



A 90-DAY JOURNEY TO WALKING BOLDLY IN
YOUR GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE

FIT FOR PURPOSE

LEONÉ MILLICENT MARTIN

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This book is the result of my journey with God over the last seven years in particular. *Fit For Purpose* is my thank you to God for rescuing me from a place of brokenness and darkness, helping me to experience His love and light. I am so grateful for His love and mercy. I'm excited to be on this journey with God; it is such a privilege to belong to Him.

When I first began writing this devotion, I planned to write one devotion every day for 90 days. I was utterly clueless! I am grateful my plan failed; what I know now I did not know then. As I have worked on this devotion, God has worked within me. Often it's not the end but the journey that matters most.

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Thank you, Lord - please watch over these words; may they accomplish your will.

LET'S JOURNEY TOGETHER

This book is an invitation to an exciting journey of discovering your unique place and purpose in God. We all have a purpose and an important part to play in God's ultimate plan for His creation. All too often the demands of an overwhelming life lead us to become busy yet unfruitful.

Each of the 90 daily devotions that follow is designed to inspire you, encourage you and challenge you to become Fit For Purpose. You will have points to reflect on and a chance to pause for prayer.

This devotion is broken down into three main sections that chart the stages of our growth using the analogy of a butterfly. The Caterpillar, The Cocoon and The Butterfly. We are often at different stages of development in different areas of our lives, but I hope you will see that transformation is a process; our journey takes time, and it can't be rushed.

The Fit For Purpose journey won't always be an easy one, but it will be worth it. Just like a seed must fall to the ground and die to grow, and a caterpillar has to go into its cocoon and literally break itself down to emerge as a beautiful bold butterfly, we too have to die to our old way of life to embrace our new life in Christ.

Thank you for joining me on this beautiful journey of discovery and transformation; I hope you are as excited as I am to begin!

PART 1

Created to Fly - The Caterpillar

INTRODUCTION

Sitting soaking in all of the information, it was clear this was an incredible opportunity, a space to grow and learn from people who had gone before me. Scanning the application process for what could be the 15th time, my mind wandered to acquaintances who had been on this programme before me, a wave of inadequacy overcame me. ‘Who was I to apply anyway? What was the point? They would never choose anyone like me.’ This was a programme for kingdom builders, men and women of God. There was no shortage of ideas in my mind, but my excuses outnumbered them. As my excuses grew in number, my faith shrank.

Fear was the loudest voice; faith was a tiny whisper. But that voice, the voice I now know was the voice of God, was still there. Faint but persistent saying ‘there is more, you are not alone, trust me’.

Confession and prayer set the heart free, once the words ‘I’m afraid; please pray against the spirit of fear for me’ escaped from my mouth, my life was never the same. The realisation that on our own we are nothing but in God we are everything we need to be, set in motion the most exciting adventure.

Two years later, my finger hit the send button on my computer, I applied

for the programme and was accepted. Holding the acceptance letter I understood, our faith will take us to places our fears never will. Living out our purpose is not hindered by a lack of potential; it is hindered by fear, doubt and a lack of faith in God.

When we have a caterpillar mindset, we can't see beyond the current stage in our development. While the humble caterpillar doesn't look very impressive crawling around in the dirt, it has the potential for a destiny that far supersedes its current circumstance and appearance. It might not appear possible, but the caterpillar was created to fly.

While we may not always be able to see this potential, God does. We might see merely a caterpillar, but God also sees the beautiful butterflies we are destined to become. We begin to tap into our potential when we come into agreement with what God sees and trust Him.

We don't have to get into the detail. God's love forms the foundation of our transformation. We don't have to know how, or when, we need to agree with God that He has given us the potential to become what He purposed and predestined for us to be at the beginning of time. He is with us and will show us what to do.

When we can recognise our true potential, we can see far beyond where we are at this present moment. We see beyond our circumstances, beyond our shortcomings, beyond our failures and we look towards Christ and the hope we have in Him.

We are precious and honoured in God's sight, He loves us so deeply

(Isaiah 43:4). That's why when we truly encounter Him and begin to follow Him, it's not possible for us to stay the same.

Over the next 27 days, we are going to explore how we can recognise our potential and commit to realising it through Christ. I hope you will discover that you too were created to fly.

... "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet." ...

Hebrews 2:6-8

SECTION 1

God's Purpose for You

DAY 1

SEEK GOD, FIND YOUR PURPOSE

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:3

Have you ever felt confused about your purpose? Have you ever questioned why on earth you are here? We wouldn't be human if this question didn't cross our minds at some point in our lives. Confusion takes root in the absence of connection; when you are connected to your creator, you gain clarity about your calling.

The truth is there have been times in my life when I have confused my ambition with purpose. I had my vision and plan, but I had not once consulted God to understand what His plan was for me. I was attempting to live purposefully outside of a relationship with God.

However, our purpose is deeply rooted in our relationship with God our creator. When we commit to understanding the nature, mind, and will of God, we begin to understand ourselves and the unique part God designed us to play in His ultimate plan for His creation.

When we lose sight of God, His will and ways, we lose sight of our ultimate purpose. God created us on purpose for a purpose. God's ultimate plan for His creation is woven tightly together with His purpose

for us. This should not be seen as a burden but as an incredible privilege!

God picked you out as His own. Where there is life there is a purpose. Our job is to cooperate with God to become fit for purpose so we can reach our full potential in Christ and complete our assignment.

If you are confused about your purpose or doubt you even have a purpose, commit to seeking God's will and ways. In doing so you will discover your unique place in Him.

Reflection Point: What can you do this week to seek God and deepen your relationship with Him?

Prayer Point: Lord, thank you for creating me with a purpose. Reveal Your will and ways to me. Help me to discover my unique place within Your ultimate plan for Your creation.

DAY 2

IT STARTS WITH LOVE

We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:19

If I'm not careful, watching the news can leave me with an overwhelming sense of despair. Wars, natural disasters, and economic uncertainty. I can quickly conclude everything is falling apart, beyond repair but there is something in the heart of a change maker that sees broken things and wants to fix them. Yet, the scale of the task in a world that appears to be growing increasingly dark can cause even the most enthusiastic amongst us to wonder whether change is possible.

When confronted with a world where everything appears to be falling apart, it's crucial we don't allow despair to overwhelm our hearts. God is love (1 John 4:16), and love is the glue that holds everything together; it is in the absence of love that everything falls apart. God's love is selfless; that's why Jesus Christ reveals the heart of the Father in that He died for us (John 3:16) so nothing would hinder us from being in a relationship with Him; that's how much God loves you.

As change makers, our most effective tool of transformation is love. However, I have come to realise you cannot give what you have not received. Trying to do so can be likened to trying to make a withdrawal from a bank account that's empty and has no overdraft facility.

Transaction declined! Love is the same; you cannot give love you have not received.

Our capacity to love God and to love others is found in His love for us. If sin creates malfunction and separation, then love brings healing and reconciliation. God's love makes us fit for purpose. Start there and take a moment to meditate on God's unfailing love for you.

Reflection Point: Have you fully received God's love for you? What has or is hindering you from fully receiving God's love?

Prayer Point: Father, open my heart to receive Your love, give me the desire and capacity to love you and others.

DAY 3

CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD

...put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:24

I felt like nothing; his rejection had pierced my heart deeply and I felt powerless against the pain. Young love turned toxic had caused me to question my value. If he didn't want me, then maybe I wasn't worth wanting? Lies become our truth when we live with them long enough but they are not God's truth.

I felt powerless because I was not living in the knowledge and confidence that I was created to be like God. Humanity is the pinnacle of God's creation, the final thing God created before He rested. We are a masterpiece of God's infinite creativity, designed to be like Him. While we will never be completely like God, in the way that a reflection in a mirror is not the person looking into it, we were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) to reflect His nature. In my pain, I was oblivious to this reality but the realisation set me free.

I realised, an obsession with our inadequacies leads to the suppression of our power. When we focus on what we are not, we forget who we are and when we forget who we are we never fully grow into who God created us to be. We are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm

139:14). That's why it's insulting to God when we do not appreciate what He has created and value ourselves as His creation.

Don't miss the miracle focusing on your mess. God created us to carry His image, reflect His nature and to represent Him here on earth. No matter where you find yourself today, take peace from this. You were created to be like God, you were made by love to be love. This intention is the starting point of the Fit For Purpose journey, a journey back to God's original intent for you, to be like Him.

Reflection Point: What does it mean to you to be created in God's image?

Prayer Point: Father, thank you for lovingly creating me in Your image. Help me to be conformed to Your nature as our relationship grows and deepens.

DAY 4

CREATED TO BE LIKE CHRIST

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Romans 8:29

What if I told you that who you are becoming matters more than what you do? Often when we think about our purpose, we reflect on what we were created to do. It brings to mind actions we must take, activities we must do, the impact we will make and the part we will play. All this activity can become a distraction. When we wear ourselves out striving to earn what God gave to us for free, we are too exhausted to become who God created us to be.

Salvation is a free gift; we are transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. Behaviour modification will never be a substitute for real transformation. Our relationship with God through Christ transforms us into the likeness of Christ.

As we become like Christ, our actions will change, the source will define our activity rather than us being defined by our activity. Faith will produce our work; our labour will be prompted by love and our endurance to see our work through until the end will be inspired by our hope in Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

Focusing on Jesus and following His example of how to live in a relationship with God the Father help us to know and manifest the will of God.

Our relationship with God shapes who we are and who we are shapes what we do. We were created to be like Christ in unbroken relationship with our Father.

Reflection Point: Who are you becoming? In what ways can you begin to focus more on who you are becoming than what you do?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to imitate Christ's example of an unbroken relationship with you, becoming like Christ and manifesting Your will on this earth.

DAY 5

CREATED FOR ETERNITY

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

What if this life we are experiencing now was only a waiting room, and death was a door through which we enter the life God always intended for us? I know this thought may seem overwhelming but if this were true how would you live your life differently?

Would you freak out if the car broke down and you were unable to get to work? How would you respond if a business deal you had been working on for months fell through? Finally, how would you deal with someone you love and have emotionally invested in letting you down? These are real issues, they matter, and the fact we are affected by them means we are human but to what extent should we allow them to dictate our feelings?

Our peace is linked to our perspective; a heart hoping in the world can easily slip into despair but a heart hoping in heaven has hope to spare. God fashioned us for more than our earthly life; He created us for

eternity. Living therefore, is a delicate balance between embracing the journey and accepting we are merely passing through.

People who believe this life is all there is may live to get the most pleasurable experience here on earth yet as believers we have the promise of eternal life. This eternal purpose should shape our earthly lives; it should help us to place our priorities in order.

John 3:16 says “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” So when the stresses of life threaten to overwhelm you hold on to this guarantee, you were created for eternity.

Reflection Point: How does the fact you were created for eternity shape the decisions you are making today?

Prayer Point: Heavenly Father, help me to live my life with a heavenly perspective knowing you created me with eternity within my heart.

DAY 6

DISCOVER THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:5, 9

What picture forms in your mind when you read the word 'Church'? These days when people mention the word 'Church' we often think of a building, with a steeple, pews and an altar, yet referring to the Church as a physical building has no biblical basis. The Greek word for Church is Ekklesia which means called out.

Ekklesia was also used to describe people called out and assembled for a purpose. Therefore, it's important for us to remember while we have a personal purpose and destiny, it is part of a collective purpose and destiny, the purpose of the Church.

The misconception that the Church is a place and not a people results in a Church that is static and stationary. When the real purpose of the Church is connected to movement and momentum; the Church is a people that go and not a place that people go to. In Mark 16:15, Jesus

tells the disciples “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

In a dark world, the light that we carry as believers is wasted, shut up in a building; we need to go out into all the world so that others have the opportunity to see the light of Christ that shines through us.

If the Church is not a place but a people and if that people have been called out together for a purpose, the purpose of sharing the good news with the world, then our purpose is manifest within relationships. People and purpose are inseparable; you can't have one without the other.

Reflection Point: What does it mean to you to be called out by God? How can you become more personally involved in the collective purpose of the Church?

Prayer Point: Father, help us to understand and seek after our collective purpose as Your chosen people, a people called out by you to stand out and make a difference in Your world. Help us to be unified in purpose and to realise we are not able to fulfil Your purpose for our lives without each other.

DAY 7

GET CONNECTED

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 2:18

Sometimes I feel like a terrible friend. With many conflicting commitments, I don't call and get so busy I find it hard to meet up. At one point in my life, I went through a period of intense loneliness, and I realised I could not expect to reap the benefits of a community if I did not invest in cultivating community. I discovered if I wanted great friends, I had to be a great friend.

Loneliness and isolation are on the increase, despite technology and the celebration of independence people are feeling alone and disconnected as I did. Loneliness can have an adverse impact on our mental health and well-being as we were created to be connected.

Firstly, we were created to be connected to God and in a relationship with Him but also God himself identified "It is not good for the man to be alone..." (Genesis 2:18). We need human interaction and companionship to function in healthy ways.

God didn't create us to be independent; He created us to be interdependent. God created Eve to help Adam and complement him.

Naturally, when we reflect on this we think about the marriage relationship, but this also indicates as human beings we were created to help each other and to complement each other. Just as Adam needed help to fulfil his purpose, we need help to fulfil ours.

Being part of a sizeable local congregation, I know that it's possible to feel disconnected in the midst of a crowd, but I also know if you look closely there are people who feel the same as you. Don't let the ache of loneliness become the bars that keep you isolated in your pain; reach out and connect with someone who may feel the same. Get connected.

Reflection Point: Which friendships do you need to nurture in your life? How can you become a better friend and get connected this week?

Prayer Point: Father, help me to be a good friend, help me to partner with you and others to fulfil Your purposes on this earth.

DAY 8

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Your mistakes, hardships and heart ache could change the world. Sounds far-fetched right? But it's true, once we accept Christ as our personal Lord and saviour, it is our testimony about how He has changed us that becomes a catalyst of change for others.

We are Christ's ambassadors, and He has entrusted His message to us to share with others on His behalf. For me this purpose can seem like an overwhelming responsibility, yet God showed me if I am not anxious and trust Him, not only will Christ provide the opportunity but also the strength for me to fulfil this purpose.

Acts 8:26-40 recounts an encounter Philip has with an Ethiopian man on a desert road. Philip shared the good news about Christ with this Ethiopian man, he believed and was baptised in the middle of the wilderness.

Notice it was through Philip's obedience that he found himself at the right place at the right time. As we seek God, pray according to His will

and become more sensitive to the promptings of His spirit, He will show us what to do.

From this scripture, we also see Philip was able to meet the Ethiopian man where he was, not in a religious building but travelling. So, meet people where they are, in the midst of their everyday lives.

We can become anxious about what to say when sharing our faith. Yet, the best stories are the ones that we own. When we share our testimony, we make the Gospel story our own. Whether we have believed in Christ for one day, one month, a year or years, let's share our story about how Christ has changed us because we are all ambassadors for Christ.

Reflection Point: What is your testimony about Christ? How have you changed since meeting Christ and becoming a disciple?

Prayer Point: Heavenly Father, help me to represent You well and be bold in sharing the good news about You.

DAY 9

CREATED TO LEAD

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 1:28

Do you see yourself as a leader? Many people don't, but we all lead in some capacity. Whether it is within our homes, our churches, our communities or our workplaces, you don't need to have leadership in your title or job description to be a leader.

God created us as His representatives on this earth with a mandate, to rule over and take care of our domain, which is the earth. We were made to be rulers and care takers, yet often we underestimate and do not fully appreciate the power we have.

We become powerful when we realise that God did not create us powerless. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your power. Humility is not denying you have power; it's using your power to benefit and bless others above yourself.

God created us to lead. He created us as stewards of the works of His hands (Psalms 8:6). We may feel overwhelmed when we consider the responsibility we have as stewards of God's world. Yet, we must not

shrink back in fear, God has shown us how to steward well.

Being a leader does not mean lording it over other people or making demands of others. Jesus gave us a perfect model of leadership when He said "...the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves." (Luke 22:26).

No matter where we are placed, may we embrace our purpose and power as servant leaders.

Reflection Point: Do you see yourself as a leader? How can you lead with a servant's heart?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to use the power that You have given me for Your purposes. Help me to lead with the heart of a servant.

SECTION 2

Full of Potential

DAY 10

PERFECT FOR YOUR PURPOSE

I will give thanks and praise to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

Psalm 139:14 (AMP)

Why is it often easier for us to appreciate God's mastery when we watch a beautiful sunset than when we look in the mirror? The same God that created the things we marvel at in nature created us. In fact, human beings are the most precious creation of God. We are all so different, short, tall, various shades, body shapes, personalities, gifts, talents, and abilities. The combinations are infinite, complex and unique, the variety is astonishing.

