

OUT OF THE BOX

14 DAYS OF DISCOVERING
THE FREEDOM TO BECOME



YOU WERE CREATED TO BE A HUMAN BEING,
NOT A HUMAN DOING.

BEFORE WE START

I want to make you a deal.

For the next 14 days, I'm not going to give you another list of things you **should** be doing.

You probably already have enough of those.

You should pray more.

You should read your Bible more.

You should be a better husband.

You should be a better dad.

You should have more patience.

You should stop doing that thing.

You should start doing this thing.

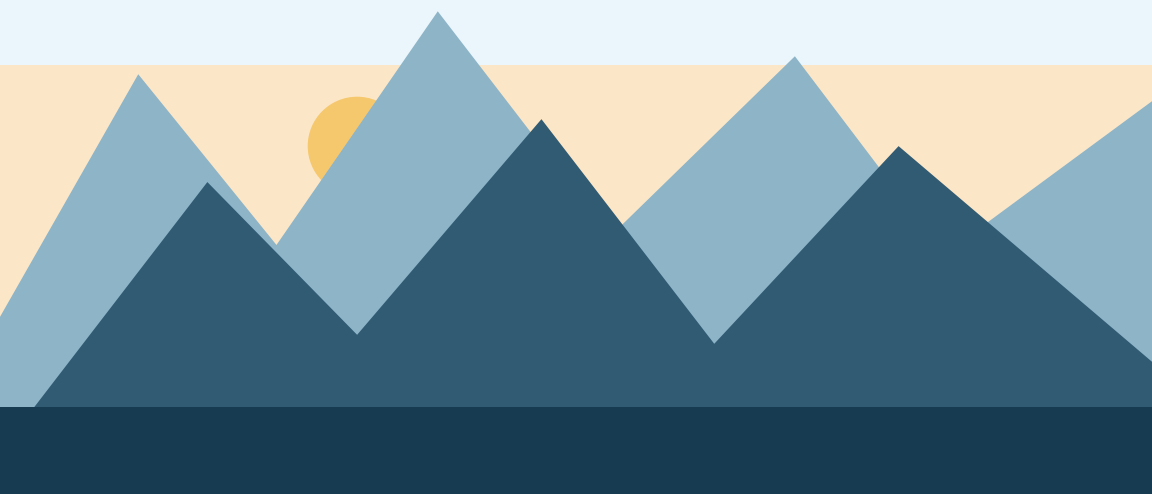
And somehow a relationship that Jesus described as **freedom** can start feeling like another performance review.

I don't think that's what Jesus intended.

What if following Jesus isn't primarily about trying harder to become the person God will finally be pleased with?

What if God is already at work inside you - loving you, teaching you, changing you and revealing the person He created you to be?

Not achieving. Becoming.



There isn't a score. Nobody's checking whether you finished.

And if you miss Day 6, Jesus isn't disappointed that you ruined your devotional streak.

Just come back.

Maybe that's part of freedom too.

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

DAY 1

OUT OF THE BOX

WHO WERE YOU BEFORE EVERYBODY TOLD YOU WHO TO BE?

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God isn't waiting for a better version of you before He starts loving you. He's already here. And you're already becoming.

OUT OF THE BOX

WHO WERE YOU BEFORE EVERYBODY TOLD YOU WHO TO BE?



THE THOUGHT

Think about opening a brand-new iPhone.

Before the case. Before the scratches. Before you've downloaded 147 apps you don't need. Before the notifications, passwords, pictures, emails, texts and years of

stuff stored inside it.

It comes out of the box exactly as it was designed.

Now think about yourself. There was a version of you before the titles, before husband, dad, career, success and failure. Before somebody disappointed you - or

you disappointed yourself.

There was a person God intentionally created. Along the way we've collected expectations, regrets, fear, pride, shame, religion and other people's opinions. Sometimes we confuse what we've accumulated with who we actually are.

DAY 1 / OUT OF THE BOX

THE WORD



"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2:10

Notice which comes first. You are God's handiwork. Then comes what you do.

We tend to reverse that: If I do enough good things, maybe I'll become somebody God is pleased with.

God says: You're Mine. I made you. Now let's discover what that means for the way you live.

One begins with performance. The other begins with identity.

THINK ABOUT THIS



If you removed your job, accomplishments, possessions, mistakes, failures, responsibilities and everybody else's expectations... Who do you believe God sees when He looks at you?

Don't give the church answer. Give the real one.

TRY THIS



Don't change anything today. Seriously. Your assignment is to not have an assignment.

Just notice how often your internal voice says: I should... I need to... I ought to...

Don't argue with it. Don't fix it. Just notice it.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, I've spent a lot of my life thinking about what I'm supposed to do. For a few minutes, I want to stop doing and simply be with You. Help me separate who You've created me to be from everything I've accumulated. Show me what You see

SAME CREATOR. BIGGER STORY. YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.

when You look at me. Amen

DAY 2

WHAT'S RUNNING IN THE BACKGROUND?

