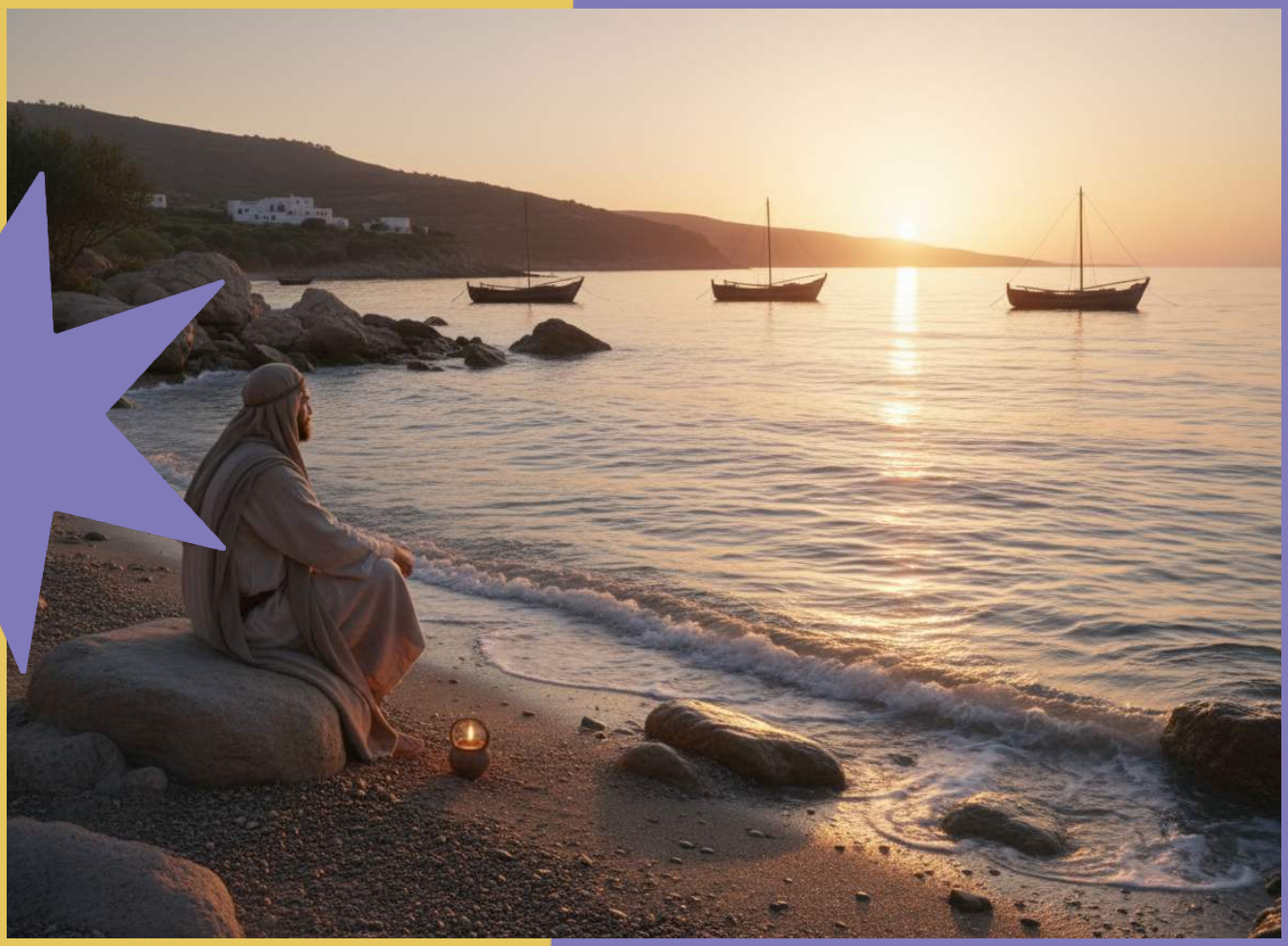
In the Field Audio Bible



A January Devotional

New Mercies: Beginning Again With God

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Table Of Contents

Chapter 1: Stepping Into New Mercies 3

Chapter 2: Releasing the Past into God’s Hands 11

Chapter 3: Cultivating Spiritual Rhythms 19

Chapter 4: Walking by Faith Not by Sight 29

Chapter 5: Finding God in the Ordinary 38

Chapter 6: Embracing Change with Hope 47

Chapter 7: Carrying Mercy Into the Year Ahead 57

01

Chapter 1: Stepping Into New Mercies

January's Gentle Threshold

January arrives as a gentle threshold—a pause between what has passed and what lies ahead. The world is hushed, wrapped in winter's stillness, as if holding its breath for something new. There is a rare quietness to these days, when the sky hangs low and the earth seems to rest beneath a blanket of frost. Each morning, pale light seeps slowly through bare branches, illuminating a landscape stripped of distraction, inviting us to linger and notice the subtle beauty that remains.

This is a season of beginnings: an open page and a quiet call to hope. The year gone by, with its celebrations and sorrows, now rests in memory. The air itself seems filled with possibility, as if the silence of January is not emptiness, but space—space for reflection, for longing, for listening to the faint stirrings of God's Spirit. In this hush, God extends an invitation to receive fresh mercies and step into the story unfolding before you.

January offers us a rare gift: the chance to pause, to breathe deeply, and to remember that life is not measured only by productivity or achievement, but by the willingness to notice what is being made new. It is a month for setting aside the noise of expectation and opening ourselves to the gentle work of grace.

A Season to Welcome Renewal

There is wonder in this moment. Beneath the frozen earth, life readies itself for spring. Roots and seeds, though hidden, are quietly preparing for the warmth to come. In the same way, your soul may feel quiet, yet God is nurturing hope within. The silence is not absence, but preparation—a holy stillness where new beginnings take root.

January is not about striving to reinvent yourself, but about opening your heart to the One who brings restoration. The world may urge you toward resolutions, self-improvement, and grand plans, but the invitation of God is subtler and more profound: to receive mercy, to rest in love, to trust that transformation begins not with effort but with surrender.

"*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*"

—Lamentations 3:22–23

Each sunrise brings an invitation to trust, to wonder, to begin again. God's compassion meets you right where you are—abundant and timely. The old patterns and mistakes do not define you; each day is a canvas for grace, painted with colors you have not yet imagined.

This season asks us to listen for the quiet voice that whispers hope, to watch for the small signs of new life, and to believe that even in the coldest winter, God is at work beneath the surface. Renewal is not a task to accomplish, but a gift to receive—one gentle moment at a time.

Embracing the Present



Every fresh start asks us to release what has been. You may carry regrets or lingering questions, the weight of what was left unfinished, or the ache of dreams deferred. January's invitation is not to ignore these, but to place them gently in God's hands. You are not defined by yesterday; you are held by love that remains.

Imagine the Israelites, standing on the edge of a land they had only heard about in stories. Their journey had been long and uncertain, marked by detours and doubts. Yet God's promise was unwavering:

"*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*"

—Isaiah 43:19

Their entry into the new was possible not because they had perfected themselves, but because they chose to trust the One who led them.

To embrace the present is to let go of the need to control the future or fix the past. It is to stand in the doorway of January and say, "*Here I am, Lord. I do not know what this year will hold, but I trust that You are already here.*" In this posture, every ordinary moment becomes holy ground.