Yet, some people see themselves as worthless, and we have all had times when we have compared ourselves to someone else and felt inadequate. However, God doesn't see things that way, we are His creation, and to Him, we are made perfect.

Before our physical conception on earth, we were conceived in the mind of God, before our earthly birth, we were birthed in God's thoughts in heaven. The same God that wove us together wove us into His plan and created us perfect for our purpose.

Everything about us was thoroughly thought out, perfectly planned and

diligently crafted. Every detail about us was diligently and deliberately combined for the purpose for which God created us.

Despite your perceived flaws, despite your mistakes, God did not make one when He created you. You are not comparable; your assignment on this earth is as unique as your fingerprint. Don't waste time and energy feeling inadequate. No matter how you feel, know deep down in your heart you are perfect for your purpose.

Reflection Point: What is one thing you can do today to better embrace who God created you to be?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to see and appreciate the unique way You made me and walk boldly in the purpose for which You created me. May I give You glory by embracing who You created me to be.

DAY 11

FOCUS ON CHRIST

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

My stomach sank, I’d messed up again, I’d let the emotion of the moment overwhelm me, and I reacted in a way that was ugly. A minor mistake of a colleague was the final tap that shattered my fragile emotions. You see when I am under pressure, I can get easily offended and super defensive. I know I need to change and God is working on me. However, the more I emphasise this weakness, the weaker I feel.

When we concentrate on our weaknesses, we begin to disqualify ourselves from what God has called us to do. The more we focus on our flaws, the more inadequate we feel to represent God and do the work He has assigned to us.

Over-reliance on ourselves leads to under reliance on Jesus, and we can do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5). Christ gives us the power to overcome our weakness and unlock our potential; we do not need to rely on our power and strength, we can rely on His.

Our weaknesses do not disqualify us from our purpose, everyone has a

thorn in their side (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), and God chooses to work through weak people like you and me so that He gets the glory. 1 Corinthians 1:27 says “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.”

There is no shame in admitting your weaknesses, there is no healing in hiding but don't focus on your weaknesses more than you focus on God's ability to help you to overcome them, focus on Jesus.

Reflection Point: How have you allowed your weaknesses to discourage or disqualify you from your purpose?

How can you begin to focus more on Christ than you do your shortcomings?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord help me to focus on You more than I focus on my weaknesses, may Your power rest on me and help me to walk in my purpose.

DAY 12

TRY NEW THINGS

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18

Growing up, when it came to physical activities I was a fearful child, so I never learnt to ride a bike. It looked fun to me standing on the sidelines but to be honest; it also seemed very risky! On sunny days when my cousin went on cycling adventures around our local park, I would run behind her or stick close to the adults out of harm's way.

Has fear ever stopped you from trying something you have always wanted to do? We discern our gifts and abilities through experimentation if we are too afraid to try new things through fear of failure we will never truly understand the depths of our capabilities. Maybe I would have been great at bike riding, but fear kept me from finding out as a child (It's on my adult bucket list!).

In the famous parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) the faithful servants made full use of what they were given, and they saw a return on their investment. The unfaithful servant was so afraid of getting it wrong he buried what little he had.

As we explore, discern and invest the gifts that God has given us, both our spiritual and natural abilities, He will multiply them and increase them.

On the other hand, if we let fear hold us back from giving new things a try and stepping out to discover our talents, what little we have will be taken from us, unexercised abilities diminish with time.

Don't be so afraid of discovering your weaknesses you never step out to discover your strengths. Let God's great love replace your fears, He wants you to succeed, and He isn't waiting for you to fail to catch you out. Trust Him, have confidence in His love and respond to His love by being bold in giving new things a try and discovering your gifts.

Reflection Point: What is one thing you have always wanted to try but have been too afraid to? When will you give it a go?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, show me Your perfect love and help me to release my fear and be bold enough to try new things and discover my gifts.

DAY 13

VALUE YOUR EXPERIENCE

But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.

1 Samuel 17:34-36

Often people called by God who at first glance look unqualified have been qualified in unconventional ways. Often our training takes place quietly behind closed doors or in those moments when no-one else is around. In those private tests, no one is aware of how you are being prepared. Our past is the practice ground for our future. Each moment preparing us for the time when all of our private preparation will be put to the test publicly.

This was David’s experience. When David told Saul he was both willing and able to go up against Goliath, he thought he was inexperienced, young and naive but that was far from the truth. He had been prepared in secret for this assignment. Shepherding his father’s sheep, he had honed his skills and abilities to fight fierce foes, but most importantly he

understood God was with him then and He would be with him now.

Often we fail to appreciate the value of our experience and the way God has set up the challenges of our past to prepare us for our future. We all have skills honed through our experience often in places and ways not visible to others.

Part of discovering and embracing the skills and abilities God wants to use in each of us now, is looking back at our experience. Our experience is preparation for our present challenges. Value your experience.

Reflection Point: What skills and abilities have been honed by your experience that can be used to serve now?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please show me how the talents, abilities, and skills my past experiences have honed can be used for Your glory and to advance Your kingdom now.

DAY 14

BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GIFTS

Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too.

Numbers 16: 9-10

Have you ever looked at someone and pondered 'I wish I could be like them, I wish I could have what they have or do what they do?' If we are honest with ourselves, we have all done this at some point and while it is right to admire the good things about others, including what they have achieved, it is not alright to become consumed by craving for these things.

We become distracted when we yearn to possess what others have, including their gifts, rather than valuing the talents and the abilities God has entrusted to us.

What God has given you is enough for your purpose; don't reject what God has entrusted to you chasing after what was never yours to have. To do so shows a lack of gratitude for all God has blessed you with.

In Numbers 16:9-10, Moses rebukes the Levites because they were

attempting to take on a role that was not theirs to perform. We need to search our hearts and examine ourselves to ensure we do not do the same. Our focus should be on embracing and refining the skills God has planted within us for His glory. We must be careful not to pursue a role that was never designed for us in the first place.

Our greatness is activated through our gratefulness; be grateful for the gifts God has blessed you with and watch your gifts grow.

Reflection Point: Name 3 gifts and talents you are grateful God has entrusted to you?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to see clearly the gifts and talents You have entrusted to me. Help me to faithfully steward the potential You have blessed me with, showing gratitude for the gifts You have given.

DAY 15

DON'T COMPARE YOUR CALLING

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Comparison is death. When we compare our calling to others, there are two main outcomes in our thinking either we judge we are called to something greater than them, or they are called to something more important than us. Both plant the seeds of sin in our lives that when mature will develop into pride or envy.

What we believe drives our actions and comparison leads to dangerous beliefs. The only standard we are called to compare ourselves against is Jesus. While Jesus had every right to brag, He humbled himself and served an undeserving humanity.

We have everything we need for our assignment. Comparison causes us to take our eyes off our assignment to focus on whether someone else has a more significant mission than us. This deception makes us forget as believers we are on the same team. No one has to lose for you to win and when others are winning you are winning too.

Comparison is a distraction. God has given us a unique DNA on purpose. We are diverse by design. Don't try to conform to manmade standards or attempt to enforce conformity onto others. Comparison stirs a craving to conform, but when you focus on your calling, you cultivate the environment to be transformed. Don't compare your calling.

Reflection Point: In what ways can comparison distract you from your purpose? What can you do to avoid falling into the trap of comparing yourself to others?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to see the beauty and value in who You created me to be. Help me to use everything You have entrusted to me to complete my assignment serving You and others.

DAY 16

HIDDEN POTENTIAL

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7

I felt invisible. I knew I could do the job, but no one else appeared to be able to see it. In fact, it felt like I was doing the job already, only I wasn't paid to do it. Have you ever felt overlooked and ignored? You are working hard, but no one appears to notice or acknowledge the efforts you are making.

God sees you; He knows you intimately, and He knows what is in your heart. God sees past your appearance and circumstances; He sees what He created you to be.

Often our potential is hidden in obscurity. Don't worry about being overlooked by man; God will help you to unlock your hidden potential when you focus on keeping your heart and mind in and on Him.

David was a simple shepherd boy, the youngest of all his brothers, overlooked and forgotten. However, God saw him as Israel's next king. God has a vision for you too, and your outward appearance or

circumstances have nothing to do with it.

At the time David was chosen to be the next king of Israel, Saul the current king had been rejected because of the condition of his heart. His pride and disobedience had led to his downfall. However, it was said of David he was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). I don't believe Saul had less potential than David; his potential was hindered by his heart. Nothing frustrates your potential or perverts your purpose like the poor condition of your heart.

It's easy when you feel overlooked and unappreciated to try to find ways to stand out but don't be so concerned with looking the part you neglect the matters of your heart.

Not everyone is going to see your potential, and that's ok. What is important is God sees it, and if you keep your heart right, He will help you to fulfil it. God is the key to your hidden potential.

Reflection Point: Think of a time you felt overlooked, how did it make you feel and how did you respond? How will you protect your heart when you feel other people do not see or appreciate your potential?

Prayer Point: Dear Father, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me, then at the appointed time uncover the potential You have hidden within me.

DAY 17

LIMITLESS POTENTIAL

I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]

Philippians 4:13 (AMP)

There have been times in my life when I have felt overwhelmed by the size of the dreams God has planted in my heart. Have you ever felt that way? Often when we think about our purpose, we can become intimidated by the size of the calling or the height of the dream, but nothing is impossible for God to achieve through and in you.

The power available to us in Jesus Christ is amazing. He gives us the strength and ability to accomplish things more wonderful than our minds can conceive. In ourselves, there is always a ceiling and a limit to our abilities but, in Christ, we are sufficient and equal to any challenge.

We don't have to worry; we can have 'confident peace' we are ready for whatever comes our way. Our potential and sufficiency come from God, not from ourselves. Depending on our strength, we discover our greatest weakness, depending on Christ we are infused with our greatest strength.

God is our source and sustainer. He is our power, He fills us and pours His power into us. In understanding this and taking it to heart, we need to take the limits off our thinking, take the limits off our potential, take the limits off our lives.

We begin to boldly fulfil our potential when we understand it is truly unlimited in Christ. If you have ever made excuses for why you are unable to live courageously for Christ, realise today it is your excuses limiting you; it is your thinking. In reality, you have unlimited potential in Christ; you can do anything He has called you to do. In union and relationship with God, our potential is limitless.

Reflection Point: What has God called you to do that you have felt too intimidated to pursue? What dream has God laid on your heart you have not pursued because it appears impossible?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to realise and live boldly in the reality I can do anything You have called me to do. Give me boldness and help me not to shrink back in fear when faced with fulfilling my calling.

DAY 18

GO DEEPER WITH GOD

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

Contrary to what the world would have us believe, the fulfilment of our potential is not measured by the amount of possession we accumulate, the fame we acquire or the position we occupy. We have not fulfilled our potential if man recognises us but heaven does not. Achieving your potential is about fulfilling God's purposes on earth, walking in the power and authority of Christ.

The differentiator between those who fulfil their potential and those who don't is relationship, intimacy, and depth of relationship. The word of God says "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Without God, we are unable to fulfil our purpose.

As we have discovered, Jesus Christ is our perfect example of what is possible when living in harmony with the Father. In human flesh, He put limits on His divine nature to show us what is possible for humanity when living in unbroken relationship with God the Father.

Romans 8:29 says Jesus was "the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." John 14:12 says "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me

will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” Jesus is our perfect example of humanities optimum state.

Higher heights require deeper depths; go deep. The depth of authentic relationship with God is the differentiator between those who fulfil their potential and those who don't. Remain in Christ as He remains in you and you will produce fruit and you will walk in your purpose.

Reflection Point: How would you describe your relationship with God? How can you go deeper?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, give me a deep hunger and thirst to get to know You and to get closer to You.

SECTION 3

Say Yes

DAY 19

START WITH THE HEART

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23

You can look successful to the outside world and be completely miserable. I know because I have been there. If you allow bitterness to creep into your heart, it will suck the joy out of your life.

In the story of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-31), the son who stayed home working diligently was resentful of the joyous celebration at his brother's return because his heart was not right.

We cannot hide what is in our hearts, no matter how hard we try to conceal it. What is in our hearts is going to come out. It comes out in our words, and actions.

We can't change our hearts; only God can do that, but we can prayerfully watch over our hearts and ask God to protect us from the temptation of pursuing our agenda (Matthew 26:41).

Our heart is where it all starts; cleansing our hearts is the foundation of any work we do in God's Kingdom.

The successful son was hard working but resentful. He hadn't fully embraced the Father's love, and while he worked as a servant, he had

not fully grasped what it meant to be a son. As a son, you don't work to obtain the Father's love; you work in response to the Father's love, and you enjoy all the benefits of sonship along the way.

As sons' and daughters' of the Most High God, our service should never be a burden to us. We should not work out of obligation but with humbleness of heart and with joy. Then, when we see our brothers and sisters returning and having a joyful relationship with the Father, we will not resent them; we will join the party!

Reflection Point: In what ways do you need God to work in your heart? What motivates your work and dreams?

Prayer Point: Father, give me a new heart, through the power of your Holy Spirit cleanse my heart and help me to love how You love. Help me to watch over my heart so I can serve You from a place of peace and joy.

DAY 20

CHECK THE SOURCE OF YOUR SERVICE

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Why do you work? Is it to earn money, recognition or status? Or do you work to please God? For too long my service to God was driven by a sense of obligation, guilt, fear and seeking to earn God's favour and somehow deserve His love.

This was until I finally realised we cannot work for God's grace, we cannot serve our way to salvation, and we cannot labour for His love. The Thessalonians worked in response to God's love, not to earn it. God's love is priceless, and we can't afford the cost of salvation which is why it was given to us for free. As I worked to earn it, I missed the point it was unmerited favour, not based on who I am but on who God is.

Our faith should compel us to serve, not guilt, not condemnation or the desire for recognition or even prosperity. The source of our labour should be love, not merely love for what we do (often for love's sake we have to do what we would prefer not to) but love for who we do it for, Jesus Christ. Our love for God should prompt our service, yet we cannot

claim to love God and hate our brother and sister (1 John 4:20-21).

As mentioned, sometimes our service will require us to do things we would prefer not to or times we have to push past our comfort zones to keep going when we would rather give up. That's why the ability to endure in ministry is crucial. Our endurance comes from our hope in Christ, that if we persevere and do not give up, we will receive our eternal reward (James 1:12).

When you work this way, God is glorified, so ask yourself what is the source of your service?

Reflection Point: Why do you work? What is the source of your service? How will you respond to God's love for you?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to remember and receive Your love, so it overflows and pours out to the lives around me. May Your love and grace inspire my service in Your name.

DAY 21

PURSUE THE WILL OF GOD

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:38 (AMP)

Whose will takes priority in your life? Your will or the will of God? The key to living a purposeful life is learning to discern and fulfil the will of God.

Jesus understood this and was unwaveringly determined to fulfil the will of the Father. He overcame temptation, violent oppositions, criticism, betrayal and physical pain to accomplish His purpose. He was entirely focused on the Father's will and did what was required to fulfil it.

The heart of a purposeful life is surrendering to the will of God. Our will is incredibly strong and subduing it is not easy. It requires dying to your fleshly desires daily and wholly trusting God. It's a process of letting go.

We all have a will; it's powerful, and it drives our actions. God has given us a free will, which means we can choose. The purposeful life is one in which we decide to accept the will of the Father and to, as Jesus said 'do the will of the one who sent me'.

As we grow in the knowledge of God and are renewed by His Holy

Spirit, our will and God's will become aligned. His desires become our desires, but it all starts with saying YES to intentionally and wholeheartedly pursuing His will.

Reflection Point: Are there any areas of your life you have not surrendered to God? If you were to surrender to God's will totally, what would you do differently?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to choose Your will over my own. May I surrender entirely to Your ultimate plan and purpose for my life.

DAY 22

OBEY GOD

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Hebrews 11:8

What God can do with just one YES is amazing. Things we may have strategised and pondered for many years God can make it happen in moments. In moments, God can turn around your whole situation, but first, you have to trust Him. Trust Him enough to say YES even before He tells you what He requires of you. Say YES even if it costs you all you have. Obeying God is challenging, so much so even though we can see God perform miracles, we still resist obeying Him.

Slowly I am learning faith is a daily choice rather than a onetime event. Sometimes we can feel the weight of the decision like Abraham did when he was called to leave everything he knew behind to journey into the unknown. At other times, choices we make appear more mundane and routine, but each moment we get to choose whether we will trust and obey God.

When things in life appear hazy, we can prefer to trust in our logic and reasoning, yet there will be times when God may ask you to do something that does not make sense. We can miss the blessings God has

set aside for us because we are too afraid of letting go of our present to step into our future.

Why bear the cost and consequences of disobedience when we can reap the rewards of saying YES to God? Obey God.

Reflection Point: What has prevented you from obeying God?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, give me the courage to obey You even when I may not know where You are leading me.

