

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONALS

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i dare you

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BY KIM MCMANUS

I DARE YOU

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intro

LET'S SET OUR PRIORITIES FOR
THE NEXT SIX WEEKS:

Learn from Scriptures. Explore it. God has something to say in the mystery of the ancient text and it's relevant to your life. He will open you up to what he is daring to create through you. Throughout the next six weeks we will go through Genesis 1-3 together and you are encouraged to revisit the scriptures throughout the week. See what happens as you listen to him daily.

ASK THREE QUESTIONS AS YOU
READ:

1. What is God saying to me personally?
2. What do I need to change?
3. What action is required of me?

so here we go!

the first dare

SCRIPTURE

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

- Genesis 1:1-5

week one

the first dare

BEGINNING

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

God has the ability to take nothing but space and put HEAVENS in it and to take darkness and say, “Be EARTH,” and it all became real. The formless took on shape and substance.

Think of 2019 as your beginning! “Old things are passed away. Behold all things are new.”

God in his creative capacity creates anew. It will take a mental reset for you to take on YOUR new beginning and let the old go.

Let it go. Hands open and release it. We can't start strong with hands and minds full of the weight that keeps us weak. We will start over together.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 1

1. What do you need to release in order to take on your new beginning?
2. How can you step into your full strength?

week one

the first dare

FORMLESS

You were created in His image and his image is in you. His strength is to be strength in you. Let God inhabit your body, mind, decisions, and course in life.

WHAT INFORMS YOU, FORMS YOU. Give him space to form you. Stop the struggle and ceaseless hustle of your own image making and be formless and see what he will create when you allow his presence and authority in your life. Be careful here because God often comes on low volume so don't miss the teaching because you expect flash and sparkles. He isn't interested in making you always feel the "feels" but in Spirit and truth he comes with raw honesty to help you rise. He is your greatest trainer, wisest counselor, and profound teacher. Follow in his way and be okay to let your own master life plan submit to his most perfect way. Learn well and it will pay big.

According to Genesis 1:2, the earth was once formless and its original palette was empty. Our excellent Creator began the investment to make it exist, take shape, to bring to life his imagination of Earth.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 2

1. What does not yet exist that you are called to create?
2. Do you allow space in your life to let God shape who you are?
3. What has God's raw honest truth taught you this past year? How have you decided to move forward with what He has told you?

week one

the first dare

LIGHT

And God said, "Let there be light and there was light." He separated that light from darkness. The darkness was called Night.

From the beginning, "God saw that the light was good." Light was essential in creation and spiritual light is imperative in generating healthy patterns.

Shine a light on your deepest desire for this year. Don't be afraid to look at it and for some it would mean admitting that you want it.

I dare you to say it out loud!
I dare you to ask for it!

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 3

1. What are your deepest desires for 2019?
2. Are there dreams that you have that are so big you are afraid to ask God for them?
3. What are healthy patterns you need to implement to become who you want to be?

week one

i dare you challenge

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

I dare you to say it out loud!

I dare you to ask for it!

I DARE YOU to write in one short statement the one challenge you declare for 2019.

EVENING

Each evening this week, take time to pray about your challenge. Ask for wisdom from God about your challenge and listen for answers or clarity or hope.

This week, help your group by responding to each individual about their challenge with one sentence of meaningful encouragement or a word of help.

I DARE YOU to end your day by thanking God for his goodness toward you and by writing down any positive or negative movement you have had toward your challenge.

MORNING

I DARE YOU to begin your day with Jesus. Pray for his guidance and light on your path. Acknowledge that he leads and you follow.

I DARE YOU to reread the scriptures in this week's bible study and meditate asking God for insight and application.

I DARE YOU to do two healthy things daily towards your challenge.

I DARE YOU to write at least five major steps that must happen for your challenge to succeed. Bring them to the next group!

Caution: if your challenge is too small, trust your friends to tell you, then be brave enough to change it.

week one

the second dare

WHAT ARE YOUR STEPS FOR SUCCESS?

Plot out five steps for success that will help you achieve and conquer your challenge over the next five weeks:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Be prepared to share one or all of your steps with your group!

week two

the second dare

SCRIPTURE

And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

- Genesis 1:6-8

SKY

God created a “vault” or expanse between the waters. So there was water. When was water created? Be okay with asking questions of what is written in the Bible.

