that constructive criticism leads us to be among the wise. It doesn't usually feel good to receive correction or what we may perceive as negative feedback from those around us, whether it may be our spouses, bosses, co-workers, pastors, or other loved ones; however, our openness and willingness to humbly receive instruction are ultimately what can lead to progressive growth and wisdom in our lives. Often, God speaks through others in our lives to help us receive His knowledge and direction. Therefore, it's essential to stay humble, teachable, and sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God guides us into all truth so that we may walk in the light and the path He has determined for our lives. So, instead of resisting criticism, perhaps we can shift the narrative and embrace it as an opportunity to grow and develop in the various aspects of our lives that the Lord highlights.

A growth mindset requires a willingness to improve and learn, and allowing God to use people's feedback will help us develop specific skills, strengthen our relationships, build confidence, and let the Lord shape and mold our lives. Lean into constructive criticism to grow in wisdom and understanding.

Application:

1. Is there an area of your life where you've rejected constructive criticism?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to receive constructive criticism with humility as He provides growth opportunities.

### **Day 7 - Embrace the Need to Grow**

*Scripture: Luke 2:52*

Our Lord took on human likeness in His earthly life. Meaning He didn't come fully formed with all that He would need to accomplish His Father's given mission. It was all in Him of course. In seed form. The kingdom of heaven in us also starts in seed form. Embracing our need to grow and the Father's patience and kindness towards us will help us to enjoy the process of sanctification, by which we grow up into the full grown and mature person of God that we were intended to be. Breathe. Enjoy the ride.

Application:

1. Are you patient with yourself on your journey towards maturity in Christ?
2. What area do you most want to mature in?

## **Day 8 - Upward and Onward**

*Scripture: Philippians 3:12-16*

I have not arrived, but I am on my way. I believe every healthy Christian should maintain this attitude. Christ is always calling us forward. Upwards rather. Deeper into His presence. Pleasures forevermore! If I do not yet experience the deepest sense of joy and peace and rapture in Him, this means I am to sojourn deeper! If I am honest with myself, I know this will be an eternal lifetime of discovery. And in this I rejoice. So enjoy His presence today a little more than you did yesterday. Upwards and onwards. If you fall into despair one day, forgetting His reality in your life, don't fret on it too long. Forget what is behind. Press towards the Prize.

Application:

1. How much do you experience God on a day to day basis?
2. Do you view Christ as the ultimate Prize of life? If not, would you like to ask Him to become that to you?

## **Day 9 - Stay Humble**

*Scripture: Proverbs 9:9*

God gives grace to the humble. Those who are humble are teachable. The Grace of God teaches us to say no to ungodliness and to live upright lives. To be taught by God is absolutely necessary for the believer. Many times these "God lessons" come through humans, and that can be where our humility falters ... in receiving instruction from an imperfect vessel. But remember, the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who come as children. A child is willing to learn from anyone. Learn this, and the mysteries of God will never cease revealing themselves to you.

Application:

1. Are you good at receiving correction in humility?
2. What is an area of your life where you desire to be more wise?

### **Pillar 3: Spirit of Persistence**

One of the vital pillars of a biblical growth mindset is the resolve to “never give up.” Some of the most meaningful growth in our lives and in the lives of others is the result of persevering or persisting! Our attention now turns to how we see the spirit of persistence played out in the Bible. Perhaps the growth you have been longing to see is on the other side of your courage to persist and endure. Let’s dig in!

#### **Day 10 - Choosing to Grow Through**

*Scriptures: Hebrews 12; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-24*

Most of us remember a family road trip to a place you’d never been, minutes became hours, learning to endure the miles and as children crying out “Are we there yet? How much longer?” I know these questions filled me with discomfort on long trips, as I felt captive in the car with no end in sight. In these moments my only thoughts were, “How long do I have to endure this?” Great heroes of faith speak to us about their perseverance in pursuing the Father and the promises He made to them. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and Paul demonstrated the fruit of perseverance. Each of their stories had a purpose when we look at their completed story. Like those in Hebrews 12, we too are called to be refined for purpose. Paul tells us in Romans 12:1-2, the key to perseverance is found in living as the sacrifice by which we are, “transformed by the renewing of our mind. This is the “greater growth mind set” we are being called to. As we grow through our perseverance, we prove what the good, acceptable and perfect will of God is in us (Gal 5:22-24).