DAY 23

LOVING GOD IS REVEALED IN LOVING OTHERS

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

1 John 4:20-21

What does it truly mean to love God? When Jesus responded to the question about which of the commandment was greatest, He said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37) We are to love God with all we are and all we have.

We can't merely love in words when Jesus asked Peter ‘do you love me’ He told him to feed His lambs when he replied yes. Jesus asked Peter the same question 3 times, and each time Peter said ‘yes’ Jesus gave him the same instruction (John 21:15-17). The repetition emphasises the importance of the point; God is saying if you love me, take care of those who belong to me.

How can we say we love God and then mistreat or even neglect others?

This is dishonest. Our love for God is shown by how we treat others. Love is easy to talk about but much harder to do, speaking love is free, but living love has a high cost. Probably why we are given a lifetime to perfect it, as God uses our pursuit to perfect us.

We can't wait around, waiting to feel like showing love. Sometimes people behave in ways that annoy us, hurt us or grieve us, yet we are still told to love them. Jesus went as far as to instruct us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Why? God reveals himself through our love for others, while our actions show our love for God.

Our love for God is an act of submission, God says if you love me you will obey, you will do what I tell you to do, and I am commanding you to love.

Reflection Point: Is your love for God expressed through your love for others? What can you do today to show love?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, I can do nothing apart from You, help me to exercise my love for You by demonstrating my love for others.

DAY 24

EMBRACE THE HEART OF TRUE MINISTRY

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24

Do you see yourself as a minister? Often when we think of the word ‘ministry’, we think of public officials or leaders serving within the Church. We think of pastors, evangelists, teachers and prophets. We don’t often think of entrepreneurs, school teachers, doctors or lawyers. When we look at the Greek word for ministry ‘diakonia’ it is used in many contexts not merely limited to ordained ministers. This word is used about government officials, serving tables and administering food, but importantly also in regards to our ultimate call to serve and glorify God.

The essential meaning of the word ministry is service. Ministry is not a set of acts, a group of roles or a title. Ministry is a state of heart and mind; it is an attitude, it is a posture.

Each one of us, as children of God and members of the body of Christ, is called to ministry; we are all called to serve and glorify God through serving the body of Christ and the wider world.

Ministry is not about position; it is about purpose. From the beginning when Adam was created, he served in the garden, tending to it and fellowshiping with God. We were designed for ministry; ministry is the vehicle through which we worship God and give Him glory.

All work is ministry when it is done to glorify God. Don't make ministry a role; embrace ministry as a lifestyle and serve now, where you are placed, in this season.

Reflection Point: How have you previously defined ministry? Has your definition limited you in any way? Thinking of ministry as serving God through serving others, in what ways might you minister?

Prayer Point: Father God, help me to serve You with all You have blessed me with and wherever I find myself placed in this season. Give me a heart for ministry inspired by Your love and light.

DAY 25

SURRENDER AND SERVE

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves...They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.

Mark 6:41-43

‘There is not enough’, this must have been what the disciples thought when they looked at the meagre leftovers they were expected to feed thousands with. I have often felt this way when I thought about what God has called me to do; there is not enough time, there is not enough money, and there are not enough people to help.

It can be frustrating when you look at your resources and then look at what needs to be done and see a gaping hole in your resources, but that’s because we shouldn’t be looking to our resources or looking at the size of the challenge we should be looking to Jesus.

Thousands of years ago, the disciples got to witness what Jesus could do with what little they had. Jesus fed 5000 men not counting the women and children amongst them, with a few loaves of bread and fish. Today we get to witness what Jesus can do with what little we have. If we give Jesus our time, if we give Him our money and if we give Him our gifts, no matter how small they may seem to us, He will take what we have

and multiply it so it will not only meet present needs but there will be surplus for our future needs as well.

We serve a generous God, but first, we must surrender all He has given us back to Him so He can work through us in astounding ways.

Reflection Point: What do you need to surrender to God in your life so He can multiply it?

Prayer Point: Lord, show me how I can use all You have given me to bless others. Help me to surrender all I have to You so that You can work through me in astounding ways.

DAY 26

LIVE YOUR PURPOSE

*encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God,
who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

1 Thessalonians 2:12

Living on purpose is disruptive. It will take life as you know it and turn it upside down. When Paul urged the Thessalonians to live a life worthy of God, he was letting them know a life of purpose is a lifestyle. It wasn't a choice only affecting one area of their lives; it was an all-encompassing decision to live for God in every single area of their lives every day.

As a Christian in the marketplace, I have often tried to compartmentalise my life, saying this area of my life is business and this other area is ministry, but it does not work like that. We have one life, one ultimate purpose and one God. Our lives should minister because they should reflect God and be lived to His glory.

Like Paul, we may work to make a living so as not to be a burden (1 Thessalonians 2:9) but ultimately everything we do should work towards the ultimate purpose of becoming more like Christ and making disciples as others see Christ in us and ask the reason for the hope we have.

The journey of transformation we are on is a daily choice. This journey

is one we will be on until the day we die. This work will not be complete until we meet Jesus, but it's a worthy journey and one that brings peace.

Choosing to live for Christ daily is choosing to know, no matter what, your life matters. You were created for a purpose; as you are transformed you begin to change the world around you but it starts with you. We cannot expect to transform the world around us if we do not submit to our transformation. Start now, at this moment, choose to glorify God with your lifestyle.

Reflection Point: What area of your daily life do you need to adjust, so it glorifies and reflects God?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to live a life worthy of You and Your calling.

DAY 27

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.”

Genesis 12:1

She laughed and said with a twinkle in her eye ‘Leoné, you love planning, don’t you?’, I thought to myself ‘this woman thinks I’m crazy and it’s only our first meeting!’ My coach had picked up in moments on one of my greatest strengths and also one of my greatest weaknesses, my love of planning. The truth is my love of planning is rooted in my hate of uncertainty.

Considering the story of Abram (later named Abraham) amazes me. When God called Abram, He didn’t even reveal to him where he was going; all he had to go on was God’s word. That level of uncertainty makes my stomach do somersaults.

Yet, Abram stepped out and embraced the journey. God is teaching me we need to do the same because the journey is often more important than the destination itself. On the journey, we grow into and become the people God created us to be.

We must grow to love the journey and learn to enjoy the process, becoming at peace with a constant state of not knowing for sure, a state

of uncertainty.

Uncertainty is part of life. If everything was certain, we could rely on ourselves; there would be no need to hope, no need to trust God. The more I consider this, the more I see when I wrestle to obtain complete clarity in every area of my life, I am fighting a fight I can never win. Being entirely sure of every minute detail requires no trust, requires no faith.

Rest in the uncertainty and trust if you do what's next, do what God last told you to do somehow it will all work out for your good.

Reflection Point: How do you deal with uncertainty? What can you do to keep your peace when life becomes uncertain?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to keep my peace when things in life are uncertain. Give me the grace to enjoy the journey.

PART 2

Sometimes Beautiful Things Grow in Ugly Places - The Cocoon

INTRODUCTION

Here I was again, sitting in my car, gazing around the car park feeling trapped. I didn't want to leave my car; in fact, I wanted to drive back home, as 9:00 am approached my chest clenched tight. I felt trapped, and I resented my captivity, my calendar bore the crosses I marked off counting down to some undefined date in the future when I would finally escape. I lived in a prison where the door was unlocked. I could walk out at any time, but it was my mind that was captive, captive to my numerous fears, insecurities and doubts.

Finally, acceptance and surrender brought peace. Truth cast light in the dark corners of my mind and I began to see what had become a burden as a blessing. The problem was not my position, my job or the company that employed me. My problem was twofold; I had not submitted to where God had placed me in that season of my life, and I had become comfortable in my bondage.

Over the next 45 days, we will explore how to submit where we are. Where we are today is preparing us for where we are destined to go. Our place of preparation can sometimes feel painful, isolated and even

unfair, yet it is necessary. The cocoon is where good work gets done, not work on our circumstance but work on our character. We were created to fly, but underdeveloped wings are dangerous.

The cocoon is where we die to ourselves so that we can become fully alive in Christ, where God develops us so we become fit for purpose. So that when the process is over, we can fly powerfully, we can fly high, and we can realise our full potential in Christ.

Like a diamond built under pressure, the struggle doesn't define us; it refines us. We don't survive in spite of the tests of life; we don't thrive amidst them, we fly high because of them. In each struggle, there is a lesson, in each test we build our muscle and become a little stronger, a little braver, a little bolder and beautiful to behold.

Think of Joseph, prepared in captivity, yet prison became his preparation for the palace (Genesis 39-41). Remember Moses, his many years of development were spent in exile before he was called to lead the liberation of Israel (Exodus). Consider David, anointed king but it was many years before he ruled Israel and in his period of preparation, David found himself hunted by the person who should have mentored him (1 & 2 Samuel). Behold Jesus, who endured the cross before He wore the crown and brought our salvation with His precious blood. Yes, sometimes beautiful things grow in ugly places.

...But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

Genesis 39:20-21

SECTION 1

Make Room

DAY 28

OLD THINGS HAVE TO DIE FOR NEW THINGS TO EMERGE

*I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone [just one grain, never more].
But if it dies, it produces much grain and yields a harvest.*

John 12:24 (AMP)

Death is often a gateway to life. Take a caterpillar, for example, it enters the cocoon to die. Before a butterfly can emerge, the caterpillar is broken down into a liquid form and transformed. It's the same with wheat; the seed has to die in the ground before more grain can be produced and you can yield a harvest (John 12:24).

For us it is the same; for new things to be birthed in our lives old things have to die. More importantly, with our spiritual rebirth, our past life has to die for our new life to spring forth (Romans 6:6).

There is nothing sweet, comfortable or desirable about dying. The flesh never wants to die, so there has to be a higher, more powerful pull compelling us to exchange one form of life for another. That pull is found in the promise that Jesus gave us in John 12:25 (AMP). "The one who loves his life [eventually] loses it [through death], but the one who hates his life in this world [and is concerned with pleasing God] will

keep it for life eternal.”

You see, there is something so beautiful on the other side; Jesus understood that His death meant new life for many. Like the cocoon, the cross was a place of both death and life; pain and joy; bitterness and beauty.

Christ died for us so that we could live for Him; His blood paid the price for our transformation. When we let go of our lives as we know it, we take hold of our lives as He intended it. Old things have to die for new and better things to emerge.

Reflection Point: What old things in your life such as habits, thinking or behaviour need to die so new more beneficial things can emerge?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to die to my desire to please myself so that I can become alive in You.

DAY 29

FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...

Hebrews 12:1-2

I don't know about you, but I often lose focus; I will be working on an email and my phone will buzz, and I take a quick look which drifts into 15 minutes scrolling through my Instagram posts. The truth is this level of distraction makes it hard to get anything done. To achieve anything significant we have to maintain focus.

The same is true if we want to be victorious believers; we need to be able to turn down the noise of the world so we can tune into the things of heaven.

The first step to victory is to discard anything that holds us back. For me, that can be fear, material possessions or toxic relationships or the draw of excessive use of social media. This baggage is a burdensome weight that slows us down and can cause us to stumble. We need to lay down everything that is of no benefit to our journey; we need to release and let them go completely.

The second step is to persevere if we want to win we can't give up at the

first hurdle. This race takes patience and endurance, it's long distance not a short sprint. Thankfully, God has already marked the way for us; our job is to trust and obey.

Finally, if we want to win, we have to fix our eyes on Jesus. Our baggage becomes an unbearable burden when we focus on it more than we do on Him. Let us determine not to be distracted from fulfilling our purpose in Jesus.

Reflection Point: What is distracting you from focusing on your purpose?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please help me to identify anything that could be distracting me from my purpose and help me to let it go.

DAY 30

SPENDING YOUR TIME WISELY

Be very careful, then, how you live not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Ephesians 5:15-17

Have you ever felt like you could do with at least two more hours each day? Nothing over the top, you're not greedy just two more hours, and maybe you would have enough time to get everything done. However, 24 hours is all we get each day. When we say there are not enough hours in the day (even in jest) are we questioning God's wisdom when we need to be questioning our own?

Our schedules are determined by our decisions after all. A schedule left only to chance leads to squandered time and emotional bankruptcy. The only way to avoid being defeated and depleted is to intentionally shape your schedule, making thoughtful decisions about how you spend your time.

The fact, God has blessed us with 24 hours each day means we have exactly enough time to complete the assignment He has given us. Often we get to the point of being overwhelmed because we have filled our time with our agenda, allowed other people to fill our time with their agenda or potentially we have not yet mastered the art of delegation.

However, when we pause to listen, we allow God to step in and shape our decisions. Seek God's will about how He would like you to use the precious time He has given you. Through prayer and reading God's word, we will be better able to discern how to invest our time wisely, never missing the opportunity to fulfil our assignment.

Reflection Point: What items are on your schedule that God did not intend to be there? How can you shape your schedule to align with God's priorities?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please help me to plan my schedule around Your priorities and the assignment You have given to me. Help me to make better, more Godly decisions about how I spend my time.

DAY 31

PROTECT YOUR MIND

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

What have you been thinking about lately? I have noticed that my feelings are a relatively accurate reflection of my thinking. When my thoughts are filled with worries, concerns and irritations, I feel the weight of those thoughts in my emotions.

That's why it is so important that we are mindful of what we feed our thoughts. What we dwell on dwells within us. What you put in determines what comes out. What are you feeding your mind? What do you watch, listen to or read? Proverbs 15:14 says "The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly." What we allow our minds to consume, affects our thoughts, our emotions and ultimately our decisions including what we say.

We can change our minds by changing what we focus on and by replacing negative thoughts with excellent thoughts. The following are practical actions we can take to elevate our thinking:

1. Read our bible
2. Go to places that inspire us
3. Read things that are positive & inspiring
4. Connect and have stimulating conversations with positive people who love Jesus
5. Listen to uplifting and edifying things whether this is music, sermons or an audiobook
6. Ask for God's help; we can do nothing without Him so we must be persistent in prayer

As purposeful people, we must take action to align our thoughts with the mind of Christ, what action will you take today?

Reflection Point: What changes do you need to make to improve the quality of your thoughts?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to keep my mind on things that are excellent and praiseworthy.

DAY 32

A CHANGED MIND CHANGES EVERYTHING

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

Can I be honest with you? When it comes to discerning God's will for my life many times I have struggled. Fear, doubt and guilt have clouded my mind and made it difficult for me to hear His still small voice. It used to freak me out so much because I deeply desired to live and walk in God's purpose for my life. Until I discovered I was going about things all wrong, I couldn't worry my way into the will of God. Romans 12:2 teaches us that as our minds are renewed, we will be able to test and approve the perfect will of God.

A changed mind changes everything. It changes the way we think, the way we see, the way we make decisions, the way we are. Before we have changed our minds, it's difficult to change our behaviour and it's also challenging to discern God's will.

No, lasting change requires our minds to be renewed through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's word. When our minds are changed, they

become tuned to God's will and ways. We are no longer overcome by confusion or thinking the world's way because our mind is trained to think as God thinks. When we begin to operate in God's will, everything around us changes.

This does not happen overnight; it is a process. As we take time to study, meditate on and pray over God's word we will begin to make purposeful choices and a sequence of purposeful choices is the thread that stitches together the fabric of a purposeful life.

Reflection Point: In what areas of your life do you need to change your mind?

Prayer Point: Father God, please help me to change my mind so I can discern Your good and perfect will for my life.

DAY 33

INVEST IN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

Do not abandon your own friend and your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your disaster. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

Proverbs 27:10 (AMP)

Everyone wants a great friend, someone who is there for them when the going gets tough, someone who listens to them and shows them understanding. A friend they can share great moments with and share their sorrow with; everyone wants this type of friend but how many of us are purposeful about being this type of friend?

All healthy relationships require an investment on our part. They need an investment of our time, our attention and our love. When we are busy chasing our goals, often it's our relationships that tend to suffer.

Inevitably tough times will come, and that's when we need our friends the most. How can we expect to reap where we have not sown? The truth is we can't get a return on investment we never made. One of the most important investments we can make in life is in our relationships. We can't afford to neglect them in pursuit of our goals.

Allowing our relationships to become casualties of our ambition is often unintentional but all too easy to do. Instead, we need to be intentional

about being the type of friend we desire, remembering real friends are about quality and not quantity.

Reflection Point: How have your relationships suffered as you have pursued your goals? What friendship in your life do you need to become more intentional about cultivating?

Prayer Point: Father God, show me how to be the type of friend I desire. Lord, help me not to become distracted by my goals and neglect the people You have entrusted to me.

DAY 34

DEVOTE YOURSELF TO FELLOWSHIP

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42

Experiencing the spirit of unity in the body of Christ is like a piece of heaven invading earth. This is the fruit of fellowship, both a privilege and responsibility to develop a deep and meaningful relationship with other believers. Fellowship helps us to build our faith and leads us closer to Christ.