On the second day, God created the vault and called it SKY. Sky is seen in the ancient world as a dome-like barrier between heaven and earth. It was the expanse as God separated creation into realms.

The Hebrews believed there was a heavenly ocean in the SKY.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 1

1. When you look at the sky, what captures your attention?
2. What sky do you love the most? Describe it. It will tell us about you, so do not be afraid to share.
3. What do you feel when you look out the window of an airplane?

week two

the second dare

SCRIPTURE

For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

-Psalm 108:4

HEAVENS

Humans have always wanted to reach the heavens. We learned to fly to explore the expanse of sky. We reach further still in going from our skies to the universe beyond.

In his great love for us, God created humans uniquely designed

1. with a longing for destiny and eternity
2. with a driving curiosity
3. for creating meaning out of chaos
4. with the ability to accumulate knowledge
5. for personal growth and change
6. with an ever expanding imagination
7. for creating beauty
8. with a spiritual heart longing for its connection to God.

God has gifted you with abilities to use your longing for destiny, curiosity, imagination and creativity to connect to him and his eternal purposes for you. You were never supposed to live without meaning and purpose in life. The sky is filled with meaning.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 2

1. What is the poet saying about God as he looks up to the sky? Describe love that big.

week two

the second dare

SCRIPTURE

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

-Psalm 19:1-4

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 3

1. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Glory is God's raw presence.

How do the heavens declare that?

It says "the skies proclaim the work of his hands." How is this happening?

2. "Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge." How does the sky pour forth speech and knowledge?

Reread verses 3-4, what is the messaging in the heavens for us that we must learn?

week two

i dare you challenge

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

This week, engage your challenge with blue sky thinking:

What is blue sky thinking? It is a mindset that removes limitations.

It is thinking about your life without self- doubt, financial constraints, and even ignoring laws of physics. Believe it is possible. Dream, imagine and pray about the 2019 you want!

Some tools that promote Blue Sky Thinking are:

1. Allow change and surprise to challenge you.
2. Attack routine with adventure, inquiry and investigation.
3. Awaken your curiosity by wrestling with life questions.
4. Make sense out of something ridiculous.
5. Create meaning out of chaos.
6. Let the world be your classroom.
7. Explore creation for signs of God. What is he saying to you?
8. Exercise Faith. "Everything is possible for one who believes." (Mark 9:23)

week two

i dare you challenge

EVENING

- I DARE YOU to reread Psalm 19:1-4 and look for signs of God in the sky.
- I DARE YOU to start a list of all the ways God is speaking in the heavens.
- I DARE YOU to lay down and watch the sky and study its changes. Let it teach you.
- I DARE YOU to text a team member and encourage them.

MORNING

- I DARE YOU to post your challenge on your mirror and read it out loud daily.
- I DARE YOU keep a journal of your progress.
- I DARE YOU to review your five challenge steps and chart your progress.
- I DARE YOU to be curious this week. Share what you learn.
- I DARE YOU to review blue sky thinking tools. How can they help you?

week two

the third dare

THIS WEEK WE WILL SEEK TO UNDERSTAND SEED
TRUTH: DEEP ROOT. STRONG SHOOT. GOOD FRUIT.

SCRIPTURE

And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

- Genesis 1:9-13

week three

the third dare

From the start of all things, God spoke into existence our green home. He would be our mighty architect and gardener. He called forth the land and the seas and whether there were seven continents and five oceans at the time, or simply one of each, God would make this planet beautifully sustainable. From the soil and sea all the processes of life were forged: gravity, light, weather, photosynthesis, and on and on.

In Genesis 1:11, God said, “Let the land produce vegetation.” All the vegetation was seed bearing for reproduction. If humans would live on earth, we must have seeds and seeds would need the soil and water, the right temperatures and sunlight to grow. It’s the intricate, unseen, divinely-conceived process called germination that would produce and reproduce food.

Seeds have a story and their story is in their germination. There are seeds in you and they must germinate. The definition of germination is to come into existence. To begin to grow. To cause to develop, produce.

SEEDS

What are your seeds? Seeds that are in you that can be grown into something that will produce a good thing and, when shared, can sow into someone else to produce a good thing.

Read about the seeds of Character: Galatians 5:22-23

Read about the seeds of Choices: Galatians 6:7-10

GROUP QUESTION

1. What character seeds are in you that, if nurtured properly, would yield a better result for you?

week three

the third dare

SEED TRUTH

As a kid, do you remember the bean you planted and set in the window? You watched its progress. Two things happened when the seed went underground. First, a root grew and pushed downwards in the soil looking for minerals. Secondly, a shoot pushed upwards out of the seed in search of light. The seed searches for what it needs.

