

# MAKE THAT MOVE

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31 DAYS OF DEVOTIONALS FOR TIMES OF  
TRANSITION

MELISSA KNIGHT

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*For my husband, Jeff*

*You know that verse that says God is “able to do exceedingly above all we ask or think?” Well, you were the answer to a prayer I couldn’t even verbalize fully, as a young girl.*

*God gave me the best- He gave me you.*



## INTRODUCTION

Making a move is more than just relocating all your stuff from one place to another; it refers to any life changes, whether by choice or a shocking surprise! Here are just a few:

- A change in relationship status
- Losing a job
- Beginning a new career
- Going to college
- Retirement
- Starting a family
- Becoming an empty nester
- Adjusting to the loss of a loved one

Most of the stories in this book relate my own personal experiences as an oil industry wife and teacher, moving and adjusting to various locations over the years. However, the themes addressed each day are common to us all. Any transition, even a happy one, involves some measure of stress simply because we are pushed out of our comfort zones. During these times of distraction or mental exhaustion, it's easy to neglect our quiet times alone with our heavenly Father.

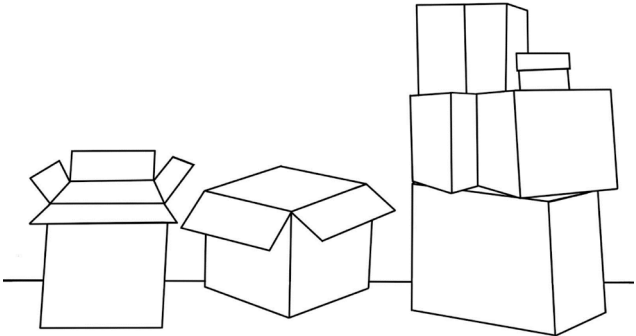
## *Introduction*

So here is my prayer for us as we travel through the days ahead, adapted from the first few verses of Psalm 23.

*Father, You are our Shepherd, and because of You we lack nothing. During these times of change, let us rest in green grass, and walk beside quiet waters. Refresh our souls. Guide us along the right paths, that we may bring honor to Your name.*

*Amen.*

# PART ONE- PREPARE

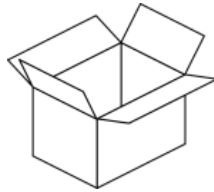






# TEMPORARY TIMES

## DAY 1



My first move as a newlywed was into my husband's apartment, our home base in exploring a large city and making our first married memories together. We lived there less than a year before buying and moving into our very first house! A few years later we moved again, this time with a toddler, into an older rental home in the western part of Texas. Ensuing moves included:

- Hanging out for a few weeks with my parents (in Oklahoma), waiting for the construction of our new house to be completed. This was precious grandparent time for my then-preschooler and one-year-old.
- Living in a hotel for a month (in southern Louisiana), while driving my junior high daughter and high school son to and from their respective schools each weekday, in different directions! We all became spoiled by the full breakfasts and snacks provided daily, and as for the housekeeping service? Yes, please.
- Sleeping for a week on the floor of a new home (in northwest Louisiana) while waiting for our furniture to arrive, with our two faithful Labradors snuggled close by.

- Renting an Airbnb apartment for a couple of months (in west Texas for the second time) while we sold one home, bought another, and survived Covid in between!

Living out of suitcases, sometimes in small spaces, is not exactly convenient. And believe it or not, neither is eating out for the majority of meals! I'm sure there were complaints, mainly from me, and I do remember rejoicing each time when we were finally able to move into our own home, unpack boxes, and settle in with our familiar things around us.

But honestly? I remember these temporary homes and experiences quite fondly. Each scenario brought its own challenges but also served to bond us together more closely. Whether it was just my husband and me packing up and relocating, or our entire family making a move, each of us faced the new and unknown. We relied on each other. The stress of where we were, or where we were “not” anymore, was alleviated by the comfort of who we were *with*. The good, the bad, or the ugly moments, bringing tears or laughter, were lived through together.

And that made all the difference.

**Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.**

*Matthew 24:3, NLT*

**For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.**

*Hebrews 13:14, NLT*

## MAKE THAT MOVE

**Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.**

*Deuteronomy 31:8, NLT*

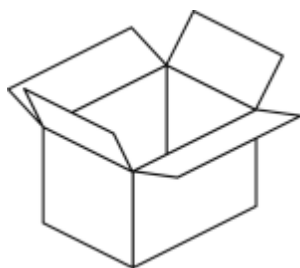
Everything is temporary! Everything, except for God's Word. If this fact doesn't put into perspective whatever stresses we currently deal with, probably nothing will.

God is aware of any burden we bear, however, as temporary as it may be. Our loving Father is not dismissive of our stresses or grief, nor does He expect us to ignore reality and pretend like these conditions don't affect us, pasting on fake smiles to disguise pain.

Instead, He promises to be *with* us, right where we are now. He goes *before* us, preparing for a future we can't yet see. Just as my family stuck together in our moves on this earth, God Himself will never fail or abandon any of His children as we go through our own good, bad, and ugly days, with all the tears and laughter that come. We will be together, His Spirit within us.

And my friend, it does make all the difference.

*Father, help me to look for You everywhere today, in ways big and small, and recognize Your intimate presence in my life. I'm grateful that You never change, will never leave me, and that in You an uncertain future is under control.*



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Have I not commanded you? 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*

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

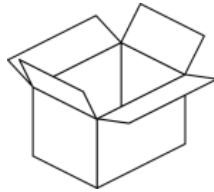
*Romans 8:38-39*

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us").

*Matthew 1:23*

# TIDYING UP

## DAY 2



Years ago, I read the best-selling book “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up” (Marie Kondo) and was mesmerized! I’m not a compulsive cleaner, but I do like an orderly home and many of her ideas just made sense. A famous question from the book became a source of humor for many, when deciding whether to keep or let go of an item—“does this spark joy?”

Now, there are various levels of joy, trust me! Deciding to hang on to that set of dishes your great aunt gave you years ago, that you don’t really like, is fine if you have enough closet space. Hey, they remind you of your loved one and that brings you joy, even if the dishes aren’t used!

But deciding to pack up and move those boxes of dishes hundreds of miles away to a new home? Perhaps multiple times, over several years? That light bulb of joy can dim quite a bit.

In my case, I held on to a few items that I never used and didn’t particularly want, doggedly moving them from one house to another out of sentimentality at best, and guilt at worst. *My mom would feel sad if I gave this away!* Or, *this was a wedding gift from a good friend!* But nope, there was little joy in keeping the item, only some self-righteous feelings mixed with a little resentment as I would pack it up

once again. *See how I'm respecting this memory, Mom? I'm hanging on to something I don't really want!* (Looking back, my wise mother might have been the very first to tell me to give that item away, pronto.)

**There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens...  
a time to keep and a time to throw away.**

*Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6b*

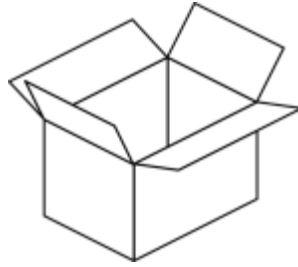
In this verse, I doubt that God is only talking about material things, although it's useful, practical advice. Instead, take time to examine your heart as you prepare for your transition. What resentment or bitterness are you carrying around, over real or imagined injustices? Are there unrealistic, heavy expectations you impose on yourself, causing feelings of inadequacy? Any toxic attitudes or habits which need to be discarded?

Some things may immediately come to mind, while others need time to float to the top of your awareness. Either way, don't believe the lie that you must deal with this unwelcome baggage on your own, and "fix" yourself. Jesus loves you dearly, and He waits for you to cast, or roll over, your burdens on Him.

His plans for you do not involve learning to live with patterns of guilt or shame, carefully hidden from the notice of others. Instead, your future can hold freedom, love, peace, and- you got it- joy! The kind of joy that spills over, quietly attracting and benefiting those around you.

*Dear Jesus, reveal to me any sinful or unhealthy attitudes and beliefs I am carrying around that need to be confessed and laid at Your feet. Transform my mind with godly, pure truth as I take time to soak in Your Word. Fill me with Your joy.*

MAKE THAT MOVE



**Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

*Psalm 139:23-24*

**Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**

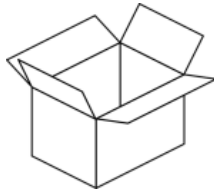
*1 Peter 5:7*

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

*Romans 12:2*

# AN UNSTAGED LIFE

## DAY 3



When selling a home, “staging” is a frequent practice, transforming an ordinary looking room into one that looks like it belongs in a home décor magazine, hopefully appealing to a potential buyer. I’ve had the privilege of working with a couple of stagers and learned a great principle about addition and subtraction.

Each stager walked through our home and quickly evaluated the layout, furniture, décor, etc. The first step was then subtraction. Get all the stuff off the closet floors! Remove most personal photos from the walls. Move non-essential pieces of furniture to the garage, making rooms seem larger. Declutter, declutter, packing up most knick-knacks and creating more space on surfaces and shelves.