Let this month be a time of gentle beginnings. Rather than chasing perfection, practice presence—be with God, with yourself, and with those you love. Let rest and reflection shape your days. Notice the way light falls across the floor, the sound of your own breath, the warmth of a shared meal. These small moments are the seeds of a life rooted in grace.



Belonging in the New Year

You are not alone as you step forward. Across the world, others enter January with hope and uncertainty, longing for restoration. The invitation to belong is woven into the very fabric of this season. We are made for community, for shared stories, for the comfort of knowing that our journeys are intertwined.

Remember, you are part of a people marked by mercy, moving together into the unknown. The struggles and joys you carry are echoed in the hearts of others—family, friends, neighbors, strangers you have yet to meet. God gathers us into a tapestry of belonging, where every thread is needed and every voice matters.



Reach out to friends or fellow travelers. Share your hopes for what's ahead. Offer encouragement and receive it in return. Listen for the stories of those around you—stories of resilience, of faith, of longing and laughter. In this community, we remind one another that every new year is an invitation to hope, to walk together, and to start anew.

Belonging is not about fitting in or meeting expectations, but about being seen, known, and loved as you are. As you move through January, look for ways to create spaces of welcome—for yourself and for others. Let your presence be a blessing, a reminder that no one walks this path alone.

Reflection

- What do you sense God inviting you to begin this year?
- Where are you longing for renewal, and how might you make space for it?
- Who can you encourage, support, or welcome as you start afresh?
- What ordinary moments help you feel present and grounded?

Practices

- **Morning Gratitude:** Begin each day by naming two or three mercies you notice, no matter how small. Let this practice open your heart to God's presence.
- **Letting Go Ritual:** Write down regrets or worries from last year. Offer them to God in prayer, then tear up the paper as a sign of release.
- **Presence Pause:** Set aside ten minutes daily to simply sit in silence, noticing your breath and inviting God to meet you there.
- **Community Connection:** Reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. Share a hope for the year and ask about theirs.
- **Sacred Noticing:** Choose one ordinary activity—making tea, folding laundry, walking outside—and do it slowly, as a prayer of gratitude.



Prayer

God of new beginnings,

Thank you for the gift of January—a sacred threshold, a gentle invitation to begin again. Help me to release what I cannot change, to receive Your mercies with open hands, and to trust Your faithfulness as I step into this year. Awaken my heart to the beauty of the present moment. Teach me to notice Your presence in the quiet, the ordinary, and the unexpected. Draw me into deeper belonging—with You, with myself, and with those I meet along the way. Guide my steps, that I may walk in hope, courage, and love.

Amen.

02

Chapter 2: Releasing the Past into God's Hands

The Weight and Gift of Release

A new year brings anticipation and a quiet ache—a longing to start fresh, yet a weight of memories and stories unfinished. As January unfolds, we may find ourselves carrying burdens we hoped would be lighter: regrets, words left unsaid, wounds yet unhealed. The shadow of the past can stretch long across the threshold of the present, whispering doubts about our worthiness or our ability to begin again.

Yet in this very tension, God meets us—not to erase the past, but to invite us to entrust it to hands greater than our own. Release is loosening our grip on what we cannot change, trusting our stories are not defined by failure or loss. This is not a solitary act, but a journey shared with others learning to trust divine mercy. Letting go is slow, sometimes painful, but always sacred—the opening of our hearts to the possibility that God is weaving redemption from every thread.





Letting go is not forgetting. It is the courage to acknowledge what has been, honor the lessons learned, and make space for the newness God longs to bring. The gift of release is freedom—a lightness that comes from surrendering what was never ours to carry alone.

The Grace That Meets Our Surrender

Letting go is rarely easy. We often hold tightly to what is familiar, even when it burdens us. Old patterns, disappointments, and unanswered questions settle into the corners of our hearts. Yet God invites us to open our hands, confident that nothing surrendered to Him is ever truly lost. Release is not defeat; it is making space for grace to grow.

"*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!*"

—Isaiah 43:18–19

God's renewal is not limited by old wounds. He gently gathers what we cannot carry, weaving redemption from every thread. His mercy is not a reward for effort, but a gift for those willing to trust. In letting go, we discover grace that meets us in our emptiness—grace that covers our mistakes, heals our hurts, and restores what we thought was beyond repair.

Grace is patient. It does not rush or demand we move on before we're ready. God's compassion allows us to grieve what we must release, to name our sorrows, and to receive comfort in the letting go. The invitation is to trust that God is already at work in the places we cannot see, bringing beauty from ashes and hope from despair.

Surrender in Story

Scripture is filled with those who learned to release:

- **Joseph let go of resentment, trusting purpose in pain. Betrayed by his brothers, imprisoned unjustly, he chose forgiveness over bitterness, allowing God to use his suffering for the saving of many lives.**
- **Ruth left behind grief and homeland, stepping into a future shaped by hope. Her willingness to let go of the familiar opened the door to unexpected blessing and belonging in a new land.**
- **Peter, after his denial, received forgiveness and a new calling. Restored by Jesus' love, he became a leader in the early church, his failure transformed into a testimony of grace.**

None walked this path alone. Each found companions—family, friends, or God's enduring presence. Their stories remind us: surrender is not weakness, but a doorway to healing and deeper belonging. In releasing what we cannot hold, we make room for God's promises to take root.

Even Jesus, in Gethsemane, modeled surrender: "*Not my will, but Yours be done*." His willingness to let go, to trust the Father's heart, became the source of life for all who follow Him. Our own letting go, however small, echoes this sacred act and draws us into the mystery of redemption.

The Rhythm and Practice of Surrender

Release is a daily practice, not a single event. Some burdens return again and again, pressing in when we least expect them. Each morning, we are invited to place them in God's care—regrets, disappointments, fears, and the ache of what might have been. Letting go is not a one-time decision but a rhythm, a returning to God with open hands and a willing heart.

This surrender is not about forgetting, but about allowing God to write a new chapter. The past shapes us, but it does not define us. In community, we remind each other that grace is enough for every story. We support one another in the slow work of release, offering encouragement, prayer, and the reminder that we are never alone.

Consider creating rituals that mark your willingness to let go: lighting a candle for a loss, writing a letter you never send, sharing your struggle with a trusted friend. These small acts become signposts, reminders that you are moving forward, even when progress feels invisible.

Over time, the practice of surrender softens our hearts, making us more compassionate toward ourselves and others. We learn to hold life loosely, to receive joy with gratitude and sorrow with hope. The rhythm of letting go becomes the heartbeat of a life anchored in trust.

Belonging in Release

As you let go, remember you belong. No burden or regret can separate you from love or the embrace of a faith-filled community. Reach out—share your journey, listen to others, and walk together into the year. The act of release is not a solitary struggle but a shared pilgrimage. In the stories of those around us, we find courage to continue.

Letting go is courageous, and it is hopeful. It trusts that mercy will meet you on the other side, and that new beginnings are possible for all who dare to release the past. As you move through January, notice the gentle ways God affirms your belonging: a word of encouragement, a moment of laughter, the quiet presence of a friend who listens without judgment.



Belonging is not about perfection, but about presence. It is the assurance that you are seen, known, and loved as you are—by God and by those who journey with you. As you practice letting go, allow yourself to receive the gifts of community, and offer your own presence as a blessing to others.