The Scriptures have always made connections to seeds and life. In our spiritual germination, we must have ROOTS AND SHOOTS. Roots that go deeper and provide a solid, stabilizing core for our life to thrive.

THIS IS SEED TRUTH: DEEP ROOT. STRONG SHOOT.
GOOD FRUIT.

week three

the third dare

ROOTS

How do you cultivate a strong root system in your spiritual life? This root system will feed the choices and character seeds in you!

1. Find the right food for the seed.

Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work." He also said, "Man cannot live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

EXERCISE

Read these verses. These verses will become your food when you allow them to give you strength by believing and living them.

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.

Proverb 18:10

The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe.

Nehemiah 8:10

Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

I Peter 5:10

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

week three

the third dare

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Romans 5:5

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Seeds must have a supply of water regularly.

Spiritually, water is your Mayim Chayim, the Hebrew word for Living Water. According to John 7:38-39, the Spirit would be our regular supply and the Spirit would pour through us and out from us. The Spirit desires to germinate your seeds and through you be water and life to others. It is supernatural when your growth causes others to grow also. Access the Spirit filling you and producing the fruit in you daily, according to Galatians 5:22-23. It is the Spirit's work to help you succeed.

week three

the third dare

STRONG SHOOT

Shoots push upwards. You are a seed bearer and all seeds must grow towards the light and bear fruit.

When you worship, you grow toward the light. When you pray, you grow towards the light. When you abandon the darkness, you grow towards the light. When you speak in faith, you grow towards the light.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Three simple ways of pushing upwards are:

1. Have better conversations.
2. Be in better environments.
3. Be with better people.

How can you do one or each of these things in your day to day life?

week three

i dare you challenge

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

I DARE YOU to read John 15.

I DARE YOU to sow seeds of character through your choices.

I DARE YOU to reread Galatians 5:22-23 “The Fruit of the Spirit.”

I DARE YOU to sow good seed and imagine an abundant harvest.

I DARE YOU to dig deeper and push upwards.

I DARE YOU to help someone else dig deeper and push upwards.

Choose which dares you will do in the evening, and which you will do in the morning -
it is important to attempt each dare every day this week!

week three

the fourth dare

Our weeks together are spiritual conversations based on the creation account in Genesis and it is about who God is as Creative Director. We then evaluate our lives and challenges through the Scriptures as Creation becomes a metaphor and the metaphor becomes a spiritual reality. Our end game is to be strong women who dare to be made new. Let the Creator make you over especially in those most vulnerable spaces of your life. Get ready to get in there with abundance of truth from the voice of God to your heart. This truth is what we must know to live and grow strong.

week four

the fourth dare

SCRIPTURE

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

- Genesis 1:14-19

Let's revisit light and darkness from Dare 1. In Genesis 1:16 it reads, “God made two great lights. The greater light to govern the day.” We know it as our sun. There are some things in your life like the sun that **bring light**. My friend Terces owns Gracias Madre, a local restaurant in LA. Last week was my first dining experience there and I could not help but think of her essence being in that restaurant. Her heart created that space. The restaurant is light because her heart is sharing its own light.

God created “the lesser light to govern the night.” The moon's light is reflected light from the sun. Somethings in your life need light. Your pain **needs light** to gain perspective of its rightful, healthy place in your body. Brokenness and failure need light to grow beyond its grip. We need each other to keep us balanced and sane.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 1

Identify one thing in your life that makes the world better. Be bold in sharing it with your group. How do you bring light? Identify one thing that becomes darkness without people in your life and share it with your group.

week four

the fourth dare

THE FOUR PURPOSES OF LIGHT'S CREATION

There were four purposes for the sun, moon and the star's creation.

They were to give light on the earth. Obvious. They were to govern the day and the night. They were to separate the light from the darkness and they were to serve as signs to mark sacred times, days and years. On any given day, do we look at the sun and recognize such distinct purpose? No, but we enjoy the warmth, the holidays, the sunsets, and Sunday mornings!

These majestic lights were to serve as signs to mark sacred times, days and years. Psalms 90:12 says "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." What does living 21,900 days on earth teach me except that I am 60 years old? Surely it means I am ALIVE! If I am alive, my days are God gifted and sacred. We cannot afford to waste the days that are holy but we live to find meaning in every one that is called TODAY!