Spending time with other believers and doing life with them are not just essential for us but are also incredibly attractive to those who may not know Christ. When we live harmoniously together, it stands in stark contrast to what we experience in today's society. The way we live should cause others to be attracted to following Christ.

In Acts, we see a blueprint for the way we should live together. The early believers learnt together, ate together, prayed together and spent time with each other. They didn't sit on the sidelines; they were not part-time Christians; they were active participants investing their lives into each other daily.

When we enter into a relationship with Christ, we also enter into a

relationship and connectedness in the spirit with other believers. As believers, we are eternally related to one another, and it's vital that we embrace this and live it out each day. When we are devoted to gathering together, we grow together. Devote yourself to fellowship.

Reflection Point: What one thing can you do today to build your relationship with other believers?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, bind Your Church together in love, help us to live in unity and invest daily in our relationships with other believers.

DAY 35

FAITH TO HEAL

And the Lord said, “If you have [confident, abiding] faith in God [even as small] as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree [which has very strong roots], ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea’; and [if the request was in agreement with the will of God] it would have obeyed you.

Luke 17:6 (AMP)

Have you ever had to deal with a stubborn problem in your life? That problem that doesn't want to give up and just keeps hanging around like a bad smell? It could be a persistent financial issue, a broken relationship or a bad habit you are struggling to give up.

On days like this, I want to stay in bed, pull the quilt over my head and press snooze on my alarm clock for the 10th time. Silently in my mind and the depths of my heart, I cry out to God for more faith. Is it only me? Often the faith we have is enough, but it won't matter how much faith we have if we do not put it to work.

Another mistake we make when we have a reoccurring problem in our lives is we attempt to heal the symptoms, without getting to the root. Dealing with the symptoms is only a temporary fix; however, we go there first because it's often less painful emotionally then facing the real issues. Go directly to the root; we cannot be free from what we are

unwilling to face.

This is where our faith kicks in, faith to believe with Jesus within us we are strong enough to face whatever we need to face, no matter how deep the roots of our pain or our problem may go, our God can heal it.

Throughout the Bible, we see examples of faith and healing going hand in hand. Not only can Jesus help us to identify the root but if we ask boldly in faith, He can help us to heal at the root.

Reflection Point: Do you need to take the time to get to the root of any reoccurring problems in your life?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to face the source of my problems and heal me at the root of my pain.

DAY 36

REMOVE YOUR DISTRACTIONS

Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.

Nehemiah 5:16

How do you stay focused when there are immeasurable demands on your time and your attention? How do you prioritise what matters most and discard everything else? When you say YES to everything you are saying NO to other things by default, and often these things matter most.

We have to decide what is most important at any given time and be disciplined to say NO to everything else. People may become disgruntled with us when we do not go with their agenda, but we need to remember it is not about people pleasing, it is about God. When we say YES to people pleasing, almost by accident, we say NO to God.

Nehemiah knew his purpose, and he was incredibly focused; despite the challenges he encountered along the way, he persevered, and pooled all his resources to make it happen. He gave his all even if at times this was not entirely appreciated by those he was serving.

Often our inability to focus dilutes the impact of our purpose. The strength of a substance is increased when diluting agents are removed or reduced. In order to increase the potency of our purpose, we need to

remove or reduce the distractions diluting our concentration and causing our purpose to lose its intended power.

When we focus on doing less what we do has more power and strength. Reduce or remove the diluting agents of your purpose.

Reflection Point: How can you become more purposeful about what you say YES to? How can you say YES to God's purpose for your life today?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please help me to identify the distractions diluting my purpose in You.

SECTION 2

Be Still

DAY 37

RELAX, GOD'S GOT IT!

Be still and know (recognize, understand) that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth.

Psalm 46:10 (AMP)

Have you ever felt like a circus act, trying to keep numerous balls in the air? Struggling to rest, to put the pen or phone down and back away from the laptop? There is often so much to do in life it's hard to know where to start let alone when to stop.

Truth is there is always more to do, if we wait for a gap in our schedule to appear it never will, some other urgent priority will encroach itself upon us. Rest then has to become an intentional choice we make in spite of the length of our to-do list, in the midst of the hectic pace of life and in response to the direction of our saviour to be still.

The need to appear as though we are keeping it all together can lead to us internally falling apart. We hold on so tight trying to work it all out in our strength; we can unwittingly begin to exalt ourselves because we start to believe it all depends on us.

In this modern world of unceasing activity, letting go, loosening our grip and relaxing are a revolutionary act of trust. Resting in the midst of a relentless rush exalts God above the noise and chaos of everyday life.

Above our worries, anxieties and concerns; above our insecurities, doubts and fears. It says even when I cease; the world does not, it keeps on spinning because my God is in control.

Reflection Point: In what ways do you commit to relaxing and trusting God? When will you take time this week to be still?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, be exalted above the busyness of my everyday life. Help me to relax and trust You to remain in control even when my schedule feels out of control.

DAY 38

ONE THING

But the Lord replied to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered and anxious about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part [that which is to her advantage], which will not be taken away from her.”

Luke 10:41-42 (AMP)

How many times have you thought ‘I’m exhausted’ or uttered the words ‘I’m tired’? At one point in my life, I had got so in the habit of using these words. I said them even when I was not truly tired! Busyness had obviously fried my brains!

Luke 10:38-42 tells the story of Martha and Mary. Martha is overworked, frustrated and annoyed with people who do not contribute (in this case her sister). Sound familiar? She is complaining to Jesus when He shares a truth with her we could all do with taking to heart. She was distracted by many things when only one thing was necessary.

I am so Martha! I get so obsessed with doing that being often eludes me, can you relate? I have come to realise busyness is not fruitfulness. Without stillness, without sitting at the feet of Jesus and receiving from Him, I get busy and consumed doing things that don’t matter and have no eternal value.

Mary got it. She understood that if she sat at the feet of Jesus, this encounter would make her more fruitful. She could have more impact doing less. In the stillness, she was able to listen to Jesus deeply, she was able to build her relationship and intimacy with Him that would give her the ability to serve Him from a heart of adoration and sincere love.

Martha's busyness caused her great anxiety which resulted in the fruit of bitterness and complaining. Mary's stillness caused her great peace which resulted in the fruit of adoration and humility. I know the fruit I desire, may we choose the one thing necessary, sitting at the feet of Jesus and continually listening to all He has to teach us there.

Reflection Point: Do you find yourself too busy to spend quality time at the feet of Jesus? How can you carve out time to listen and learn at His feet this week?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to still my heart, sit at Your feet to listen and learn from You. Help me to be fruitful rather than busy.

DAY 39

MAKE SEEKING GOD YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

Imagine a life without worry. Worry can be all-consuming; anxiety can cause us to become preoccupied by the problem and crowd God out of our minds, whether it's worrying about the bills we have to pay, the goals we are working to achieve or a relationship in our lives.

Matthew 6:33 promises if we seek God's kingdom first everything else will fall into place. That means God's will needs to come first in every area of our lives, whether it be work, relationships or ministry. If we put our priorities in order, worry will not consume us.

However, it's easier said than done, how do we practically put God first? Well, it starts with seeking God through prayer, worship and His word. If we are too busy to pray, read God's word and worship then that's a pretty good sign we are too busy, and our priorities are out of order.

Making time to seek God daily is crucial to building spiritual discernment that will help keep God's will at the forefront of every decision we make. John 15:5 reminds us apart from God we can do

nothing. Each time I try to do something in my strength, based on my wisdom and reasoning I end up getting myself into a mess.

Our minds cannot be simultaneously fixed on Jesus and fixated with our problems. Seeking God's help first, relying on His wisdom and provision makes life less complicated. If we make seeking God our number one priority each day, this will shape every other priority in our lives, it will help to clear the clutter caused by worry, and it will help to ease the pressure. Seek first His kingdom.

Reflection Point: Is seeking God your number one priority? How do you plan to seek God's kingdom and righteousness today?

Prayer Point: King Jesus be enthroned in my life, help me to keep You first in all areas of my life and show me what to do.

DAY 40

THOUGHTS BECOME THINGS

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

Thoughts become things! What we focus on will begin to manifest within our lives. If our thoughts are fearful and negative, they will steal our peace and hold us back.

Once we understand what we think has an impact on what we experience, we can then begin to take action about how we think.

Philippians 4:6 gives us explicit instruction on how to overcome anxious thoughts, through prayer and thanksgiving!

When you begin to fear, become anxious or feel your thoughts heading down a negative path bring it to God in prayer, tell the Lord what is on your mind, lay it all before Him. Ask Him for help, He is your Father, and He loves you. Tell Him exactly what you need and trust Him to give you what you need at exactly the right time.

Then begin to bring into remembrance all of the things in your life you have to give God thanks for, starting with thank you, Lord I am alive, I am your child, and you have a purpose for my life.

Remembering all of your blessings will help to shift your focus and ending where I began, what we focus on will start to manifest in our lives.

Reflection Point: What three things are you most grateful for today?

Prayer Point: Lord, I lay all my fears at your feet, knowing and trusting you will provide all I need. I am grateful Lord for all you have blessed me with, thank you for choosing me and creating me for a purpose.

DAY 41

SOAK IN GOD'S CREATION

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psalms 19:1

When I was doing my dissertation at University, my lecturer advised me to take a walk when the writing got overwhelming. He said it would help me to think more clearly and give me a fresh wind to be able to go back and write more. To be honest, at University I was so uptight I didn't take his advice; I thought I needed to use every moment to be productive. I didn't much like walking, and I felt I didn't have time for that kind of break.

It wasn't until later on in life I discovered the wisdom in what he said. There is something about slowing down, taking a moment to absorb what is around you, taking time to allow the mind to rest and embracing the moment of being out in the fresh air. Slowing down creates the space you need to truly connect with God. Some of my most original and inspired ideas have come about from a leisurely stroll. When you take time to slow down, you notice things you have never noticed before and your mind makes connections it was impossible to see in the hurry and haste of life.

We have to get out more; we have to see more, we have to taste life.

What we see changes how we see, it's incredible how changing your environment can shift your perspective. While we should strive to elevate our minds above our surroundings and above our circumstances, in my experience natural settings and being able to soak in God's creation cultivates a deeper connection with God.

Reflection Point: How can you take time to enjoy God's creation and slow down to enjoy the moment this week?

Prayer Point: Father God, thank You for the beauty of Your creation and the remarkable works of Your hand.

DAY 42

DON'T WEAR YOURSELF OUT, KNOW WHEN TO REST

Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit.

Proverbs 23:4 (NLT)

Have you ever caught yourself completely absorbed in the rat race? It can be hard to pin point when you got drawn in, or when work became all consuming. Yet once you're in the rut, you soon realise that work has taken over.

The pressure to provide can blur our focus on what is most important. We begin to chase finance and in the pursuit of becoming financially profitable we become bankrupt in other areas of our lives. Other often more essential areas of our lives can suffer such as our spiritual lives, our relationships and our health.

The truth is everything we accumulate on earth stays here when we depart, we can't even take our earthly bodies into eternity! Often we place more emphasis on the things that will fade, rot and decay than we do on the things that will last forever.

Continually battling our desires that long for instant gratification is hard. We can buy into the lie that material things will somehow bring lasting

satisfaction but once the flesh is satisfied it is only momentary before it yearns for yet more, its desires are insatiable.

Whilst there is nothing wrong with honest hard work, let us show discernment and restraint when it comes to recognising when it is time to quit and rest. Know when to rest.

Reflection Point: How easy do you find it to stop working and rest? What keeps you working when you know you need to rest?

Prayer Point: Father, help me to recognise when it is time to cease from my work and rest. Help me not to become consumed by my work and the pursuit of wealth.

DAY 43

RESPECT YOUR BODY AS A GIFT FROM GOD

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you, whom you have [received as a gift] from God, and that you are not your own [property]? You were bought with a price [you were actually purchased with the precious blood of Jesus and made His own].

So then, honor and glorify God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (AMP)

I was exhausted, run down, burnt out and completely frazzled. Early mornings and late nights had taken their toll on my mind, my body and my soul. I ached with exhaustion, and my mind was afflicted, and I didn't know how to make it stop. Then the crash came, the pressure got to me, and I broke down in a crumpled mess on the floor.

This was the outcome of years of misusing one of God's most precious gifts to me, my own body. To get ahead, meet my goals and realise my ambitions, I had neglected my body. I made excuses for eating poorly, not exercising regularly and working long and unsociable hours. What was meant to be a limited season of sacrifice turn into a habit of abandonment.

We must honour God by stewarding well what belongs to Him,

including ourselves. We are not our own; we belong to God, and we are expensive. We should treat our bodies as such, respecting God by respecting what He has given us, honouring God with the way we use our bodies to bring Him glory.

Don't wait until you are exhausted or burnt out before you begin to value your body as the gift it is, getting rest, exercising and eating right and as Paul points out staying clear of sexual immorality. Choose today to respect your body as a gift from God.

Reflection Point: Have you been neglecting your body? What is one way you plan to show respect for your body as a gift from God this week?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to respect my body as the gift it is. I am not my own; I belong to you. Help me to steward well.

DAY 44

THOSE WHO REST WELL, SERVE WELL

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

Mark 6:31

I find it hard to rest, there I said it. Since I could work, I have worked, and when I have downtime, I find a way to use it. It wasn't until I had completely burnt myself out that I realised there is purpose also in rest.

Empty is not a great place to serve from; that is why it is essential we learn how to rest. Work is good; it is appropriate and right but so is rest. Each has its place, and one without the other does not end well.

In Mark 6:31, after an intense period of work, we see Jesus inviting the disciples to come away with Him and to rest because once we have poured out in service, we need to take time to be refilled before we go again.

I'm not suggesting finding time to rest is easy, even Jesus and the disciples found it hard to escape from the crowd to rest (Mark 6:33-34). I do find it interesting while Mark 6:34 speaks of Jesus having compassion and teaching the crowds there is no mention of the disciples. That might be because when we accept Jesus' invitation to go away with

Him, He steps in between the crowd and us, allowing us time to get the rest we need.

God is always at work (John 5:17), so we don't have to be. Accept this heavenly invitation today, because those who rest well, serve well.

Reflection Point: What fills you up? How do you get rest and refreshment?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to accept Your invitation to go away with You to a quiet place and rest on a regular basis. Give me rest for my mind, body, soul and spirit.

DAY 45

STILL YOUR MIND

...Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

1 Kings 19:11-12

I have often been guilty of reducing myself to a panicking mess when I am called to make a big decision. Even after making a decision, I have been known to want to go back and check it was the right one.

This frantic internal state is not an environment that makes it easy to hear from God. How can His gentle whisper be audible above the panicking and frantic voice in our heads? No, that still, small voice is heard in a calm and stable mind unpolluted by panic. It's heard by the mind rested in God.

The anxious mind will find no answers just more anxiety, confusion and depression. It can be hard to arrest the torment and mental nagging caused by not knowing what to do. Impatience to know what to do can cause us to wander in a mental loop in our minds, getting even more lost as we try to navigate our way to the right solution.

Our solutions are discovered when we stop wondering and stand still. Simmering in solitude, silence and surrender, waiting for God to speak.

The place of answers is a place of peace. The best way to begin making better decisions is to learn how to calm our minds and be still before God.

Reflection Point: Can you remember a time in your life when worry or panic made it hard for you to hear from God? What can you do to be still before God and hear from Him more clearly?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to be still before You so I can clearly hear Your voice and discern Your will for my life.

SECTION 3

Plan

DAY 46

EMBRACE YOUR CREATIVITY

“Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they exist, and were created and brought into being.”

Revelation 4:11 (AMP)

Our God epitomises creativity, and yet I often hear people say ‘I’m just not creative’. How could this be when we are created in the image of God? We are creative by nature because we are created in the image of our maker (Colossians 3:10).

Our maker, God, is infinitely creative and the source of all creativity. So the words ‘I’m just not creative’ are not true. Not everyone is gifted in the arts, but this does not mean they are not creative. Creativity simply means to make something or to bring something into being. Each moment, each of us is creating our lives with our thoughts, our words and our actions.

We have the power to create good things or bad things. In Genesis 1, every act of creation followed the words ‘God said’. God spoke creation into existence. We often forget our words also have power. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it and indulge it will eat its fruit and bear the consequences of their words.” Proverbs 18:21 (AMP).

Our ability to become creative forces for good is connected to the quality of our conversations with God. Prayer allows us to communicate with God and understand what He wants to manifest through us in this world. It shapes what we think, what we say and what we do.

Some of the best ideas I have had have come to me on my knees as I seek God. God is the source of our creativity, therefore if we desire to cultivate our creativity, we have to go to the source, God.

Reflection Point: Do you see yourself as creative? How do you plan to embrace your creativity this week?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, show me what You desire to create in me and through me. Help me to be a creative force for good in Your world, manifesting Your will on this earth.

