



EVOLUTION



**40 DAYS OF
INTENTION,
CONNECTION AND
DEVOTION**

PART 1 OF 2

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INTRODUCTION

You are in a season of accelerated evolution. God wants to LEVEL UP your entire life and shift your perspective. I believe this is true for you personally, professionally, relationally, and as a church holistically. God's desire for us all is that we might evolve. If we are willing and obedient, He promised that we will eat the good of the land. In other words, we will experience God's best, and we will experience not just eternal life but abundant life. Don't you want joy everlasting on earth and in heaven? Don't you want peace in your home, and an insatiable zeal for the work you do on a day-to-day basis? That is the kind of evolution we are believing God for. But this evolution will happen quickly. It will happen suddenly. This means, we must prepare for the growth spurt that is required of us in this current chapter of our lives. We must be willing to sync with God's vision and refuse to settle for the normal patterns and conditions of this world. We must be obedient in the areas of execution, elimination, and trust. We are literally walking on water, and what took others years to accomplish, I believe God is going to give us the grace to get it done sooner, faster, and wiser. In

order to evolve, we must embrace the new. We must rid ourselves of excuses, and be willing to execute at a rapid pace. Are you willing to go further, faster? Are you willing to give NEW a try? Are you willing for God to introduce you to the you that you haven't seen yet? If you are, then this 40 day devotional will catapult you into your new season by reframing your expectations, aligning your insight, and providing significant instruction on the importance of execution in preparation for evolution.

The phrase “Just Do It” is the signature slogan and a core component of one of the most successful brands of the 20th century; Nike. The phrase, which was coined in an advertising agency meeting in 1988, has been recognized as one of the top 2 taglines of the 20th century. Although the message is not religious in origin, I believe it is relevant for us because it communicates and conveys an important message for those who are attempting to improve their lives. We can have motivation, information, and also intercession but we cannot experience improvement without execution. At some point, after all of the preparation, pontification, and planning, we have to just do it. In other words, elevation and evolution belong to those who have mastered the art of execution. Execution is the key that unlocks a person's potential. It is the magnet that draws in what one desires. It is the ultimate expression of faith. Faith executes. Faith follows-through. Faith takes the first step. Many of the

promises present in the pages of scripture are promises that are predicated on God's people engaging in the act of execution. Execution is expected from our Savior. Jesus says, "if you love me keep my commandments." It is commanded by the scriptures. The Bible warns us not to just be hearers of the word but doers also. God doesn't just instruct us to execute; he also assists us in executing. And, at the end of the day we can talk about it, pray about it, and plan for it but we will never be able to reach evolution without execution. This is the purpose of our concentrated devotional journey. Over the next 40 days, we will make a commitment to be intentional about execution.

DAY 1: A NEW WAY

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

Isaiah 43:18-19 (ESV)

Have you ever traveled down a familiar road only to be redirected by a detour sign? Many of us become upset, angry, or feel lost once we have been redirected. Often times we feel like we won't arrive at our destination or that we'll arrive much later than we anticipated. What we may not know is that the road that we're used to traveling could have some potential dangers that we are unaware of. Could it be that there was instability occurring on the bridge, a sinkhole developing, or conditions so hazardous that the road could no longer be traveled on? Could this new route introduce you to things you would have never seen had you not been redirected? Although the detour may seem inconvenient, the engineers, planners and developers, knew that the detour would provide a safer route.

As God points out in the book of Isaiah, He too wants us to focus on a new way! Sometimes the previous roads on which we've traveled have brought damage,

hurt and unexpected pain to our lives because we did not know that there was a different route to take to our peace, happiness and joy. Although His routes seem unfamiliar, His detours are never meant to harm us, but to help us. There are moments in your life when God will detour you from familiar routes such as insignificance, low self-esteem, toxic relationships, unhealthy habits and routines, and redirect you towards a greater purpose that involves a healthier, more enriched lifestyle.

Jesus expressed it clearly in John 14:6 when he says “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” As you can see, Jesus provides a proof set pathway to a better life. He will never lead you down a roadway that doesn’t lead to your destiny. If the Father (God) is our ultimate destination, then Jesus is expressing that He’s the best and only route to get there. Let this time of evolution be clearly inspired by God’s direction for your life. Your best life is straight ahead - let’s take this journey together!

Father give me guidance towards the road that leads to a fulfilled life in you. Help my vision to not be distorted so that I may see clearly what your plans are for me. As I take steps towards my purpose, help me to not get discouraged when you reroute me away from things or ways that are not beneficial or the best for me. I trust in your leadership and direction. Thank you for the pathway you have set that makes my life better. In Jesus’ name amen!

DAY 2: A NEW CREATION

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*
2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Do you remember when you received something new? It may have been a new car, a new job, a new home, new clothes or a new phone. Question - How did it make you feel? There's something that triggers a sense of fulfillment when we have something that's new. We've all heard the saying “Out with the old, and in with the new!”