Application:

1. Have you ever stopped and considered what waiting for God’s word to be fulfilled for 10, 20 or 40 years might have felt like?
2. What are you persevering through currently? Who is walking with you in this growth?

#### **Day 11 - Why, Lord, Do You Wait so Long to Answer?**

*Scriptures: Habakkuk 1:2-5; 5:17-19; Isaiah 43:19; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 12:1*

“Unprecedented!” Covid was unprecedented, government spending unprecedented, inflation unprecedented and now the unprecedented attack on Israel. It feels as if all of society is a wooden battleship being bombarded by cannon balls, blowing the ship into slivered pieces, while humanity hunkers down, hoping to survive today’s battle, so that all can go back to normal. What do we do if this is the new normal, and we, like other believers throughout history, are called to persevere?

Habakkuk lived during a time like ours, political and religious demise, a collapsing legal system, oppression iniquity and Babylon (modern day Iran) at the gates of Israel. The prophet in his perseverance cried out asking, “How long (God) shall I cry, and You not hear... as You show me

iniquity and violence?” (vs 2 & 3) You see, Habakkuk like us, is learning to strengthen his spirit man and persevere; for he too was deeply disturbed by the “Unprecedented Events” of his times. Then God speaks to Habakkuk a word of hope amidst all he was enduring, “Be Utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were not told you.” (vs 5) Through this and further revelation from God, Habakkuk teaches a lesson for the ages in chapter 5:17-19, “Though the fields and flock do not flourish, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy (hope) in the God of my Salvation, the Lord God is my strength...”

In 2 Peter 3:9, He is living in a time like today, a time much like that of Habakkuk’s, stating God has not forgotten His promises (any of them) but He is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish...” With this in mind, hold fast to hope as you prayerfully consider the words and times of Habakkuk and Peter. Their perseverance is recorded to encourage us as we hold fast and move forward with endurance.

Application:

1. Are you like Habakkuk crying out and feeling no relief from the weight of the “unprecedented?”
2. Over the past 4 years how has your faith and hope grown while holding firm amidst the narrative around us?

## **Day 12 - The Ultramarathon of Faith - DO NOT GIVE UP!**

*Scriptures: Galatians 6:7-9; Hebrews 12:1-3*

Weariness happens to everyone at some point. Why else would people compete in long distance endurance running events to test how long they can last?! There are 1500 Ultramarathons held in the United States with hundreds of thousands of runners participating. To be clear, an Ultramarathon is any running event with a course longer than a standard marathon length of 26.2 miles. Course lengths range from 31 miles up to 200 miles spanning multiple days.

This may sound like torture or insanity to you, but our life of faith in Christ is compared to a race in the New Testament. Those who will be rewarded, those who will reap a harvest are those who will persist, persevere, and endure to the end. Hebrews 12:3 inspires us to follow the example of Jesus. Galatians 6:9 speaks of a “great harvest” as the reward for not giving up! To put it another way, to have a “growth mindset” in our walk with Christ, the Holy Spirit wants to grow in us a “spirit of persistence,” a “do not give up” attitude. Weariness will come, but it will not hold us back from the reward and the harvest God has for us.

Application:

1. What circumstance bring weariness in your life?
2. How do you tend to handle resistance, trials, and weariness?
3. What can you learn from Galatians 6 and Hebrews 12 about developing a spirit of persistence and a “do not give up” mindset? Where do you get strength when you start getting weary?

## **Day 13 - The Only Path to Growth is "Through!"**

*Scriptures: James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6,7; 1 Peter 4:12,13; Psalm 23:4*

The definition of persistence is to continue through, to go on despite resistance, to last, or to endure a testing. If there is no resistance or opposition, then there is no persistence. Just like we look for ANY way to avoid a traffic jam, we also have a natural aversion to trials or difficulties. The problem with our “avoidance” mindset is that growth in our spiritual life and in our natural life ONLY comes by persisting and enduring THROUGH trials and testing. I like the New Living Translation (NLT) of James 1:3,4 “For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” In essence, the only path to growth in our life is THROUGH whatever trials, difficulties, or testing come our way. The character and maturity to live the life we were made for, is cultivated and grown by walking THROUGH the valley of the shadow of death (Ps.23:4); NOT by trying to avoid it or look for a shortcut. Take some time today to meditate on the recommended Bible verses in James, I Peter, and Psalms. Then answer the application questions below. Count it all joy, and let’s grow THROUGH.