DAY 47

A GODLY VISION

Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

Proverbs 29:18

I'm navigationally challenged, without the assistance of my smartphone maps I get utterly lost. When your surroundings are unfamiliar, you need guidance, but you also need to know where you are going. The old saying goes 'If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there'.

The same is true in life, not only do we need to know our destination (our vision) but we also need a map to help us to get there.

A vision creates a focal point, a place on the horizon of life you can drive towards. Without a clear focal point, it is easy to find yourself driving around in a circle going nowhere fast. The word 'revelation' in Proverbs 29:18 can also be translated as vision, prophecy or divine communication. This vision is not any vision; it's the vision that God reveals to us for our lives.

Without a revelation from God for our lives, it is easy to wander and get lost. We can find ourselves down dead ends or driving high speed in the wrong direction altogether.

God's vision for our lives propels us towards our purpose. It becomes the landmark that helps us to reorientate ourselves whenever we take the wrong turn.

We don't have to be confused about God's plan as He has given us both His written word and the Holy Spirit so that we have clarity about His purposes. When you feel lost, confused or out of control, return to God's word; it will bring clarity, direction, and peace.

Reflection Point: Are there any area's in your life where you feel lost? How can you begin to understand God's vision and instructions?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to see Your vision clearly and help me to navigate my way as I work towards Your vision for my life.

DAY 48

PRAY FOR YOUR NEXT STEP

This is the [remarkable degree of] confidence which we [as believers are entitled to] have before Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, [that is, consistent with His plan and purpose] He hears us. And if we know [for a fact, as indeed we do] that He hears and listens to us in whatever we ask, we [also] know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted to us] the requests which we have asked from Him.

1 John 5:14-15 (AMP)

There are seasons when I have felt like God had been hiding His plan for my life from me. I've prayed (and maybe worried a little too) but nothing seemed clear. I'll be honest, I've been tempted to give up, make things up as I go along; do things my way. What if I told you we can have peace whilst only having part of the picture?

The scripture shines a light on the enemy's lies. God is not hiding His will from you or me. In fact, 1 John 5:14-15 encourages us to be confident when we pray to God and ask anything according to His will. When we ask God to reveal His plan for our lives, He delights in telling us.

The problem comes when we expect Him to tell us everything all at once. I have discovered over the years God often operates a just in time

delivery policy. He will provide the direction you need at the time you need it; He reveals the next step, not the following ten steps. It means you have to trust Him, you have to keep listening and you have to keep praying.

Just because we don't get immediate answers does not mean we should give up. Matthew 7:7 says "Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek and keep on seeking and you will find; knock and keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you." (AMP).

We not only need confidence when asking for God's plan and strategy for our lives but we also need persistence. Persistent, confident and sincere prayer will help us to understand God's plan, align with His plan and execute it, one step at a time.

Reflection Point: Are you persistent in prayer or do you give up if your prayers are not answered immediately? Do you sincerely desire God's will and plan for your life?

Prayer Point: Father, show me Your plan for my life in this season, show me the next step I need to take to align myself with Your will in Jesus name I pray.

DAY 49

SET GOD CENTRED GOALS

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

Have you ever felt like you are serving your goals more than they are serving you? When we allow our goals and ambitions to consume us, we permit them to eat up all the joy in our lives. Ultimately, our goals should serve Christ and bring us closer to Him. If your goals have you feeling as though you are drifting away from God, maybe it is time to rethink them?

Goals are not a bad thing. If we want to live purposeful lives, then we do need to be clear on what we are aiming at. However, if we are honest, sometimes ambitions can be shallow or self-centred. In contrast, the goal Paul is talking about in Philippians 3:14 is God-centred, it is a heavenly goal. The goal to know Christ, the goal to become more like Christ, the goal to become who Christ had purposed him to be. This goal is not about what Paul can attain on earth but on whom he is becoming.

Purposeful, Christ-centred goals are more about becoming, then they are about attaining. I have no doubt God wants His Children to have good things, and He even wants us to ask for these things. However, if we focus first on the Godly goals, everything else we need and desire will

come as a byproduct of pursuing Christ (Matthew 6:33).

Set goals, set goals aligned with God's purpose for your life, set goals that draw you closer to Christ. Set goals that cause you to dig deep and grow deep roots in Christ, so you can grow high and bear fruit. Set God-centred goals.

Reflection Point: Thinking of goals you have set yourself; are they God-centred or self-centred? What are 3 Godly goals you can set yourself to achieve in the next 12 months?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to set God-centred goals, help me to set goals rooted in and aligned with Your purpose for my life.

DAY 50

LET GOD'S WORD LIGHT YOUR WAY

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Psalm 119:105

It was so dark, the night seemed to crowd around my car as I drove hesitantly down a narrow country road, but I was grateful for light cast by the headlamps of my car giving me just enough light to safely navigate my way.

Life can feel like that country road at times, but God's word provides enough light for us to be able to see and respond to the twist and turns that inevitably show up as we make our way.

Thankfully, we never have to stay in the dark when our problems and challenges seem to overshadow us. God promises to supply the wisdom we lack without finding fault with us. What a privilege we have access to God's wisdom if we would only ask (James 1:5).

God's wisdom is the only wisdom that can be trusted entirely. When we lean on our understanding, we fall over, but when we lean on God, we stand firm (Proverbs 3:5-6).

We can access God's wisdom in many ways, such as through prayer, personal revelation and the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, but we must

never forget God's written word to us which is a precious gift of wisdom.

If you read, study and apply the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, you will never lack the wisdom you need to fulfil the purpose for which you were created. He will truly lead you in paths of righteousness for His namesake (Psalms 23:3). Let God's word light your way.

Reflection Point: What is your natural response when you are uncertain about the right decision to make? In what ways do you seek God's wisdom to help you?

Prayer Point: Lord, when I lack wisdom, please supply it to me generously as is promised in Your word. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, please help me to read, study, understand and apply Your word so I may never lack wisdom.

DAY 51

SEEK WISE COUNSEL

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Proverbs 15:22

You can go faster alone; no extra opinions slowing you down. You can go faster alone, but together we go further. Growing up an only child used to doing things solo, this is one lesson I have had to learn the hard way, and in all honesty, I am still learning; big dreams need teams.

No crucial decision should be made rashly without thought, prayer and consultation. God has designed us to be interdependent, which means relationships are essential to fulfilling your destiny.

A God-sized vision can never be implemented on your own, and if you think you can do it all maybe you are not dreaming big enough!

Someone has been where you want to go, there are people God has strategically positioned to help you, but you have to seek that help and accept it. If you want your plans to succeed, seek wise counsel and expert advisers.

I am not suggesting that you share your plans with everyone indiscriminately, but rather that you share your vision and plans with prayerfully selected advisors so that you can refine them and make them

the best they can be.

People see things differently and while ultimately the decision will be down to you, by seeking the input of Godly counsel you will receive an alternative perspective, which may help you where you have blind spots. Seek wise counsel.

Reflection Point: Who has God positioned around you to provide Godly counsel?

Prayer Point: Lord, direct me to wise counsel and expert advisors who can help me to succeed in Godly pursuits. Help me to seek and accept their help humbly so that I may manifest the plans You have planted in my heart.

DAY 52

DON'T DOUBT DECIDE

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

James 1:6-8

I was sweating. My heart was beating heavily in my chest, ‘what if I got it wrong? What if I made the wrong choice? Was this direction the right one for me?’ Trying to decide whether to move to Canada or stay in the UK was excruciating. I hate making big decisions; I am incredibly indecisive at times but making decisions is a part of life.

The key to developing successful plans and making wise choices is to acquire the wisdom, understanding and knowledge required to create a winning strategy. Spiritually, we need to seek God’s insight through the Bible and prayer. Practically, we need to do our research so we have a good understanding of what it will take to make our vision a reality.

Once we have prayed and discerned it’s time to decide! I know from personal experience indecisiveness can keep you stuck. Once you have sought God, wise counsel and done your research, you have to trust what you know. We must trust our judgement, but more importantly, we must not doubt God’s willingness to help us and endow us with wisdom.

The truth is God is not trying to catch us out; He wants us to make wise choices. Fear creates confusion and disables our ability to hear God clearly. Our ability to discern will improve with practice. The more decisions we make, the better we will become at making wise choices guided by the Holy Spirit. Doubting makes us unstable, and it prevents our progress. Don't doubt, decide.

Reflection Point: What decisions in your life have you been putting off? What action can you take today?

Prayer Point: Lord, grant me the wisdom to make wise Godly decisions according to your will. Once I have prayed and discerned help me to trust I have received Your wisdom, taking action honouring the free will You have blessed me with.

DAY 53

PREPARE IN FAITH

*Prepare your work outside and get it ready for yourself in the field;
Afterward build your house and establish your home.*

Proverbs 24:27 (AMP)

Want to waste your resources, energy and time? Rush ahead and begin building before you have made proper preparations.

For plans to prosper you have to prepare. Naturally, there is a time to stop planning, take action and begin building. However, if you start building without a well thought out plan, without considering what it will take to finish and without putting in place proper preparations either you will build something substandard, or you will not be able to see the project through to the end.

Preparation is an essential part of the process, and there are no shortcuts worth taking. Always remember good things take time to grow.

Often the time between our prayer for God to do something big in our lives and the time it takes to manifest is a grace period for us to put in place the required preparations. God is too kind to grant a request He has not first prepared us for.

Preparation, therefore, is an act of faith. Some doors of opportunity God

will not open for you because you are not prepared for what is behind the door.

Blessings can easily become burdens when we are not prepared for them. You may be seeking after that promotion but are you prepared to shoulder the added responsibility and workload? You may want a larger home but are you ready for the additional cost of maintaining that home? You may want to expand your business or ministry but do you have the required finance, systems and infrastructure in place to be able to support the expansion?

Prayer paired with preparation is powerful. When we pray and prepare, we are demonstrating an active and dynamic faith. Prepare in faith.

Reflection Point: What preparations can you make now to be ready for what you have prayed for?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please show me what preparations You need me to make today, so I am ready to fulfil the purpose and plan You have in mind for me.

DAY 54

PLAN TO BE INTERRUPTED

While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.” Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples. Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.

Matthew 9:18-20

I’m a control freak, I admit it, and there is something about interruptions that put me on edge. When I’ve got a plan, I want to get on with working it and interruptions are just distractions from me meeting my goal. And yet I have discovered interruptions are often some of our most important opportunities, opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ.

Jesus was always getting interrupted, some of His greatest miracles whereas the result of an interruption, the truth is people’s needs just won’t wait. We can’t put off doing the right thing until the point when it becomes more convenient.

Narrowing our focus is critical when we are always working at capacity or even over capacity an interruption has the power to push us right over the edge. We can feel so tense, if someone comes with one more demand, need or request we might just explode!

We don't have to respond to all interruptions; all interruptions are not equal, and some are obviously diversions and distractions, but some are opportunities. Opportunities to serve, opportunities to surrender to the Will of God and opportunities to do the right thing. The flesh won't like it, but we should watch and pray, so we do not miss these opportunities. So we don't pass them up because we are overwhelmed by life.

Interruptions often mean we have to relinquish control, surrendering our goals so we can achieve God's goals but in the end that's what purpose is all about, being used by God for His glory in the midst of everyday life.

Reflection Point: How can you create more flexibility in your schedule to allow for interruptions? What can you learn from Jesus' response to interruptions that you can apply to your own life?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to make the most of the opportunities to glorify You and serve presented by the interruptions in my life. Help me to be able to discern interruptions from You versus distractions from the enemy.

SECTION 4

Do the Work

DAY 55

JUST GET STARTED

Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.

Zechariah 4:10 (NLT)

I couldn't see it; I couldn't see how I was going to make the transition from my current career towards my dream of working as an educator. It was too different, I had no experience, and I was not qualified. The size of my dream terrified me, and I didn't know where to start.

That's how the people of Judah felt when they were faced with the task of rebuilding the temple. They were discouraged and could not see an end in sight. They may have questioned how they would succeed when in the past they faced failure.

Zechariah had a word of encouragement for them. He told them there was nothing wrong with starting small; the most important thing was to get started.

That's what I did with my dream; I started small, by merely speaking about it at first, then I went to night school, then God guided me toward my next step and the next until three years later I was doing what I had only ever dreamed of. I got there one small and seemingly insignificant step at a time.

When it comes to walking in your purpose, the same is true; no matter how small you start, just get started. Often we make excuses for why we can't begin, we see the end goal, and we want it now, but we can't skip the process.

While your vision maybe big, it will be achieved by the culmination of a sequence of small actions. So focus on what you can do to begin today, what you can accomplish this week, God is in control of the bigger picture don't become overwhelmed by the size of your assignment, do what you can and let God do the rest. Just get started!

Reflection Point: What excuses have you made in the past for why you cannot do what you believe you have been called to do? What one action do you commit to take today to get started?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, show me the one purposeful step I can take today to fulfil Your will for my life.

DAY 56

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR GIFTS

Do not neglect the gift which is in you, [that special inward endowment] which was directly imparted to you [by the Holy Spirit] by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you [at your ordination]. Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties; throw yourself wholly into them [as your ministry], so that your progress may be evident to everybody.

1 Timothy 4:14-15 (AMP)

Are your gifts growing or dying? Gifts are like muscles without regular exercise they become weak. If we want our gifts to grow, we need to be intentional about cultivating them. Living with our purpose in mind should focus our thoughts on how we can maximise our strengths to the glory of God.

Developing your gifts requires commitment and dedication, there are three key ways that you can build your gifts:

- 1. Practice-** Take time to apply your gifts, develop the habit of putting your gifts to work. Mastery is achieved through repetition and refinement. As you invest your time and energy in developing your gifts, they will grow.
- 2. Cultivate your gifts-** your gifts are not developed merely by

practice, like a plant you need to prune your potential by getting rid of activities that are no longer fruitful. As you focus your efforts, you expand your expertise.

- 3. Meditate on your assignment-** Think deeply about your assignment and how God has guided you to use your gifts. Meditate on your duties and focus your mind on your goal. Often successful athletes rehearse winning a race in their minds before they compete, you too have to meditate on completing your assignment.

Go all in, don't hold back when it comes to using your gifts and talents; God has given them to you for a reason. Don't just dip your toes in the water jump right in and let God be glorified as you use what He has entrusted to you.

As you develop the gifts God has given to you, your progress will be evident to others, acting as a witness, testimony and inspiration. So don't neglect your gifts.

Reflection Point: How have you neglected the gifts God has blessed you with in the past? How will you begin to develop the gifts you have been given this week?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to maximise my gifts for Your glory, putting them to good use on a daily basis.

DAY 57

SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.

Ecclesiastes 10:10

Hard work is overrated! There have been times in my life when I have worked relentlessly to achieve a goal, yet I felt as though I was not making much progress with the result I was pursuing eluding me.

I was under the misguided impression if I was determined, worked hard and never gave up, in the end, I would get there. While I believe there is some truth to this, this approach can also be incredibly exhausting.

Like the person who tries to cut a piece of wood with a dull axe, while with brute force and persistence you will get there, in the end, you will likely get there exhausted and unable to truly enjoy your success.

Interrupting your frenzied work long enough to take time to sharpen the axe makes you more productive so you can achieve success in less time, with less struggle and feeling a lot less exhausted as a result.

There is nothing wrong with working hard, but to make the best use of our time and the resources God has entrusted to us, we should not be afraid to take time out to invest in sharpening our skills so we can

maximise our impact.

With sharper skills, we can work smarter rather than harder and get better results.

Reflection Point: What has prevented you from investing in sharpening your skills in the past? What skills do you commit to sharpening over the next 90 days?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to see what skills I need to invest in developing to improve my results and increase my chance of success.

DAY 58

WHEN STRENGTHS BECOME GIFTS

A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great

Proverbs 18:16

Are our strengths gifts if we don't share them with others? Our strengths become gifts when we use them generously to bless others. Our strengths are gifts from God to us, as we share them we share what God has entrusted to us, and our gifts increase. They are honed, refined and multiplied as we put them to work in service to others.

When we come alive in our gifts, it is inspirational for others around us; enthusiasm is contagious. Our gifts take us to places and before people we would never imagine. We will be surprised at how things in our lives shift when we share our strengths generously, with a humble heart and without fear.

Often we can hold our gifts back due to fear, limited time or complacency. Whatever the reason we don't make time to share our blessings. An unexercised strength becomes weak; gifts not given decay over time. God has given us these abilities for a reason, and we enjoy them for a reason, so neglecting them and holding them back is poor stewardship.

We have to be intentional, first by understanding what we are good at

and enjoy, secondly by making time to put them to work. Don't be stingy with your gifts; sharpen them and share them.

Reflection Point: Identify one strength you have that you have not used in a while, how can you use this strength in the next month to bless others?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to put my strengths to work for Your glory. Show me how I can use my gifts to bless others.