BACKGROUND? THE HIDDEN BELIEFS CONSUMING YOUR BATTERY.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

You don't have to carry everything just because you've gotten good at carrying it.



THE THOUGHT

Your phone can look perfectly fine while something in the background is absolutely destroying the battery. Ever had that happen? You're barely using it, yet somehow you're at 23% before lunch. Something's running. I think men can be like that. We can look fine - work, laugh, take care of the family, show up at church - while underneath something keeps running: Am I enough? What if I fail? What if they knew? I need to prove myself. I can't let anyone down. Those thoughts consume something. Sometimes we've carried them so long we don't even realize they're running anymore.

DAY 2 / WHAT'S RUNNING IN THE BACKGROUND?

THE WORD



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

Matthew 11:28

Jesus doesn't say, Get yourself together and then come. He says: Come tired.

Come carrying it. Come exactly like this.

Maybe spiritual maturity isn't learning how to carry more. Maybe sometimes it's

learning what we can finally put down.

THINK ABOUT THIS



What's been running in the background of your life lately?

Fear? Pressure? Comparison? Regret? The need to keep everyone happy?

TRY THIS



At some point today, stop for sixty seconds. No phone. No fixing. No accomplishing.

Ask: What am I carrying right now that Jesus never asked me to carry?

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, You know what's running inside me even when I don't. Show me what I'm

SAME CREATOR. BIGGER STORY. YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.

carrying. Show me what belongs to me - and what doesn't. Teach me what

DAY 3

THE CASE ISN'T THE PHONE

WHAT ARE YOU PROTECTING?

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God isn't in love with the version of you that you've learned to present. He loves you.



THE THOUGHT

We put cases on our phones for a reason: protection. Most men learn pretty early how to build cases around themselves too. Funny guy. Successful guy. Strong guy. Tough guy. Church guy. Provider. Problem solver. The guy who has it handled. Those things may be real parts of you. But they're still not the whole phone. They're the case. Eventually a case designed to protect us can make it difficult for anyone to actually know us - including ourselves. Jesus never seemed terribly interested in people's cases. He kept seeing the person underneath.

DAY 3 / THE CASE ISN'T THE PHONE
THE WORD

"People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7

That's incredibly freeing - and maybe a little terrifying.

God already sees underneath.

And He hasn't left.

THINK ABOUT THIS



What version of yourself do you work hardest to maintain for other people? What are you afraid might happen if they saw underneath it?

TRY THIS



Have one honest moment today. Not a dramatic confession. Just honest. When somebody asks how you're doing, maybe don't automatically say, "Great."

Or tell God something you've been editing before you say it to Him.

No case.

TALK TO GOD



Father, You already know what's underneath everything I show people. Thank You

that I don't have to impress You. Help me become comfortable being fully known by

SAME CREATOR. BIGGER STORY. YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.

You. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

DAY 4

YOU WERE MADE FOR CONNECTION

CONNECTION FAITH IS RELATIONSHIP BEFORE IT IS INFORMATION.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus didn't invite you into a program. He invited you into a life with Him.



THE THOUGHT

A smartphone without a connection is an impressive little brick. It can still do some things. Take pictures. Play downloaded music. Use the calculator none of us understand. But it was designed for connection. So were you. Sometimes we've reduced Christianity to information: know this, believe this, don't do this, start doing that. But Jesus didn't walk up to His disciples and hand them a religious instruction manual. He said: Follow Me. Relationship came first.

DAY 4 / YOU WERE MADE FOR CONNECTION
THE WORD

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you."

John 15:4

Jesus isn't describing occasional contact. He's describing connection. Life with Him.

Not checking in with Him.

THINK ABOUT THIS



Is your faith currently more about Jesus Himself or about everything you're trying to do for Jesus?

TRY THIS



Give Jesus five minutes today without asking Him for anything. No prayer list. No problem solving. Just: Jesus, I'm here.

And be there.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, I've spent plenty of time trying to understand You. Teach me to simply be

with You. Make our relationship real - not just religious. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