The Apostle Paul may not have understood what it felt like to have a new car, haircut, or phone, however he did understand what it felt like to have a new life. Prior to becoming an apostle, Paul was previously known as Saul of Tarsus. In his former lifestyle he was a persecutor of the church, consenting to the death of those who practiced Christianity. Eventually he was blinded for three days while on the road leading to Damascus when he was questioned by Jesus who asked- “Why are you persecuting me?”

Ultimately Saul was converted and his name changed to Paul. It was there that he received his sight and viewed life, people and his purpose in a brand new way. Paul didn't keep his old ways, nor did he view things the same as he did previously, everything about him became new! His perspective, vision, attitude, heart, commitment, mission, assignment, conscience and love were now evidence of his transformation. He didn't become a better version of his old lifestyle after his encounter with Jesus. Instead, Paul became a new creation! His old lifestyle had ended and it wasn't just a mere improvement of an older version of who he was, but absolutely a new creation of something he had never been.

Not only did Jesus want this new life for Paul, he also wants it for you and I. When we have an authentic encounter with Jesus he will blind us from negativity, insecurities, self-righteousness and other things that misrepresent who we are called to be. It's a known saying, that the caterpillar that has been transformed into a butterfly will never crawl again! We should now have a new outlook on our life, our purpose, and our identity. As Paul mentioned, "...The old has gone, the new is here!" Because we're a new creation in Christ, we don't have to live with our past mistakes, shame, guilt, insecurities and failures. As Ezekiel 36:26 states "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you."

Lord I pray that you create in me a new heart and renew a righteous spirit within me. Help me to see that I've been designed by you and created in your image and after your likeness. When I am unsure about who I am, remind me of my creation. Remind me often that I am more than a conqueror and that I can do all things through you as you give me strength. Thank you for renewing my mind and heart. In Jesus name' - Amen!

DAY 3: A NEW THING

“Behold the former things have come to pass, and the new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Isaiah 42:9 (ESV)

On the hit HGTV television show “Fixer Upper”, a married couple redesigns old houses, but before they begin construction, they provide homeowners with a layout of how their new house will look. While the designers are extremely confident about their projected finished product, the buyers are often hesitant about moving forward because they don’t see the potential or what the visionaries see. After the demolition takes place and the plan starts to move into action, the homeowners start to gain a sense of what the home will look like in the end. At the end of the show before the designers reveal the new home, the homeowners stand in front of a gigantic picture of what the home previously looked like. The designers then shout to the homeowners - “Are you ready to see your new home?” After hearing “Yes” from the homeowners, the new home is revealed. As

you can guess, the homeowners are blown away by the outcome.

What if God is simply waiting for your «Yes?» Yes, to His ways, His vision, His design for your life. What if He's already given us a blueprint on how our lives will be so much better if we allow him to take control. He understands that we aren't always at our best and that there are moments when things have to be reconstructed or at times demolished in our lives so that we can have a better outlook on His promises. Realize, that we don't see things as God sees them. He sees the finished product, while we are limited to its current state the finished product, while we are limited to its current state. He sees our joy at the end, while we're busy focusing on the pain. He will walk us through the entire process with reassurance that things will get better.

Just like the TV series, sometimes we're faced with a picture of our past and how dreadful moments from it may have been. But if you give God your «Yes» he'll remove the old things and reveal the new things. As 1 Corinthians 2:9 states, "...What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him—" There are great things that God has prepared for your future. He's designed His best for your life. He's already prepared the finest people, career path, relationships, etc. to enhance you. All that he awaits from you now...is your «Yes!»

Father give me the ability to say yes. As I give you my yes, I pray that you will provide all of the necessities for my life. Expose me to the things that you know will benefit me. When I am faced with past feelings and emotions that disrupt my future, help me to know that you will complete the work that you have begun in me. I trust that your plans for my life will help me to not be afraid of the unknown ahead. Your plan is perfect and true. I thank you in advance for the outcome of your promises. In Jesus' name - Amen!

DAY 4: A NEW SPIRIT

“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 11:19

Evolution is a desire that every one of us have. We all want to live better and we all want to be better. Whether our better begins at our workplace with promotions or starting our own businesses. It may be relationally with the decision of creating more contacts, which can assist us in something that God placed on our hearts. Or we desire to produce a stronger spiritual foundation. It can be the increase of our financial status, by being better stewards of our resources. Whatever your means of evolution, we can all agree: *better is challenging*.

Evolution requires planning, patience, and persistence. In this passage of scripture, a promise of God was spoken through Ezekiel: “I will put a new spirit in them”. God understands evolution more than anyone; better yet, He created evolution Himself by giving an undivided heart along with a new spirit, to

a people who no longer had the willingness to obey his commandments. A people whom He called his own, no longer saw a need to follow the laws of their ancestors. The need for evolution was major. In this process, God gave them a new spirit; one that could help God's people to follow through with living a Godly lifestyle.