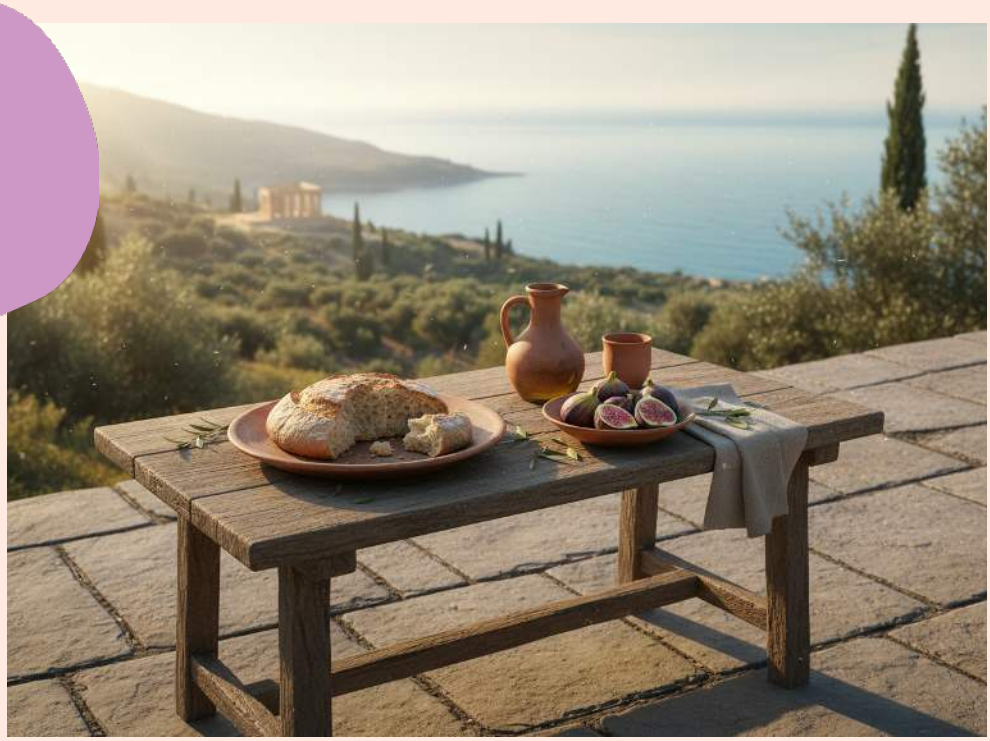
Reflection

- What burdens are you carrying into this year? How do they affect your sense of hope?
- Where do you feel God inviting you to release and trust, even if only for today?
- How can you support someone else in their journey of letting go?
- What practices or rituals help you mark moments of surrender?



Practices

- **Release Prayer:** Each morning, name one thing to surrender. Speak it aloud, and ask God to hold it for you.
- **Letting Go Ritual:** Write down regrets or disappointments, then tear up or burn the paper as a symbol of release. Pray for peace as you let go.
- **Companion Encouragement:** Share your hopes or struggles with a trusted friend. Offer and receive prayer for the journey.
- **Gratitude for Growth:** Reflect on how letting go in the past has brought unexpected blessing or growth.
- **Sacred Symbol:** Place a stone, candle, or other object in a visible place as a reminder of your willingness to release and trust.



Prayer

Merciful God,

Thank you for holding what I cannot bear. As I step into this year, help me release the past and rest in Your grace. Heal the places where I am wounded, comfort me where I grieve, and fill the empty spaces with hope. Remind me that I am not alone, and give me courage to trust You with every new beginning.

Teach me to walk in the rhythm of surrender, to receive Your mercy each day, and to extend grace to others as I have received it. May my life become a story of release and renewal, marked by Your faithful love.

Amen.

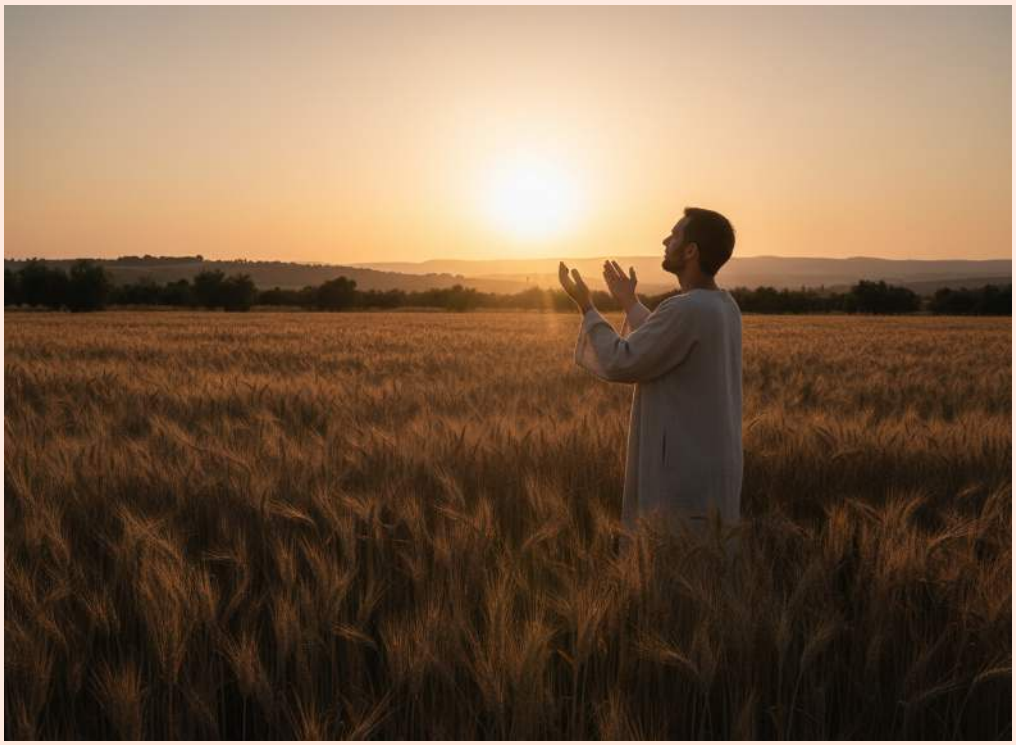
03

Chapter 3: Cultivating Spiritual Rhythms

The Quiet Work Beneath the Surface

January's hush invites us to listen for God's quiet work. While the world outside appears dormant, beneath the surface, roots reach deeper, preparing for the life that spring will bring. In these still days, there is a hidden energy—a slow, persistent movement that cannot be seen but is vital for all that is to come. The trees may stand bare against the sky, but their roots are alive, drawing sustenance and strength from the earth.

Our souls, too, need seasons of hidden growth—moments to nurture the inner life that sustains us through all that lies ahead. Just as a tree's true vitality is found below ground, our own resilience is shaped in the places no one else sees: in prayer, in reflection, in the quiet choices we make each day. It is in these unseen spaces that God prepares us for fruitfulness.



This season asks us to trust the process. Growth is not always visible or immediate. Sometimes, progress feels slow, and the desire for dramatic change can make us impatient. But the wisdom of winter is this: what is rooted deeply will flourish in its season. The work God does in the quiet will one day be revealed in strength and beauty.