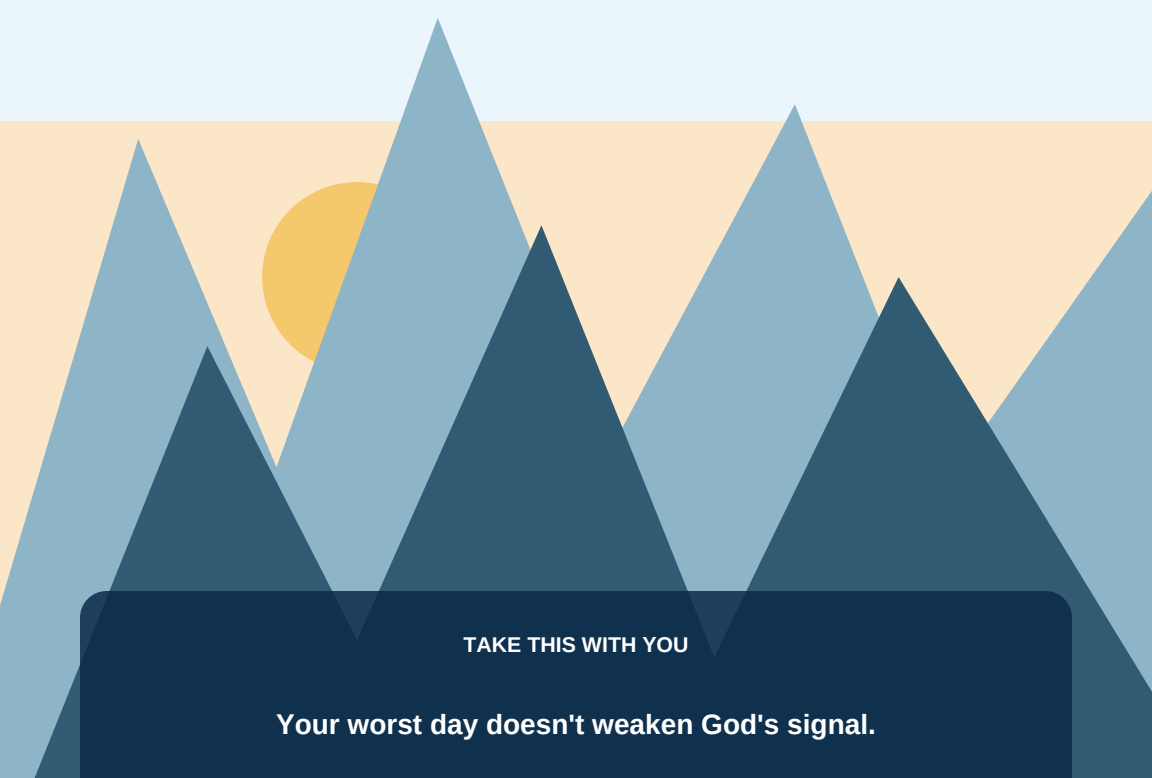


Jesus didn't invite you into a program. He invited you into a life with Him.

DAY 5

STOP TRYING TO EARN THE SIGNAL

SIGNAL GRACE DOESN'T RISE AND FALL WITH YOUR PERFORMANCE.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially visible behind the mountains. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Your worst day doesn't weaken God's signal.

STOP TRYING TO EARN THE SIGNAL

SIGNAL GRACE DOESN'T RISE AND FALL WITH YOUR PERFORMANCE.



THE THOUGHT

We've all done it. You hold the phone higher. Walk toward the window. Turn sideways for absolutely no scientific reason. Trying to get another bar. Sometimes I think we approach God that way. Good week? Four bars. Messed up? One bar. Haven't prayed lately? No service. So we start trying to earn our way back into range. But grace doesn't work like that.

DAY 5 / STOP TRYING TO EARN THE SIGNAL
THE WORD

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

Not once we improved. Not after we cleaned ourselves up.

While we were still sinners.

The Cross settled the question of whether God loves you.

THINK ABOUT THIS



When you mess up, do you instinctively move toward Jesus - or hide from Him

until you feel worthy again?

TRY THIS



Think of something you're not particularly proud of.

Instead of promising God you'll do better, simply say: Jesus, thank You that You

already know - and You still want me near You.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, help me stop measuring Your love by my performance. Teach me to run

toward You instead of away from You when I fail. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