Just like today, we may be in a season of evolution and we may need the assistance of God in order to live a Godly lifestyle. That same promise of God exists for all people. No matter who you are or where you are, God is able to provide you with an undivided heart and put a new spirit in you. This spirit is a new spirit from God that directs, protects, and provides us with the capability to achieve anything! And what we aren't able to do, God can. Take time out today to dwell on where you need the help of the Holy Spirit in your life. Use the tool you have living right inside you, and achieve your evolution starting with today!

Heavenly Father, I thank you for putting a new spirit within me. Thank you for giving me the exact tools that I need to pursue and achieve evolution.

Reveal to me any areas in my life that I need to improve. Build my life with the new spirit you have placed within me. And as I draw closer to your spirit, provide me with the sensitivity to know your voice, and to obey. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 5: A NEW HEART

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 36:26

What are you expecting to see in this season of evolution? What if I told you that God wants you to experience evolution, but needs something from you first? Are you willing to do it? If you are, then I will tell you. God wants access to your heart. Nothing can be done properly without God being in the middle of it. A new you needs a new heart. It is impossible to experience an evolution on the outside without receiving a transformation on the inside. If we are to experience a Godly lifestyle, then we must give Him what's most valuable; our heart.

In this scripture Ezekiel speaks of removing the heart of stone and in return giving us a heart of flesh. In God's promise of giving us a new heart, He explains to us the process of removing stones. These stones in our hearts prevent us from experiencing and producing God's love. God's desire is that we are

able to see Him correctly, so that we may be able to correctly see ourselves. In this we will understand that what we did doesn't represent who we are. The past mistakes of your family don't limit you in who God created you to be. And what was done does not have a hold on you.

Today is the day that you can look at yourself and say *God truly loves me*. There is nothing that you can do more of or less of, to change the heart God has for you. You can finally let go of what has been holding you back from your evolution. It's time to see yourself correctly. It's time for you to introduce your new heart to your new designed future.

Lord, thank you for giving me a new heart. Thank you also for removing the stones from my old heart. Help me to give you more access to my heart. Release me from past mistakes, hurt, and pain. Give me the correct view of who I am to you. With this new heart, I ask that you will help me to have the desire to sustain my Godly lifestyle. In Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 6: A NEW ATTITUDE

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, righteousness and holiness”

Ephesians 4:22-24

Attitude is defined as a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person’s behavior (Dictionary.com). So, your attitude is just the outward reflection of what’s inside your heart. Therefore, a change in attitude requires a change of heart, which takes work. Heart work. This is the kind of heart work that only the Holy Spirit can do successfully. As a child I was hurt a lot, intentionally and unintentionally by the adults in my life. To protect myself, as an adult, I became distant, I didn’t seek out friends, and I redirected or ignored anyone who offered friendship.

Then I met Christ and I learned about love. True love, the kind that makes you vulnerable because it

makes you want to be different. It makes you want to love and to give love. But again, this takes work. True love makes you want to love others, and that's what Christ's love did to me. It showed me how to love in my words and actions. Love made me want to love, and be loved. In John 5:6, Christ asked a man who had been an invalid for 38-years, "Do you want to be made whole?" Of course, the response was yes. And so when I was faced with the dilemma of being a person known to be easily offended and negative all of the time, I asked God to make me whole. I wanted to say and believe positive things. I wanted a new attitude.

So to you I ask, "Do you want to be made whole?" "Do you believe that evolution is possible for you?" Do you believe that because you spent most of your life as a metaphorical caterpillar, that you cannot become a butterfly? Well, you can. You and I serve the God of the exception and he is able to give you a new attitude about everything, which will lead to a new altitude. Halleluiah!

Father, I thank you that I have evolved. I thank you for a new attitude that gives and shows love. A new attitude that believes that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). A new attitude that uplifts and does not tear down. A new attitude that says, "Here I am Lord, send me." And as you have answered this prayer, Father, I pray that you give a new attitude to my sister and/or brother reading this prayer. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY 7: A NEW LOCATION

And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you.

Ezekiel 36:27-29

Ezekiel received a word from the Lord to give to the children of Israel about the promises of God. The children of Israel needed to move to the place God had given to their fathers. God states he will put a new spirit in them to move them to a new place. God places inside each of us a part of who he is and what he desires for us. But, we have to make a decision to follow him. Our decisions impact our destiny and our willingness to move, speaks to our participation in God's plan.

If we aren't willing to move, then we won't change. If we don't change, then everything will remain the same. God is calling us to move out of

the place(s) we were once in. Not only does our heart have to change in order for the move to occur, our minds also need to change as well. We have to make a decision to execute the change. Execution is key. In that execution we become different. We are not remaining the same.