Then came the additions! No, I was not asked to buy or rent anything new. Instead, the gifted stagers took stock of the items I already owned and rearranged or repurposed them, displaying items in new ways or changing their locations. That forgotten vase collecting dust in the cabinet? It now brought elegance to the dining room. Take that utilitarian basket, throw a couple of colorful accent pillows in it and voila! It became an accent piece drawing attention to the fireplace.

At the end of a staging session, I was always amazed by how great



## MAKE THAT MOVE

the house now looked! Couldn't I just maintain this state of perfection forever? There was a catch, of course - it was really all for show. Our home looked terrific, but it wasn't livable or comfortable for the long term. When they were small, it was also hard and frustrating to keep my children's rooms pristine, and at any age we all missed having our favorite things around us.

Overall, I learned a lot about staging and some ideas I have adopted to this day. I'm more of a minimalist now with possessions and have come to believe that "less is more" when maintaining a peaceful home.

**“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth,  
and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt.  
Serve the LORD!**

*Joshua 24:14 NKJV*

In this verse, Joshua warned the nation of Israel to get rid of all pretense and deceit, and to serve the one and only true God. The gods referred to were worshiped back in the land they had escaped from, where their families had been slaves. It was essential for the Israelites to subtract these false gods from their lives and routines, and add godly practices that, in both the short and long term, brought holiness and beauty to their lives.

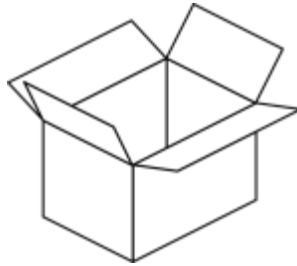
Today, we are wise to heed this command in our own culture where we face gods of pride and pretense, just to name a couple. On Day 1, we read about spiritual clutter we may have stuffed in the closets of our hearts, hidden from others but seen by our loving God. What old habits need to be trotted out and critically examined? What is worth holding on to, and pleasing to Him? On the addition side, are there godly disciplines, routines and attitudes we can begin to cultivate, attracting others to Jesus with the love we display?

No one earns a way to heaven by doing "good" deeds. The Bible is

clear that even the sincerest of spiritual clean-ups might make us feel better about ourselves but will not guarantee our eternal home with Jesus. When we accept Him as our Savior, however, the spiritual fruit of peace, love, and joy begin to develop (among others!). Tended and nurtured by our loving Designer, He adds to our lives and makes them beautiful as we serve Him in sincerity and in truth.

Life at its best is not artificial or staged. Instead, may we build authentic lives, displaying gritty godliness and drawing those around us to the order and beauty of the one true God.

*Dear Jesus, I'm grateful that I don't have to pretend to be someone I'm not, or "fix myself up" to approach You. I choose to put away false gods and serve You in sincerity and in truth. Please show me what that looks like right now, today.*



**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.**

*Ephesians 2:8-9*

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

*Galatians 5:22-23*

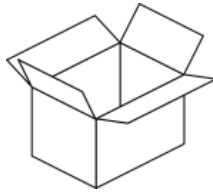
*MAKE THAT MOVE*

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

*2 Peter 1:5-7*

# THE FROWNS THAT BRING YOU DOWN

DAY 4



During my husband's career we have made several moves, and the first one was probably the hardest, looking back. As a new bride, I moved with my husband to a much larger city than my hometown, in a different state. There were many tears as I left my closest family members behind! It was tough, but in hindsight turned out to bring blessings in a couple of significant ways. Jeff and I learned to rely on each other very quickly and deeply, and I began to be nudged out of my shy, "don't-want-to-reach-out-I'm-an-introvert" habits.

Years later another move was made more difficult, surprisingly, by the reactions of some friends. We were moving from a conservative smaller town to an area near a well-known city, beautiful in many ways but renowned for an "anything goes" vibe. I sensed faint disapproval on various faces, and encouragement seemed lacking. One person told me that I should just refuse to go! I do believe everyone meant well and thought they were looking out for our best interests, as they saw it. Fortunately, I was convicted and confident that God was leading our family in this direction.

But it still bothered this overly sensitive people-pleaser! As someone who enjoys lots of warm fuzzies and "atta girls!" the chilliness was definitely noticed.

MAKE THAT MOVE

**Whether you turn to the right or to the left,  
your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying,  
“This is the way; walk in it.”**

*Isaiah 30:21*

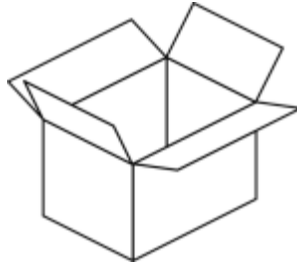
When making a move of any sort, it's natural to desire approval and encouragement from those who care about us the most. When it doesn't come, or there is a sense of hesitancy, by all means take that seriously. Are there big red flags I'm choosing to ignore? Am I sweeping aside obvious issues that I would be wise to reconsider? Godly counsel is valuable.

Above all, submit every concern to God, asking Him for wisdom and remembering that His will never contradicts His written word already given to us in the Bible. Sometimes God does ask us to take little steps- or great big leaps- of faith that others around us don't understand, at least not yet. If this is the case, then make your transition in peace, even if your usual cheerleaders are standing on the sidelines, arms crossed and pom poms on the ground.

The warm fuzzies from others may be lacking, but instead of feeling hurt or disappointed, choose to give thanks for God's direction. He will never leave you, and will show you the next step, and the one after that, and the one after that.

*Dear Father, please guide my every step. Teach me to recognize and apply wise counsel. Help me to obey Your Word and follow You, whether I hear the applause of others or not. May I also be an encourager to others who are sincerely following You.*

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**Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.**

*Proverbs 19:20*

**If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.**

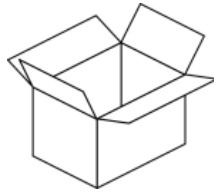
*James 1:5*

**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.**

*Philippians 4:6-7*

# MEMORIES

## DAY 5



I am a rock collector. For years now I have gathered smooth, pretty, or unusually shaped rocks found on mountain hiking trails, by rivers, in parks, and so on, most of which are small enough to put in a pocket or backpack. No, I don't usually know the scientific names of the rocks I admire; maybe I'll study that one of these days!

For me, the rocks are reminders of places I have enjoyed. I like the feel of a cool, smooth stone in my hand, one that came from a river that my family floated down on inner tubes. Another rock brings to mind a steep mountain trail that we huffed and puffed on, feeling victorious when we reached the top! Yet another has white, black and brown coloring. I can't recall where I found it but appreciate its elegant beauty, designed by a Creator who cares about the details of "just" another rock.

With each move, most of this collection comes with me. Is it extra weight to carry? Yep. Worth it? Absolutely! The rocks are displayed in or around flower beds, tucked in terra cotta pots, or in the case of our current home, as part of a creative rock garden. Regardless of how they're used, the stones are never just part of the outside décor. They are personal to me, reminders of times spent with the ones I love, in places where we have been happy.

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.”

... He (*Joshua*) said to the Israelites “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’”

*Joshua 4:1-3, 21-22 (name inserted for clarification)*

Memories are powerful, and it’s worth holding on to the good ones. God instructed the Israelites to create a visual reminder of a miraculous event, one that would spark conversations among generations to come. Why? God tells us *exactly* why later in this chapter:

“so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” (*v. 24*)

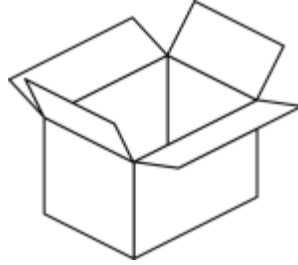
Take time to ponder the memories you have made while living in your current home, job, or stage of life. What experiences brought you joy, a gift from God? Which situation helped grow your faith, even though it was difficult at the time? Who gave you encouragement on this leg of your life’s journey?

Whether it’s in the form of rocks, photos, journaling, or various mementos, consider documenting a few of these events in some way. Carry them with you, both to refresh your memory of God’s faithfulness and to spark a conversation or two in the future.

*Father, You are the giver of every good thing. As I transition to another stage in life, may I always remember and talk about Your power, faithfulness, and goodness to me.*



*MAKE THAT MOVE*



**Let this be recorded for future generations, so that a people not yet born will praise the Lord.**

*Psalm 102:18, NLT*

**Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,**

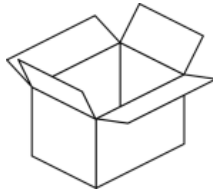
*Psalm 103:2*

**Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.**

*1 Chronicles 16:12*

# GENEROSITY

## DAY 6



In theory, we should evaluate the contents of our closets, cabinets, garages, and storage sheds on a regular basis, deciding what to keep, give away or sell.

In real life, do most of us actually do this? Consider a few statistics found online\*:

- 25% of Americans don't have room to park in their (two-car) garages.
- 80% of the items we keep are never used.
- On average we spend one year of our lives looking for lost items.

I get it! Most of us are so busy living our lives, with work and family commitments, that we must prioritize our time, and let's face it. Cleaning out that closet, most days, will always be at the bottom of the list.

Ahhh, but then you face a *move*, and suddenly this priority rockets up to the top! Or you make decisions while you're actually,

hurriedly, packing the boxes, and ruthless choices tend to be made. Keep, throw away, sell? Donate?