The Wisdom of Roots

Nature teaches the value of what is unseen. In winter, trees stand bare, yet below ground, roots press deeper, anchoring for storms and future fruitfulness. What looks still is actually preparation. The strength we cultivate in silence becomes our anchor when winds rise.

"*Blessed is the one . . . whose delight is in the law of the Lord . . . That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.*"

—Psalm 1:1–3



This tree flourishes not by striving, but by being planted—drawing from a hidden source. Spiritual rhythms—prayer, Scripture, rest, worship—are streams that nourish and steady us, especially in uncertain times.

To be rooted is to choose depth over display, to invest in the slow work of becoming. It is to let God shape your character in the hidden places, trusting that what He cultivates in private will one day become a blessing to others. Deep roots allow us to withstand storms, to remain steady when circumstances change, and to draw nourishment even in times of drought.

A Fresh Invitation to Spiritual Practice

The year ahead is unwritten. While the world encourages us to fill it with plans, the Spirit's invitation is different: begin with being. Before rushing into action, return to the Source. Let presence—being with God, with yourself, and with others—be your first priority.

Jesus modeled this beautifully. Surrounded by crowds, He regularly withdrew to quiet places to pray (Luke 5:16). His ministry flowed from these hidden moments with the Father. We, too, are invited to root our lives in relationship, not merely in activity.

Spiritual rhythms are not about rigid routines or perfection. They are about creating space for God to meet us, about returning again and again to the well that never runs dry. Whether through silence, worship, journaling, or contemplative reading, these practices become the means by which we stay connected to the Source of life.

Consider the invitation to Sabbath—a regular pause from striving, a time to remember that you are loved for who you are, not what you accomplish. Or the practice of Lectio Divina, reading Scripture slowly and prayerfully, allowing God's word to shape your heart. These rhythms are not obligations but gifts, invitations to rest, receive, and be renewed.

Small Seeds, Steady Growth

Spiritual rhythms aren't grand gestures; they're humble, faithful steps. A few quiet moments in the morning, a whispered prayer before sleep, a verse carried in your heart —these are seeds that, over time, deepen your roots.

Don't underestimate small beginnings. God's kingdom is like a mustard seed—tiny, yet destined for growth (Matthew 13:31–32). Habits formed in January can become lifelines in the months ahead. Give yourself grace as you start. If you falter, simply begin again. The goal isn't perfection, but presence.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus describes how seeds flourish in good soil—soil that is tended, receptive, and patient (Mark 4:1–20). Our hearts, too, need tending. The daily choices to pray, to listen, to rest, and to trust are like drops of water and rays of sunlight, nurturing the life God has planted within us.

Growth is rarely dramatic or instantaneous. More often, it is measured in small victories: a moment of peace in the midst of chaos, a kind word offered, a gentle return to prayer after a season of distraction. These small acts, repeated over time, become the roots that anchor us in love.

Nurturing Renewal in Community

Community is essential for spiritual growth. Just as trees in a forest support one another through intertwined roots, we are meant to encourage, challenge, and uphold each other. Share your journey with others—celebrate progress, confess struggles, and pray together. In community, we find accountability, inspiration, and the reassurance that we are not alone.

What practices might God be inviting you to nurture this year?

- **Scripture Reading:** Approach God's Word as nourishment, not a checklist. Read slowly; let a word or phrase linger and shape your prayers.
- **Prayer:** Honest, unhurried conversation. Some days, words may fail—let silence or a simple breath prayer be enough.
- **Sabbath:** Regular pauses from striving. Rest, delight, and remember you are loved beyond your productivity.
- **Community:** Faith is strengthened together. Join a group, reach out to a friend, or gather for prayer.
- **Gratitude:** Notice God's gifts, even on hard days. Keep a journal, speak thanks aloud, or share gratitude with someone else.

Roots grow slowly. Habits take time. If you miss a day, simply start again. The point is to receive, not to impress.

When Life Disrupts



There will be seasons when rhythms falter—when illness, grief, or change uproot your plans. Even then, God's faithfulness is your anchor. Sometimes, the most powerful prayer is simply, "*Lord, hold me*." Trust that the roots you've planted will sustain you, and that God's Spirit intercedes when words fail.

Remember Elijah, who, after great victories, fled to the wilderness exhausted. God met him not in the wind or earthquake, but in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:11–13). Renewal often comes in the quiet, when all we can do is rest in God's presence.

Seasons of disruption are not failures, but invitations to deeper trust. In times of loss or uncertainty, spiritual rhythms may shift or pause. Give yourself grace, and remember that God is patient with your process. Even when you feel distant or distracted, His love remains constant.

Trust that nothing is wasted. Even in the wilderness, God provides manna, water, and rest. The roots you have cultivated will draw nourishment from hidden reserves, sustaining you until spring returns.

Fruit That Lasts

As roots deepen, fruit will come—in its season. You may not see immediate change, but trust that God is at work beneath the surface. Over time, spiritual rhythms shape our character, steady our hearts, and prepare us for all that lies ahead.

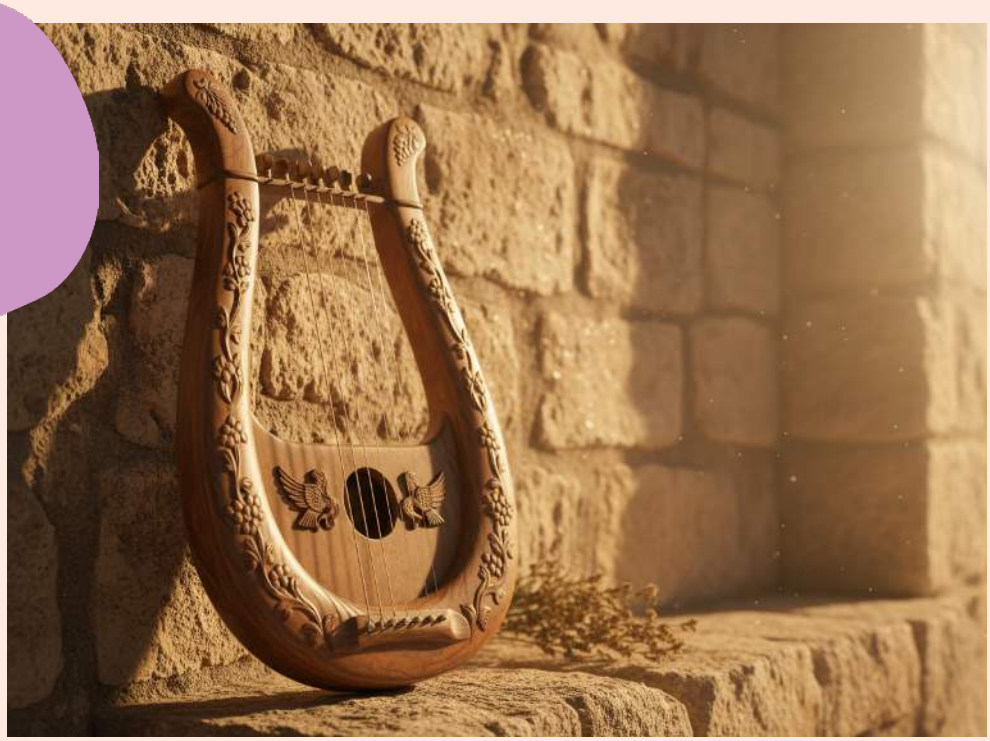


Fruit may appear in unexpected ways: a deeper sense of peace, greater compassion for others, resilience in hardship, or joy in the mundane. The promise of Psalm 1 is not that life will be easy, but that those who are rooted in God's love will flourish, bearing fruit that blesses both themselves and the world.