The plan of God was that the Illuminators would govern the day and the night. To govern in the Hebrew means "to rule and have dominion over." God has given each of us 24 hours every day to have dominion over.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 2

On a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being excellent use of time and 1 being poor use of time,

1. How do you govern your first waking hour of the day?
2. How are you as ruler of your free time?

No discussion allowed. Only numbers, please!

week four

the fourth dare

Part of self-governing that is important to our “gaining a heart of wisdom” is integrity. Integrity evolved from the Latin adjective integer, meaning whole or complete. To have integrity means you are one. One faced and not two. To have integrity doesn’t mean you are faultless. It means you are false-less.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 3

Do you have a “Day You” and then a “Night You?” Are your values the same in the day as the night?

What does taking dominion over your day and your night mean when it comes to your integrity, the false-less you?

The third purpose of God in creating the sun, the moon and the stars was to separate the light from the darkness. The book of Job is a hard dive into suffering. It is difficult to read but so important, and in chapter 12, Job understands that “to God belongs wisdom and power, counsel and understanding are his. To him belong strength and insight. Both deceived and deceiver are his.”

In his suffering, Job probes the chaos of darkness and reasons that God is in control and brings down and raises up, strips off and overthrows. He makes great and destroys, holds back and lets loose. God is powerful. In Job 12:22, Job declares of God that “He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light.”

Darkness is real. Your darkness is real, and only you understand what that looks and feels like. God wants to take your darkness and put in the light so you can get some perspective about it and see it for what it is. He wants you to let it go so it will not destroy you. The darkness of the lies and secrets, the shame, the mistakes, the pain and also the oppression are usually hidden and tucked away and covered with a smile and some mascara with the hope no one will ever find out who you are. The worst part of the darkness is it’s hiding your beauty and destroying your happiness.

week four

the fourth dare

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 4

How do you learn to separate the light from the darkness practically and daily?

1. Know the difference between daybreak and sunset.

Daybreak is light taking over darkness.

Sunset is darkness taking over the light.

Which would best describe your lifestyle choices or your spiritual journey today?

Daybreak or Sunset?

Note: Don't judge people based on where they are because we don't know which direction they are going, toward daybreak or sunset.

2. Let God reveal to you the deep things of darkness in your life. Let God bring utter darkness out into the openness of day. Once it is in the light, darkness must submit to light. How does this work?

Make Confession. Confession means to acknowledge, to admit to. To speak of according to James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:8-9; 2 Corinthians 9:13 and 1 Timothy 6:12- 16, confession means to...

Admit in prayer to God and share with a few people the sins that separate you from God and others. Share with trusted ones all that is hidden that you could be free of.

Share with all your confession of faith in Christ as a celebration of freedom.

week four

the fourth dare

Here are helpful verses that assist us in seeing light and dark as God sees it in the Spirit realm. Light is when God meets your need the way He intended for you to experience it. Darkness is a God-given need met in a way God never intended.

PRINCIPLES OF TRUE LIGHT

1. Our best life is experienced with the God of Light. It is in this place there is truth, authentic community and cleansing of sin.
I John 1:5-7
2. Jesus is the only light of the world and whoever follows him will never walk in darkness but will have an enlightened life.
John 1:4; John 8:12
3. Living in truth keeps us in the light. There is an understanding that all that we do, God sees. **John 3:21**
4. Faith in Jesus takes us directly to light as children of light.
John 12:36;46
5. We are light to give light. **Acts 13:47; Acts 26:15-18**
6. Light shines out of darkness showing our hearts and minds what God is doing in us. **2 Corinthians 4:6**
7. Light cannot be bound together with darkness. They are unequal in relationship. They cannot be partners. Check your relationships. Are you in a dating relationship with an unbeliever? **2 Corinthians 6:14**
8. Light produces goodness, righteousness, and truth according to **Ephesians 5:8-9**. When in doubt of your choices, take the light test. Is it good? Is it righteous (acceptable to God)? Is it true?
9. Light changes our identity and our praises are a natural result of our identity change. **I Peter 2:9**
10. The proof of light is your genuine love for people.
I John 2:10

week four

the fourth dare

PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

1. People love darkness when their lifestyle choices are evil. There is the tendency to stay hidden for fear of exposure.