In order to walk into your new location, move away from anything that keeps you stagnant mentally, emotionally, or otherwise. You can't get to a new place if you don't move. The scripture mentions promises from God in the movement. The promise to dwell in a new land, filled with abundance and renewal—these are all benefits of your spiritual evolution. Our new location isn't just happening to us physically, but emotionally and mentally. Listen to God's spirit, He is calling you to move.

Prayer: Sovereign God, you know where I am at all times. Thank you that you know what is best for me, when it is time to move and when it is time to stay. Thank you for giving me the wisdom and the heart to know that you are calling me to evolve. Now that you have changed my heart, I can set my mind to change and move to the new place you have for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 8: A NEW COVENANT

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

Matthew 26:27-29NKJV

When we partake in communion, we remember that Christ died and shed his blood so that we might be forgiven. In shedding his blood, this sealed the covenant, God's promise to us. When Jesus was with his disciples at the last supper, he told them to drink of the cup each of them. Jesus was not selective in who should drink from the cup. The cup was for all.

When we live according to God's word for our lives, the promise of forgiveness is for us. We have all sinned and we have all fallen short of his glory. Jesus' blood was shed so that we can obtain forgiveness of sins. In surrendering his life, Christ sealed our pledge so that we could give our lives to God in all

holy obedience. The new covenant is the forgiveness God gives to each of us. It is new because we are no longer under the law. We can go directly to God to seek forgiveness. This cup is not offered only once; it is offered to us on a daily basis so that we can be renewed. When the enemy wants to show you who you used to be, remember God's promises, you are forgiven.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for sending your son Jesus to die on the cross for me. Thank you for the blood that covers all my sins. I am grateful that through your shed blood, I have new life and forgiveness is mine. Though the blood cost you everything, you have freely given to all. I thank you for the courage to confess my sins and to know that you will forgive me. I praise you and thank you for forgiveness in Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 9: A NEW MERCY

Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me. This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

(Lamentations 3:19-24 KJV)

Each day I wake up, I am reminded of God's mercy. I have a clean slate and a fresh start. It's a new beginning. I have the opportunity to start again what I should have done the day before. I'm not going to agonize over missed moments. I won't drown myself in thoughts like: *I should have prayed, I should have fasted, and all of the other I should have's*. I can't continue to wallow in misery over missed moments. Instead, I will focus on the fresh mercy God has given me. Each day, I have to make a decision to create an amazing future for myself. I am grateful that God is faithful and for this I am hopeful.

I remember being lost and hitting rock bottom. But God's love never gave up on me. I remember being overwhelmed and unfulfilled. But God's love never gave up on me. Isn't it a wonderful thing to know that God's love will never run out on you? He is merciful, kind and loving. It doesn't matter what the previous day was about. We have another chance to get it right today! Rejoice today in the fact that his mercies are new every morning. I don't get the same mercy every day. With God, it's new. That means I can expect new every day. A change, something different. God never changes who he is, He changes me.

Prayer: God of love and mercy, thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for new mercies, and for new beginnings each day for me. Just when I think you have given me much, you still have much more to give and for that I am eternally grateful. Lord, help me to show the same mercy to others that you continually show to me every minute, hour and in the days ahead, in Jesus' name. Amen

DAY 10: A NEW MISSION

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

Have you ever been referred to as acting “brand new”? This was a phrase often directed at individuals or groups who in some shape form or fashion, did not take on the persona of what people were accustomed to. In other words, they weren’t who or what others desired them to be as it related to their encounter. It’s interesting that whomever the phrase was directed at, would often times feel the need to defend why they were acting the way they were acting. As if to be brand new, was negative in nature; I would suggest to you the contrary. Contextually speaking, acting “brand new” can be a very desirable course of action; especially, if your salvation depended on it.

As followers of Christ, we should relish at the thought of being brand new. We should be grateful that we were crucified with Christ so that we could

be raised with him brand new. Now we have received our mission (purpose) and it is evident that the tasks therein required a new entity. The author, Maxie D. Dunnam writes, that “Three words capture the dynamic meaning of crucifixion with Christ: pardon, power, partnership. Dunnam explains that being pardoned means forgiveness from past sin, freedom from the law, but also a passionate urge never to sin again.” He writes, that “Power is received as we give ourselves to the Lordship of Christ. We yield ourselves to Him. Our ‘I will’ becomes dominated by ‘the mind of Christ,’ and this is our power.” With respect to partnership, the author writes, “Being crucified with Christ, we enter into his creative suffering to ‘complete what remains of Christ’s affliction’ for the sake of His Body the Church”.

The Apostle Paul spoke to this in his Epistle to the Church at Rome; he wrote, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8:17). Friends, do not allow the phrase “acting brand new” to take on a negative connotation; especially, when it relates to your salvation. For those who espouse to use it in this fashion, fail to understand that you aren’t who you used to be for a reason. You were bought with a price; a heavy one at that! In fact, it cost an innocent man his very life. So, embrace your newness because your new mission requires a new you!