Let your life become a testimony to the quiet, persistent work of grace. Trust that the seeds planted in faithfulness will yield a harvest in due time. Remain open to the ways God surprises you, and celebrate every sign of growth, no matter how small.

Reflection

- What spiritual practice helps you feel most rooted? How might you deepen or expand it this year?
- Where do you long for renewal, and what small steps can you take toward it?
- Who can encourage you as you nurture new habits? How might you support others in their growth?
- When have you seen hidden growth bear fruit in your life or the lives of others?



Practices

- **Daily Anchor:** Choose one simple practice to start or end your day, such as lighting a candle, repeating a breath prayer, or reading a Psalm.
- **Scripture Meditation:** Linger with a single verse all week, memorizing and reflecting on its meaning.
- **Community Check-In:** Reach out for prayer or encouragement, and offer the same to someone else.
- **Sabbath Delight:** Set aside intentional time for rest, worship, and joy each week.
- **Gratitude List:** Write down at least five things each day for which you are thankful, noticing how this shapes your perspective.
- **Nature Walk:** Spend time outdoors, observing how creation rests and grows, and reflect on what God might be nurturing in you.

Prayer

Gardener of my soul,

Thank you for nourishing me with Your presence. Help me grow deeper roots in Your love and cultivate rhythms that sustain me. When I am weary, draw me back to Your living water, and let my life bear fruit in its season.

Teach me to trust the slow work of grace, to celebrate small beginnings, and to remain patient in times of waiting. Surround me with companions for the journey, and let my presence be an encouragement to others.

May my heart be open to Your surprises, and may my life reflect Your faithfulness, one quiet day at a time.

Amen.

04

Chapter 4: Walking by Faith Not by Sight

The Unfolding Path

The new year stretches before us like a winding path shrouded in early morning mist. We take tentative steps, unable to see far ahead, yet drawn onward by a quiet conviction that something good awaits. After rooting ourselves in spiritual rhythms, we are invited to walk by faith—trusting in what we cannot yet see, believing that God guides each step even when the way is hidden.

In the uncertainty of January, we are reminded that life rarely offers a perfect map. Our plans are often interrupted, our expectations reshaped by events beyond our control. The invitation of faith is to move forward with open hands, allowing God's presence to lead us through uncertainty. Faith is not the absence of questions, but the willingness to journey with hope, even when the outcome is unclear.



This journey is not a sprint but a pilgrimage. Each day brings new choices, fresh opportunities to trust, and moments of doubt that invite us to lean more fully into God's character. The path may twist and turn, sometimes leading us into unfamiliar terrain, but the promise remains: we do not walk alone.

The Courage to Trust

"*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*"

—Hebrews 11:1

This kind of trust is woven throughout Scripture. Abraham left everything familiar, setting out for a land he had never seen, trusting God's voice above his own fears. Moses led his people through wilderness, guided by a pillar of cloud and fire, learning to depend on daily provision. Mary said yes to God's promise, not knowing where it would lead, her ordinary life transformed by extraordinary faith.



Their stories remind us: faith is a pilgrimage, and God is faithful to those who walk with Him. Trust is not a feeling, but a decision—a daily choice to believe that God's promises hold true, even when our vision is limited. Each act of trust, however small, becomes a stepping stone on the path ahead.

Courage does not mean the absence of fear; it means moving forward despite uncertainty. It is the gentle strength that keeps us going when doubts whisper and the road seems long. God honors even the smallest step of faith, meeting us in our questions and leading us with compassion.

Embracing Mystery

To walk by faith is to accept mystery. There will be seasons when answers elude us, when prayers seem to linger in silence, when the way forward is obscured. In these moments, faith becomes an anchor—a quiet trust that God is at work beneath the surface, orchestrating goodness even when we cannot perceive it.

Jesus often invited His followers into the unknown. "*Come, follow me*," He said, and they left nets, boats, and certainty behind. Their lives became stories of discovery, shaped by trust and surrender. We, too, are called to step out, believing that God's promises hold true even when our vision is limited.

Mystery is not something to be feared, but to be welcomed as part of the journey. It is in the not-knowing that we learn to listen more closely, to notice God's presence in unexpected places, and to find beauty in the unfolding story. The questions that remain unanswered become invitations to deeper intimacy with the One who holds all things together.

Companions for the Journey

The journey of faith is not meant to be solitary. We are given companions—friends, mentors, fellow pilgrims—who encourage us when courage falters. Sharing our questions, hopes, and doubts creates a tapestry of belonging, where each person's story strengthens the whole.

Consider the disciples on the Emmaus road, hearts heavy with confusion and loss. Jesus joined them, walking alongside, opening their eyes to grace in unexpected ways (Luke 24:13–35). In community, we discover that faith is not about certainty, but about walking together, attentive to God's presence in every conversation and shared meal.

Community provides the strength to keep going when our own faith feels fragile. The prayers of others become a shelter, their encouragement a source of renewed hope. We are reminded that we are not alone in our questions, and that the journey is richer when shared.

Practicing Trust in the Everyday

Trust grows through practice—small, daily acts of surrender. It might look like praying when answers are slow, choosing kindness in uncertainty, or simply taking the next right step. Faith is forged in the ordinary, in the willingness to keep moving even when the outcome is unknown.

- **Attentive Prayer:** Begin each day by asking, "*God, where are You leading me today?*" Pause to listen for gentle nudges or unexpected invitations. Trust that God speaks in whispers as well as in clarity.
- **Stepping Out:** Identify one area where you sense God inviting you to risk or stretch beyond comfort. Take a small step, trusting that God meets you there, whether or not you see immediate results.
- **Remembering:** Keep a journal of moments when God's faithfulness surprised you—provision, encouragement, peace. Return to these reminders when doubt creeps in, letting them become anchors in uncertainty.
- **Community Encouragement:** Share your journey with a trusted friend. Pray for one another, and celebrate steps of faith, no matter how small. Let your stories intertwine, strengthening each other for the road ahead.

Trust is also cultivated in silence and stillness. Allow yourself moments of quiet, where you can listen for God's guidance without distraction. These pauses become spaces where faith is renewed and hope is rekindled.

When the Path Is Difficult

There will be days when faith feels fragile—when disappointment, loss, or fear threaten to overshadow hope. In these seasons, remember you are not walking alone. God's Spirit intercedes for you with sighs too deep for words (Romans 8:26), and your community stands ready to carry you in prayer.

Trust is not about having all the answers, but about leaning into God's character—believing that He is good, even when circumstances are hard. Just as roots hold a tree steady in winter, faith anchors us through life's storms.

In times of struggle, allow yourself to grieve and to ask hard questions. God is not threatened by your doubts; He welcomes your honesty. Let others walk with you, offering comfort and perspective when your own vision is clouded. Remember that valleys are not the end of the journey, but places where God's presence often feels most real.



Celebrate the small victories—moments when you choose hope, offer forgiveness, or simply keep moving. Each act of trust, however small, is precious in God's eyes.