John 3:19-21

2. Darkness is behavioral. **Ephesians 5:1-20**

3. Darkness causes us to stumble and fall down because we cannot see where we are going. **John 11:10**

4. Darkness is anything that causes you to lose direction and creates confusion. **John 12:35**

5. Darkness blinds the mind and heart from salvation.

2 Corinthians 4:4

6. When we are lured out of our place of protection into temptation and we are baited by our desires, darkness wins.

John 1:13-15

7. Darkness is slavery to anything that has mastery over us.

2 Peter 2:17-19

8. Darkness blinds anyone who hates another human being.

I John 2:9-11

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 5

Which principle of light most relates to your life today?
Which principle of darkness most relates to your life today?

week four

the fourth dare

Lastly, Genesis 1:17 says God set the sun and the moon in place
“to give light on the earth.”

The most obvious of all reasons may not be obvious spiritually. Isaiah was a prophet in Israel and in Isaiah 60:1-5 he trumpets,

“Arise shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy.”

Your light has come and Jesus is his name. His glory (Shakinah: his raw presence) is on you. In the midst of the oppressive darkness that covers the people, nations will come to your light. There is a gravitational pull of light. When there is intensity of light, people gather. You have a brightness and it is dawning. With your influence, give light. In your success, give light. What you rule, give light. To those that are stumbling, give light. To those who are falling, give light. This is the dawning of a new era for you, be radiant. Let your heart throb. Let joy in and celebrate it. You are the giver of light to someone's path today. It takes very little to share your spotlight with someone else. Step aside. It takes everything to love and be light and love in any room you find yourself.

Arise and shine today, it is new. It is for you. It is for you to give away! Be brilliant. I DARE YOU!
And God saw that it WAS GOOD.

“There was evening and there was morning- the fourth day.”

week four

i dare you challenge

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

EVENING

I DARE YOU to read the verses on spiritual light and darkness this week. Repeat the exercise as many times as you need in this season of your journey.

I DARE YOU to confess in prayer to God. You know what to say.
He knows what to do.

I DARE YOU to practice staying in the light. Let your last thoughts be your best.

I DARE YOU as the last act of night to text 3 people and give them some encouragement.

MORNING

Wake up and let it be your daybreak- darkness turning to light.

I DARE YOU to reread Isaiah 60:1-5 and post it somewhere.

I DARE YOU to give light to two people as your first act of day.

I DARE YOU to confess your faith to someone.

I DARE YOU to look for light today. Write down all the things that are bright and colorful and truthful and good.

I DARE YOU to let Jesus be radiant through you.

week four

the fifth dare

SCRIPTURE

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

- Genesis 1:20-23

Everything made in the seven days of creation was original from the imagination of God on his canvas Earth.

Everything God created was good and it was new.

He said, "Let the water teem." Teem is a fascinating word. God wanted abundance of life in the oceans and in the sky. Teem means to swarm. To become filled to overflowing. It is being generous, fruitful, numerous, giving birth to. By the hand of God, all life on earth was created to TEEM.

This past week at Mosaic, Pastor Erwin shared an incredible message called 'The New.' It was a 'stop the press' moment. We have to unpack these truths. We have to get them and act from them. Pastor Erwin spoke from this scripture:

This is what the LORD says - he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick. "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

- Isaiah 43:16-19

week five

the fifth dare

The Old Testament was a message of new – God can take total destruction and make it new, over and over again. The scripture says, ‘He has made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters.’ God pulled back the sea for the Israelites and commanded his people to go through it. The only way out of your past is through. God has pulled back the waters in your life and said, ‘Go through!’

THE PAST IS DEAD

‘...they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick...’

How many ways does God have to tell you the past is dead for you to believe it? God created life to teem about the earth, not death. I sat in the gathering this Sunday and realized - all the people who have hurt me are now dead. They’re all gone from the earth, but I still held on to the pain they caused me. That’s how far back I was holding on to hurt. I was fighting ghosts. Pastor Erwin said, ‘When you fight battles that only exist in your past, you are destined to lose.’

God wants the future to be created in the Earth, not the past to be re-lived.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 1

What past battle do you keep fighting? What ghosts do you still wrestle?

Share with your group what battles in your past you are still holding on to.

ACTIVITY

I want you to see your past battles laying in the dust. Visualize them on the ground, never to rise again. Never to be in your home again. Never to be in your mind again. Imagine them like a small flame you have kept burning and let the flame die!

week five

the fifth dare

BUILDING ON THE PAST

There is a difference between building on the past and living in the past.