Father, we thank you for newness. Now grant us the courage and intestinal fortitude to walk in it. We thank you Lord God for the mission that you have given to your church; we do not take it lightly. We thank you Father that you are leveling us up for the “New Mission” at hand. Father we pray for those who are yet in their respective situations. Many have not discovered that you are calling them to a newness Father; to that end, we pray that you would do for them that which you did for the Prophet Elisha’s servant; “Lord Open their eyes, so that they might see” (2 Kings 6:17). For your mission is of the utmost importance. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

DAY 11: A NEW LIFE

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 10:10 ESV

I can't think of anything more upsetting than having someone take away something that rightfully belongs to me; especially, something that was given to me as a gift. In our scripture today, The Apostle John records Jesus conveying words of wisdom to the disciples with respect to their need for discernment. In effect, Jesus is telling the disciples that there is one who desires to put a stop to their evolution. This thief as Jesus categorizes him, desires to sever the umbilical cord which links us to our Savior. He desires to keep us grounded and rooted in soil that has long lost its ability to provide us with the nutrients we need to grow consistent with God's perfect will and purpose for our respective lives.

Moses said to the people of Israel, "I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his

commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess” (Deuteronomy 30:15-16). Please don’t miss that Israel was headed to “A New Life”. A life full of promises and blessings. In like fashion, we too have the promise of “A New Life”. Note, that I did not say a life without challenges; but, a “A New Life” nonetheless with the promises of joy unspeakable for those that believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

What then shall we say or do? We must ensure that our deeds reflect that which we purport as followers of Christ. We must execute in the affirmative like Moses admonished the people of Israel wherein he wrote, “Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). In our case, let us choose “A New Life”; one that is predicated upon the teachings and admonitions of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us not be deceived my friends; for truly, the enemy comes but to steal, kill and destroy; but, praise be to the Lord our God for “A New Life” in Christ Jesus! “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty,” who was, and is, and is to come” (Revelation 4:8).

Father we thank you for your love and protection. We thank you Lord God for provision upon provision. We thank you Lord God that you look beyond our many faults to facilitate our needs. To that end, we are grateful. We realize Lord that we are not worthy of any good measure from you and to that end, we are thankful Lord that your “thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are your ways our ways” (Isaiah 55:8). We bless your High Name Father and we thank you for “A New Life” in your beloved Son who sits at your right hand. Now Lord we pray for constant guidance through your “Holy Spirit” as we maneuver in and through this New Life. We thank you in advance for your mercy and grace in Jesus’ name. Amen.

DAY 12: A NEW BIRTH

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born
again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus
Christ from the dead*

1 Peter 1:3 ESV

How often have you thought to yourself, if I could but start all over again? Life has a peculiar way of causing us to long for the simpler days. The days when the cares of the world were seemingly someone else's responsibility. A time wherein our mistakes didn't hold us captive. The phrase "do-over" was commonplace and we boldly played that card without any secret evasion or mental reservation.

The author Paul A. Cedar wrote, "Mercy is a key word which we must understand in order to grasp the fullest meaning of Peter's teaching on the subject of salvation. Within the context of verse 3, Peter reminds us that new birth has come to us through the mercy of God." The Apostle later declared in his letter, that "Once you were not a people, but now you are

the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:10). Friends those of us who are in Christ Jesus, have effectively received a “do-over”. Our “New Birth”, is filled with wonder, hope, love and an abundance of grace. The Apostle Paul in his letter to his mentee in the faith; Timothy, said it best. He writes, “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:14).

My friends, this very grace was like wine poured out on us through our “New Birth.” As a result, we are to take this “New Birth” and evolve. God is looking for us to grow beyond the constraints of this world. In other words, with each day that we are granted, we are to become increasingly more like Jesus. This, dear friends, will require us to execute on a level that will stretch us both physically and intellectually. To that end, we can look for our respective minds to receive a workout like never before. I am convinced that our God has greater for us and we must believe through faith that it’s time for next level living!

Father we thank you for our “New Birth” through Jesus our Lord and Savior. We thank you Father for the promise of evolution within this birth. We realize Father, that we have a role to play relative to our evolution. We vehemently understand, that you will do that which we cannot do and not that which we will not do. We pray Father that we would execute in excellence all that you have called us to do so that you might be glorified as a result thereof. Thank you Father for your grace, mercy and love. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

DAY 13: A NEW ASSIGNMENT

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus, said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-20

Imagine that you're in the car and you're heading to a particular mall. Now imagine you've been going there for years. In fact, you have been going to this place since your parents had you in diapers. Suddenly, you see a sign on the road advertising a new mall. It's similar to the place you were heading to, at the same time, it's different. It goes beyond just being new; it's a total upgrade from what you're used to. You become curious and want to check it out. But the problem is, it will require you to drive in the opposite direction. You drive a little further, that new mall still fresh on your mind, when you see a U-Turn approaching. As much as you would like to stick with what you know, you decide to take the U-Turn and back towards the new mall.