DAY 59

CULTIVATE UNITY

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Philippians 2: 1-2

There is a deadly poison that slowly and systematically corrodes relationships within the body of Christ; it is called division. While our purpose is personal, its manifestation happens in the context of community. That's why division is so deadly. It hinders the Church's ability to serve its intended purpose (Mark 3:25). Nothing kills purpose like division.

Unity is essential to the advancement of the kingdom, and we all have a part to play. Consider the following four practical ways we can promote unity in the Church:

- 1. Value collaboration over competing** - We are to value and seek opportunities to collaborate towards the advancement of the kingdom. Look for ways to help others get ahead; don't seek your advantage, seek kingdom advantage.
- 2. Value the opinions of others** - It can be hard to listen to and

consider other points of view when you are convinced you are right. However, for unity's sake, it is essential to listen to, respect and value the opinions of others above your own.

3. **Seek to acknowledge the gifts and strengths of others** -Often it can be easier for us to see the fault of others, but we can resist this critical spirit, seeking to identify the gifts and strengths of others.
4. **Remember the end goal** - Remember what Jesus answered when asked what the greatest commandment was. It was all rooted in love, loving God and loving others as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). We have a significant assignment to love God through loving others, may we let nothing prevent us from fulfilling this purpose.

Reflection Point: How can you contribute to cultivating unity within the body of Christ? What can you do today to heal relationships that could be preventing you from living your purpose?

Prayer Point: Lord, give me a new heart and a spirit of humility so I will be able to put the interests of others above my own and cultivate a spirit of unity within the body of Christ.

DAY 60

DEVELOP HOLY HABITS

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience...And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:12,14

I don't know about you, but I am not in the habit of leaving the house before getting dressed. In fact doing anything different is unthinkable for most. Habits, therefore are things we repeatedly do without much thought, almost like a reflex action.

This is how sin can become entrenched in our lives. We behave in a certain way for so long, choosing to act differently is difficult. One of the most dangerous things that can pervert our purpose is habitual sin. Whether it is sinning in word, thought or action. Paul shares the antidote for sinful habits which are holy habits.

He calls us to 'clothe' ourselves 'with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.' (Colossians 3:12). Godly habits are not developed automatically. We have to be intentional about developing these attitudes and behaviours daily. Even when we have accepted Christ and are, therefore 'holy and dearly loved' we still need to take action assisted by the power of the Holy Spirit to form good habits. In the same

way, we choose our clothes each morning, day in, day out we need to choose the attitude we will wear that day.

At the start of the day through prayer and with the help of the Holy Spirit let us set our minds on living according to our new nature in Christ. Paul advises “Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value].”

Colossians 3:2 (AMP). Develop holy habits.

Reflection Point: What bad habits do you need to drive out of your life? What good habits do you need to put on each day?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, through the power of Your Holy Spirit reveal to me the habits I need to discard and empower me to develop holy habits pleasing to You.

DAY 61

RECEIVING DISCIPLINE WITH JOY

For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness—in conformity to God’s will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God].

Hebrews 12:11 (AMP)

We need to learn to love discipline. We need to learn to run towards it and embrace it like a loving friend we have not seen in years.

Discipline is often seen as a negative word. It brings to mind pain, discomfort, punishment and strict rules. Our natural reaction may be to resist discipline and complain ‘why me, Lord?’ We can even become self-pitying or angry. As human beings, our automatic response to pain is to avoid it, but when it comes to discipline, we need to rest and receive it with joy.

This truth is one every successful athlete knows; great discipline produces great results. Just like a parental coach pushes a professional athlete to train hard, God wants us to be our best. He wants us to win the race and receive the eternal crown (1 Corinthians 9:25).

The discipline Hebrews 12:11 speaks of, is like that of a loving parent

disciplining their child. In the same way, God as our loving heavenly Father disciplines us, sometimes through hardship, struggles and challenges so we can share in His holiness (Hebrews 12:10).

Today, let us not shy away from God's loving discipline. Let us receive it with joy and be trained in the ways of righteousness.

Reflection Point: In what ways do you need to change your attitude towards receiving and exercising discipline?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to receive Your discipline with joy, knowing it is an expression of Your great love for me, that it will produce righteousness in me and lead me to great peace.

DAY 62

WHEN YOU FACE DISCOURAGEMENT KEEP ON BUILDING

When I saw their fear, I stood and said to the nobles and officials and the rest of the people: “Do not be afraid of them; [confidently] remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and [with courage from Him] fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and for your homes.”

Nehemiah 4:14 (AMP)

Nehemiah undertook what to many appeared to be an impossible task. His enemies taunted him, telling him how pointless his pursuit was, his workers were afraid and demotivated, yet he had a vision that would not permit him to give up.

His purpose was clear to him, he understood his assignment, and in the face of severe discouragement, he kept on building. He realised this truth, if we allow the voice of discouragement to grow louder than the voice of God, we will be deceived out of our destiny.

His courage and faith were what made him a strong leader. It takes great faith to persevere in the face of opposition, but we must realise as we work towards our purpose we will be opposed. There will be times when others tell you what you are doing will not work, there will be times

when those who are on your team want to give up, and there will be times when you ask the question can I do this?

At these times remember it's not a question of whether you can do it because you are not alone, the truth is what you cannot accomplish on your own God can accomplish through you! Nehemiah said "Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome" (Nehemiah 4:14). He drew his courage from God and fought until the wall was rebuilt.

If we think about our abilities to complete the task, we will give up. We need to draw on the courage that comes from God, which helps us to persist in the face of resistance until our task is complete.

Pray, roll your burdens onto God, take courage, stay focused and keep building.

Reflection Point: Have you ever wanted to give up because the task seemed too big? What dreams have you let die because discouragement set in before you could finish building? What will you do differently the next time you begin to feel discouraged?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, please give me courage in the face of discouragement, help me to pursue my purpose and overcome any opposition. Help me to remember all things are possible through You and give me the strength to keep on building.

DAY 63

TRIUMPH FROM TRIALS

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1

Sometimes we can find ourselves in challenging situations and wonder to ourselves ‘how on earth did I end up here?’ These places can be times of great trial or struggle, periods of loneliness and isolation or moments of darkness and despair.

We can often default to either blaming the devil or blaming ourselves but sometimes the hard times we face in life are no one’s ‘fault’, and sometimes it’s God who has led us to our test.

The same God that leads you into the wilderness will also lead you to victory. Jesus’ time of temptation was His preparation for His ministry. This period primed Him for what was ahead. Times of great trial and struggle never feel good, but they are often the training ground for what is ahead of us.

When we commit to becoming more like Jesus, we are asking for trouble! But we are also guaranteeing victory.

None of us wants to face hardship, but when at some point in our lives

we inevitably do, we need to hold on to the fact that this difficulty could be our education for reaching our fullest potential and fulfilling God's purpose for our lives.

Take heart and remember God's strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Reflection Point: How has God lead you to victory through your trials in the past?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to overcome temptation and triumph in my trials so that I can be perfected by them and fulfil my full potential in You.

SECTION 5

Placed for Purpose

DAY 64

YOU ARE POSITIONED FOR PURPOSE

The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Genesis 39:23

Have you ever been in a place you resented? A job you hate, a boss who takes advantage of you and mistreats you? You know where you want to get to but where you are is just so far removed that it's hard to see how you will get there.

Often it's only retrospectively we see how the hard times, low points or trials contributed to our breakthrough. It's in the trenches our characters are developed, it's in the valley where our spiritual muscle gains strength. Wherever you find yourself today, ask yourself what is God trying to teach me while I am here?

Situations in life can be a lot like quicksand, the more you struggle, the deeper you sink. We stay stuck because we resist the place so much we miss the lesson, and we delay our departure. Life is a journey, and the places we stop off along the way are only temporary. They are designed to teach us, to help us grow and become who God has created us to be.

We can become so fixated on the destination we miss our opportunity to glorify God on the journey. Joseph had a dream as a child that did not

manifest for many years. At the point of having the dream, he had no idea how it would come to pass. Along the way, he was placed in hostile environments, but he maintained his integrity, and no matter where he was, God was with him.

When God is with you, you can thrive in hostile environments, you can shine in dark places, and you can always be confident and have faith you are placed for a purpose.

Reflection Point: What lesson is God teaching you where you are placed? How can you give God the glory in your current position?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to see the power in where I am placed, help me to learn the lesson I need to learn at this point in my journey and lead me into my promised land.

DAY 65

DON'T ALLOW THE WAIT TO BECOME A WEIGHT

But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] Will gain new strength and renew their power; They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; They will run and not become weary, They will walk and not grow tired.

Isaiah 40:31 (AMP)

How do we avoid the wait becoming a weight? Waiting for something you deeply desire to happen, can be excruciating. Whether it's waiting for a promotion, to meet the right life partner or to conceive your first child. Waiting can make you weary.

We can make two common mistakes when waiting weighs heavy upon us, we can try to take things into our own hands, or we can become hopeless.

Both these responses can cost us dearly, not only our peace but also our purpose. Our impatient actions can cause us to have to live with consequences that complicate our lives and cause us pain. Sarah learnt this when she took things into her own hands and gave Hagar her maid to Abraham her husband to conceive a child (Genesis 16:1-4).

Waiting is not easy, but when we can shift our minds and protect our

hearts we can wait in hopeful expectation God will come to our aid and give us the strength to wait patiently. The word 'wait' used in Isaiah 40:31 means to look for, to hope and to expect. When we wait expectantly for the Lord, we will not be without hope; we will have the strength to persevere and power to endure.

Waiting teaches us patience; it causes us to draw closer to God and exercise our faith. Hopelessness leads to exhaustion, discouragement depletes your strength, but if you can hold on to your hope and expect God to move in your life, you will receive His power to remain strong in the meantime and keep your peace while you wait.

Cry out to God in prayer, draw close to God through His word but don't allow the wait to become a weight!

Reflection Point: What have you been waiting for, for a long time? What desires has God previously brought to pass in your life after a long wait? How can you hold on to hope while you wait for your aspirations to be realised?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, give me hope, joy and patience as I wait for the desires of my heart to come to pass. Help me to trust Your timing and draw closer to You.

DAY 66

ONE LIFE

For whoever wishes to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but whoever loses his life [in this world] for My sake will find it [that is, life with Me for all eternity].

Matthew 16:25 (AMP)

I was living a double life, I was working my 9-5 Monday - Friday and then every free moment outside of that I was working on my own business. However, I was very secretive about it, hiding my extracurricular activities from my colleagues. When I became a Christian, I felt convicted about how I was managing my life. In truth, I hated my job and spent years complaining, criticising and resenting the company I worked for. The business was an escape for me, but I realised in doing life my way I had drifted from life God's way.

Looking back, I see that it was not my place that needed to change, it was me. My position did not change until I had a change of perspective and this process taught me that God cares more about our character than He does about our comfort.

There are places in life we would love to escape but moving too soon can cause us to miss the lesson the place and process were designed to teach us. Often we want life our way on our terms. However, our purpose requires for us to die to our ideas about how our life should be.

Most of us who live in the west may never have to lose our physical lives for Christ due to persecution, yet each day we need to put to death our selfish ambition to wholeheartedly pursue the will of God.

The more we try to cling on to life on our terms, the further the full life God intended for us slips away. Are you willing to allow Christ to take charge of your life, in every single area? Total submission means the flesh dies, but the spirit soars free.

There is one God, and we have one life to live for His glory.

Reflection Point: In what areas of your life do you need to relinquish control and submit fully to God?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to submit to You in every area of my life.

DAY 67

SEPARATION IS PART OF YOUR PREPARATION

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things [which are dishonorable—disobedient, sinful], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified [set apart for a special purpose and], useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

2 Timothy 2:21 (AMP)

Some seasons are lonely, even when there are other people around. It can seem like no one understands your position or what you are going through. Often in these seasons when there is no one else to call, we dig deep and get closer to God.

Consecration and separation are necessary preparation for purpose. Private victory often precedes public success. The secret place is where all the action takes place. Behind closed doors and far from prying eyes is where the progress is made, where your roots grow down and deep.

This communion between you and God is essential as He purifies you with His word and shapes you through His love. If you leave that place before the work is done, the process is interrupted, and the work is undone.

When something is consecrated or sanctified, it is set aside for special

purposes. That's why when you embark on the Fit For Purpose journey there are many things you have to let go of, habits, people, projects and places. You have to get comfortable with isolation; it's your incubation period where you die to your old life and are renewed.

Free from distractions you can press in and connect at a deeper level with God, so He can teach you, shape you and lead you by the power of His Holy Spirit.

The transformation takes place in private, like the caterpillar that wraps itself in a cocoon, no one else can enter that place with you. This is one on one work just you and God. Don't be afraid of the solitude, don't despise the separation; it's part of the process.

Reflection Point: How much time do you spend alone just you and God? What is your attitude towards isolation and separation?

Prayer Point: Father God, help me not to resist the places of solitude that You have prepared for me, in order to prepare me.

DAY 68

STAY THANKFUL

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Life can be a roller-coaster, one minute you are up and then something happens bringing you crashing to the ground. If we look externally to feel a sense of joy, our emotions would be up, down and out of control.

The key to experiencing joy despite our circumstances is gratitude. Regardless of our circumstances, there is always something to give thanks for.

Often when we have a problem, it can grow to giant proportions in our minds if we allow it, literally blocking out everything else. When this happens, it can be so hard to see the many blessings in our lives. We have to be intentional about our gratitude. We have to give thanks on purpose so we can shift our perspectives and change the way we see our lives.

When we invest more of our emotions in a negative narrative than we do in a positive perspective, we become trapped by our thoughts. However, praise shifts our perspective above our current circumstances, revealing the bigger picture. We stop majoring in minor issues and start to see new

options and solutions.

A positive mind and a grateful heart at peace can make connections a frantic mind is unable to discern. Often the solutions we seek are deceptively simple, yet whether the answer is simple or complex, a mind clouded by discouraging thoughts is unable to see it. When you team gratitude, joy and prayer, it not only aids clarity but it strengthens your endurance. Stay thankful.

Reflection Point: What three things are you most thankful for today?

Prayer Point: Lord, I praise you for the many ways you bless me, help me to have joy and give thanks in all circumstances.

DAY 69

FIND YOUR PURPOSE PARTNERS

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

Friction is not always negative, friends willing to challenge you in love cause you to grow and become better. Like iron striking against iron, purpose partners keep you sharp.

I remember when I decided to leave my job after seven years in a successful marketing career, if it were not for a supportive network of people who prayed for me, challenged me and supported me I don't think I would have taken the leap. Having a community of people who knew me, who cared and wanted the best for me I dared to pursue God's will for my life.

This is not a coincidence; God places purpose partners in our lives strategically to help us to realise our potential. They may be a spiritual teacher, leader, family member, colleague or friend but these people partner with you to challenge you, support you and encourage you. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to your purpose partners; sometimes they are there positioned and waiting, but we fail to recognise them.

Together we go further, so don't try to go it alone. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their

labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”

Commit to playing an active part in your church community and identify those people who will help you to stay sharp as you spend time together, pray together and provide practical biblically based advice for each other. This mutual and powerful exchange allows the will of God to be worked out through us.

Reflection Point: Do you play an active role in your church community? Who are your purpose partners?

Prayer Point: Lord, open my eyes to my purpose partners, the people You have strategically placed in my life, so I can contribute to manifesting Your purposes on this earth.

DAY 70

TAKE YOUR PLACE

He must become greater; I must become less.”

John 3:30

Have you ever become full of yourself? When we think of someone being full of themselves, we can imagine someone who is arrogant, boastful and self-centred. However, pride can be extremely deceptive; it may not be as apparent as boastful self-praise. Pride creeps in when we get out of place.

We can get out of place when in pursuit of our dreams and desires we lose focus on God. When we begin to act and operate in our strength, we exalt ourselves above God. We become full of ourselves when we use human wisdom to bring about God’s promises.

Pride causes us to become out of order. We follow our will and desires rather than following Jesus. To be placed for purpose we need to take our rightful place behind Jesus; we can’t follow from the front.

Ambition is not wrong, but selfish ambition is dangerous. We need to examine our hearts and ask ourselves the question ‘am I doing this to exalt myself or am I doing this so Jesus will be exalted?’

John understood his place. His ministry was about pointing people to

Jesus. He wasn't interested in how important people thought he was; he wanted them to know who Jesus was. He was happy to minimise himself so Jesus could be maximised.

Making ourselves less can be challenging, and it can even be painful but that is precisely what Jesus did for us, He made himself less and submitted to death in our place so we could receive life (Hebrews 2:9).

Becoming fit for purpose is not about pushing yourself to the front; it's about falling behind Jesus and following Him wherever He leads. "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Luke 14:11. Take your place.

