

BE TRANSFORMED




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FITNESS

encouragement and wisdom for the journey : a devotional

BE TRANSFORMED

When you think about transformation, what comes to your mind? Are there areas of your life where you are hoping for change? Is the status quo simply unacceptable and it's time for something new? You are not alone. If we take an honest look, most of us have a longing for transformation in some area. But where does true transformation take place? Romans 12:2 tells us that ***we are transformed by the renewal of our mind.*** Then what? When we allow our minds to be renewed, transformation can happen in our hearts – and this produces a change in our behavior. Bonray sings, *"I'm changed from the inside out... I don't want to hide, I just want to let it out."* What change needs to take place in your mind to begin the process of transformation? Read the devotionals that follow and consider ways in which God is offering to replace your thoughts with His truth on the path from status quo to being transformed.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,



Amy & Jeannie

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DON'T GIVE UP- GOD HAS GIVEN US HOPE!

Transformation takes work. Transformation takes time. But God isn't stopped by how long it takes or how difficult it is. God never gives up on us, no matter how many times we blow it – even if we go our own way and forget about him, even if we ignore him and think we've got things under control by ourselves. He loves us unconditionally, and that gives us hope, a hope we can share. Following his example, he wants us to never ever give up on other people. With His help we can inspire others to be fighters and to encourage them as we see them fighting through challenges. The song "Never Ever Give Up" by Matthew West says this: *"No matter what you're facin' you are my inspiration... you're the fighter that doesn't know how to back down. You never ever give up. You hold on, no matter what. You show the world the face of brave."* Let's all determine to fight and be brave, and let's cheer each other on, with the Lord as our example. ***Pray and never give up!*** [see Luke 18:1]

GOD MENDS OUR BROKENNESS

Have you ever been in a broken place of darkness when you felt helpless and hopeless? We've all had moments like this, but we do not have to stay in that place. God is a mender of the brokenhearted. Jordan Feliz, in his song "Changed" sings: *"All my heartbreak fades away like a book when you turn the page. Let me take the mic, go on and testify how I was dead and then came to life. No more living in the dark of night. I've been changed... Put my hands in the air 'cause you heard my prayer, a transformation radical."* Change is just a prayer away. God is listening and waiting for you to call out, ready to mend your brokenness and transform your life. You may be on the brink of change right now. Cry out to him! ***"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"*** 2 Cor 5:17





A GOOD NEWS LOST & FOUND STORY

In his song "Good Love" Steve Malcolm declares a clear story of how God's truth changed his life. He expresses his story in these simple but profound words: *"I was lost, but now I'm found. You pick me up when I fall down. You switched it up and showed me ground. You show me mercy, yeah, you got that good love."* He is speaking of that moment when he invited Jesus into his life, that moment when he realized God was the one who truly knew where he was. On that day, he trusted in God's saving grace, by faith. If you feel like you are wandering and lost, know that God sees exactly where you are and he's come to rescue you. Luke 19:10 says: ***"The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*** That is truly God's good love!

FEAR NOT - HAVE FAITH

Isaiah 41:10 reads: "***Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.***" Yes please! Do you believe God is with you? Do you believe that He will strengthen you and help you? Do you believe He upholds you with His righteous right hand? IT IS TRUE- and this is FAITH! To believe is to trust; Unbelief is fueled by fear, and fear is a liar. Is there a lie that you have allowed to mess with your belief system? Call it out, bringing it into the light, and trust God to deal with it. Let the almighty power of God fight for you. Sing along with Mandisa in her song, "Comeback Kid", "*Nothing's gonna keep me down... You hold my hand... You've always got my back... You were there in my corner.*" Dispel the lie that you can't win, that you are beyond saving or forgiving, that you are too weak, or that you are alone. Stand firm, knowing what you believe and in whom you believe, and let Him fight for you!