This analogy paints a large portrait about purpose in relation to this Scripture. I believe we can safely assume that Peter and Andrew had come from a family of fishermen. Their daddy was a fisherman, and his daddy, and so on and so forth. Being fishermen, there's nothing in particular that sticks out about them. It was a common profession in that time. There were probably more fishermen on the lake that day. But along comes Jesus, only focusing on those two, and invites them to go beyond what they know.

However, just because it was something that your family always did, it doesn't mean that it's God's plan for you. Sometimes, when we are locked in on what others do, we can become so focused repeating their experience that we lose sight of when God wants to use us elsewhere. So He has to step into where we are in order to get us to shift our gears and head to His best for us. The beautiful thing about it is that God doesn't allow the experience we had to be wasted. Some translations quote Jesus as saying, "I will make you fishers of men." Jesus didn't let what they were doing expire, He let it evolve. When God recalibrates us, it's easy to become scared of the unknown. But much like these two brothers learned, that when we let go of what we know and trust in what He knows, then we will see our lives being fulfilled in unimaginable, magnificent ways.

Loving and gracious Abba, thank You for redirection and refocus. Thank You for seeing us where we are and pulling us from living lives that don't bring You glory. Lord, help us to be fearlessly obedient to the things You call us to. Affirm us when we feel that we are disqualified for the task. Your wisdom is greater than ours. Take the bread of what we know Lord and break it that we may be able to bless others with it. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

DAY 14: A NEW HOPE

Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.

Psalm 62:5

Not too long ago, a woman by the name of Martha had been laid off from work. She wasn't unfamiliar with unemployment. She had gone through a long and grueling season of it before. There were many clamoring voices around her telling what she should and shouldn't do. But many of those same voices, were not there in her wilderness season. But God was there as He always had been. So as difficult as it was to worship, as difficult as it was to trust that she was not going to have a repeat of her past, Martha grasped for God and held on as long as she could. She held on because she knew that if God could get her out of that before, He would have no problem doing that again. Martha knew if she was honest and transparent with God about what she wanted that He would go exceedingly and abundantly beyond that. To God be the glory, unemployment only lasted a month before she started her new job. The enemy tried to sabotage it, but as the saints often remind us, "What

God has for us is for us!” Martha kept holding on to the assurance that God had everything under control even when she didn’t see or feel it. In the end, things worked out.

In times of despair, it’s easy for us to become frustrated. We’re in a state of mind and spirit that is extremely vulnerable. Thanks be to God that we aren’t alone in that. At the time this Psalm is being written, David is going through it. Situations are coming at him left and right. People are throwing all sorts of shade at him. David is in a mess and is a mess. Yet in the midst of it all, David in a moment of humility reminds himself that the naysayers and situations didn’t elevate him to where he was at that point. The power of God had gotten him there. So long as he didn’t waver in faith, God would keep him there.

Anxiety and worry can leech so much from us. They don’t change the situation, and if we’re not careful, they can change us. Your destiny is too important for you not to have peace. It is imperative that we rest in God. He’s the only One who can turn a situation on its head. He’s the only One who can change the heart of someone against you and use them to bless you. He is the only One who knows your story from start to finish. It’s because He wrote it. Therefore, if He wrote it, that means He’s there from the “Once upon a time” to “The End” and everything in between. Hold on to that and rest, and He’ll refresh your weary bones.

Lord of my life and lover of my soul, You are a constant God who anchors me and keeps me from being lost at sea. But for those times that I become adrift oh God, show me how to use my faith and trust in You to walk on water. Release me from the stronghold of worry, anxiety, and other things that stress me and keep me from living life as You intended. You take my tests and turn them into testimonies. I will never love you as much as you love me. I'm thankful that in spite of that You still come through for me. Weary as I am God, I come to You in anticipation that You will give me a replenishing rest that I may go and serve You more. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 15: A NEW GOAL

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14

As believers, sometimes there is pressure to have it all together. If we did have it all together, there would be practically no need for God to go to the lengths that He does to love us. It is because He loves us, He refuses to allow us to live a life that is less than His best for us. But we have our moments where we look at past seasons and are blinded to the glory revealed in it because we become so focused on every single mistake. Even in this, God has enough love and compassion for us to take our shortcomings and use them as a means of redirecting our vision.

Many people before they came to Christ had their own ideas as to what the ideal end would be for them. They may have devoted all sorts of blood,

sweat, and tears into making that possible. Then here comes God, highlighting what we desire and showing us that while we may be satisfied for a season, it won't satisfy our souls like His plans for us will. When God gives us a goal, it's putting us into a position that we are living for something much bigger than ourselves. One of the purposes we have in life is to give God glory through our story. No matter how many flaws we have or how often we fall short, God uses us as a means to bless others. Look at many of the people in the Bible; David, Moses, Samson, Solomon, Paul, Rahab, Bathsheba, Miriam. Each of them had their own issues and even though they are long gone from this Earth, God is still getting the glory out of their lives and we're still getting blessed by their experiences.