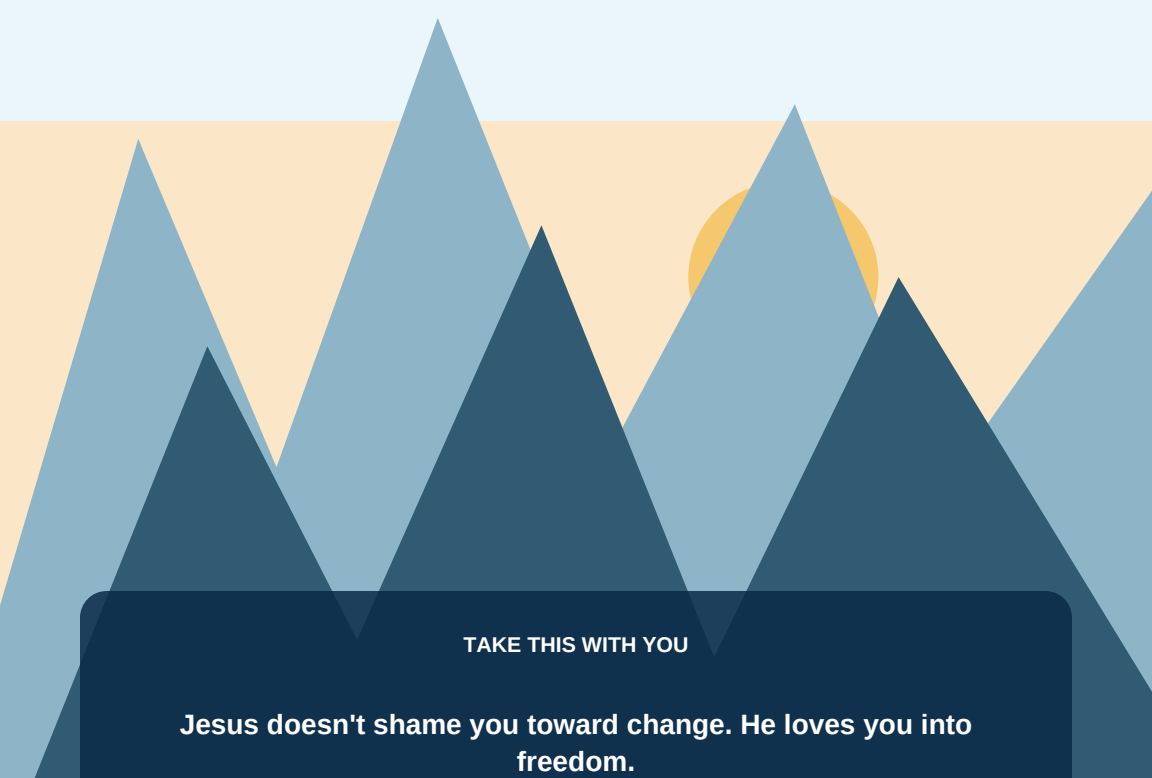


Your worst day doesn't weaken God's signal.

DAY 6

DELETE THE 'SHOULD' APP

INVITATION IS DIFFERENT FROM CONDEMNATION.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially obscured by one of the peaks. The background is a light blue sky.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus doesn't shame you toward change. He loves you into freedom.



THE THOUGHT

Should. It's a tiny word. But man, can it run your life.

I should pray more. I should be further along. I shouldn't struggle with this anymore.

I should be a better husband. I should be more spiritual.

Some of those desires may actually be good. But there's a difference between

invitation and condemnation.

Jesus transforms people, but He doesn't shame them into transformation.

DAY 6 / DELETE THE 'SHOULD' APP

THE WORD



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

Romans 8:1

No condemnation. Not reduced condemnation. No condemnation.

The Holy Spirit can convict you without crushing you.

THINK ABOUT THIS



What's the loudest I should... in your life right now?

Whose voice does it sound like?

TRY THIS



When you catch yourself saying "I should," replace it with:

What is Jesus inviting me into?

See if that changes the conversation.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, help me recognize the difference between Your invitation and my condemnation. I don't want shame driving my life. Teach me to respond to Your

love instead. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU



Jesus doesn't shame you toward change. He loves you into freedom.

DAY 7

LOW POWER MODE

WHAT IF EXHAUSTION IS TELLING YOU SOMETHING?

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Rest isn't quitting the journey. Sometimes it's how God keeps you on it.



THE THOUGHT

Your phone actually tells you when it's running out of power. We usually ignore our warnings. Exhausted? Keep going. Overwhelmed? Push harder. Emotionally empty? Grab some caffeine. Spiritually dry? Try harder. We're men. We can power through. Until we can't. Jesus wasn't impressed by nonstop activity. He rested. He withdrew. He slept. He got away from crowds. Apparently being the Savior of the world still allowed time for rest.

DAY 7 / LOW POWER MODE

THE WORD



"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Mark 6:31

That's Jesus talking.

Rest wasn't weakness. It was rhythm.

THINK ABOUT THIS



What is your life trying to tell you right now that you've been ignoring?

TRY THIS



Find ten minutes today when you accomplish absolutely nothing. And don't feel guilty about it. Sit. Walk. Look outside. Breathe. Let yourself be a human being.

TALK TO GOD



Father, I confess that sometimes I measure my worth by how much I accomplish.

Teach me the rhythm of Jesus: work, rest, presence, trust. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU



Rest isn't quitting the journey. Sometimes it's how God keeps you on it.

DAY 8

WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

NOT EVERY VOICE DESERVES A MICROPHONE.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A yellow sun is partially visible behind one of the peaks. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Not every voice in your head deserves a microphone.

WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

NOT EVERY VOICE DESERVES A MICROPHONE.



THE THOUGHT

Your phone has learned your voice.

But here's a better question: Whose voice have you learned?

Maybe you still hear something a father said thirty years ago. A coach. A teacher.

An ex. A boss.

Maybe the loudest voice is your own: You're not enough. Don't screw this up. Real

men don't struggle. God must be disappointed.

We've listened to some voices so long we've mistaken them for truth.

DAY 8 / WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?