Bam! Decisions made, on the fly!

Now, in a previous devotion we read that there are seasons for everything, for keeping things or letting them go. Decluttering our homes, and our lives, is a valuable practice. Let's add to that by examining a related concept.

Generosity.

**A generous person will prosper;  
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.**

*Proverbs 11:25*

I love the word "refresh." For me, it evokes an image of sipping iced tea on the porch of a mountain cabin, listening to the sound of a rushing stream and children's laughter nearby. Perhaps it brings up a different picture for you- an isolated beach by azure water, a long Sunday afternoon nap, or watching a funny movie with your friends (with plenty of snacks, of course). In the Bible, "refresh" can mean to take breath, to have room, to find relief, or support.

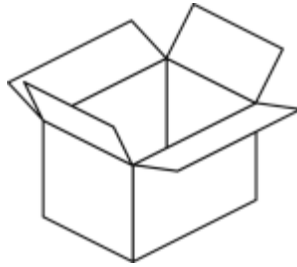
Being generous doesn't just mean donating unwanted possessions or sharing our "stuff." We can be generous with our time as well, a precious gift for the lonely, bereaved, or hurting. We can share our talents- creativity, organizational, problem-solving, leadership, you name it. We can refresh others through our services freely given.

As you prepare for your transition, ask God for discernment in evaluating what items need to be packed and which can be released as a blessing to someone else. Consider who to spend a little more time with, even as extra moving chores loom. Freeing up possessions or minutes of our days to help others will in turn free *us* up, both literally (fewer items to move or maintain) and spiritually, as we connect with others and recognize that there is room for them in our lives.

Who can you bring refreshment to during this season in your life?

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*Father, teach me to be a wise, cheerful giver. Thank You for showing me, through the gift of Your own Son, what it means to be extravagantly generous.*



**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

*2 Corinthians 9:6-8*

**One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.**

*Proverbs 11:24*

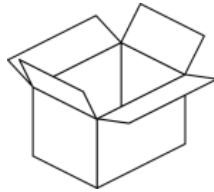
**And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.**

*Hebrews 13:16*

\* [7 Organization Stats You Need To Know - Pickup Please](#)

# IDENTITY

## DAY 7



I was a special education teacher with several years of experience. Now eight months pregnant, the end of the school year was looming, and also the end of my teaching contract. Instead of returning to my position the next semester, I would be a stay-at-home mom with my firstborn, a precious baby boy!

It was a dream come true, but I also cried on that last day of school. (And yes, it could have been due to raging hormones!) Even though I was looking forward to motherhood, I would miss the classroom, my students and coworkers. Teaching was a part of me, a way I identified myself, and the surrendering of that label left me unsettled.

Fast forward over a year later, when my husband accepted a transfer that moved our little family across the state. Again, the circumstances were happy, and yet I felt such a loss as we settled into our new home. No, I wasn't grieving for my former house or regretting the move itself. Instead, there was a realization that I had left a part of "me" behind. Nobody here, in my new community, "knew" who I had been as a teacher. There were other things about me they didn't know, of course - not necessarily a bad thing! Our move was a fresh start for sure, but one that brought mixed feelings.

**So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.**

*Galatians 3:26*

What “labels” would you give yourself? In what order would you prioritize them? Most people probably think of themselves in general terms such as mother, son, grandma, engineer, student, fiancée, volunteer, athlete, retiree and so on. These roles give us purpose, usually dictating how we spend our days and direct our energy. If our circumstances change, then sadness over the loss of the person we once “were” is understandable and normal, even if it’s due to positive choices we made.

I’ve learned that it’s okay to grieve over an honorable role we miss, or a way in which we were previously known. Letting go can take time and won’t be rushed. Let’s not get stuck there, however, but take comfort and direction in today’s verse.

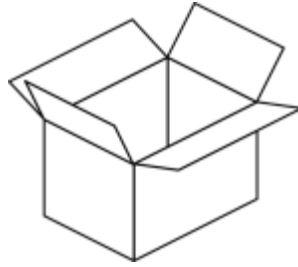
*So in Christ Jesus...* what does that mean? If we are trusting in Jesus as the Son of God, the forgiver of our confessed sins, and are following Him, then we are “in Christ Jesus,” part of the body of Christ which He leads.

*You are all children of God through faith.* On any list of labels we give ourselves, being a child of God is the first and best, before any other description. Being a child of God is *the* identity which will define and influence our other roles, giving us direction in all situations as we seek wisdom from our Father.

No matter where life takes us, or how our circumstances change, our identity as a beloved child of God remains secure.

*Father, thank You for Your presence in my past and present, even as I face a new and uncertain future. May I see myself first and foremost as You do, as Your beloved child.*

MAKE THAT MOVE



Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

*1 Corinthians 12:27*

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him  
who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

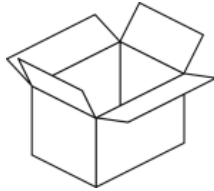
*1 Peter 2:9*

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the  
surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake  
I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain  
Christ...

*Philippians 3:8*

# HELP!

## DAY 8



For most of our moves, I did whatever deep cleaning was necessary to prepare our home for prospective buyers. Part of this was due to the way I was raised- *if you can do it yourself, then what's the issue?* - and part of this was simply economical. Other than having carpets professionally cleaned, commonly requested in a contract of sale, I saw no need to hire someone else to come into my house and do what I could easily do on my own. *Who needs a professional housekeeper? I can do just as good a job!*

That is, until I met *that* realtor. As we walked around my house, she pointed out cobwebs on the ceiling that I had never noticed and informed me that she could refer a great person to handle this oversight. Wince! Don't get me wrong, I loved this woman! Friendly and energetic, with a no-nonsense attitude, she spoke plainly and I respected that. I was still hesitant, though.

As it turns out, life threw some curveballs and I had to be out of town the days immediately before our house was listed, so it became necessary to hire the recommended house cleaner after all. She did a terrific job and all went well, though I still walked around the house after I got back from my trip, muttering. "These floors don't look any shinier than when *I* mop them!" My ego, you know.



MAKE THAT MOVE

**A man's pride will bring him low,  
but the humble in spirit will retain honor.**

*Proverbs 29:23 NKJV*

It can be humbling to ask for help. Sometimes our motives seem admirable.

- I don't want to be a burden.
- I can do this myself.
- I've never needed help with this before, so why ask for it now?

Often we have other reasons we barely acknowledge, if we're aware of them at all.

- I have a reputation to uphold, an image to maintain.
- I don't want to be perceived as weak or incompetent.
- Being a martyr about (fill in the blank) makes me feel better about myself.

When you're in a transition phase, trust me, you will need support, whether physically or emotionally! There may be areas in your life that have always felt under control, yet the demands and stresses of moving have a way of exposing underlying weaknesses and fault lines you were previously unaware of.

Compare it to a heavy thunderstorm and the unanticipated damage it can cause, such as a leaky roof, weak tree branches broken off, and electrical outages. Yes, you would survive these things, but to insist on repairing downed power lines yourself would be ridiculous, right? You would *expect* help, and certainly accept it!

During this season, if a trusted friend offers to watch your children while you meet with the moving company rep, gratefully accept the help. If you're overwhelmed with all the "things" and can afford to hire a house cleaner, do it. When a realtor points out cobwebs, or states that your house lacks curb appeal, swallow that pride and ask for *more* constructive criticism and advice.

I love the paradoxes in the Bible. Pride is "supposed" to keep us lofty and high, looking down on others, yet according to today's verse it only results in bringing us low. Sincere humility, on the other hand, ironically lifts us up, allowing us to "retain honor,"

*Father, show me this day how to walk humbly before You. Lead me to recognize, seek and accept any help that I truly need.*



**Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.**

*Proverbs 16:18*

**God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.**

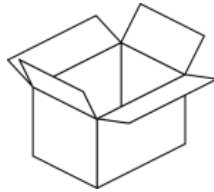
*James 4:6b*

**Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

*Galatians 6:2*

# BETTERNESS

## DAY 9



Is “betterness” even a word? Maybe not officially, but let’s change that one little vowel in “bitterness” to make it so!

After over twenty years of service to a company that had always treated him well, my husband was abruptly laid off from his position right before Christmas. The year was 2020 and his industry, among many others, had suffered tremendous losses as a result of the Covid pandemic and economic shutdown. We shouldn’t have been surprised, and yet we were! It was shocking, and I was indignant on my husband’s behalf.

How dare the powers-that-be lay off such a gifted engineer! How did that new hire, with little to no experience, retain his/her job?!

Then once the immediate shock wore off, other questions began.

What exactly were we going to *do*? Would we stay in this community, or even in this state? What was the job outlook like here? Should we mull over options we had never seriously considered? Who would hire an “older” candidate, competing for jobs with twenty-somethings right out of college and much cheaper to employ?

For the next few months, my husband followed leads, went to interviews, and was given encouragement by friends and former coworkers in the industry, many of whom had also experienced

layoffs at some point in their careers. He was eventually offered a great position with a respected company. It meant a move, but we were prepared for that, and thankful.