Application:

1. What trial or obstacle have you been trying to avoid?
2. What is a next step you can take to “go through” a difficulty and trust God?
3. Ask Jesus what you need to repent of regarding trials, and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you with a spirit of persistence.

## **Pillar 4: Optimism and Positivity**

Days 14-17 of our devotional put the spotlight on the pillar of optimism and positivity. Over and over in God’s Word we are instructed and exhorted to maintain an attitude of faith and gratitude. This idea of being positive is not just an "attitude adjustment," but rather a foundational state of mind empowered by the Holy Spirit. Let’s go!

### **Day 14 - Optimism in the Bible**

*Scriptures: Genesis 15:5-6, 17:15-19; Genesis 37-50; Psalm 27:1-3, 31:24, 62:5-8*

Optimism is a positive attitude that helps us see the good in every situation. It’s a powerful tool that can help us overcome challenges and achieve our goals. In the Bible, we find many examples of people who were optimistic despite facing difficult situations. Let’s explore some of these examples and see how we can apply them to our lives.

#### **Abraham - Trusting in God's Promises**

Abraham was an old man when God promised him that he would have a son and become the father of many nations. Despite his old age and the fact that his wife was barren, Abraham believed in God’s promise. He had faith that God would fulfill His promise, and he remained optimistic. As a result, God blessed him with a son, Isaac, and fulfilled His promise. (Genesis 15:5-6, 17:15-19)

#### **Joseph - Seeing the Good in Every Situation**

Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers and spent years in prison for a crime he didn’t commit. Despite all this, he remained optimistic. He saw the good in every situation and trusted



that God had a plan for his life. Eventually, he became the second-in-command in Egypt and was able to save his family from a famine. (Genesis 37-50)

### **David - Finding Strength in God**

David faced many challenges in his life, including being hunted by King Saul and fighting battles against his enemies. However, he found strength in God and remained optimistic. He wrote many psalms that express his trust in God and his optimism for the future. (Psalm 27:1-3, Psalm 31:24, Psalm 62:5-8)

Optimism is a powerful tool that can help us overcome challenges and achieve our goals. By trusting in God's promises, seeing the good in every situation, and finding strength in God, we can remain optimistic even in difficult times. Let's remember these examples from the Bible and apply them to our lives today.

Application:

1. Who was an example of optimism in the Bible, despite facing difficult circumstances? What can we learn from their example?
2. How can optimism help us overcome challenges and achieve our goals, according to the devotional?

## **Day 15 - Cultivating Optimism in Our Lives**

*Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:8; Romans 8:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Yesterday we explored biblical examples of individuals who demonstrated optimism in the face of adversity. Now, let's delve deeper into how we can cultivate optimism in our own lives by incorporating key principles from the Bible.

### **Gratitude - Counting Our Blessings**

One powerful way to cultivate optimism is by practicing gratitude. The Bible encourages us to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we intentionally focus on the blessings and goodness in our lives, it shifts our perspective and helps us maintain an optimistic outlook.

### **Renewing Our Minds - Meditating on God's Word**

Optimism is closely tied to our thought patterns. The Bible urges us to renew our minds and think on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). By meditating on God's Word and filling our minds with His promises, we can combat negative thinking and cultivate a positive and optimistic mindset.

### **Seeking God's Guidance - Trusting His Plan**

Optimism involves trusting in God's plan for our lives, even when things don't go as we expect. The Bible assures us that God works all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28). When we seek God's guidance and trust His leading, we can have confidence that He is working behind the scenes, orchestrating circumstances for our ultimate good.