THE WORD

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

John 10:27

Jesus has a voice too.

And His voice sounds like truth and grace.



THINK ABOUT THIS

What's something negative you've believed about yourself for years?

Now ask: Did Jesus actually say that?



TRY THIS

When an old voice shows up today, answer it with four words:

Jesus didn't say that.



TALK TO GOD

Jesus, there are voices I've carried for a long time. Help me recognize Yours. Let

Your truth become louder than the voices that have defined me. Amen.



TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Not every voice in your head deserves a microphone.

DAY 9

NO FILTER

BRING GOD THE UNEDITED VERSION.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially obscured by one of the peaks. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God would rather have your honest heart than your edited prayer.



THE THOUGHT

We know how to crop a picture. Adjust the lighting. Find the good angle. Maybe remove a chin or two if technology allows it. We edit what people see. And sometimes we do that with God. We bring Him the spiritual version of ourselves. But here's the ridiculous part: He already has the original photo. God knows the doubts, anger, temptation, disappointment, questions and the stuff you don't say at church. And He still says, Come.

DAY 9 / NO FILTER

THE WORD

*"You have searched me, LORD, and you know me."**Psalms 139:1**You're already fully known.**So maybe prayer isn't informing God.**Maybe prayer is finally becoming honest ourselves.*

THINK ABOUT THIS



What conversation with God have you been avoiding because you don't know how to make it sound spiritual?

TRY THIS



Have that conversation.

Use your actual words.

God can handle them.

TALK TO GOD



God, You already know me. So I don't want to hide behind religious words. Teach

me to bring You the real me. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

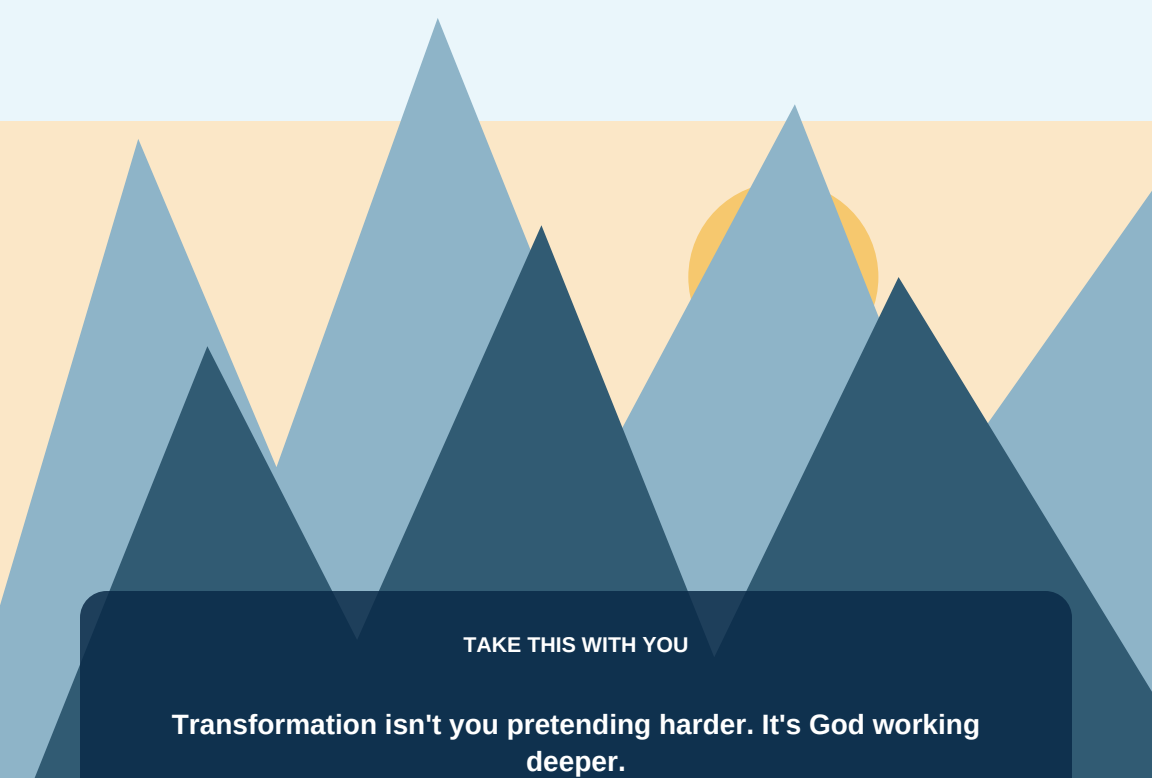


God would rather have your honest heart than your edited prayer.

DAY 10

THE UPDATE HAPPENS INSIDE

TRANSFORMATION IS DEEPER THAN BEHAVIOR.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially visible behind one of the peaks. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Transformation isn't you pretending harder. It's God working deeper.



THE THOUGHT

Software updates are interesting.