Through it all, however, I fought bitterness, not always in an obvious way but in the privacy of my own thoughts. This emotion had a specific target: my husband's former manager. Obviously, the layoff could not have been entirely his fault and he possibly objected to it, but this man was still the one who had made that fateful phone call which abruptly changed our plans and lives. He was the "hit man," and I didn't appreciate it one bit.

**Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy;  
without holiness no one will see the Lord.**

**See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God  
and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.**

*Hebrews 12:14-15*

Bitterness can be defined as resentment, or anger at being treated unfairly. The seeds might "look" logical and benign, such as a deep disappointment in the actions of others, and seem justified.

- I am reaping the consequences of someone else's mistake.
- My child/husband/parent/friend deserves better treatment than this.
- If my boss had made a better decision, my future would be more stable.

In nature, however, once the roots are established a plant will begin to grow, and those roots will define it. Will dandelion roots be attached to a beautifully scented rose? Will poison ivy roots anchor a productive apple tree? Of course not! Roots don't lie. (And as any hairdresser knows, roots can only be covered up to a certain point!)

## MAKE THAT MOVE

Making a life change is hard enough without feeling like someone else forced it upon you. In my situation, I had to consciously identify my “sarcasm font” when talking about my husband’s former boss for what it really was- a thinly veiled disguise of bitterness and unforgiveness. For me, even joking about this man needed to be eliminated. Now, there’s nothing wrong with injecting humor into a situation! But when it involves bringing someone else down, or trashing his or her character, it’s no longer about that person.

It was about what was in *my* heart.

*Father, bring to my mind any root of bitterness that I have been covering up with other labels. As I move on in life, enable me to lay all unforgiveness and anger at Your feet and leave them there. May I make every effort to live in peace with everyone.*



**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

*Ephesians 4:31-32*

**For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

*Matthew 6:14-15*

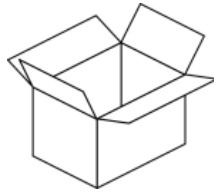
MELISSA KNIGHT

**Do not judge, or you will be judged. For with the same judgment  
you pronounce, you will be judged; and with the measure you use,  
it will be measured to you.**

*Matthew 7:1-2*

# GRIEF

## DAY 10



Some goodbyes are a breath of fresh air. Goodbye debt, making that final student loan/car/house payment! Goodbye, dead-end job that felt so draining each day! Goodbye, season of loss! Recognize these occasions and celebrate them, giving thanks for what you're leaving behind.

Other goodbyes are just plain hard, and there is no easy way to get through them. Whether through death or a transition of some sort- even if it's a positive one- separation from people or places we love is stressful and can bring grief.

During a particular season in my life, several major changes happened in relatively quick succession. First, I said goodbye to my father, who had suffered with Alzheimer's for years, when he passed away. My husband and I were already in the middle of preparing for a move to our current city, and we dealt with many of these details- packing, listing our home, searching for another, and arranging moving company schedules- in the months right before and following his death. I resigned from a teaching job I loved, meaning even more goodbyes. Not long after we settled into our new home, and less than a year after my father died, my mother also lost her last battle with cancer.

During this season I did what I had to do, often mechanically. Care for Dad. Teach. Pack, move, unpack. Care for Mom. There were tears, but mostly I was numb. I wondered, to myself, why I didn't cry more. Perhaps I wasn't grieving properly? My goal was to get things done and take care of my people, which sounds noble, but I sure didn't feel that way. Privately, I struggled with feelings of regret, guilt, and failure, all emotions that can accompany grief.

**For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;  
In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me;  
He shall set me high upon a rock.**

*Psalm 27:5 NKJV*

The verse above is of great comfort to me. Have you, too, ever felt that you just wanted to run and hide from the difficulty and apparent unfairness of life? Our Father gets that, and He prepares a pavilion for us.

Charles Spurgeon notes that, in Bible times, a royal pavilion, probably a tent, was placed in the center of the army and guarded by soldiers at all times. The pavilion was a place of peace and safety, a hiding place from the turmoil all around. I also like to picture a more modern pavilion like you would find in a park, a place of beauty and open air, where one can freely breathe.

The secret place of God's tabernacle, or sanctuary, was a sacred place, not to be entered without invitation. Yet God Himself promises to hide us there! As for being set high upon a rock? Imagine the solid footing, a place unreachable by our enemies, providing a fresh, broader perspective we cannot see from down below.

If you are grieving in some way during this transition time, acknowledge it. Own it. And then, my friend, run to Jesus, through honest prayer and steady reading of His word. Allow Him to shelter you, safe, protected, and comforted.



MAKE THAT MOVE

*Father, during times of stress and grief please hide me in Your pavilion, and in the secret place of Your tabernacle, close to You. Set me high upon a rock in a place of safety and vision.*



**He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.**

*Psalm 147:3*

**My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.**

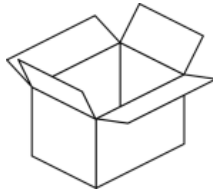
*Psalm 73:26*

**You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you.**

*Isaiah 26:3*

# GRATITUDE

## DAY 11



From each place I have lived, there are fond memories I am thankful for to this very day. Primarily, the people! Loved ones from my childhood. Friends who stood by me during challenging times or laughed with me in light-hearted moments until our stomachs hurt! People who were kind to my children. The principal who was as tough as nails, but who also helped me become a more disciplined and effective teacher. The church family which rallied behind us during a job lay-off. Strangers who became precious family!

There are memories specific to each location, as well. Exploring Dallas as newlyweds, meeting friends for dinner in fun new places, and becoming lifelong fans of the Texas state parks! The unobstructed beauty of a west Texas sunset. Watching my children's baseball and soccer games, and taking them camping and swimming in Oklahoma rivers and lakes. The calm of sitting on a bench by the Mississippi River, followed by the best cuisine I've probably ever had in my life, in New Orleans. Gathering pecans from the multiple trees on our property in northern Louisiana to make pies, and going for hikes near the Red River. The vibrant pink bougainvillea that grows so effortlessly in my current, arid climate.

I could name a thousand more!

MAKE THAT MOVE

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,  
coming down from the Father of lights,  
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

*James 1:17 ESV*

Take a few minutes to reflect on your current home or status. What are you thankful for? Even if painful memories come to mind, who gave you counsel or a hug during those dark times? How have you grown spiritually?

What and who will you miss? Though it is sad to leave behind people, routines, and things unique to your personal universe right now, it is a privilege to carry such happy memories along with you. As Dr. Seuss said, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." Yes, it's normal to shed a tear or two, or fifty. But gratitude must dominate our attitudes, and it's a habit we can cultivate.

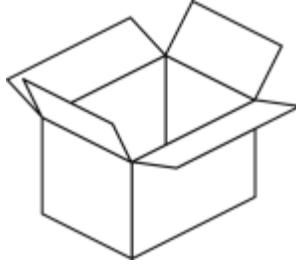
*Every perfect gift.* A smile at the right moment, the way the sunlight comes through the window at a certain time of day, the house that sheltered you through a thunderstorm, the physician assistant who listened and took her time with you, the strength to fold your laundry, pack a box, or even take a breath... these are gifts, my friend, from the Father of lights.

*With whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.* I love this part! Our lives may change- addresses, relationships, finances, dreams- but God is the great I Am, forever remaining the same.

As you prepare for the next chapter in your story, meditate on the gifts He has given and think back on them with joy, even as you anticipate the ones yet to come.

*Dear Father, thank You for every good gift in my life, including things which I barely notice or acknowledge. Give me greater awareness of these expressions of Your unchanging love.*

MELISSA KNIGHT



**The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease.  
Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.**

*Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT*

**Praise the Lord, O my soul. And forget none of His acts of  
kindness. He forgives all my sins. He heals all my diseases. He saves  
my life from the grave. He crowns me with loving-kindness and  
pity. He fills my years with good things and I am made young again  
like the eagle.**

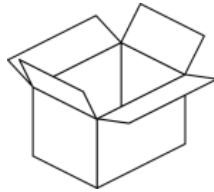
*Psalms 103:2-5, NLT*

**Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!**

*2 Corinthians 9:15*

# ATTITUDE

## DAY 12



When our son was about a year old, my husband and I moved from Dallas to west Texas. I didn't know a soul except for our realtor and felt adrift, while trying to adjust to the different landscape, find new doctors and a good grocery store. All the things!

One evening my husband and I went to a social gathering with his colleagues where I met an older couple, probably nearing retirement, who had just moved to the community themselves. They had left behind family in Florida, including precious grandchildren, and my heart hurt for them. How hard that would be, at their age! Weren't they sad or upset that job changes had taken them so far from loved ones, similar to my own story? Apparently, I must have made a comment to the wife along those lines because I have never forgotten her response.

She gave me a wide smile. "We're excited to be here!" There was great sincerity in her expression because I believed her! Her simple words changed my perspective, and the way I would regard subsequent moves, forever.

This woman did not deny that she missed her previous home and family, but she had enough room in her heart, and adventure in her

spirit, to be hopeful and ready to take on whatever the next chapter in life would bring.