Reflection

- Where do you sense God inviting you to walk by faith this year? What step feels most uncertain?
- What uncertainties or mysteries are you facing? How might you welcome them as invitations to deeper trust?
- When have you seen God's faithfulness in seasons of uncertainty before? What stories can you remember or share?



Practices

- **Faith Step:** Choose one uncertain area and take a small, intentional action, trusting God with the outcome.
- **Attentive Listening:** Spend time in silence, asking God to reveal His presence in your daily life.
- **Testimony Sharing:** Recall and share a story of God's faithfulness with someone close to you.
- **Community Prayer:** Gather with others (even virtually) to pray for courage and discernment as you step into the unknown.

Prayer

Guide of the hidden path,

Thank you for walking with me into the unknown. Strengthen my trust when I cannot see the road ahead. Remind me that Your presence is enough, and that I am surrounded by companions who journey with me.

When I am afraid, anchor me in Your goodness. When I am uncertain, help me take the next faithful step. May my life be a story of trust, woven with hope and belonging.

Grant me courage to embrace mystery, patience to wait for Your timing, and humility to rely on others when my faith feels weak. May my journey bring light to others and glory to Your name.

Amen.

05

Chapter 5: Finding God in the Ordinary



The Sacredness of Everyday Life

After stepping forward in faith through uncertainty, we return to the gentle rhythms of daily life. January's days may seem quiet, the world moving at a slower pace beneath winter's pale sun. Yet, it is here, in the simple routines and familiar places, that God's presence quietly transforms the ordinary into something sacred.

Too often, we overlook the spiritual significance of our daily tasks, imagining that God is found only in moments of worship or dramatic change. Yet, Scripture teaches us that the holy is woven into the fabric of the everyday. Moses encountered God while tending sheep, his ordinary work interrupted by a burning bush. Ruth's faithfulness in gleaning led to redemption and new beginnings. The disciples were mending nets when Jesus called them to follow—a mundane moment transformed into a turning point for the world.

Jesus Himself embraced the ordinary. He shared meals, walked with friends, touched the sick, and welcomed children. His miracles often began with simple things: water, bread, a gentle word. In His presence, daily life became a doorway to wonder. He invites us to see the sacred in the smallest gestures, to recognize that every moment—no matter how routine—can become an altar of gratitude.



Attentiveness to Presence

To find God in the ordinary, we learn to slow down and notice. The warmth of a mug in your hands, the laughter of a loved one, the hush of snow at dusk—each can become a gentle reminder of divine nearness. When we pause, we discover that grace is already present, illuminating our routines with quiet beauty.

Brother Lawrence, a humble monk, practiced the presence of God while washing dishes, reminding us that love transforms even the smallest acts. He wrote, "*We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.*"

Attentiveness is a spiritual discipline. It asks us to turn our gaze from what is missing or broken, and instead focus on the gifts that surround us. It is the art of being fully present, of noticing the subtle ways God whispers encouragement and hope into the fabric of our days. When we cultivate awareness, even the most repetitive or humble task becomes an opportunity for worship.



This attentiveness also helps us see others more clearly. We become more compassionate, more willing to listen, more attuned to the needs and joys of those around us. In noticing the sacred in our own lives, we are better equipped to honor the sacredness in others.

Guidance for the Journey

There are seasons when the ordinary feels heavy—tasks seem endless, and meaning feels distant. In these times, God's light is not always a blazing sunrise; sometimes it is a single candle, enough to show the next step. The psalmist says, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*" (Psalm 119:105). Trust that the guidance you need will come, one day at a time.

The seeds you plant in faithfulness—kindness, prayer, generosity—will bear fruit in their season. Even small acts, done with love, have the power to shape lives. A gentle word can heal a heart; a simple meal shared can become a feast of grace. The ordinary, when offered to God, becomes extraordinary.

God's guidance often comes in subtle ways: a sense of peace in the midst of chaos, a timely word from a friend, an unexpected opportunity. Learn to trust these gentle nudges, to follow the quiet leading of the Spirit. As you do, you will find that God is present not only in the milestones, but in the moments in between.

When life feels monotonous or overwhelming, remember that God is not asking you to accomplish grand things every day. He delights in your willingness to show up, to love well, and to trust that your small acts matter in the kingdom.

Stories of Everyday Faith

Consider the widow who offered two small coins, her gift unnoticed by many but treasured by Jesus. Or the boy who brought his lunch, never imagining it would feed thousands. These stories remind us that God values what the world overlooks. The ordinary, offered in faith, becomes extraordinary in God's hands.

Reflect on your own journey: moments when a simple gesture became a blessing, when a routine was interrupted by grace, when you sensed God's nearness in the midst of the mundane. These are the places where faith quietly grows.

Scripture is filled with stories of people who met God in daily life: Hannah praying in the temple, David tending sheep and composing psalms, Lydia opening her home to the early church. Their faithfulness in small things became the foundation for greater works. The same is true for us—our willingness to serve, to persevere, to hope in the ordinary, is precious in God's sight.

Let these stories inspire you to seek God in your own routines. Ask Him to open your eyes to the miracles hidden in the mundane, and to give you courage to offer what you have, trusting that He will multiply it for His purposes.

Making Daily Life Sacred

Let your routines become rituals of gratitude. Fold laundry with a prayer for those who wear the clothes. Prepare meals with thankfulness. Greet each day as a gift, each evening as a benediction. Invite God into every task, no matter how small.

The ordinary is not an obstacle to holiness; it is the very ground where holiness takes root. As you move through your days, remember you are never alone. God walks with you, delights in your company, and blesses the work of your hands.

Transform your living space into a sanctuary by dedicating moments for reflection—a candle lit at breakfast, a verse on the mirror, a blessing spoken over your family as you part for the day. These small acts create a rhythm of worship that weaves through your home and heart.

As you practice gratitude, you will notice a shift in your perspective. The burdens of the day become lighter, and the joys more vivid. You become more resilient in the face of disappointment, more peaceful in the midst of chaos. Holiness becomes not a distant goal, but a lived reality—one ordinary moment at a time.

Reflection

- Where have you noticed God's presence in your daily routines? What moments feel most sacred?
- How can you become more attentive to grace in the ordinary, and what practices might help you slow down and notice?
- What simple act can you offer as worship this week? How might you bless someone else through ordinary kindness?
- Who in your life models faithfulness in the everyday? What can you learn from their example?

Practices

- **Mindful Moments:** Choose one routine and do it as a prayer, focusing on God's presence as you work.
- **Gratitude Pause:** Set reminders to notice small blessings throughout the day; write them down or speak them aloud.
- **Acts of Service:** Serve someone quietly and intentionally—a note, a meal, a helping hand.
- **Scripture in the Everyday: Place verses in places you frequent—on the fridge, by the sink, in your workspace.**
- **Evening Reflection:** Before bed, recall moments when you sensed God's presence and offer thanks.
- **Blessing Ritual:** Begin and end your day by blessing your home, your work, and your loved ones.



Prayer

God of everyday wonders,

Thank you for meeting me in the simple moments. Help me slow down, notice Your presence, and find light in the rhythms of each day. Bless my work and my rest, and let my life become a living prayer.