### **Encouraging Others - Spreading Hope**

Optimism is contagious. As followers of Christ, we are called to encourage and uplift one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11). By sharing words of hope and reminding others of God's faithfulness, we can inspire optimism in those around us and create a positive ripple effect. Cultivating optimism in our lives is a journey that requires intentional effort. By practicing gratitude, renewing our minds with God's Word, seeking His guidance, and encouraging others, we can foster a mindset of optimism rooted in biblical principles. Let's embrace the power of optimism and allow it to transform our lives and impact those around us.

Application:

1. What are some practical ways to cultivate optimism in our lives, according to the devotional? Which one resonates with you the most?
2. How can encouraging others and spreading hope create a positive ripple effect?

## Day 16 - The Power of Positivity in the Bible

*Scriptures: Philippians 4:4; Ruth 1:16; John 8:12*

Positivity is a mindset that focuses on the good in every situation. It's a powerful tool that can help us overcome challenges and live a fulfilling life. In the Bible, we find many examples of people who maintained a positive outlook despite facing difficult circumstances. Let's explore some of these examples and see how we can apply them to our lives.

### **Paul - Finding Joy in All Circumstances**

Paul was a great example of positivity in the Bible. Despite being imprisoned, beaten, and persecuted for his faith, he maintained a positive outlook and found joy in all circumstances. He wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). By focusing on the positive and trusting in God's plan, Paul was able to maintain a joyful and positive attitude.

### **Ruth - Choosing to Serve Others**

Ruth was a woman who chose to serve others with a positive attitude. After her husband died, she chose to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and help her instead of returning to her own family. She said to Naomi, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). By choosing to serve others with a positive attitude, Ruth was able to find favor with God and ultimately became an ancestor of Jesus.

### **Jesus - Bringing Light into Darkness**

Jesus was the ultimate example of positivity in the Bible. He brought light into darkness and hope into despair. He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). By focusing on the positive and bringing hope to those around Him, Jesus was able to transform countless lives.

Positivity is a powerful tool that can help us overcome challenges and live a fulfilling life. By finding joy in all circumstances, choosing to serve others, and bringing light into darkness, we can cultivate a positive mindset rooted in biblical principles. Let's remember these examples from the Bible and apply them to our lives today.

Application:

1. Who were some examples of positivity in the Bible, and what can we learn from their examples?
2. What can you do to cultivate positivity to help overcome a challenge in your life?

## Day 17 - Cultivating Positivity in Our Lives

*Scriptures: Philippians 4:4; Ruth 1:16; John 8:12*

Yesterday we explored biblical examples of individuals who demonstrated positivity in the face of adversity. Now, let's delve deeper into how we can cultivate positivity in our own lives by incorporating key principles from the Bible.

### **Gratitude - Counting Our Blessings**

Gratitude is a powerful way to cultivate positivity. The Bible encourages us to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we focus on the blessings and goodness in our lives, it shifts our perspective and helps us maintain a positive outlook.

### **Forgiveness - Letting Go of Resentment**

Forgiveness is another key principle for cultivating positivity. The Bible teaches us to forgive others as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). When we let go of resentment and bitterness, we free ourselves from negative emotions and open ourselves up to positive experiences.

### **Encouragement - Building Up Others**

Encouragement is a powerful tool for cultivating positivity in ourselves and others. The Bible urges us to encourage one another and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). By sharing words of affirmation and offering support to those around us, we can create a more positive environment.

### **Prayer - Trusting in God's Plan**

Prayer is a powerful way to cultivate positivity by trusting in God's plan. The Bible encourages us to pray without ceasing and to cast our cares on Him (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Peter 5:7). When we bring our worries and concerns to God, we can trust that He is working all things together for our good.

Cultivating positivity in our lives requires intentional effort. By practicing gratitude, forgiveness, encouragement and prayer, we can foster a mindset of positivity rooted in biblical principles. Let's embrace the power of positivity, and allow it to transform our lives and impact those around us.

Application:

1. Which of the above practical ways listed above do you find most challenging?
2. How can forgiveness and encouragement help cultivate positivity in your life?