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

*1 Thessalonians 5:18*

One short but very key word in the first part of today's verse has just two letters- the word "in." We are not commanded to give thanks *for* all developments in our lives, but to express gratitude *in* them. One commentator noted, "The thought isn't 'this is God's will, so you *must* do it.' The thought is rather 'this is God's will, so you *can* do it.'" (David Guzik)

Here's what this might look like:

- My family lives hundreds of miles away, but they are always present and available to me in every way that counts.
- That relationship did not work out and I am devastated, but I am also thankful for the prayers and practical ways of support certain friends are giving me.
- My new job responsibilities are difficult and push me to my limits, but I am learning new things every day and am grateful for this opportunity.

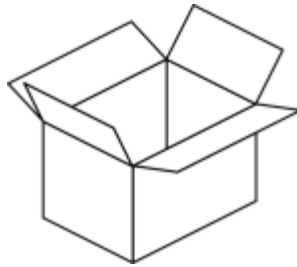
One researcher associated with John Hopkins University found a link between positivity and improved heart health, among people with greater cardiovascular risk factors. \* While general positivity and giving thanks to God are not quite the same things, the principle is similar; a grateful spirit has the potential to uplift you spiritually, and also improve your physical well-being.

What are some circumstances today that are sapping your energy, confidence or hope in the future? Identify them. Talk to Jesus about

MAKE THAT MOVE

them, no matter how large they loom or insignificant they seem in the grand scheme of things.

*Father, thank You that in every single nook and cranny of my life- in the past, present, and days to come- You are my Lord and Savior. No matter what today brings, I am loved and chosen by You, and in return I offer You my continual and heartfelt praise.*



**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

*Philippians 4:4*

**This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

*Psalms 118:24 ESV*

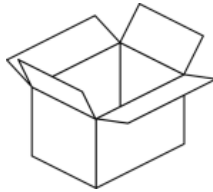
**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

*Philippians 4:8*

[\\*The power of positive thinking: Here's how it can make you healthier \(healthshots.com\)](http://healthshots.com)

# PRIORITIES

## DAY 13



Preparing a house to sell always brings at least one “*why?*” moment.

- Why didn't we paint our kitchen before now? It looks fresh and inviting!
- Wow, cleaning all the junk out of this closet really opens up more space. Why didn't I do this sooner?
- Why didn't we replace this flooring/fence/door/fill-in-the blank a long time ago, so we could enjoy it while we lived here?

Same thing for relationships:

- Why didn't I ever accept that lunch invitation from my coworker?
- Why did I delay so long in joining that Bible study class, where I found so many potential friends?
- Why didn't we ever take our kids to that state park an hour away, which we always intended to check out “one of these days”?



## MAKE THAT MOVE

Some regrets are more somber than others.

- Why didn't I take the time to help that elderly neighbor?
- Did I share the love of Christ with anyone in this community?

Moving from one chapter in our lives to another is a prime time to reflect, and then plan ahead for some strategic adjustments.

**Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
This is the first and greatest commandment.**

**And the second is like it:  
‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”**

*Matthew 22: 37-39*

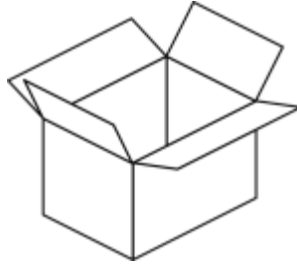
Priorities, priorities! Years from now, that freshly painted kitchen will be a pleasant memory, but not as eternal as the kind deed done for the struggling single mom next door, inconvenient at the time but undertaken with quiet resolve. Teaching your children the importance of loving the body of Christ by becoming involved in a local church will sow seeds of wisdom that a trip to a park, although valuable, just can't accomplish.

So, is it a waste of time to keep our homes looking nice, or to plan fun adventures with our kids? Of course those things matter! They are wonderful ways to show attentiveness and love to your family. But we only have so much time in a day, a month, a year- a life - and it's wise to make the most of it by allowing today's Bible reading to settle deeply into our hearts and dictate our plans.

Going forward, what is an activity you can create more time for, to show love and honor to your Savior? Is there a habit you might cultivate that would share the love of Christ to others, even strangers?

MELISSA KNIGHT

*Father, teach me what it means to love you with all my heart, soul, and mind, and to love others as I love myself. You are worthy of any sacrifice of my energy or reworking of my schedule. May the teachings of Your Word take priority in all that I do.*



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

*Matthew 6:33*

**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

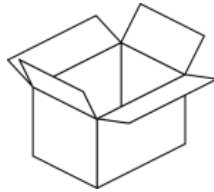
*Colossians 3:2*

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God —this is your true and proper worship.**

*Romans 12:1*

# PATIENCE

## DAY 14



You've probably heard this ironic prayer: "Give me patience, Lord, and give it to me right now!" Well, allow me to warn you- if you decide to sincerely pray for patience, the good Lord might just have you make some sort of move!

If you have a home up for sale, you wait for a decent offer. You might view dozens of potential homes before finding one that suits your needs and budget. Waiting on financing arrangements, dealing with moving companies, gathering documents and medical records- all while continuing your usual job and managing your kids' schedules and routines- can make your head spin and even the best of us grumpy. I think there's a reason why the latter part of Psalm 55:22 tells us that God "**will never permit the righteous to be moved**"! (*ESV*) All kidding aside, moving is indeed a marathon, not a sprint.

Impatience isn't just about wishing a process would go faster, however. For most of my teaching career I worked with special needs students. When teaching kids with severe emotional and behavioral issues, I learned quickly that if I stayed calm, the students would pick up on my attitude and the entire classroom could become more serene. Yep, I considered myself to be a fairly patient person! Until God introduced me to my "nemesis," that is.

He was a sweet, loving teenager, rarely without a smile on his face, but this kid could talk. And talk. And talk! I laugh about it now, and did even then, but out of all the more challenging and even violent behaviors I dealt with, this one talkative student was placed in my life to show me how much growth I had yet to do in the patience department!

**Be completely humble and gentle;  
be patient, bearing with one another in love.**

*Ephesians 4:2*

Patience is defined as the ability to accept delays or suffering without complaining or becoming upset. Not all suffering is the same, of course; reporting abuse or speaking up about an unethical or dangerous situation is right and necessary. In most cases, however, recognizing and fighting impatience is an everyday challenge. Some days, at least for me, complaining comes as naturally as breathing!

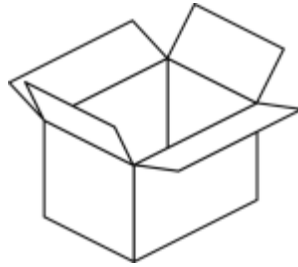
It's the *first* part of this verse that sets the stage, though- "be completely humble and gentle." Being humble and gentle might look like this:

- My time isn't any more valuable than his.
- My feelings are not more important than hers.
- I recognize that this oh-so-frustrating person might be going through a tough situation which I will never know about.
- I can choose a soft, kind word during this tense moment instead of "venting."

Whether facing the demands of a move, a cantankerous neighbor, or an edgy situation at work, the harsh lines of all these scenarios are softened when we look at them through a lens of humility, and gentleness.

MAKE THAT MOVE

*Father, thank You for all the times You are gentle and kind to me, when I least deserve it. Remind me to be patient in frustrating situations as well as with other people, loving them even when they rub me the wrong way.*



**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.**

*Romans 12:12*

**Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.**

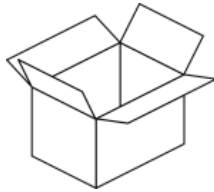
*Proverbs 16:32*

**A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.**

*Proverbs 15:18*

# ANTICIPATION

DAY 15



Christmas morning, weddings, graduations, new babies, retirement, and dream jobs – these are some of the many things most of us look forward to! Other events are unique and personal. I look forward to *any* time I get to spend these days with my grown children, anywhere! I enjoy opening the blinds each morning to let in the sunshine. I stare at the dirt in my garden each spring on a regular basis, looking for those first tiny green shoots to emerge from the seeds I planted.

Before and after each move, my husband and I would investigate family-friendly destinations in or near our new community and anticipate checking them out. We now have many great pictures and memories to show for it- visits to state and national parks, museums, unique restaurants, canoe trips, and local recreation areas. Do I sound like a travel agent yet?

There's a flip side to anticipation, of course, and that's the not-so-positive aspects of your future home, or that exciting change in your life. Perhaps a relocation to a beautiful new part of the country also means a higher cost of living, putting you on a tighter budget. Maybe that change of career you dreamed of involves a pay cut. Getting that medical degree might lead to a significant student loan. Non-mone-ary downers may include being farther from family, adjusting to a

MAKE THAT MOVE

new climate you're not crazy about, or finding new medical professionals to trust with your health.

The book of Proverbs has much to say about anticipating the future, or more specifically, planning ahead.