Teach me to see the sacred in the ordinary, to honor the routines that shape my days, and to offer each task as an act of worship. Grant me wisdom to serve with joy, patience to endure when life feels heavy, and gratitude to celebrate each small gift.

May Your light guide my steps, and may I become a beacon of hope and kindness to those I meet.

Amen.

06

Chapter 6: Embracing Change with Hope

The Invitation of Change

As the rhythm of daily life settles in, the new year quietly calls us to deeper courage. Change is woven into the fabric of every January—sometimes as a fresh opportunity, sometimes as an unexpected challenge. The invitation is not simply to endure transition, but to step forward with hope, believing that God walks with us into the unknown.



Change can arrive gently, like the gradual lengthening of daylight, or suddenly, like a storm that alters the landscape. Sometimes we choose it, and sometimes it chooses us. In either case, the threshold of change can feel both exhilarating and daunting. We may sense the possibility of something new, yet mourn the loss of what was familiar. The courage to begin again is not found in certainty, but in trust—in the assurance that God's presence is steady even when the path is unclear.

January's spirit of renewal offers us a sacred moment to pause and ask: What is God inviting me to release? What new thing is being born in me? Change is never easy, but it is the soil in which growth takes root. Each step into the unknown is an act of faith, a declaration that God's promises are greater than our fears.



The Threshold of Change

Every journey includes moments when the familiar gives way to something new. Sometimes the shift is gentle; other times, it feels abrupt. Scripture is filled with stories of people who faced turning points—Noah stepping out of the ark into a cleansed world, Ruth beginning again in Bethlehem after loss, the disciples setting aside their nets to follow Jesus into the unknown. Each story reminds us: new beginnings are possible, even when the path is uncertain.

"*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*"

—Isaiah 43:19

God's creativity is not limited by our circumstances. He specializes in transformation, weaving fresh hope into places that felt barren. The threshold of change is both an ending and a beginning—a place where what was meets what will be. It is natural to feel apprehension, but it is also a moment to celebrate the resilience that has carried you this far.

Crossing a threshold requires intention. It asks us to honor what we leave behind, to grieve what is lost, and to bless what is yet to come. In this sacred space, God whispers encouragement: "*I am making all things new.*" The courage to step forward is nurtured by remembering that we are never alone in the journey.



Facing Uncertainty Together

Change often brings questions. We wonder if we are strong enough, if the future will be kind, if we are truly equipped for what lies ahead. Yet courage is not the absence of doubt—it is choosing to trust God's presence more than our own fears.

Joshua stood on the edge of the promised land, facing a daunting task. God's word to him was simple and empowering: "*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go*" (Joshua 1:9).

We are not meant to navigate change alone. God gives us companions—friends, mentors, fellow travelers—who encourage us, pray with us, and celebrate small victories. In community, courage multiplies. The prayers and support of others become a source of strength when our own faith wavers.





Sharing your journey with others creates space for vulnerability and hope. When you admit your fears, others can remind you of God's faithfulness. When you celebrate small wins, your joy becomes contagious. In every season of change, community is both a safety net and a launching pad.

Small Steps, Lasting Impact

Beginning again rarely means dramatic change overnight. More often, it is a series of quiet choices: to forgive, to hope, to try one more time. Peter's story is a testament to this. After his failure, Jesus welcomed him back with breakfast on the shore—a simple meal, a new chapter. Restoration begins with a single step.

Let yourself start small. Take one action, offer one prayer, extend one kindness. Trust that God honors every act of faith, no matter how modest. The journey of a thousand miles truly does begin with a single step, and each act of courage is a building block for the future.

Consider the power of small beginnings: a conversation that sparks reconciliation, a daily walk that restores your spirit, a note of encouragement that lifts another's heart. Over time, these small acts accumulate, shaping your story and the stories of those around you. God rejoices in every brave choice, no matter how quiet or unseen.

Honoring What Was, Welcoming What Will Be

Change sometimes means letting go—of routines, roles, or dreams. Grief and hope often walk side by side. God invites us to honor what we release, to name our sorrows, and to welcome what is being born. He is patient with our process, gentle with our hearts, and faithful through every transition.

Keep a record of God's faithfulness. Write down answered prayers, unexpected provisions, moments of peace in uncertainty. Let these reminders become anchors when beginnings feel overwhelming. As you reflect on what has passed, give thanks for the lessons learned and the growth that has taken root, even in seasons of loss or confusion. Trust that nothing offered to God is wasted; every surrendered hope, every closed chapter, becomes fertile ground for new life.

Rituals of remembrance—lighting a candle, planting a seed, creating a gratitude list—help us mark the turning points in our journey. They remind us that grief and gratitude can coexist, and that every ending carries the seed of a new beginning.

Hope as Companion

Hope is the quiet strength that lifts your gaze beyond what is to what could be. It is the assurance that God's promises remain, even when circumstances shift. When you feel uncertain or afraid, let hope steady your steps. Remember that God's love is not dependent on your confidence—He is faithful when you are unsure, steadfast when you hesitate, and gentle when you need to pause.

Let hope be the light that guides you through unfamiliar places. Allow it to shape your words, your prayers, and the decisions you make, however small. Hope is not wishful thinking; it is rooted in the character of the One who makes all things new.

Hope is sustained by remembering God's past faithfulness and anticipating His future goodness. It is nurtured in community, in worship, and in the quiet moments of prayer. When hope feels distant, borrow it from others—let their stories and encouragement rekindle your own flame.

Reflection

- Where do you sense God inviting you to begin again? What threshold are you standing on?
- What changes are stirring in your life this season? How do you feel about them?
- Who can walk with you as you embrace something new? How can you invite support or offer it to others?
- How has God shown faithfulness in past transitions? What stories can you remember or share?

Practices

- **Courage Prayer:** Each morning, ask God for strength to face the day's changes. Write down your prayer and revisit it at week's end.
- **Remembrance Journal:** Recall a time when God brought you through uncertainty. Reflect on how that shapes your hope now.
- **Step of Faith:** Identify one action you can take toward a new beginning, and do it prayerfully. Celebrate your step, no matter how small.
- **Encouragement Circle:** Reach out to someone who is also facing change. Share support and prayer, and check in regularly.
- **Grieving Ritual:** Light a candle for something you are letting go of, and invite God's comfort. Name your loss and your hope aloud.
- **Hope List:** Write down promises from Scripture that inspire you to trust again. Keep them visible as reminders.



Prayer

God of new beginnings,

Thank you for walking with me through seasons of change. When I am uncertain, remind me of Your steady presence. When I am afraid, fill me with hope. Give me courage to start again, to trust Your goodness, and to welcome what is yet to come.

Surround me with companions for the journey. Help me honor what I release and embrace what You are making new. May my life bear witness to Your faithfulness, one step at a time.

Grant me the grace to celebrate small victories, to learn from failures, and to rest in Your love when I am weary. Let hope be my guide, and let my story encourage others who are learning to begin again.

Amen.

07

Chapter 7: Carrying Mercy Into the Year Ahead

The Journey Continues

As January draws to a close, the first page of the year nearly turns. The world remains hushed, yet the days are slowly lengthening, and a quiet hope begins to rise with the returning light. The journey ahead is unwritten—full of possibility, promise, and the presence of God who has walked with you through each chapter so far. Now, you are invited to carry the mercy you have received into every step that follows, becoming a blessing along the way.