Your phone looks exactly the same on the outside. But inside, things are changing:

processes, security, performance, capabilities.

That's closer to how the Holy Spirit works than the version of Christianity many of us learned.

We often try to change from the outside in. Fix behavior. Try harder.

Look better.

But God works deeper.

DAY 10 / THE UPDATE HAPPENS INSIDE

THE WORD



"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

Philippians 2:13

Read that again.

God works in you.

You're participating in transformation. You're not manufacturing it.

THINK ABOUT THIS



Where have you been trying desperately to change yourself through willpower

alone?

TRY THIS



Instead of saying, I've got to stop this, try:

Holy Spirit, what are You changing in me?

Then pay attention.

TALK TO GOD



Holy Spirit, I don't want to merely look different. Change me from the inside. Shape

my desires, thoughts and reactions. Help me cooperate with what You're already

doing. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU



Transformation isn't you pretending harder. It's God working deeper.

DAY 11

OBEDIENCE WITHOUT THE LEASH

LOVE CHANGES OBEDIENCE.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Obedience isn't the price of God's love. It's one of the things His love begins producing in us.



THE THOUGHT

Here's where freedom can get misunderstood.

Freedom doesn't mean: I can do whatever I want.

Biblical freedom is much bigger. It's becoming free enough that you actually want

what gives life.

Think about someone you deeply love. When you do something for them, you don't

necessarily think, Fine. Apparently I'm required to.

Love changes obedience. Jesus didn't come to put a longer leash on us.

He came

to change our hearts.

DAY 11 / OBEDIENCE WITHOUT THE LEASH

THE WORD



"If you love me, keep my commands."

John 14:15

Notice the order.

Love. Then obedience.

Not: Obey enough and maybe I'll love you.

THINK ABOUT THIS



Does your obedience to God feel more like earning or responding?

TRY THIS



Do one Christlike thing today simply because you want to reflect the One who loves

you.

Don't tell anybody.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, I don't want to obey You because I'm afraid of disappointing You.

I want my

life to become a response to Your love. Change what I want. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU



Obedience isn't the price of God's love. It's one of the things His love begins producing in us.

DAY 12

STILL BECOMING

UNFINISHED DOESN'T MEAN UNSUCCESSFUL.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range. The mountains are represented by various shades of blue triangles of different sizes, creating a layered effect. Behind the mountains, a solid orange horizontal band represents the sky. A yellow circle, representing the sun, is partially visible behind one of the mountains. The entire scene is set against a light blue background.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

You can be a work in progress and still be deeply loved by God.



THE THOUGHT

Wouldn't it be nice if spiritual growth had a progress bar?

Tony: 73% complete.

Unfortunately, mine would probably freeze at 41% and tell me an update is

required.

We're unfinished. And that bothers us. We think we should be further along.

But what if unfinished isn't failure? What if it's simply human?

Peter followed Jesus, walked on water and declared Jesus the Messiah.

Peter also

argued, panicked, cut off somebody's ear and denied knowing Jesus.

And Jesus kept working with Peter.

DAY 12 / STILL BECOMING

THE WORD



"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."

Philippians 1:6

Who began it? He did.

Who continues it? He does.

You're still becoming.

THINK ABOUT THIS



Where are you beating yourself up because you're not there yet?

What if God isn't surprised by your timeline?

TRY THIS



Give yourself permission to be unfinished today.

Not complacent. Not careless.

Unfinished.

There's a difference.

TALK TO GOD



Father, thank You for not giving up on unfinished people. Help me see growth

where I usually only see failure. Keep doing Your work in me. Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