**In their hearts humans plan their course,  
but the LORD establishes their steps.**

*Proverbs 16:9*

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

*Proverbs 15:22*

**Many are the plans in a person's heart,  
but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.**

*Proverbs 19:21*

**Commit to the LORD whatever you do,  
and he will establish your plans.**

*Proverbs 16:3*

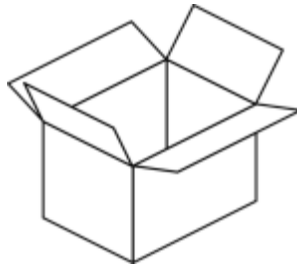
As these verses indicate, God expects us to plan ahead. An old saying goes, "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail"! There is truth to this; it's hard to imagine a cross-country move, or even a move across the street, without consulting calendars, creating checklists, and contacting essential companies or people. All of these things take time and both physical and mental energy. After a few busy days of this- or weeks- sometimes the most you might hope for is to simply survive the move.

But thriving, not just surviving, is what God desires for the children He loves. After all, isn't that what we want for our own children

or loved ones? Planning, and carrying out those plans, is not always the easiest part of a transition. If we do as Proverbs instructs, however- committing our plans and work to the Lord, following wise advice, and accepting that God's purposes may differ from ours- then the Lord will establish our steps. The purpose of the Lord will prevail, or as another version states, "**the Lord will do what He has decided**" (CEV). That, my friend, is a valuable promise, giving us hope and peace during a time when stress levels can climb pretty high.

Take time while you're planning to add a fun goal or two. Build in a day to sightsee and play, or a day of rest, on the other side of this transition. Give yourself something to anticipate, and leave the results to the God who sees all, knows what you need, and loves you far beyond what you can understand.

*Dear Father, please establish my steps today, and in the days to come. May I recognize and accept wise counsel and submit my plans to You. May Your will be done in every way.*



**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.**

*Proverbs 3:5-6*



MAKE THAT MOVE

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

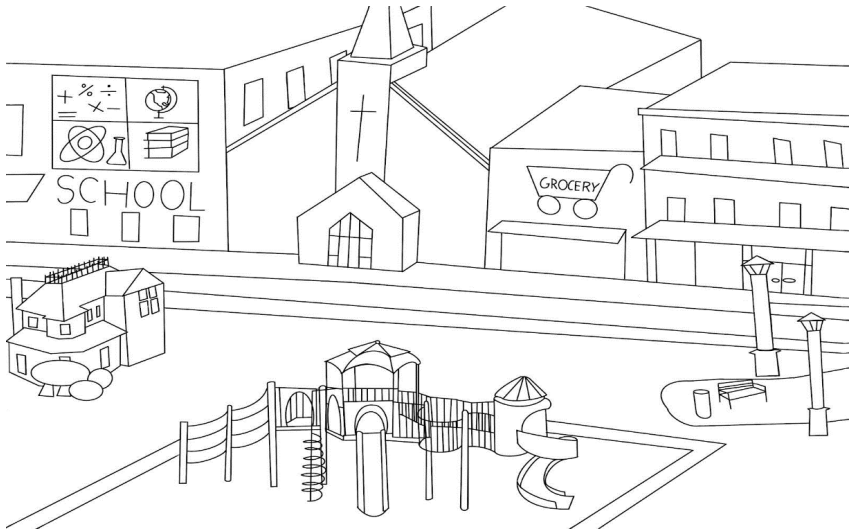
*Proverbs 21:5*

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

*James 4:13-15*



# PART TWO – DWELL





## DIRECTION

DAY 16



The year was 1989, and I was a new bride finding my way around in a huge, unfamiliar city. Though my husband and I lived in a suburb, for some reason I can no longer recall I was trying to find a particular office deep in the heart of Dallas. My carefully written instructions were dutifully followed, back in the day when we relied on paper maps, phone books and verbal instructions from those in the know to get us where we were going.

After navigating heavier traffic than I had ever been used to and straining to quickly read highway signs, I finally pulled into a parking lot. At last, I had found the place I was looking for! Or so I thought.

Now, I don't know if the address itself was incorrect or if I had made a mistake in writing out the directions, but upon entering the building and making inquiries, it became obvious that I was most definitely *not* in the right place. So, after dealing with all that traffic and stress, did I chalk all this frustration up to experience and laugh it off, like a mature person might do?

Not exactly. I exited the building, went back to my car, made sure the windows were rolled up, and I screamed.

A long, loud, primal scream!

It did make me feel a bit better, but when all was said and done, I

was still in the wrong place, frustrated, and with my mission unaccomplished.

I needed better directions!

**The teaching of your word gives light,  
so even the simple can understand.**

*Psalm 119:130, NLT*

**Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.**

*Psalm 119:105, NLT*

So here you are, in a new community, job, relationship, or stage of life. The move has been made, the transition accomplished, the commitments given. Perhaps you're surrounded by good advice from people who have been around this particular block a few times, and hopefully you have a cell phone to assist in navigating around your new physical territory! Praise God for helpful contacts and GPS!

But what about our other directional issues?

- How should I handle my strong-willed stepdaughter?
- What is the best way to deal with my new coworker who regards me with suspicion?
- How do I maintain long distance relationships in a realistic and effective way, without stress or guilt?

The Word of God is referred to in almost every verse of Psalm 119. This lengthy chapter, the longest one in the Bible, reflects on the beauty, purity and value of the Scriptures.

The Bible, however, is more than just a book of poetic words or sage advice. God's commands and precepts give us spiritual life and guide us in practical, everyday ways. When we obey God's

MAKE THAT MOVE

commands, laying aside our own opinions, and follow His eternal principles instead of what our changing culture declares is most effective, we will find direction.

Raising our children, managing our finances, dealing with difficult people, rising above circumstances we can't control? The wisdom is all there. And ultimately, we will successfully make it to our longed-for destination, at home with Christ forever.

*Father, give me a love and respect for Your Word. I choose to seek out and follow Your wisdom in every situation I face right now.*



**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

*Proverbs 1:7*

**If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.**

*James 1:5*

**But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.**

*James 3:17*

## THE BEST PLACE TO BE

DAY 17



Growing up in Oklahoma, many of the people I knew had lived in the same general area for most or all their lives, and they had no intention of moving anywhere else. With their families, friends, and favorite places close by, they were quite content. For them, their state and town was the best place to live!

In southern Louisiana? Same! In fact, one friend who had lived in that area all her life told me she just couldn't find decent food anywhere else. (Admittedly, after eating our way around New Orleans and the Gulf coast for several years, my family tended to agree!)

Other locations? Check! Being near family was always a primary reason, but other factors unique to these areas were also key, whether it was the proximity to good hunting and lakes, or to well-paying jobs and a variety of entertainment possibilities. The Dallas area in particular was a job magnet for young professionals, including my husband and I at the time. While we never got used to the traffic, we still knew many people who loved the area and are probably still living there, many years later.

Even those who are happy with where they live don't usually think their homes are perfect, of course. Many acknowledge that their school districts or civic leadership may need improvements,



MAKE THAT MOVE

sometimes in significant ways. Overall, however, most seem pretty content.

I am not saying this because I am in need,  
for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.  
I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.  
I have learned the secret of being content in any and every  
situation,  
whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.  
I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

*Philippians 4:11-13*

Contentment is *learned*. It does not require beautiful scenery, perfect children, a husband who brings you flowers, good health, a house in a certain neighborhood, proximity to family, lifelong friends, or a weekly Tex-Mex fix (preaching to myself, here).

What does it require, then? How can we be satisfied where we are right now if we long for where we grew up, close to family and favorite places? On the other hand, for those who love to travel and explore new areas, how can contentment be found with scenery or routines which seem mundane or boring?

Fortunately, we don't have to think too hard or read a bunch of self-help books to figure this out, since the answer is clearly given in the last verse of our passage.

**I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

Following Jesus is the source of our contentment. The One who so freely gave His own life for ours, who endured such shame and agony to spare us the same, will gently teach us “**the secret of being content in any and every situation.**” He has been there! He understands our conflict, yet knows contentment is possible.

Can I be at peace even when I feel sad or lonely? I believe the answer is yes. I can choose to focus on all the good things on my radar

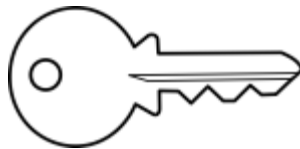
even while I miss a family member, mourn a lost relationship, or collapse, exhausted, at the end of a frustrating day. The very fact that I *have* a loved one to miss, for example, is in itself a blessing.

Here's what contentment does *not* mean:

- Viewing injustice, crime, abuse, or any other sin as something I must accept.
- Doing mediocre work because hey, my boss should learn to be content with that!
- Refusing to consider any “God-nudge” outside of my comfort zone because I’m content right where I am!

So how can we tell the difference between discontent and that “God-nudge,” directing us to make some sort of change? Seek God through His word. Learn to recognize His voice, just as you know the voice of any of your loved ones. Then enjoy steady contentment, not just as a hoped-for goal sometime in the future but *today*, simply because you belong to Him.

*Father, teach me to be content whatever my circumstances are today. You are the One who gives me the strength to do this. Thank You for Your provision, mercy, and direction.*



**But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.**

*1 Timothy 6:6-7*

*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

**Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the  
vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet  
I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.**

*Habakkuk 3:17-18*

## THE UNPACKING BLUES

DAY 18



After one particular move, I felt very lethargic. I would get up each morning, prepare breakfast, get my kids to school on time, and come back to a house filled with unopened cardboard boxes. Now, I was happy to see those boxes! We had waited, not always patiently, for all of the wheels to turn during this move and had been staying in a hotel for a while. Seeing those taped-up cartons stacked in each room meant we could finally unpack and settle into our new home!