The road before you may wind through valleys and over hills, sometimes straight and sometimes meandering. There will be days when you feel strong and others when you wonder if you can keep going. Through it all, God's faithfulness remains your constant companion. Each sunrise is another invitation to trust, to hope, and to believe that your life is part of a much larger story—a story woven together by grace.



Looking back, you may see moments of struggle and moments of joy, times when you felt lost and times when you found your way. All of these experiences are part of your pilgrimage. The journey is not about reaching a destination as quickly as possible, but about noticing the presence of God in every step, and allowing His mercy to shape who you are becoming.

Pilgrims on the Road

The life of faith is a pilgrimage, marked by seasons of setting out, wandering, arriving, and beginning again. Scripture is filled with travelers: Abraham journeying toward a promise, the Israelites moving through wilderness, Mary and Joseph carrying Jesus to new places, the disciples following Christ from village to village. Each story is woven with trust and hope, reminding us that God's people are always on the move—guided, protected, and blessed.

These journeys were rarely easy. Abraham left behind all that was familiar, trusting a promise he could not see. The Israelites wandered for years, learning to rely on God's provision in unfamiliar territory. Mary and Joseph faced uncertainty and risk, yet their obedience brought salvation to the world. The disciples left their livelihoods to follow Jesus, discovering along the way that companionship with Him was worth every sacrifice.

Your own journey may not take you across deserts or seas, but the spiritual landscape is just as real. Every day, you are invited to step out in faith, to embrace the unknown, and to trust that God is leading you. The road is not always straight, and detours are inevitable, but each twist and turn is an opportunity to encounter God's mercy anew.



Living as Bearers of Blessing

Blessing is more than a word; it is a way of moving through the world. To bless is to speak hope, to call forth goodness, to recognize God's presence in both the ordinary and the difficult. As you step into the year ahead, you are invited to become a bearer of blessing—someone who carries kindness, compassion, and light wherever you go.

Mercy shapes the journey. God's compassion is new every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23), and Jesus' ministry was marked by acts of healing, welcome, forgiveness, and generosity. To follow Him is to let your life reflect His kindness, even in small ways.

Being a bearer of blessing means looking for opportunities to encourage, to serve, and to lift up those around you. It means offering forgiveness when wronged, extending grace when others fall short, and choosing generosity over scarcity. Blessing is not reserved for the spiritually elite; it is the calling of every person who has received mercy.



Let your words be seeds of hope, your actions a reflection of God's love. Bless your family, your friends, your neighbors, and even strangers. In a world often marked by hurry and division, your presence can be a gentle reminder that God's love is near.

Blessing Each Step

The road ahead will hold both joys and challenges, smooth stretches and rough patches. Some days will be quiet, others extraordinary. In all of it, God's Spirit goes before you and behind you, surrounding you with mercy and leading you in peace.

Adopt the posture of a pilgrim: open to surprise, willing to learn, grateful for companions, attentive to the sacred in the everyday. Bless your own journey with words of encouragement. Bless those you meet—a smile, a prayer, a listening ear, a helping hand. Let your presence be a reminder that God's love is near.

Each step is sacred, whether it leads you into new adventures or deeper into familiar routines. Trust that God is at work in every detail, orchestrating moments of connection, growth, and renewal. Bless your efforts, your rest, your successes, and your failures, knowing that God's mercy is sufficient for all.

As you walk, remember that every act of kindness, every prayer whispered, every burden shared is a blessing multiplied. You are both recipient and giver, a vessel through which God's compassion flows into the world.

Remembering and Releasing

As you move forward, pause to remember the mercies that have brought you this far. Recall answered prayers, unexpected provision, moments of peace in the storm. Let these memories become stones of remembrance—evidence of God's faithfulness.

At the same time, release what you cannot carry: regrets, disappointments, burdens too heavy for your heart. Trust that God's mercy is enough for every weakness and every new beginning.

Create intentional moments to reflect on your journey. Look back with gratitude, naming the people, places, and experiences that have shaped you. Celebrate the growth that has come through struggle, and honor the lessons learned in times of waiting.

Release the weight of perfectionism and the pressure to have everything figured out. Let go of the need to control outcomes, and open your hands to receive whatever God has for you next. The freedom to move forward comes from trusting that God's grace covers both your past and your future.

Companions for the Journey

You are not meant to walk alone. God gives companions—friends, family, fellow travelers—who share your burdens, celebrate your victories, and remind you of hope. Bless those who walk with you: encourage them, pray for them, share your joys and struggles. Receive blessing in return, and together, form a community marked by mercy and gratitude.

Community is the soil in which blessing grows. When you walk with others, you multiply joy and divide sorrow. The prayers and presence of companions sustain you in difficult times and magnify your gratitude in seasons of abundance.

Be intentional about nurturing these relationships. Reach out, check in, and offer help when you can. Allow yourself to be vulnerable, sharing your needs as well as your strengths. In doing so, you create a circle of blessing that strengthens everyone within it.

A Benediction for the Road

In ancient times, travelers were sent out with a blessing—a prayer for protection, provision, and peace.

As you step into the year, receive this blessing:

~ May the Lord bless you and keep you.

~ May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

~ May He turn His face toward you and give you peace.

—Numbers 6:24–26

Carry these words in your heart. Let them shape your choices and your responses to the world around you. Wherever the road leads, you are held in God's mercy.

Speak blessing over your life each morning. Let it be the first word you hear and the last word you speak at night. Bless your work, your rest, your laughter, and your tears. Let blessing become the rhythm that carries you through the year.



Reflection

- What mercies from God have marked your journey so far? How do they shape your outlook for the year ahead?
- How might you carry blessing into the months to come, both in word and deed?
- Who are your companions on the path, and how can you encourage or thank them?
- What burdens do you need to lay down as you move forward? How will you practice release?

Practices

- **Release and Receive:** At the end of each week, name what you need to let go of. Open your hands and ask God for new mercies.
- **Companion Connection:** Reach out to a friend or fellow traveler. Share a word of encouragement or blessing.
- **Gratitude Pause:** At day's end, recall moments of blessing—both given and received. Offer thanks to God for His presence on the journey.
- **Community Gathering:** Invite others for a meal or conversation, sharing stories of mercy and hope. Celebrate the journey together.

Prayer

God of the journey,

Thank you for mercies new every morning. As I step into this year, fill me with hope, courage, and compassion. Bless my path with Your presence. Help me carry mercy into every place I go. Make me a bearer of blessing—to my family, my community, and all I encounter.

When the road is hard, strengthen me. When I am weary, renew me. When I am joyful, remind me to share that joy. May every step be marked by Your love, and may my journey bring glory to Your name.

Surround me with companions for the road, and let our shared stories become a testament to Your faithfulness. Keep my heart open to surprise, my hands ready to serve, and my spirit anchored in gratitude.

Amen.

New Mercies: Beginning Again with God is a poetic, contemplative devotional that gently guides you through letting go of the past, rooting yourself in faith, and discovering God's presence in everyday life. Each chapter weaves together biblical narrative, practical reflection, and heartfelt prayer—helping you embrace change and step forward with courage.

Whether you are seeking a fresh start or encouragement for the road ahead, this devotional offers companionship and blessing for every season. Walk into the new year trusting that God's mercies are truly new every morning.