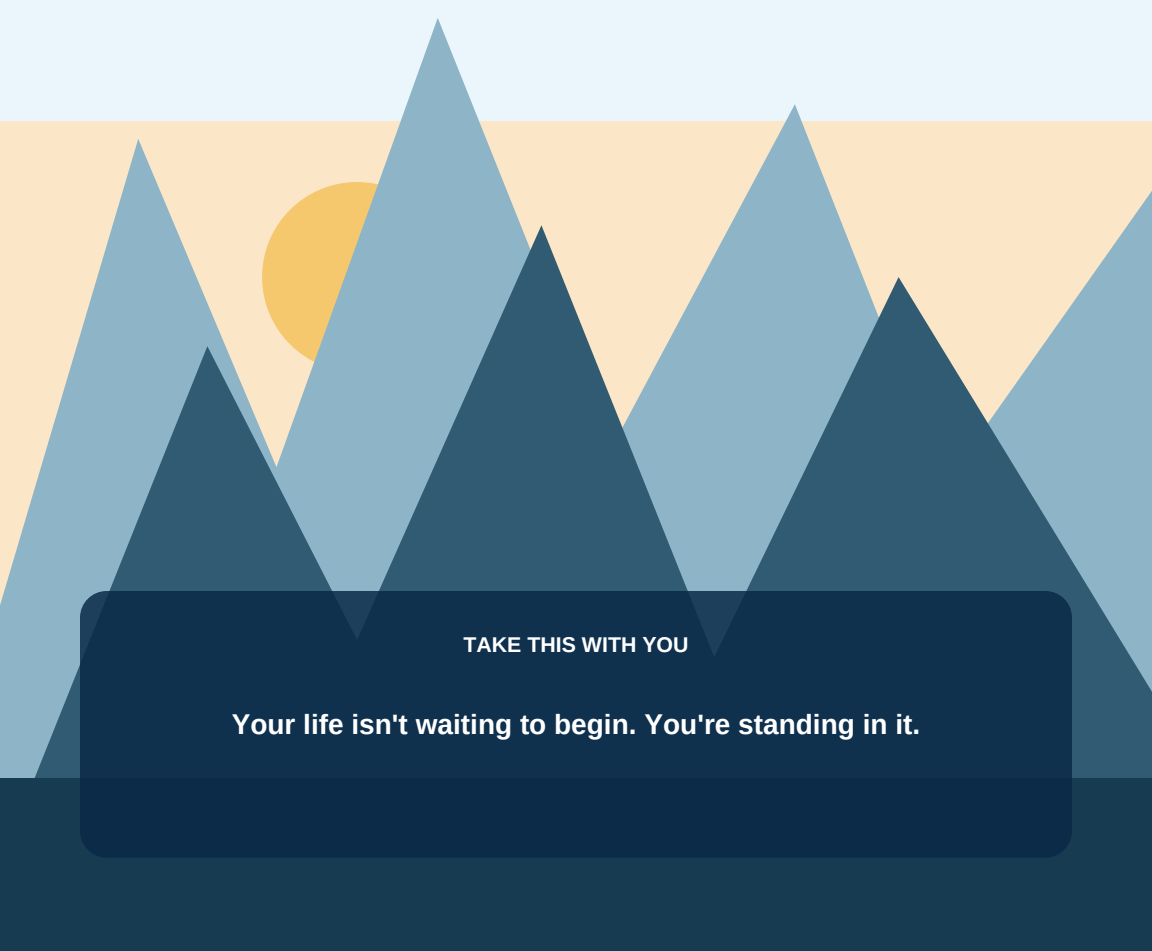


You can be a work in progress and still be deeply loved by God.

DAY 13

PUT THE PHONE DOWN

BE WHERE YOUR LIFE ACTUALLY IS.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially obscured by one of the peaks. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Your life isn't waiting to begin. You're standing in it.



THE THOUGHT

There's some irony in reading a devotional built around a phone analogy... probably on your phone.

So here's today's spiritual exercise: Put the thing down.

We spend enormous amounts of time somewhere other than where our bodies

actually are. Replaying yesterday. Worrying about tomorrow. Scrolling through

somebody else's life. Planning the next thing.

Meanwhile, God keeps meeting us in one place:

Here.



DAY 13 / PUT THE PHONE DOWN

THE WORD

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."

Matthew 6:34

You don't get tomorrow today.

You get this moment.

And this moment contains God.

THINK ABOUT THIS



How much of your life are you missing because your mind is somewhere else?

TRY THIS



Put your phone somewhere else for fifteen minutes.

Sit with your wife. Talk to your kid. Walk outside. Watch the sunset. Sit with Jesus.

Don't document it. Don't post it.

Just be there.

TALK TO GOD



Jesus, my mind goes everywhere. Bring me back here. Help me receive today

instead of constantly reaching for tomorrow. Teach me to be present.

Amen.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU _____



SAME CREATOR. BIGGER STORY. YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.

Your life isn't waiting to begin. You're standing in it.

DAY 14

FULLY ALIVE

FREEDOM TO BECOME.

A stylized illustration of a mountain range with several peaks in shades of blue and teal. A bright yellow sun is partially visible behind one of the peaks. The background is a light blue gradient.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

You're not finished. Neither am I. That's actually the point. Jesus is with us in the becoming. So go live. Live free.

SAME DESIGN.
GREATER PURPOSE.
CREATED. KNOWN. LOVED.
STILL BECOMING



THE THOUGHT

So here we are. Fourteen days.

And hopefully you haven't become a better religious performer. That was never the point.

Maybe you've simply started seeing something.

You're not a project God reluctantly agreed to take on. You're His creation. You're known. You're loved. You're unfinished. You're being transformed.

And if you've put your trust in Jesus, you're free.

Not free from every struggle. Not free from consequences. Not free from hard days.

Not suddenly perfect.

Free to become.

DAY 14 / FULLY ALIVE

THE WORD



"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

John 10:10

Life. Not religious exhaustion. Not constant self-condemnation. Not pretending. Life.

Maybe the goal isn't becoming more impressive. Maybe it's becoming more alive: more present, loving, patient, honest, forgiving, courageous - more like Jesus. Not because somebody told you that you should. Because the Spirit of God is alive

inside you and you're discovering who you were created to be.