Except, I couldn't.

I didn't.

I felt drained of energy, not just physically but mentally. I sat on my couch, looked at the boxes, and they “looked” back at me.

I moaned about this to my brother, long-distance, and still remember his advice. “One box at a time,” he encouraged me. “Just tackle one box at a time.”

So I took his advice and soon found that once I got started, I could usually find the motivation to unpack more than just *one* box. Setting a timer helped as well. How much could I get done in an hour, or even fifteen minutes? Breaking a huge task down into smaller parts made it seem less daunting, and more do-able.

MAKE THAT MOVE

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

*Zechariah 4:10, NLT*

Zerubbabel had a big job to oversee, rebuilding the temple of God. I imagine he may have felt a bit overwhelmed! But God rejoiced to see the plumb line, a device used to make sure the walls lined up correctly, in Z's hand. It was a small step- and the walls were not rebuilt *yet*- but picking up that plumb line was significant and meaningful, something God saw fit to celebrate.

My friend, you might not be staring down dozens of boxes to unpack, but other sizable challenges may loom ahead. Making new friends, establishing routines, finding your way around an unfamiliar area, getting your children settled in their schools, adjusting to a new job or season of life- all of these take time, energy, and the resolve to get them done.

So, break it down. Pick one task and figure out that first step. Maybe you don't require a plumb line, but do you need a box cutter? A phone number or an address? Do that very first thing and pat yourself on the back! Then take another step. And another.

God rejoices with you!

*Father, help me to recognize and rejoice in my small beginnings! Give me the wisdom to know what that first step should be, when a situation seems overwhelming.*



Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

*Mark 4:30-32*

Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

*Matthew 17:20b*

“Go and look toward the sea,” he (*Elijah*) told his servant. And he went up and looked.

“There is nothing there,” he said.

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.”

So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’” Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling...

*1 Kings 18:43-45a (name inserted for clarification)*

## FEELING LIKE HOME

DAY 19



Congratulations, it's your first day in a new residence! What now?

Many people pack a “necessity box” which holds all the essentials required on that first day in a new place. This might include a coffee maker and disposable cups, toilet paper, a shower curtain, bedding, medicine, towels, phone chargers, and so on. For me, a tea kettle and a bunch of tea bags would definitely be in that box! While ensuring you have these things right away is important, it's still just the basics, not much different than camping out somewhere.

So what *does* make a “neutral” house or apartment actually start feeling like your own home, a true refuge?

It's an individual thing. One of my aunts has moved frequently, and a priority for her was to hang artwork on the walls. She and my uncle have a lovely collection from the various places they have lived, not always valuable in terms of money, but meaningful and personal to them.

For me, hanging pictures is always one of the *last* things to happen! My first priority is usually unpacking the kitchen, and not just for practical reasons- we have to eat, you know- but also because I am a “dish” person. The Fiesta plates my mother gave me, the depression glassware handed down from my grandmother, my set of

cobalt blue drinking glasses- these are familiar and comforting parts of my “family”. I also like knowing where the spatulas are, having an organized pantry, and so on. (Do you have a favorite colander? I do!)

I also make sure my transported plants are watered and comfortable, first thing. Many pots filled with perennials and herbs have been carried from place to place over the years, and they make me happy. Not all of them survive the shock of a new climate, mind you, but enough do to make it worthwhile. Leaving a plant behind may not be the same as leaving a child, but it would still hurt! Not gonna happen.

**You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.**

**You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

**You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.**

**Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.**

*Psalm 139:1-4*

It's good to be loved that much.

Besides the big stuff going on in our lives, God knows all the little details about us, the things that make us unique and bring us comfort. Our tastes in art, or flowers. The sweet conversations we have shared with loved ones. The way a certain smell or sound triggers a memory long distant, one only He could know about. The things that make a place feel like home.

He created us, knows us, and *gets* us.

As you settle into your new place, invite Him into every room. With the unique tastes and creativity God has given you, start making the structure you're living in a real home, a place of rest and beauty that makes you and your loved ones comfortable, relaxed and happy.

Welcome home!



MAKE THAT MOVE

*Father, I can hardly comprehend Your love for me, and Your knowledge of all my deepest hopes and dreams. As I settle into my dwelling place, show me how to make it a home where You are always glorified and welcomed.*



**Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**

*Luke 12:6-7*

**The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.**

*Zephaniah 3:17*

**By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.**

*Proverbs 24:3-4*

## LETTING GO

DAY 20



In northern Louisiana, my husband and I owned a property that boasted several mature pecan trees, and I absolutely loved them! Each fall I would scour the ground underneath them for pecan shells, spend hours cracking them and then use the pecans in my Thanksgiving and Christmas recipes! The two best producing trees were in the front yard.

Not long after we sold that house and moved away, I received a disturbing text from a friend who had driven by our former home. The pecan trees in the front yard were gone. The new owner had cut them down! My friend sent me a picture of the much-barer yard, and I was aghast and appalled. Why cut down healthy, attractive trees? Who *did* that? My poor babies!

Except, they were no longer *my* babies. The owner was free to do whatever he wanted in that front yard, including sending food-producing, shade-giving, beautiful, stately trees to an untimely demise. (Yes, dramatic.)

I had to let it go.

MAKE THAT MOVE

**I will remember the deeds of the LORD;  
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.**

*Psalm 77:11*

**Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.**

*Isaiah 43:18*

How can these two verses co-exist? Don't they contradict each other? Remembering the deeds of the Lord, yet not considering the past?

Obviously, God expects us to remember the things He has done in our lives. These experiences and memories shape our perspectives, and therefore our present days and futures. As for the verse in Isaiah instructing us to *forget* the former things, or the things of old, let's look at the verse that immediately follows it:

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

**I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.**

*Isaiah 43:19*

There are good things behind us but take note of the new things God is doing right now, and in the days to come! Think of it this way. When you become a new parent, about every single milestone your baby hits is simply fantastic. He can roll over and sit up! She's crawling! He said his first word! She's walking!

These are wonderful events, ones that we take pictures of and remember fondly. But by the grace of God, usually our children grow and move on to bigger and better things.

I can remember my former pecan trees fondly, but I'm in a new place now, where God is moving and working in numerous ways (and blessing me with all kinds of other plant life). I will choose to be

thankful for the old yet keep my eyes open so I can become aware of the new.

*Father, during this transition time I thank You for the ways You have blessed me in the past. Thank You also for the current things You are doing in this very moment, and for the new developments I have yet to see.*



**Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

*Philippians 3:13-14*

**Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.**

*Proverbs 4:25-26*

**He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.**

*1 Chronicles 16:15-16*

# INVEST

## DAY 21



Years ago, when I was a young mother, another mom from the church my family attended called me up unexpectedly one afternoon and asked if I could go with her to a movie. Like, that night! Spur of the moment!

I didn't know this other mom that well, I needed to check with my husband to see if he had plans, I had to fix supper and take care of my toddler, blah, blah. All those things were valid, but they could easily have been dealt with. Mainly, it just seemed inconvenient, I'm more of a planner than a spontaneous type, and I didn't want to put forth any effort that night to invest in a new friendship. I was, and still am, shy, and my social tank was low. I told her no, maybe another time. The other mom accepted this graciously, but I could hear in her voice that she was a little surprised, a little disappointed.

I never did get to know her that well, and we didn't spend any time together outside of church that I can recall. My family moved to another state not too long after that, and her family probably moved away too. I don't even recall her name.

So why do I still remember that phone call, after twenty-something years?

In the next almost-three decades, I learned to say "yes" more to

the work of making and maintaining a friendship. I'm honored by those who let me into their circle when from all appearances they don't "need" another friend. I'm beyond grateful for those friends who live hundreds of miles away who will text me randomly to share something funny or say that they're praying for me! I appreciate the harder friendships, too, where we don't agree on some things and I'm challenged to not just listen, but really hear their hearts.

As for that other mom, I still wonder if she just needed a break, and a friend to share it with, and I closed the door in her face. Ouch.

Now, it's okay to say "no," And it was okay for me to tell that other mom "maybe another time," it really was. But I wish I hadn't, because now she's the potential buddy who "got away." Who knows what she and I might be talking about now, as empty nesters?

**Cast your bread upon the waters,  
For you will find it after many days.**

*Ecclesiastes II:1 ESV*

The image in this verse probably refers to one of two things. In Old Testament times, someone who invested (cast his bread) in a shipping venture (the waters) might have a lengthy wait before that ship returned, bringing a profit. Others think this verse is about showing generosity to the point of seeming wasteful (casting bread on *water!*) for a reward you can't yet see.

Either way, investment is the main idea. It takes effort, energy, and time to begin, build, and maintain a relationship. Such sacrifices are difficult to make! I can almost see Jesus nodding up and down, however, agreeing with a smile. After all, who could know more about sacrifice? His heavenly home, His place right beside the Father, His very life- all given freely for people who might or might not believe or accept Him. He invested *everything*.