Reflection Point: In what ways do you need to decrease in your life so Jesus can increase?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help us to exalt you and follow you in every area of our lives. Lord if I have become out of order in areas of my life, help me to take my rightful place so You can take yours.

DAY 71

LET GOD PROMOTE YOU

...All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

1 Peter 5:5-6

Have you ever felt undervalued, underpaid and under utilised? I remember a period early on in my career when I felt all of these things, I was working above my position, and I felt like I was getting paid below it. It made me incredibly resentful and bitter. I was angry with my portion in life, I was frustrated, and I felt stuck.

This was a cycle in my life, I would get promoted, and then after a short period of joy, I went right back to the start. Until God showed me, there was no point getting frustrated because human beings were not promoting me because ultimately all promotion comes from Him.

My main problem was I lacked humility; I felt entitled to a promotion because of my work, but my attitude kept me stuck longer than I needed to be. No matter how unfairly human beings treat you, when God decides to favour you He will open doors no man can shut and give you promotions you haven’t earned, but first, He will humble you.

The fastest way to promotion is humility. No matter where you have been placed humble yourself before God and follow His instructions. When God turns your situation around many people will be astounded. The Lord can transform your life in an instant. Joseph certainly knew this to be true (Genesis 41). He went from prisoner to running the country, imagine that!

Like Joseph, no matter where you are placed whether in prison or the palace, work diligently doing the best with the resources you have. If you humble yourself, in due time, God will exalt you.

Reflection Point: Have you ever felt frustrated because you were not promoted in the timeframe you wanted? In what ways can you adjust your attitude when your promotion appears to be delayed?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to humble myself no matter where I am placed knowing in due time You will exalt me.

DAY 72

SOMETIMES BEAUTIFUL THINGS GROW IN UGLY PLACES

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

Are you ready to pay the price? Anyone who desires to live a life of purpose and fulfil their God-given potential has to ask themselves this question. Following Jesus is going to cost you something, in fact, it is likely it is going to cost you everything (Matthew 16:24-26).

Clinging to comfort can cause us to stay stuck living below our potential, spiritually stagnant. Growing spiritually often requires letting go of the things that make you feel comfortable and secure.

Letting go is often a choice, but at times we are thrust out of our comfort zones by life circumstances. We are thrown into a period of testing and tribulation that threatens to overwhelm us. At these times, it is crucial for us to hold on to the fact every cross is connected to a promise.

James speaks of the crown of life, the Lord has promised, our eternal life we receive after we have been faithful in our earthly life. However, this principle can also be applied to the promise of our purpose or calling in

Christ.

If the crown represents kingship, dominion and authority, we know from the example of King Saul power and position without character lead to disaster (1 Samuel 9-31). Carrying our cross develops Godly character in us, so when we access the crown and receive God's promises in our lives, we will steward them well. While we may not enjoy the trials we face, we can be confident if we endure them and love God we can take hold of the promises of God.

Matthew Henry said 'There is a proneness in good men to expect the crown without the cross.' When faced with difficulties hold on to this truth, sometimes beautiful things grow in ugly places.

Reflection Point: When has clinging to comfort kept you stuck? What beautiful things have grown out of your past pain?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, give me the strength to endure when the trials of life make me weak. Help me to take hold of Your promises and steward them well.

PART 3

Break Free - The Butterfly

INTRODUCTION

Surely this could not be happening, the phone call winded me. It was only Monday when I had worked up the courage to hand my notice in. Today was Tuesday, and now my mom was telling me she too was going to be out of a job. Nausea rose within me, what would we do? It was a risk handing in my notice without having anything else in place but hadn't God asked me to do it? My notice period was three months surely something would come in place before then? Maybe it wasn't too late to retract my notice? No, now was not the time to turn back, now was the time to stand firm, God would make a way.

The cocoon can be a hard place yet it can become a place of comfortable familiarity. One of the most challenging but important things to do is to recognise when your wings have developed. Coming out of the cocoon too soon can be fatal but then so can staying in too long.

Breaking free takes courage. When the time came for me to leave my cocoon, terror gripped me, my heart was sure that it was time but what waited outside was unknown. 'What if I didn't fly? What if I plummeted to the ground and crashed?' The thought of breaking out made me dizzy

with fear, but it was time to test my wings.

It takes faith to leave, but it takes, even more faith to fly. As we begin to emerge, there are often things that come to test us and tempt us to retreat inside. We have to be bold, step into the unknown and leap forward into our destiny. That's why waiting on God's timing is so crucial, standing firm and trusting God was one of my best decisions, by Friday of the week I handed in my notice, God had opened a door for me that I was not qualified for on paper.

Decide to emerge; it's not going to be easy, but it will be worth it. You don't simply trust God for a moment in time; it's a lifestyle, it's not a step, it's a marathon. This new environment demands a new level of faith and total reliance on God. Now it is time to put into practice your spiritual weapons, it's now time to take action and fully embody your purpose and that's what we will be exploring together over the next 18 days.

Professional athletes train diligently to compete, when they get to the starting line and hear the gun go off they can't stand there when it's time to run, they must give it their all and dash to the finish line. When a butterfly emerges and its wings are dry, it's time to fly. Don't stay hidden, don't remain on the ground; mount up and fly high. After all, that's what we were created to do.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

SECTION 1

Emerge

DAY 73

WHEN YOUR TIME COMES ACT!

...And who knows whether you have attained royalty for such a time as this [and for this very purpose]?

Esther 4:14 (AMP)

Pivotal moments arise in the midst of everyday life when we have to make a choice, will we do what is safe or do what is right? This is the situation Esther was in; she had a good and comfortable life as Queen.

When Mordecai initially asked her to intercede with the King on behalf of the Jews, her response was based on her fear and also her common sense. Approaching the King without an invite put her life at risk, it was a real risk, but Mordecai rebuked her encouraging her to help while she had the chance. He helped her to see she was placed there for a purpose. Her position could well have been given to her ‘...for such as time as this’ Esther 4:14.

Often our moment may not seem as significant as Esther’s; the life of a nation may not be at stake but all purpose is important, and we are all placed for a purpose. Don’t miss your moment; when it is your time to act, do not allow fear to paralyse you. Often the action required of us to fulfil our purpose will require us to step out of our comfort zone and may even put our lives as we know it at risk.

We often make a mistake in thinking our purpose is always linked with our desire. Sometimes God will ask us to do things which are not desirable to us, but are right. We need to do what needs to be done, yet I am confident God works everything out for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). So when your time comes, act!

Reflection Point: Have you ever found yourself paralysed by fear? What did you do to get unstuck? How can you prepare now, so you are ready to take action when your moment arrives?

Prayer Point: Father, give me courage and boldness to take action and fulfil the purpose for which You have placed me.

DAY 74

DON'T EXPECT IT TO BE EASY, EXPECT IT TO BE WORTH IT!

because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

1 Corinthians 16:9

‘If this is God’s will surely it should be easier than this?’ Has this thought ever crossed your mind? Many times this has crossed my mind. God’s will does not always equal trouble free. The Apostle Paul was well aware of this.

Paul identified a great opportunity in Ephesus to evangelise and to advance God’s kingdom, but he faced fierce opposition. However, he did not allow this opposition to deter him because he was convinced the work he was doing was crucial.

When you say YES to the Lord and decide to live for Him you will be opposed. Your opposition may not be like Paul’s in the form of the religious and political elite. It may be a wave of doubt, anxiety or fear. Whatever form your opposition takes, often the greater the opportunity to fulfil your God-given purpose, the greater the resistance you will face.

The power is in knowing you will face opposition and being prepared to stand firm in the face of it. Don’t buy the lie just because something is

hard it is not God's will. When it comes to fulfilling your purpose don't expect it to be easy, expect it to be worth it.

Apostle Paul said, "I press on toward the goal to win the [heavenly] prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14 (AMP). Let's press on!

Reflection Point: What forms of opposition have you faced when new opportunities have come your way? What can you do to stand firm in the face of opposition?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to be prepared to stand firm and live for You in the face of opposition.

DAY 75

DEALING WITH PAST FAILURE

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us].

Romans 8:37 (AMP)

Dealing with a cycle of failure can be hard. I know from experience failure can have you feeling as though you are inadequate and incapable. The discouragement you experience can make you want to give up before you have even begun.

We cannot break this cycle on our own but Jesus can. When we realise no failure from our past or mistake can separate us from His love, we are victorious. His love becomes the fuel propelling us into the fulfilment of our purpose.

No matter how useless you may feel, this is not the truth. You may have failed, but you are not a failure. Maybe you didn't hit the deadline; maybe you gave up too soon. Perhaps you have tried multiple endeavours, and none of them seemed to work. Everything you have experienced God will use to build you and bring you into your purpose and fullest potential (Romans 8:28).

No matter how much you feel you may have failed, don't give up. You

are not what other people say about you; you're not even what you say about you, you are what God says about you. In a mental battle fuelled by the enemies lies it's God's truth that wins out. Hold on to this truth when you feel overwhelmed by the bitter disappointment of failure.

In fact, sometimes failure is the best thing to happen to us, we can learn what not to do next time, and we can grow stronger and more resilient. You don't have to dwell in defeat; you can draw upon God's strength, God who is our source and sustainer. When the discouragement and disappointment of failure threaten to overwhelm, do not surrender, surrender to God but never to failure.

Reflection Point: Are you allowing failures from your past to hinder your present and future? What area of past failure do you need to surrender to God?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to receive the truth I am more than a conquer in You, help me to heal from the discouragement of past failures and hold on to the truth You will work everything out for my good.

DAY 76

DON'T LET FEAR OF FAILURE STOP YOU

Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. So they inquired further of the Lord, "Has the man come here yet?" And the Lord said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

1 Samuel 10:21-22

The disappointment that accompanies failure can be overwhelming. It can be so painful it leads us to retreat and avoid situations that could cause us to be disappointed. Like Saul when it's time to step into our purpose, it can be tempting to withdraw and hide amongst ordinary everyday items.

Don't hide from your purpose because you are afraid you don't have what it takes to fulfil it. If God created you for it, then you are perfectly equipped for it, and He is all the assistance you need to have success.

Imaginary ceilings created by our fear of failure are dangerous. They are the self-imposed limits keeping us operating below our potential. They keep us living small. They stop us from pursuing the dreams God has laid on our hearts and pursuing the purpose for which He created us; they need to come down. These mental walls holding our potential hostage need to be demolished.

Disappointment is a part of life, no matter how much we try to avoid it at some point we are going to have to deal with it, face it, pick ourselves up and keep going. We can't allow our failures and disappointments to define us we must allow them to refine us and make us better people.

Failure in itself is not the problem, avoiding failure and not being able to recover from failure is. If you fail to try, you are already defeated. Don't let the fear of failure stop you from pursuing your purpose.

Reflection Point: When have you withdrew because you were afraid you might fail? What action can you take today to step boldly into your purpose?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to be bold in faith and not to withdraw from the purpose You have for me.

DAY 77

GET FIGHTING FIT

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strong holds.

2 Corinthians 10:4

Do you ever feel deflated and defeated as you try to walk out your faith? I have come to realise we can't fight a spiritual war with physical weapons. Often we feel as though we are losing because we have not learnt how to fight. Stepping into your purpose comes with resistance, you have to fight to emerge, but if you fight with worldly weapons rather than spiritual weapons, you will feel as though you are losing a fight already fixed in your favour.

If we want to walk in the victory that is already ours in Christ who said 'It is finished' (John 19:30) we need to learn how to fight God's way. Ephesians 6:11 says "Put on the full armour of God, so you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." The enemy does not want to see you walking in your God-given purpose. He does not want to see you emerge and become aware of who you are. When you become the light you were destined to be, the darkness has to flee, so the devil wants you to stay dim.

As we learn to protect ourselves with the spiritual armour God has given us and the spiritual weapons at our disposal, we can preserve our light

and walk powerfully in our purpose. Ephesians 6:14-17 list our spiritual armour which includes truth, righteousness, Gospel peace, faith, salvation and the word of God.

So let's learn to fight lies with truth, evil with righteousness, strife with peace, fear with faith, condemnation with salvation and finally let us live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). Being fit for purpose means we are fit to fight in this spiritual war. Get fighting fit!

Reflection Point: In what area of your life are you feeling defeated? How can you use your spiritual weapons to win the battle you are facing in this area of your life?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to be fit to fight the fight of faith, help me to put on Your armour and fight darkness with the light of Your word.

DAY 78

NEW NAME, NEW SEASON

No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.

Genesis 17:5

Do you remember the sweet rush of relief you get when you have made it through a tough time and the storm is over? Once the storm has passed, in the stillness afterwards we can find ourselves wondering, 'I'm glad that's done but now what?'

The storms and tests of life are the processes used to refine us. The way you enter the process is not the way you leave the process. The caterpillar emerges from the cocoon a butterfly. After the transformation the caterpillar not only receives a new name, it receives a new nature. A changed name in the Bible often signified a changed person. A change of heart, a change of mind and a change of character.

In a new season, your old name no longer fits, your old thinking no longer fits, your old lifestyle no longer fits, you are brand new. What God saw in you from the start will begin to manifest.

Often when God changed a person's name, the change of name was accompanied by a promise. When Abram became Abraham God promised him he would become the father of many (Genesis 17:5).

When God changed Sarai's name to Sarah, He promised her she would give birth to a son and royalty would come from her (Genesis 17:15-16). When Simon became Peter, Jesus promised him He would build His Church and hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). God changes us to change the world through us.

There is a promise on your life associated with your transformation; as you emerge, you will begin to walk in your purpose. Your potential will no longer be hidden; it will be plain for all to see like the vibrant colours and extravagant patterns on a butterfly's wings.

Reflection Point: How has going through past tests and trials transformed you and changed you? In what areas do you still need God's transforming power to change you and renew you?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, thank you for doing a new thing in my heart and giving me a new name. Lord as you transform the things within me, help me to transform the things around me.

DAY 79

GO IN FAITH

Then Moses went away and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please, let me go back so that I may return to my relatives in Egypt, and see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

Exodus 4:18 (AMP)

Is it only me that frequently feels insufficiently fuelled by faith? Like the dial on a fuel gauge sometimes I feel like my faith dial is in the red and I need to find a faith fuelling station before I completely run out! However, I have discovered unlike the fuel used to keep our cars going, when it comes to faith we don't often set out with a full tank.

I remember praying to God once about how to develop faith, and I was led to recall the story of Moses. Moses didn't start off parting the Red Sea; he started off plucking up the courage to go as God commanded him. He did so after arguing with God about his ability to do it, in the end, he didn't do it entirely alone Aaron went with him to speak on his behalf, but he went (Exodus 3-4).

Moses went afraid, he went with his doubts, and he asked the Lord to go with him but he went. When he asked his father-in-law for permission to leave he didn't even reveal the real reason for his trip, such was his hesitancy about what he was being asked to do. Despite all this he went.

In his going a glorious sequence of events unfolded before him and as his trust in God grew so did the wondrous things God did through him.

We will never feel like we have enough faith to do what God has placed on our hearts if we just sit at home willing our faith to be increased. Your faith will grow as you go. Like a muscle, trust in God is built through exercise. So go, go afraid, go despite your doubts, go with a brother or sister, go in faith, go in peace and see what the Lord your God will do.

Reflection Point: Think of a time in your life when you have taken action on what God has told you to do despite your doubts and fears. What was the outcome of your obedience?

Prayer Point: Lord, help me to overcome my doubts and fears. Help me to go in faith and peace, knowing You will go ahead of me to prepare the way.

DAY 80

DON'T BE INTIMIDATED, EMERGE!

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified or dismayed (intimidated), for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9 (AMP)

I was terrified; I mean completely petrified of the thought of diving forward and attempting to swim without floats to keep me up. Nothing aiding me, just my body horizontal in the water. I was a grown woman, why was I so scared of swimming? I had been learning for months, by now the floats I was using weren't sufficient to hold me up, more of a placebo than anything but the thought of swimming unaided intimidated me.

If we are honest, we have all been in that place of intimidation. The time has come for us to step out and do what we believe we have been called to do but the prospect of doing it instils us with fear. Whether it's starting a new job; starting a business; leaving your 'secure' job to step into full-time ministry or learning to swim as an adult! Often the only thing standing in between where we are now and where we want to be is our fear.

Fear kept the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years; it stopped a whole generation from entering into the promise land and

living in the place of purpose God himself had prepared for them (Joshua 5:6). Don't let that be your story. Don't let fear stop you from emerging out of the cocoon and flying boldly into the calling God has placed on your life.

In Joshua 1:9 God commanded Joshua to be 'strong and courageous', why? Because God promised to be with Joshua and He will be with us too. Get in the water, throw yourself forward and swim, God will keep you afloat; He is with you.

Reflection Point: Is there anywhere in your life where fear is holding you back from emerging from your place of preparation into your place of purpose? In what areas of your life do you need to be strong and courageous?