## **Pillar 5: Embrace Change and Adapt**

Our final four days of this 21-day journey are focused on a crucial quality of a growth mindset. In contrast to a fixed or resistant mindset, the courage to embrace change opens wide the door for growth and new opportunities. Let's finish strong these last few days and see what God will teach us. Remember, if any is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

### **Day 18 - Transform the Norm**

*Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:2*

“Holy dissatisfaction” refers to a feeling or attitude that prompts us to seek deeper meaning, purpose or change in our lives. Another way to phrase it is a “divine discontentment” that motivates us to change.

This process begins with the recognition that there is something missing or incomplete in my life. It may manifest as a sense of emptiness, unfulfillment or a longing for a deeper relationship with God. This dissonance is a gift from God.

For example, when we have back pain, there is a misalignment that causes discomfort and a desire for something to change. With us, dissonance between us and God means there's a misalignment between God's way and the fruit of our lives. If we don't recognize this dissonance, it can become a negative norm for our lives, and we end up adapting negatively with compromise, apathy and settling for less.

This Divine prompting is like a nudge from God toward His divine purposes. This dissatisfaction with the status quo can serve as a powerful motivator for embracing change and experiencing growth. It can drive us to overcome obstacles, develop Godly character and strive to please Him.

This pivot begins by courageously facing the giants in our lives. It starts with facing the fears, obstacles or destructive patterns that we no longer want to tolerate or accept. We may find ourselves drifting from the shore, or worse, frolicking in a pigpen. When we become "sick and tired of being sick and tired"...when the fruit of our lives is stale or rotting and spiritual smelling salts are needed, this is the perfect place to make some much needed "power moves." This is God's call to transcend the ordinary and embrace the extraordinary in the pursuit of His plans and purposes for our lives. Let's be courageous and transform the norm!

Application:

1. Take a few minutes to sit with God and do an honest assessment of your life. Are there any areas that show signs or neglect, decay or death?
2. Ask Holy Spirit to reveal the root cause of these outcomes.
3. Ask Holy Spirit if you are tolerating sin or if you're unconsciously participating or aligning with any demonic influence or ungodly beliefs about God or yourself. Write down what you hear from God.

## **Day 19 - Make Power Moves**

*Scriptures: Matthew 16:24-25; James 4:7-8*

God's kingdom ways are diametrically opposed to the ways of the world. Power moves with God look like powerlessness in the worlds' eyes. In reality, embracing change and adapting begins with the power moves of surrender, repentance and refreshing. Let's examine the life of Jacob to illustrate.

In a small village nestled among rolling hills, a man named Jacob found himself trapped in a cycle of bitterness and despair. He carried the weight of grudges, resentments and regrets that seemed to drag him further from the light of hope. It was in the darkest of nights that he had a dream, a vision, that would set him on a path of transformation.

In this dream, Jacob saw a ladder reaching up to the heavens, with angels ascending and descending upon it. At the top of the ladder, he perceived a radiant presence that emanated peace and grace. He awoke with a profound sense of awe and realized that his heart had been hardened for far too long. He yearned for transformation, for a connection to something greater than himself.

Embracing the biblical power move of surrender, Jacob knelt in prayer, humbling himself before God. He surrendered his burdens, his grudges and his pride. With tears streaming down his

face, he confessed his sins and shortcomings, seeking forgiveness. He understood that true change could only begin with genuine repentance, a turning away from his old ways.

As Jacob walked the path of repentance, he found the courage to confront those he had wronged and ask for their forgiveness. Some forgave him readily, while others were hesitant, but his sincerity gradually won them over. He felt the weight of past transgressions lift, as the power of forgiveness began to mend broken relationships.

But Jacob's journey didn't stop there. He realized that true transformation also required refreshing his spirit, like a parched land receiving much-needed rain. He began to immerse himself in the scriptures, seeking wisdom and guidance. He attended gatherings of his people, where they sang praises and shared the stories of redemption.

Slowly, Jacob's heart was renewed and his bitterness turned into gratitude. The darkness that once clouded his soul gave way to the radiant light of hope. He realized that the ladder from his dream was a symbol of the connection between the earthly and the Divine, and it represented the potential for spiritual growth and transformation.