It's hard to let go of past hurts. It's even harder trusting in the fact that at the end of the day, God is God. And He has it all under control. We put more faith in the idea of a car starting, or a light switch working, or an automatic door opening. If you can put your faith in those things, then let it sink in that God has you. Trust Him and push forward. It will all come together.

Wonderful and magnificent God, You know the race that we run daily. You know that it is so hard for us to do in our own strength. Help us to remember that You have already run this race ahead of us. Help us to remember that when we pass off the baton of our fears and worries that You take them to a place where they have already been trampled under Your feet God. Give us the power to endure to the very end that You may be glorified. Victory is secured in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY 16: NEW JOY

Nehemiah 8:10, Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those we have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

It's revival time(x5)

Everybody oughta know(x2)

It's revival time.

Every revival service I have ever attended, opened with this enthusiastic song. The Revivalist would then preach a word that would invigorate one's faith and convict the heart. Revival brings an awakening that produces a stronger, closer, and better walk with God. Revival fosters a season of EVOLUTION.

Change is not easy, but necessary, in order to do what you have never done before. Change begins with the simplest introduction of a word, designed to present a different thought. When "that" word is accepted and applied, it produces transformation. Transformation is the inward process of advanced development from a previous state or condition. This creates a new You!

As we allow the word of God to search our hearts, we will find that we may be challenged to make many adjustments. This may feel overwhelming, but trust and embrace the process. Nehemiah encouraged the people, “Do not grieve”. This process is necessary for you to be your best and to have His best. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). Embrace the New Joy.

Father help me to endure the process that is required for me to experience all the joy you have prepared for me. Give me a joy that is new and never-ending. Thank you for the confidence in You that brings joy and strength. Amen.

DAY 17: A NEW LOVE

“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

S ometime in 1984, guitarist Mike Jones, of the band Foreigner, recalled how a night of insomnia had its benefits at three in the morning. Finally finding some quiet time amidst the whirlwind of success, Mike put pen to paper. Considering it a gift that was expressed through him, “I Want To Know What Love Is”, was written. In spite of the success, applause and great fan followings, Mike experienced failed expectations of love in various streams of relationships.

What is Love? Is Love the allegiance we see expressed in the social and financial classes we qualify for? Can love be gauged by the guidelines of equal exchange of expressions? Vetting what love is, based on conditional factors, most often than not, results in failed expectations. Once conditions like these

change, love no longer exist. Sadly enough, every failed expectation can lead to a potential set back.

The evolution of the new you requires a new level of love. A new love that leads, guides, and directs appropriate expectations, and practices when engaging with others. One that is demonstrated by Jesus and developed through intentional devotion and practicing of His teachings. His love for us will teach us to guard our hearts and our minds, diminishing the unrealistic and immature expectations that make room for failure. This love defeats setbacks and brings fulfillment of destiny. Trust the new love. Embrace the new and improved YOU!

Father, give us a heart to love like You love, and the ability to demonstrate that love that Jesus exhibited to others. We love you and we thank you for being God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 18: A NEW SONG

He put a new song in my mouth. A hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in Him.

Psalms 40:3

There is nothing like the sound of Victory! A collage of emotions that convey a specific impression as a result of a successful outcome. Victory is often expressed through words of praise, affirmation and exaltation. The sound of Victory reveals a conclusive proclamation of conquest. However, the sound of Victory does not always reveal or do homage to the real MVP.

Victories overshadow the times; you wanted to give up, got discouraged, endured insult, rejected and mistreatment. In the spotlight of Victory, no one could see the times you had to do it over and over again, feeling like a failure. People will see the “WHAT”. That is “what” you have accomplished. They will not see the “WHY”. Why you were able to gain the victory over matters the other experience defeat in.

The One who changed the trajectory of your life, is your Most Valuable Player(MVP. The One who implemented the new play of this game of life: turned your giving up into getting up, changed your defeat into Victory, your failures into success and your discouragement into courage. You persevered through the one play in the book that leads to your road of victory. “After you have suffered a little while, the God of all Grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1Peter 5:10) and your heart will sing, I HAVE THE VICTORY! And this victory will produce a song that only victorious people can sing. This song is new, fresh, and convicting! Sing your song today and remind yourself that if God did it before, He can and will do it again.

Father help me to persevere through the process knowing that it leads me to the victory you have already prepared for me. Give me a new song for a new season. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 19: A NEW STANDARD

For my part, I am going to boast about nothing but the Cross of our Master, Jesus Christ. Because of that Cross, I have been crucified in relation to the world, set free from the stifling atmosphere of pleasing others and fitting into the little patterns that they dictate. Can't you see the central issue in all this? It is not what you and I do—submit to circumcision, reject circumcision. It is what God is doing, and he is creating something totally new, a free life! All who walk by this standard are the true Israel of God—his chosen people. Peace and mercy on them!