Pastor Erwin told us, 'We forget 90% of our lives. We only remember the defeats and victories. When you live in past victories, it means you are not confident you will have future glories.'

We have to not only stop fighting past battles, but re-living past glories. Your greatest glory is only a baseline of what God can do, not the ceiling. When we stop fighting battles in our past, we can live for our future.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 2

1. What have you missed out on in the present because you're stuck living in the past?
2. Ask yourself - Is God doing something real in my life right now?
3. Can you take the time out to create a different future conversation with yourself?

the fifth dare

REMEMBER

To live in the past is to live in a prison we created. But alongside jail sentences, humans have the ability to create life sentences for ourselves. The negative or limiting phrase, word, idea, or thought that we let take up residence in our brains.

It keeps coming back and replaying itself in our mind. It's not just a scenario, it's a condemnation on ourselves. It zips across our thinking like a scrolling advertisement in Times Square.

I've been working on a writing project and struggling with writer's block.

There is a cement block in my head that read, 'You cannot do it.' It feels like my excuses cannot move me. I wrote to my friend for encouragement and my friend just responded, '500 words a day.

The Word tells us to remember like 235 times.'

My writing project is about my past but I'm not still in that past. I visit the past only to remember it so that I can look forward. To remember is to build our future. It's not living in the past but building on the past.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 3

What in your past is a good thing to remember as you build your future?

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A NEW THING

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

Some things will not travel with you into your future. God is doing something new, so we have to move where he is moving. We ask God to sit where we are, but God is not apathetic. God is never in stasis, never static. He is always moving and dynamic.

Pastor Erwin said, ‘Stop looking for your future in your past. You cannot step into the future if you travel there as the same you. You must be made new.’

God wants to make you new! He is longing to do a new thing in you!

When you are made new your perspective changes. When something bad happens, you know something good is coming. You lean into hope and not despair. You choose to give and not to hoard. You believe there is always enough. You choose to be courageous in the midst of fear.

Your choices change.

Carol Dweck wrote in her book *Mindset* that humans choose a mindset through which they view their lives: a growth mindset that believes ‘failure is an opportunity to growth,’ or a fixed mindset that believes ‘failure is the limit of my abilities.’ A growth mindset always sees an opportunity for a world and relationships to expand. A fixed mindset doesn’t believe the world can get bigger and that life must be managed, not made new.

(This book is a worthy read and I encourage each of you to pick it up!)

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GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 4

1. What have you been trying to travel with that has become too heavy for you?
2. What choices are you making that keep your future in your past?
3. Which mindset do you have? How can you switch your thinking to a growth mindset?
4. What can you imagine God is going to do in your life with a new you?

NEW EYES

Can you see the new things God is doing in you and your life?

What will it take for you to see it?

If you're staring at the old, you won't see the new God is doing in you. We need new eyes.

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.

- Luke 11:34-36

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Healthy in the Greek means generous. If you want your eyes to perceive the future, healthy eyes start with generous eyes. Generous eyes are open to see outside their own periphery. Generous eyes know they have the capacity to look at any situation with new meaning and a new perspective. Generous eyes always open the door to let people in.

This new you is not about you. God makes you new to make you the person he needs to change the world. Unhealthy eyes have tunnel vision. They are self-focused. They are small-minded. They only see a future for yourself, not for others.

When is your perception faulty as you look at your life? When you are not lit up from within.

We can call things light in our lives that are not light. Sometimes we want to call darkness light so we don't have to acknowledge it or put in the work of getting rid of it. Are you calling darkness in your life light?

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 5

Let us have new eyes to see the light and dark in the world and call it out for what it is. This is how we have healthy eyes:

1. Check the status of your relationships, your bank account, your time – are you holding onto it for dear life? Are you hoarding your life for yourself?
2. Are you lit up from within? How do you see Jesus shine out from other women in your group and your life? How can you be lit from within as they are?

week five

i dare you challenge

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

EVENING

I DARE YOU to read Luke 11:34-36.

I DARE YOU to think about your day with new eyes. What are you grateful for? What can you improve? What was light you can expand and what was dark you could eradicate?

I DARE YOU to help a friend with their I DARE YOU challenge – reach out with encouragement and support!

MORNING

I DARE YOU to read Isaiah 43:16-19.