THINK ABOUT THIS



Go back fourteen days. What's different?

Not: What did I accomplish?

Ask: What am I beginning to see differently about God, myself and this life

He's given me?

And one more: Who am I becoming?

TRY THIS



No assignment today.

Instead, go live. Love somebody. Laugh. Forgive. Call somebody. Enjoy your family. Notice something beautiful. Talk to Jesus. Make a mistake. Receive grace. Get back up.

Keep becoming.

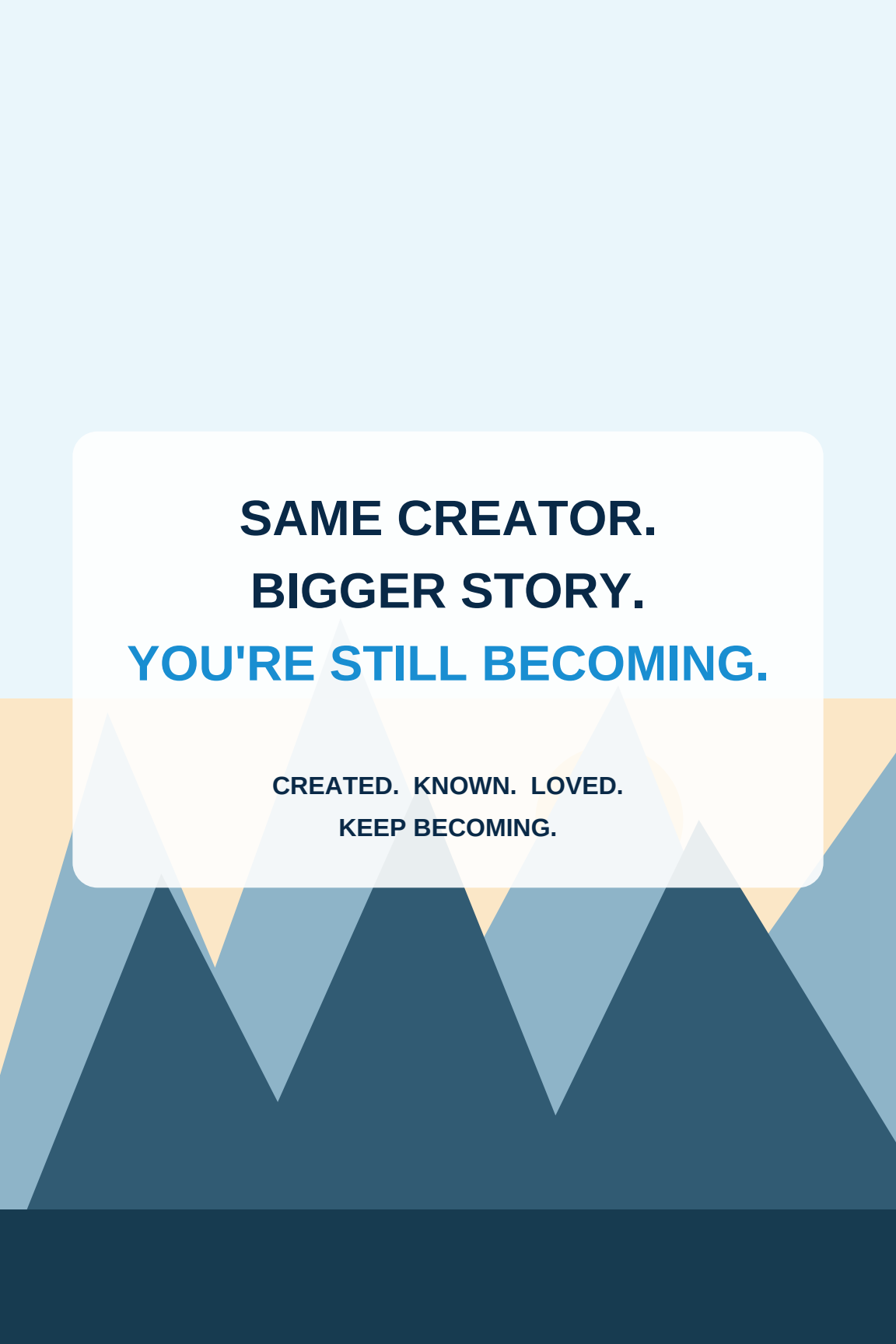
TALK TO GOD



Jesus, thank You that You didn't come just to make me more religious. You came to give me life. Thank You for loving me where I am and refusing to leave me there.

SAME CREATOR. BIGGER STORY. YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.

Keep shaping me. Keep teaching me. Keep freeing me. I don't know exactly who



**SAME CREATOR.
BIGGER STORY.
YOU'RE STILL BECOMING.**

**CREATED. KNOWN. LOVED.
KEEP BECOMING.**