Galatians 6:14-16 (MSG)

I don't know about you, but I do not like Standardized Tests. I get nervous whenever I have to take them, and I never feel satisfied with what I produce. The purpose of a standardized test is to evaluate and assess the strengths and weaknesses of a student, in preparation for elevation. The test was designed as an objective means of examination. But the problem is, only students with brains wired toward “standardized” thinking, excel in standardized texts!

I am so glad that God's standards are not like ours. I'm so glad that he sent Jesus so that we could

all pass the exam of life, because he knew, in our own flesh, we wouldn't be able to do it on our own. I'm so glad he provided the Bible as the manual for human existence, so that whenever we found ourselves stuck on a question, we could turn to the back of the book and get the answer. This is the beauty of an evolved life. When Christ makes you new, he gives you a new standard. He changes your living. He changes your appetites. He changes your joy, and he changes your outlook. Galatians reminds us that God is creating something totally new, and the consequence of this newness, is a free life. That's a standard worth worshiping about! This is how we are differentiated from others. When people see us, they should see a man or woman who lives, loves, and leads like Jesus. That is the standard. That is our pattern. And that is our cross. Never let anyone convince you to lower your standards in order to gain their approval. Walk high! Walk strong! Know that God has made you exactly as you are, and you are not meant to be a carbon copy of anyone else!

Prayer: Father, thank you for not testing me like others. Thank you for knowing my value and my distinctiveness. Thank you for sending Jesus to curve the test scores in my favor. Because of you, I am saved. Because of you, I have a new standard of living. I accept my cross. I accept my thorn. I am ready to be all that you have called me to be.

In Jesus' name. AMEN.

DAY 20: A NEW LEVEL

He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

John 15:2-4

For the past few months, a girl named Jasmin had been feeling this looming sense that she couldn't quite put her finger on. She kept seeing things pertaining to the phrase, "Level Up" or "Levels" As the New Year drew closer, the more she felt things were moving in this area. But she couldn't understand why. Then one day, during her devotional time, Jasmin got the unction to look up the meaning of her name. Of course she knew that she was named after a flower but she couldn't really see anything else beyond that. Still, that unction vied for her attention. The meaning doesn't just lie in the name, the meaning lies in its behavior. Jasmin finally conceded and pulled up a

quick search of the flower on her phone. She learned something that is applicable for us all as we evolve. Jasmine, the flower, has three distinctive traits.

1. They can be evergreen. For a plant to be evergreen, it means that it still maintains its vibrancy and color in seasons that cause other plants to die.
2. They can be vine-like and spread out or climb up.
3. They can be deciduous. For a plant to be deciduous, it has to shed off whatever leaves, petals, or fruit it has when its mature enough or no longer needed. Leaves that fall in the autumn fall off of deciduous trees.

We are reaching a point as believers where God wants us to reach a new level. However, some of us cannot proceed unless some stuff falls off of us. And in some cases, we have to be mature enough to let God do some much-needed pruning in our character and our habits. As we level up, we have to expect some growing pains. There will be things that God will expose to us so we can show how our mess will alert (and get the attention of) the Messiah. We have to understand that there are labels and things that many have put on us to grow into, but when we reach

our full size, they won't fit us. Levelling up can be awkward and uncomfortable because we are learning things that God knows about us that we didn't know about ourselves.

Many of us are on the cusp of change. Some of us are searching for the catalyst that sets everything off and changes everything. But we need to ask ourselves, Is the only reason that we're not seeing the change we're expecting is because we don't understand that we're the catalyst? For everything that God hasn't changed yet, there is a chance that He has already given us what we need to change it. This will be a time where God will really challenge us on if we want His best or not. This will be the time where He challenges and asks us, "Are you going to keep settling or do you want more? What are you willing to let go of and give back to Me in trust to get to the next stage? I'm not sure about you, but as for me and my house, I want what God has planned for me, even if that means I have to go through the mountains and valleys of pursuing Him in worship. He's given us the tools to go for it. Reach.

Abba, You know what is on the other side of this Level Up season. You know who we are completely and comprehensively. I speak against any device of the enemy that seeks to talk us out of our next level. The enemy may prowl like a lion but God with Your living, breathing word, he has no teeth. Let Your voice mute him where he stands. Lord, in Jesus' name I ask that everything that no longer serves a purpose for us according to Your will for our lives must fall off. Prune what is toxic and keeping us from growing into the person You called us to be. And for the things that You choose not to prune because it's like Paul's thorn, give us the wisdom and the strength to manage it. We stand on Your word that dispels the spirit of fear. Have Your way in us God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NOTES

EVOLUTION

**40 DAYS OF INTENTION,
CONNECTION AND DEVOTION**