I DARE YOU to visualize the new in your life. What new things is God trying to do in, through, and for you?

I DARE YOU to call out the negative ‘marquee thoughts’ that try to get in your head today. Kick them out and replace them with light!

week five

the final dare

“People travel to wonder at the height of the mountains, At the huge waves of the seas. At the Long course of the rivers. At the vast compass of the ocean, At the circular motion of the stars and yet they pass by themselves without wondering.”

- St. Augustine of Hippo

You are a wonder.

SCRIPTURE

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 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.” Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

- Genesis 1:26-31

week six

the final dare

SCRIPTURE

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

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

- Genesis 2:18-25

QUALITIES OF GOD

In verse 27 it reads, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." In His most perfect essence, He created you and I in His image. He gave us his best qualities.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 1

What are the qualities of God we were gifted with?
God gave us His likeness. I want to be like him. God is so good.
In your life, how is God good?

week six

the final dare

INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION

All of the universe was created for relationship. God is without need but he created us with three intrinsic needs and they all reflect his image in us. In Pastor Erwin's book, *Soul Cravings*, the three Intrinsic Needs of all Humans are:

1. MEANING: to find meaning God has given us curiosity, imagination, questions, belief, reason, truth, trust, mystery and faith.
2. DESTINY: to find destiny God has given us dreams, desires, ambition, success, significance, progress, optimism and hope.
3. INTIMACY: to find intimacy God has given us passion, relationships, acceptance, belonging, community, tribe, identity, compassion and love (our most powerful weapon for good).

We were never meant to search for meaning and destiny without intimacy. The first thing God said was not good was man being alone. Note: one thing we are not doing in our time together is dividing man against female. Men were never to overpower women and women were never to overpower men. Not the plan. We are going back to the real plan, and that was that we were together.

the final dare

Our brains might reject the part of Genesis that says in 2:18, “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.’” Let’s rest our tired arms and fighting fists and hear God’s love when he took from man to create woman. When he created her as helper. Helper may seem to disempower the creation that was woman, but it does not. God needed a woman to elevate humanity. It’s all how you see ‘helper.’ Is to help to be inadequate or less than? It’s all how we see God’s love in creation and in creating us.

In Genesis 2:22 it reads, “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.” Their first meeting. Granted they were both sore from the rib thing, but they were together. Being alone was not good to God. Our isolation was never God’s plan. Adam’s loyalty to Eve can be found in his response to her: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’ for she was taken out of man.”

Our isolated selves might consider this act as less, but it is beautiful how God made us join. One coming from the other. It was to make us stronger. This was God’s likeness. One. We are most like God when we are ONE. In the movie, *Doing that Thing you Do*, the band was called the ONEders but people kept referring to them as the ‘Oh-nee-ders.’ Not the original intent.

GROUP DISCUSSION - PT. 2

1. In what areas in your life have you chosen isolation over intimacy?
2. What causes you to isolate instead of seeking out community?
3. When you have chosen intimacy with others, how have you seen God’s ‘original intent’ play out?

i dare you challenge

I DARE YOU RECAP

1. Share the challenge you wrote in week one with your group.
2. What have you learned or experienced in the past six weeks?
3. What steps or progress have you made in tackling your challenge?
4. What goals are you setting to build on your challenge or continue to develop it?

For the I DARE YOU challenge, we will take time each evening and morning this week to reset and refocus.

EVENING

I DARE YOU to reach out to someone with a fear or worry you've been struggling with alone. Choose intimacy over isolation!

I DARE YOU to confess in prayer to God. You know what to say. He knows what to do.

I DARE YOU as the last act of night to text 3 people and give them some encouragement.

MORNING

I DARE YOU write down the qualities of God that he has gifted you. How will you act out of those qualities today?

I DARE YOU to name the qualities of God in someone else – call out the good in them!

I DARE YOU to embrace your challenge and chase after it with your whole heart today!

week six

girls in 100 words

I Dare You Girl to see far off into the edges without seeing
boundaries.

Let your field of vision be limitless and may your eyes see God.
Get perspective from love and not fear and let God's path take
you into impossibilities.

Heavenly realms await your exploration.

There is a guide and he is Jesus.

Walk the path with him. He knows the best, most excellent way
to peace.

He will give you a pleasing view and your soul will rest complete.

I Dare You Girl to stand in the gap. The world needs you. True.

I love you.

Kim

i dare you