Through surrender, repentance and refreshing, Jacob's life underwent a profound metamorphosis. He became a source of inspiration for others in the village, showing them that the power moves found in the Bible could indeed lead to transformation. The ladder to the heavens, once distant and unattainable, became a reality within their hearts, as they too surrendered, repented and sought refreshing. The village, once burdened by bitterness and strife, transformed into a place of love, forgiveness and profound spiritual growth.

Application:

1. What power moves can you make in your life this week?

## **Day 20 - Let God Lead**

*Scriptures: Proverbs 16:9; Proverbs 19:21; Psalm 23:3*

The Grace of God is not a concept, message or theology. Grace is Jesus: and it is central to growth, because it is the power, favor and blessing to be transformed and to live the life God calls us to.

Let's look at the life of Samuel:

In the quiet town of Bethel, nestled amid rolling hills and lush pastures, there lived a humble blacksmith named Samuel. Samuel was known throughout the region for his skill at the forge and the warmth of his heart. He toiled tirelessly day after day, crafting tools and implements for the townsfolk, and never once did he boast of his own abilities. His faith in God was unwavering, and he believed in letting God lead his life.

One sweltering summer afternoon, a stranger arrived in Bethel, weary and dust-covered from a long journey. His name was Ezra, and he was a merchant seeking respite from his travels. Samuel, ever the gracious host, welcomed Ezra into his home, offering him cool water and a place to rest.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, Samuel and Ezra sat by the fire, sharing stories and tales of their life experiences. Samuel spoke of his unwavering faith in God and his belief in yielding to God's will. He explained that he did not rely on his own power or strength but instead allowed God to order his steps.

Ezra was deeply moved by Samuel's words. He had spent his life amassing wealth and power, believing that these were the keys to happiness. But Samuel's simple yet profound faith made him question his own priorities.

The following morning, as Ezra prepared to continue his journey, he approached Samuel with a gift. It was a magnificent sword, its blade shimmering like silver in the morning light. "I can see the strength of your faith, Samuel," Ezra said. "This sword represents my old way of life, driven by my own power and might. I want you to have it, as a reminder to let God lead and to rely on His grace."

Samuel accepted the sword with gratitude, and as he held it in his hands, he felt the weight of Ezra's message. He knew that the sword represented a powerful and important lesson.

Years passed, and Samuel continued to work at his forge, crafting tools and helping those in need. He became a respected figure in Bethel, not for his skills as a blacksmith but for his unwavering faith and his willingness to let God guide his steps. The sword Ezra had given him remained displayed in his home, a reminder of the choice he had made to yield to God's will. In the end, the story of Samuel and Ezra became a parable in Bethel, a lesson to all that true strength and grace come not from our own power or might, but from yielding to God and allowing Him to order our steps. Samuel's life, led by faith and guided by God, became a living testament to the power of letting God lead.

Application:

1. Lean in, what ideas, what plans are you hearing? Write them down.
2. Submit the plans to God. Listen to what he says and adjust the plan according to His revelation.

## **Day 21 - Enjoy the Ride!**

*Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6*

Do you remember as a kid the feeling of your first major roller coaster ride? Do you recall the excitement of arriving at the theme park and imagining what it would be like?

We must become like children and enjoy and embrace the process of change, all the while trusting God, the Good Father. Just as children on the roller coaster embrace the twists, turns, and sudden drops with laughter and excitement, life's journey can be a thrilling ride, in spite of the change that can seem daunting. However, it's in this process of transformation that God reveals His character and nature.

When we yield to God's authority and follow the ordering of His steps, we can learn to celebrate the wins, no matter how small, and trust that God will even re-route us like a GPS when we veer off course.

We must embrace change with open hearts, knowing that our faith and trust in God's divine plan will guide us through life's exhilarating and unpredictable journey, much like the joyous children on a roller coaster ride, buckled in and safe in the hand of God.

In the end, we discover that life's changes were opportunities for growth, deepening our faith, and strengthening our trust and reliance on God and others within our Spiritual Family.

Application:

1. Write a detailed plan of change that you've envisioned. Dream big and let God order your steps!
2. Identify any fears that are barriers to change: Fear of failure, discomfort, unknown, etc. Name those giants and actively give them to God as they surface.

3. Write a “Declaration of Transformation” to speak daily, anchored with one or more key promises from God’s Word.