GRACE DOESN'T KEEP SCORE

Have you known someone who keeps score in their relationships? This person keeps a mental scorecard of relational wins and losses. These could also be recorded as deposits and withdrawals, and we all know that no one wants to be overdrawn in their account. This approach to relationships would break the bank– if not for grace (also known as overdraft protection). **Ephesians 2:8-9** tells us that we are saved by grace, not by works, and that this is the gift of God. Gifts are not earned, they are offered. Gifts also must be received, though we have the option to refuse them. Here is our example of the truest form of a grace-based relationship: Jesus Christ freely gave His life so that we may live eternally with Him in heaven. We can do nothing to earn this gift, and yet we often strive for it instead of receiving it from Him. Are you engaged in this beautiful grace-based relationship, or are you striving and turning it into a performance-based relationship? Stop performing and striving for perfection. Stop keeping score and instead rest in the truth that Jesus has erased your scorecard. This grace *“never asks for perfection”* (listen to “Even Then” by Micah Tyler), it doesn’t keep score, and it is your gift. You win!

IN SEARCH OF A LOCKSMITH

Whether or not we've literally been in prison, we all have experienced bondage of some sort. It may have been a habit we knew wasn't the best thing for us. Or maybe you found yourself in a financial place or relationship you never intended. This prison may be a story from your past, or it may be your current reality. Have hope, because though this place has a locked door, you have access to the key— yet you need some help. As you long to step outside and breathe the fresh air of freedom, you struggle. Austin French puts this into lyrics in his song, "Freedom Hymn". *"I push, I pull, go back and forth finding myself pounding on a locked door. I try to make it out alone without your help, but I know I'll never win this war. I can never be free without You."* Just like the story told in Acts 5, where an angel of the Lord opened prison doors and freed the apostles, we need our prison door unlocked too. There is good news: Jesus is in this business— the business of setting His children free. What holds you captive today? Ask for the greatest locksmith ever to come and use His master key to open the prison door and set you free. Believe that this freedom you long for is possible, because ***"if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*** (John 8:36)

GO ALL IN AND SHINE

James 1:6 commands us to ***“believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”*** Doubt causes indecision, and indecision makes us unstable, which can be dangerous. There’s a quote circulating on social media that says: “Be decisive. The road of life is paved with flat squirrels who couldn’t make a decision.” Funny but true, right? But seriously, can you remember times that your doubt paralyzed you and stole your momentum? You thought you believed, yet something held you back? Spiritual transformation occurs when we go all in with God and surrender our doubt to Him. God is constant and never-changing. He is the opposite of the doubter James describes. He is never blown nor tossed by the wind. Consider one step you can take today in the direction that you believe God is leading you and stick with it. Don’t dart back in the other direction. Go all in, believing God. In their song “Heaven on Earth”, Stars Go Dim puts it this way: *“Help me move when I should move. Help me rest when I should rest. Help me give what I should give. All of me, nothing less.”*



GOD HOLDS US FIRM & STEADY IN STRESSFUL TIMES

“When the world is spinning out of control, your love is like my gravity. When I am overboard and going under, your love will rescue me, and somehow you find a way to reach me, when I can’t see the road ahead of me. When the world is spinning out of control, your love is like my gravity, holding me down.”

Landry Cantrell expresses what we all have felt at one time or another— life’s stresses can spin us out of control, and we desperately need God’s love to hold us firm and solid, just like gravity holds things to earth. What a great message to pass on to others who are feeling the stresses of life! God says: ***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*** (Phil 4:6,7) Let this message in His Word speak truth to you and be your personal gravity in the spinning times in your life.

LOVE'S NOT DONE WITH YOU

"It's not what you've done, it's what His love is doing. It's not who you were, it's who you are becoming. Everyone's redeemable. Your story isn't over yet. His love's not done with you." (Jason Gray, "Love's Not Done with You")

We are works in progress. We are neither who we've been in the past nor who we are yet to become. We are works of art that are incomplete and in need of transformation— and God's not finished. Our stories are continuing to be written, and this truth conquers regret, shame, and false labels we allow to identify us. In Scripture, God calls us forgiven, beloved, chosen, His children. God covers our sin with His righteousness, and our inadequacies with His abundance.

1 Thessalonians 1:4 reads, ***"For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you"***— reminding us that not only are we loved by God, we are also chosen by Him. These are labels that we wear as His beloved children. Place them, and others you find as you read the Scriptures, over the old labels you've worn, as God continues to write your story.