Prayer Point: Father, help me not to fear, infuse me with courage and strength so I can fly boldly into the destiny you have called me to.

DAY 81

PRAISE HIM IN ADVANCE

But about midnight when Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; suddenly there was a great earthquake, so [powerful] that the very foundations of the prison were shaken and at once all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

Act 16:25-26 (AMP)

‘Judah goes first’ he said. I was clueless; I had no idea what he was talking about. I was discussing our recent results with my boss, and it was clear we needed to turn our results around but his statement threw me. Until he explained, ‘We need to praise God in advance’.

Judah was Leah’s fourth son and when she had him “...she said, “Now I will praise the Lord.” So she named him Judah” (Genesis 29:35). God sent the tribe of Judah up to battle first on two occasions in the Book of Judges Chapter 1 and 20. Both battles were ultimately successful and I realised my boss was reminding me we need to praise God before any major victory, even when we appear to be taking many losses.

It is easy to praise God when everything is going just as you would like it, much harder when everything seems to be falling apart around you.

However, that is what Paul and Silas did; they praised God in spite of

their circumstances, they sang and prayed in prison because while their bodies had been beaten their spirits were not broken. They understood praise has the power to shatter the shackles keeping you bound. Praising God will set you free, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually.

We shouldn't wait until we feel like praising God, we shouldn't wait until we are perfectly placed, we need to begin to praise God from right where we are despite what it looks like.

God responds to your praise. Your praise will power your breakthrough. Your praise precedes you breaking free; your praise goes before your victory, so praise God in advance.

Reflection Point: What do you need God to set you free from in your life? In what areas of your life do you need to praise God in advance for your breakthrough?

Prayer Point: Abba, despite my circumstances You are worthy of my praise. No matter what I am going through, You are still God and You are worthy to be praised.

SECTION 2

Faith to Fly

DAY 82

LET JESUS DO IT!

Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Psalm 9:10

Over the years I have worked with a lot of entrepreneurs, as someone who sees themselves as quite pragmatic and ‘realistic’ I have often found it challenging working with people who think up all kinds of weird and wonderful ideas. I have become frustrated when I am then called upon to take these abstract ideas and make them a reality when I am the one who is asked to make it happen.

Until one day it dawned on me, I’m not actually the one who has to make it happen. When you feel like it’s all on you, you can begin to feel anxious, frustrated and even angry. When you realise you are never alone, and you have a God who operates in doing impossible things, suddenly the burden is lifted, and you show up and do what you can and trust God to do the rest.

Sure you need to take action, but more crucially you need to trust God. If this big idea is His will, it will happen, if not He will work it out for your good but ultimately we can’t carry the world because we will get crushed under its weight. We can take what we are carrying and lay it down at the feet of Jesus, so we are free, unburdened and at rest. Jesus

said “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28).

When we feel out of control, we need to remember God is, was and will remain in control. God wants to help us, when we can't He can!

Reflection Point: How do you respond when you are given a seemingly impossible or challenging task to do? In what ways can you cease these opportunities to build your trust in God?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to do my best and leave the rest in Your hands. Help me to be focused and not frustrated when I am facing challenging goals.

DAY 83

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Genesis 18:12

Is there anything too hard for the Lord? Our first response may be ‘of course not; God can do all things!’ That being the case, why do we doubt? Why do we allow our circumstances to convince us that the dreams God has given us a glimpse of are impossible? Like Sarah, sometimes we laugh at the promises of God because it’s hard for us to imagine a different reality to the one we are currently experiencing.

Some dreams seem to tarry for far too long, as we wait to see the manifestation our hope can begin to wane. When you have walked with God long enough, you come to see and experience that nothing is impossible for Him. He can fulfil and bring to pass the most outrageous possibilities no matter how long it may take, what is impossible to man is possible with God.

The most important thing is that we do not give up hope in the waiting rooms that face us in life. We can begin to believe that our dreams will never come to pass but often the period of waiting is the time that God uses to prepare us ahead of the blessing.

No matter how outlandish the promise, no matter how improbable the assignment and no matter how impossible the dream, if God said it, it will come to pass. We may not feel capable, we may feel unqualified, and we may not understand why the Lord has selected us but none of that matters because God merely requires our surrender and our obedience, He has the rest covered.

Believe in the things you once laughed at; God operates in the impossible.

Reflection Point: How can you begin to raise your expectations about what God can do in your life?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to trust You when the dreams You have placed in my heart seem impossible.

DAY 84

LOVE IN ACTION

By this we know [and have come to understand the depth and essence of His precious] love: that He [willingly] laid down His life for us [because He loved us]. And we ought to lay down our lives for the believers.

1 John 3:16 (AMP)

Would you die for people who hate you? Probably not, not sure I would either. However, that's precisely what Jesus did. He died for us when we were sinners (Romans 5:8), and He even died for those who murdered Him. In His dying, Jesus showed us what real love looks like. Not lovely words or warm feelings but the full, willingly giving over of His life for the ones He loves, you and me. Amazing!

As my mother's only child, I sometimes struggle with this giving thing, this putting others above myself stuff, it doesn't feel natural at times. Other people's desires can be inconvenient and go against what my flesh wants to do. Someone might ask me to do something for them but in my flesh, I would rather not, like when my mom asks me to go to the shops, but I'd rather put my feet up with a cup of tea and read a book. Do you ever feel this way?

At these times I don't feel loving or holy, yet I have come to realise love is not a feeling, love is an action. Love helps, gives, encourages and

listens even when you do not feel like it. Love will cause you to inconvenience yourself and do Gods will even when you would rather not.

At first, it feels awful, but over time the more the flesh is put in its place it starts to become more natural. Choosing to love despite your emotions, no matter how loud they are, starves the flesh and feeds the spirit. Each time we decide to put the needs of our fellow humans above our own, we become more like our saviour.

Live your love out loud with your actions and not just your words despite your feelings. Show love in action.

Reflection Point: How could you show love in action more often? In what area does your flesh make it challenging for you to show love?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to not merely love with my words or show love when it's comfortable and convenient. Help me to show love in action despite my emotions, empower me with Your unselfish love.

DAY 85

KEEP GOING WHEN IT STOPS BEING EASY

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:4

How do you keep going when you want to give up? At the start, anything feels possible, even though it's scary stepping into the unknown your passion and zeal are at their peak. In the beginning, you know what you want to achieve, and you are excited to begin.

So you get started, and you are all fired up, but over time your passion begins to dwindle because now you have started to discover this is harder than you thought. It will take more of you than you could have possibly imagined, and your emotions begin to scream at you 'this is too hard, start again!'

Take it from someone who developed the bad habit of giving up, no matter what you choose to do, no matter how zealous you are at the start or how much fun you are having at first, there will always be part of the process that is hard. If you develop the habit of giving up, you'll always be busy doing something, you will always be occupied but if you give up before you breakthrough your initial hard work will be in vain.

Dreams seldom come ready-made; they are built by persevering when

your enthusiasm begins to fade. Any major and meaningful achievement will require perseverance. The advantage we have as believers is this, we do not have to persevere alone, we have a helper, an advocate and a provider present every step of the journey. Don't give up, persevering when things get hard develops maturity and Godly character in you; it will be worth it in the end.

Reflection Point: When have you given up in the past because it got too hard? How can you adjust your attitude so in future you persevere in spite of difficulties?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to persevere in faith and not give up when things get hard.

DAY 86

A LIFE OF PURPOSE BEARS GOOD FRUIT

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

How do you measure your success? With a background in business, I am used to measuring success in numbers, profit, sales and customer satisfaction scores. However, when it comes to measuring the success of a purposeful life we need to look beyond the numbers, and towards the spiritual profits we expect as the outcome of a life of purpose.

As we join our lives with Christ and submit ourselves to the process of transformation, the Holy Spirit will work within us to produce spiritual fruit. No matter what we say, the proof of what we believe and who we believe in is shown by our actions. What is within us will always come out, the word of God teaches us a good tree cannot produce rotten fruit (Matthew 7:18).

A life of purpose will cause you to bear good fruit because you are planted in the right soil, allowing you to get the proper nutrients and benefit from being cultivated in an optimum spiritual environment.

The right spiritual environment is two-way; it happens as we remain in

Christ following His ways, reading His word, praying and living out what we learn. As well as Christ remaining in us through the power of the Holy Spirit enabling us to live for Him.

Attempts to bear the fruit of the spirit outside of Christ are futile, but as we remain in Christ, these fruit will begin to show in our lives. The manifestation of the fruits of the spirit is one way we should measure our success. We may not be where we want to be, but we should be aiming to progress step by step, day by day.

Reflection Point: What spiritual fruit do you want the Holy Spirit to develop in your life? How will you cooperate with the Holy Spirit today to create the right spiritual environment to cultivate these fruit?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, work within me to transform my heart, so my thoughts, words and actions reflect Your likeness, and I manifest the fruits of the spirit in my life.

DAY 87

FINISH THE JOB

but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. So Joshua said to the Israelites: “How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you?”

Joshua 18:2-3

Have you ever struggled with the guilt of an unfinished task? You know it needs to be done, but there is something within you resisting taking action?

Often this delaying seems harmless, especially for those little insignificant tasks but what if I told you delay could be blocking your blessing? What if your procrastination was preventing you from pursuing your ultimate purpose and becoming all God created you to be?

In Joshua 18:2-3, we see the Israelites had not yet received their inheritance, not because God had not given it to them but because they had not taken possession of it.

Why did they delay in taking possession of the land? Why do we also often delay? The truth is, many of us are not enjoying the best God has for us because we do not want to do the hard work it will take to finish what we have started.

Like the Israelites, we may want to take the path of least resistance and find an easy way of achieving our goals. I have come to realise even our blessings come with hard work built-in, let's not miss them trying to avoid it. Today let's determine to finish what we have started.

Reflection Point: Are there any areas of your life where procrastination has caused you to leave a job unfinished?

Prayer Point: Strengthen me Lord, so I can finish the job and take possession of all You have set aside for me.

DAY 88

DON'T HOLD BACK

Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.

Isaiah 54:2

Have you been holding out on God? Have you been keeping the best of yourself hidden away? Would you admit it if you had been? No one likes to admit they have not been giving God their all but deep in your heart you know if you have been holding back.

Often it's unintentional, subconscious. We don't hold back on purpose; we just don't realise we have been doing it. One morning as I read Isaiah 54 it hit me, I had totally been holding back!

Sometimes we hold back out of fear, at other times we hold back out of a sense of false humility. We don't want to shine too brightly; people may think we are showing off. Don't shrink back because you are afraid of standing out, don't bury your talent because you are scared of being rejected or getting it wrong.

To hold something back is to restrain it, to keep it in check, to spare it. To be honest, holding back what God has given you is just plain stingy. The world needs the fruit of the seed that God has planted in you, it's OK to start small, but you don't have to stay small. Enlarge, grow,

develop, do things that stretch you, take you out of your comfort zone and strengthen you.

Let's collectively decide today we will not hold back. We will not hold back our dreams, we will not hold back our talents, we will not hold back our purpose, and we will not hold back when pursuing God's purpose for our lives. Let's give it all we've got. Go for it, stop placing limits on an unlimited God. Stop thinking small and narrow; God is BIG! Is there anything the Lord cannot do? Do not hold back!

Reflection Point: In what areas of your life have you been holding back? How can you be more generous with what God has placed within you?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, give me the boldness to enlarge, stretch past my comfort zone and strengthen the gifts You have given me. Help me not to hold back what You have placed inside of me, help me to give You my all.

DAY 89

DON'T NEGLECT YOUR PURPOSE

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Acts 6:2

Sometimes we can go wrong trying to do what's right. The twelve apostles did not fall into that trap because they were clear and knew what God had chosen them to do. They understood their purpose, and they were unapologetic about it. That's why their ministry was so powerful and their impact so great.

Clarity of purpose allowed them to discern distractions easily. They were able to identify them, boldly call them out and create a solution to resolve them; this is precisely what Acts 6:1-7 records.

A problem was brought to their attention, a serious problem, some widows amongst the disciples were not receiving food. They knew it was an important issue, but as leaders, they also knew trying to do it all would mean they did not fulfil their assignment.

The administration of food was not less important than the ministry of the word, both were needed, but the apostles understood their role. Everyone has a part to play in the spreading of the Gospel; the key is to

be able to discern your part in any particular season. Once you know your part, do not neglect it taking on someone else's role.

Guilt can cause us to take on roles that we are not equipped for, anointed for or called to. This can distract us from what God has purposed us to do. This is a serious matter, the start of Acts 6:7 says "So the word of God spread...". If the apostles had not been clear on their purpose and bold enough to confront a distraction, they would have neglected their purpose, and the word of God may not have spread as rapidly or had the impact that it did.

Don't be tempted to think that your purpose is in some way less important than theirs, as a believer your purpose matters. Be discerning, be bold and do not neglect it!

Reflection Point: In what ways in the past have you neglected your purpose? What can you do today to walk in it boldly?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me not to neglect my purpose, help me to boldly and diligently do what You have called me to do.

DAY 90

WORK YOUR LAND

Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.

Proverbs 28:19

What's next? A question that comes to mind after I have achieved anything substantial. I hardly pause to celebrate my achievement before I say 'Lord what do you want me to do next?' This mentality can breed unhealthy habits of neglect. While the Fit For Purpose journey is about getting ready to step into and walk in your purpose, we must not forget the end of one journey is often the start of another. In this case, your journey is only just beginning.

When you pass your driving test, you can drive, but you are still learning. To master driving, you have to practice over and over again. When you step into your purpose, it's the same; yes you have gone through a period of intense preparation, but you are still a learner, mastery will only come with practice.

Grand dreams of what's next can cause us to neglect what is now. There is nothing wrong with dreaming or aspiring for more, but this should not lead to the waste or neglect of what is already in our care.

Why would God entrust us with more if we refuse to work what we

have? Having faith to fly is not just about taking the leap and using your wings for the first time. You have to keep on flying, keep on working and keep on going when it gets tiring when it gets hard.

If we want to reap a harvest and see the fruits of our labour, we need to work our land. Then we will not only be fit for purpose, but we will begin to profit for purpose (but that is a whole new journey I hope we will take together another day). Today, let's embrace how far we have come, right here and right now, let's work our land.

Reflection Point: What is one thing you can do today to work your land? What is the most significant lesson you have learnt over the last 90 days on this Fit For Purpose journey?

Prayer Point: Dear Lord, help me to give thanks for what You have entrusted to me. Help me to make the most of it and work diligently with what I have today.

FINAL THOUGHTS...

His authoritative gaze always had the effect of turning me into a mumbling school girl. 'I'm trying, Bishop' I whined. He responded with a stern 'Don't try; just be.' As I write these final thoughts, his words echo in my mind.

Wherever you find yourself on your journey, my prayer is that you will have peace. "So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." 1 Corinthians 3:7. After all is said and done, it is God who does the work, and He never does half a job, Philippians 1:6 says "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

The caterpillar is no less fit for purpose than the butterfly; they are simply at a different stage of their process, and God can use them at every stage for His glory. God transforms us; it is all about Him. His deepest desires are that we know Him and love Him.

In our pursuit to live out our purpose for God, we should be careful not to miss God and turn our purpose into an idol. God is the great reward, and He is with us even now. It is easy to get so carried away and 'focused' that we forget to enjoy our relationship with God. The presence of God is the fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).

Don't try to be fit for purpose; just be, it is God himself that makes us fit for purpose.

SOMETIMES BEAUTIFUL THINGS GROW IN UGLY PLACES

Sometimes beautiful things grow in ugly places.

In the places where things go to die.
In the chrysalis, in the cocoon, in the grave, and in the tomb,
in the deepest darkest place, so dark I can't take it.
Screaming out in anguish flesh slowly dying,
it's hard to see through all my tears
alone in the dark with my fears.

Flesh and spirit collide in great violence,
as my screams ring out piercing the silence.
Broken down my heart is at a loss
because I know deep inside I desire the crown without the cross.

Everything has a cost,
my saviour paid it for the lost.
In the depths of my brokenness, I cling to the cross.
Cling to hope, hanging on to every word my saviour spoke.

Most of me has to die, in order for me to fly.
Every ounce of my flesh daily put to death.
In the midst of the abyss, in the pit, in the grave.
My flesh had to die but my soul has been saved.

Deep in the chrysalis death gives way to life.
The old me has passed away, all things become new,
as I fly into the sun,
my breath restricted by the view.

I can't believe I made it,
so in awe of what God has done.
My old life had to die,
my new life has just begun.

I'm a butterfly emerging,
completely transformed by the pain.

I placed my life in Jesus,
now I will never be the same.

Metamorphosis is complete, it is finished, it is done.
Finally, transformed into the very likeness of Jesus Christ the Son.

Because sometimes beautiful things grow in ugly places.