



## The Beginning of a Whole New Life

### DEVOTIONAL | MAY 18

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#### RECEIVE

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In **Romans 7:14–20**, the Apostle Paul talks about his deep desire to do good and his inability to do the good that he wants to do. Most of us can relate. We have desires for healthy relationships and lives that flourish, yet we often find ourselves taking steps in the opposite direction. We might make a resolution, join a gym, or find a good therapist and then we struggle to make the progress our hearts desire. Paul's words are as true today as they were 2,000 years ago.

This past weekend, our sermon featured John Ortberg, who walked us through the way this reality plays out in all our lives and how we can take intentional steps to move ahead with God. If you missed that sermon, please click [here](#) to give it a listen before diving into the devotional material for this week.

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#### REFLECT

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#### 1. A Life of Grace-Filled Steps

"God meets us where we are, but He doesn't leave us there."

John Ortberg opens with an invitation to reimagine spiritual growth as a series of small, grace-fueled steps toward God, rather than daunting leaps. He reminds us that we are all broken, but in God's hands our brokenness becomes the starting point for transformation.

- Have you ever felt stuck or unworthy?
- Is there a time you can point to when God met you in your brokenness?
- How did your experience intersect with Paul's word to us from Romans 7?
- How did that encounter shape your view of God's love?

## **2. Trusting the Process**

"Spiritual growth is about progress, not perfection."

Growth in Christ is a journey, not a race. Like seeds planted in good soil, our faith deepens through consistent, intentional nurturing. God is patient with us. Read Philippians chapter 1:6, where we find a glimpse into God's patience.

- What might be a good work God is specifically doing in you?
- God's work in us takes time. In our on-demand culture, it can be hard to wait for the fruit of the Spirit (read Galatians 5) to take place. Are you a patient person, or do you find yourself hurrying along the work of formation?
- What are some "small steps" you've taken recently that brought you closer to God? How can we encourage one another in these steps?

## **3. God's Gentle Yoke**

"We grow best when we surrender control to God."

Often, our spiritual struggles come from trying to control outcomes instead of trusting in God's provision, but there is great freedom in surrender. Surrender is a word that most of us avoid, yet Jesus invites us to exchange our burdens for His gentle yoke—a symbol of partnership and rest.

- Read Proverbs 3:5–6. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."
- What burden are you carrying that you need to release to God today?
- What does surrendering control to God look like in your daily life? How have you experienced rest in partnering with Him?

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## RESPOND

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Invite each person in your group (or reflect on your own in a journal) to share one area where they are seeking growth or surrender. Pray together (or privately) for God to meet you in that desire and help reveal next steps for you to take.

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## BLESSING

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Take a moment to pray through Matthew 11 and pray it in first person, asking God to guide your Steps this week and beyond.

“Jesus, please help me come to You, for I am weary and burdened, and I need You to give me rest. Take my heaviness and help me learn from You, for You are gentle and humble in heart, and in You I will find rest for my soul. For Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light.”