DON'T WORRY- GOD'S GOT THIS

"Don't worry, just lay it down. It's not your fight. Don't worry it'll be alright. Don't worry, he'll make your heavy, light. Don't worry at all. His love is always right on time." This is the encouraging message of the song "Right on Time" by Aaron Cole. It's easy to hear but harder to accept- especially when we are in the midst of tough things. But it is truth. God reminds us again and again in his word that we should trade in our worry for trust. Why? Because he is trustworthy! Story after story in the Bible reminds us that God watches over his people and that he has a plan- even in their struggles. He knows already what lies ahead for us; he has a plan and he will walk with us through it. Psalm 31:14-15 says, ***"But I trust in you, Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hands."*** Dwell on His truth and let God transform your worry to trust in Him. Your Almighty, trustworthy God's love is always right on time, providing for your every need.





GRATITUDE TRANSFORMS US

There are days when we selfishly want to just stay curled up in bed, forgetting the world, ignoring the phone alarm that rings in the dark, but as the song “One More Day” by Aaron Cole says— we need to get up, take a breath of fresh air, and give thanks for another day. We need to trust God for how he wants to use us each and every day as he transforms us one day at a time. We need to sing along with this song: *“This heart so young, it’s yours, just Yours. All of my days, my hours, they’re Yours... I’m giving thanks for one more day.”* There is a freedom and a joy that comes from choosing gratitude over selfishness, choosing to look for what God is doing in our everyday life instead of what we’re trying to do with it. Try changing your perspective, one day at a time. It will transform the way you live! ***“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”*** [Col 3:16]



ARE YOU READY FOR A SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION?

Are you searching for spiritual truth, ready for a change in your soul and your spirit, not just your physical body, as you work out with us in Body & Soul? Read on! **There is good news and great hope for a whole new you.**

God's offers you a chance to clear your slate and change from the inside out. He offers a transformation of the soul and spirit. He will forgive you for all the things you've done that you wish you had not done, and for all the things you have neglected to do. He reaches out to you, asking you to trust him, to have faith that he will do the transformation in your heart, as you surrender control and let him lead you. He loves you with a supernatural, unconditional love that can lift you up from your past mistakes and make you brand new.

God loves you so much that he sent his son to cover your mistakes and open the door to everlasting life. God's son, Jesus, bridges the gap between you and God. Choose, by faith, to believe that Jesus is the only way to ensure your eternal life in heaven. Once you have made this decision, your new life will start and you will begin to experience the faithfulness of God, as he makes you new and transforms every part of your life.

Take a step of faith to ask God to take control of your life, and allow him to guide you to a new, transformed life in his love.

Admit your faults and mistakes— things that have made you feel unworthy of his love. His love reaches out to you, just as you are.

Accept God's grace and forgiveness. He offers this grace to you in a supernatural way. He does not ask you to earn it. He knows you don't deserve it; he offers it as a free gift.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!"

The following is a suggested prayer:

Dear God, thank you for giving me a second chance, a chance for a transformed life. I am taking the step of faith to believe in you. I open the door of my heart and accept you as my Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me new life. Take control of my life. Make me the person you want me to be. Thank you for your grace and your love. Amen.

Never Ever Give Up	Matthew West
Even Then	Micah Tyler
The Sound of a Life Changing	Matthew West
Grace Got You	MercyMe
Inside Out	Bonray
Changed	Jordan Feliz
Gravity	Landry Cantrell
Heaven on Earth	Stars Go Dim
Comeback Kid	Mandisa
He Still Does (Miracles)	Hawk Nelson
Right on Time (feat. TobyMac)	Aaron Cole
One More Day	Aaron Cole
Cheer You On	Jordan Feliz
Freedom Hymn	Austin French
Miracle	Unspoken
Get Up	Building 429
Love's Not Done With You	Jason Gray
All In	Matthew West
The One He Speaks Through	Mandisa
Different	Micah Tyler
If It's Amazing Grace	Stars Go Dim
Not to Us/Good Love (feat.	Steven Malcolm
Taylor Hill & Anderson, Michael)	
Hold On	Beckah Shae
What a Friend	Matt Maher
Talk About It	Branan Murphy
Life is Beautiful	Rend Collective
Amen	Matthew West

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