When it comes to making new friends and deepening relationships, may we choose to cast the bread we have in whatever waters we find ourselves right now. Let Him handle the results...

MAKE THAT MOVE

...especially if, and when, it takes a while to see them.

*Father, thank You for the precious relationships I already have, and give me wisdom to maintain them meaningfully. Help me to also build new friendships! I commit my time, energy, and resources to You. Guide me in investing them wisely.*



**Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.**

**For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**

*Luke 6:38*

**Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.**

*Matthew 10:8*

**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.**

*2 Corinthians 9:6*

## MEET THE NEIGHBORS

DAY 22



Soon after moving to Louisiana, a sweet elderly neighbor brought over a blueberry lemon cake, welcoming us to the neighborhood! Yum! In Texas, the busy young mom next door introduced herself and laughed, saying something like “If I was a good neighbor I’d bring over a casserole, right? Not happening!” As a sometimes-stressed young mother myself, we bonded immediately.

Then there were the not-so-great situations. One family down the street from us had girls close to my own seven-year-old daughter’s age. These young ones were polite yet mischievous, a rather cute trait until it eventually inched over into the devious. When I overheard one of the sisters telling my daughter “just lie to your mom!” I had to get stern and become more cautious about those friendships. Another family, years later, had a teenage boy with many friends, all of whom seemed to park on the street in front of *our* house in their very loud trucks, revving them mightily even late at night! Yay.

The truth is, there are no guarantees when it comes to neighbors. No amount of money, spent on a lavish house in a grand neighborhood, will ensure that you’ll hit the neighbor jackpot, becoming the best of friends or even willing to chat over the fence once in awhile.



## MAKE THAT MOVE

But here I am, in a new neighborhood, and there they are, my neighbors. How do I start? What is my responsibility?

**Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
This is the first and greatest commandment.  
And the second is like it:  
Love your neighbor as yourself.”**

*Matthew 22:37-39*

Before one move, our pastor told my husband and me that “God already knows your future address,” reassuring us that God is in control at all times, not just the here and now. Those words also meant that God already knew who our new neighbors would be.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that *any* people we encounter are our neighbors, whether they live near us or not and no matter what their backgrounds might be. And we are to love them as ourselves!

For those noisy teenagers, God nudged me to pray. When I heard those engines revving, I took a minute to ask for their safety and bless their families and futures. Yes, the situation was irritating, and they could have been more considerate. But taking their needs to God calmed *me* down, putting things into better perspective. How would I want my own son to be treated?

Loving your neighbor doesn't always mean you have to give, or get, a casserole. It might look or sound like this:

- “Sure, I can retrieve that delivery on your porch/water your plants/keep an eye on your house while you're gone.”
- Pick up the trash strewn across their yard, when their dumpster is accidentally knocked over while they are at work.
- Pray for that neighbor, whether he or she is nice, friendly, cranky, unsmiling, or simply indifferent.

Another verse sums it up quite well-

**Do to others as you would have them do to you.**

*Luke 6:31*

Be *that* neighbor.

*Father, show me how to love each person I encounter today in ways that will resonate with him or her. Teach me to treat others as I want to be treated, with respect and kindness.*



**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**

*1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

**The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself”. Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

*Romans 13:9-10*

*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**

*Philippians 2:3-7*

# PRUNING

DAY 23



In our last move, my husband and I decided to downsize, as empty nesters. Our house is still roomy and comfortable but has a smaller square footage which we enjoy. Before we moved in, however, it was clear that all the furniture we had collected over the years would simply be too much.

Now, storage facilities do have their benefits! For us, though, the cost of storing extra furniture, possibly for years, didn't make sense. So, we donated couches and bedframes, sold a dining room set and buffet table, and gave away several more items. A couple of years after the fact, do I miss any of that furniture that we used and enjoyed for so long? I hardly ever think about it.

Once we moved into our current house the "fun" still awaited us, of course. Like puzzle pieces, we had to decide what went where and arrange the furniture we had kept in a way that was both practical and hopefully attractive. We wound up getting rid of even more stuff!

Other things about our previous home- our "old" life- were evaluated as well. In our new community, would I apply for another teaching position? Would we look for a new church home similar to the one we had been attending? What parts of our routines or habits did we intend to keep, or need to discard, in a new environment?

MAKE THAT MOVE

**I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.  
Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;  
and every branch that bears fruit He prunes,  
that it may bear more fruit.**

*John 15:1 NKJV*

Have you heard the expression “all vine and no taters?” Think of a flashy politician with big promises, unkept. Or a stately armchair with gorgeous upholstery, which no one wants to sit in because it’s so uncomfortable!

Or how about “wither on the vine?” Perhaps you planned a home do-it-yourself project that never quite got finished, or even started, because of interruptions, lack of funds, or changes in priorities.

Our Master Gardener prunes the circumstances in our lives out of kindness and concern for our growth and well-being, wanting us to be spiritually fruitful. He is unhurried, and careful.

**“...every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”**

*But I am fruitful, Lord, right where I am, just as things are! Why the changes? Why ask me to leave a location that is just fine? Or give up a role that has been pleasing to You?*

“Airo”, the Greek word for “prunes,” is translated as “cleanse” in other places. A gardener cleans up a vine, even one already bearing fruit, so it can produce *more* fruit. The “suckers” which will never bear fruit are cut off. Jesus is thus concerned about our spiritual purity as well as our fruitfulness.

Also note that the Greek word for “takes away” can be translated “lifts up.” In a vineyard, an unfruitful branch was commonly lifted off the ground for it to receive more sun. I love the idea that God will tenderly take me away, lifting me up so that I can receive more nourishment. Yes, it will move me from where I am, nice and comfortable,

but will also mean that I am enabled to do what I was created for—bearing fruit for the kingdom of God.

*Dear Master Gardener, how I want to stay close to Jesus, my true Vine! Help me to recognize pruning for what it really is, a life-giving process, instead of regarding it as merely a painful loss. Enable me to become more fruitful for Your kingdom.*



**Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.**

*Job 5:17-18*

Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

*Hebrews 12:9-11*

**Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.**

*1 Corinthians 9:25*

# REGRETS

## DAY 24



Perhaps you've experienced buyer's remorse, that feeling of regret or outright anxiety about the purchase you just made. Unlike a pair of shoes or a streaming service, it's difficult to "return" a house or cancel a contract, once those papers have been signed!

- I'll be eating peanut butter and ramen for years because now I can't afford anything else!
- We should have bought in another school district.
- If I had just waited a little longer, I would have found my dream home.

There's remorse in other situations, as well.

- My new co-workers don't like me. I should have stayed where I felt comfortable.
- We were so excited about getting married, and now we're both unhappy.
- I should have spent more time with my dad before he died.

How do you handle the nagging feeling that you made a mistake? Is it best to try to exit the situation altogether, try to “fix” it somehow, or just hope for the best and ignore those negative voices in your head? Before leaping into action of some sort, a good place to start is with a healthy and calm frame of mind.

So, consider this- what is the *opposite* of regret?  
Peace of mind.

**You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you,  
because he trusts in You.**

*Isaiah 26:3 ESV*

During the difficult situations described above, peace is still entirely possible because God says so! He is clear on how that peace is attained - keeping our mind stayed on Him, committed and focused in trust. While there is no one-size-fits-all medicine that rids us instantly of regrets, there are two daily practices that help us fix our attention where it belongs, on Jesus:

- Reading or listening to God’s word
- Praying, giving God thanks and seeking His wisdom

Whether regret overshadows a move, a struggling marriage, or any other messy situation, begin by getting things into perspective first. Search the Word with a heart willing to accept and apply what you learn. Tell God everything, all your hopes and fears! Learn to know His voice.

Then do the next right thing. For most of life, we don’t, and can’t, figure out the entire game plan of a situation from start to finish. We go with the facts in front of us, with the light of God’s Word directing our path, in that moment.

Is sadness over a decision ever a *good* thing, though?



MAKE THAT MOVE

**For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow.**

**But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.**

*2 Corinthians 7:10 NLT*

We need to experience the kind of sorrow that forces us to acknowledge when we have been foolish and sinned. Once we repent, or turn away from our sins, and choose to follow Jesus, we are then free. Free! We're able to think clearly and make godly, life-giving decisions.

Worldly sorrow is "me" focused - on *my* bad feelings, damage to *my* reputation, or the threat of consequences I dread. In contrast, godly sorrow inspires change and hope through Christ.

*Father, give me godly sorrow over anything in my life that grieves You. I repent of that thing and ask You to forgive me. For each of my other concerns, I will keep my mind focused on You alone, and trust You to guide me.*



**Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,**

*Acts 3:19*

MELISSA KNIGHT

**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.**

*Philippians 4:6-7*

**Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.**

*Psalms 25:4*

# LONELINESS

DAY 25



We had just moved, I didn't know a soul except for a realtor, and I was lonely. I distinctly remember being contacted by an Avon representative (back in the day when they went door to door and made phone calls) and feeling overjoyed to simply talk to someone!

My mother used to feel lonely, as a caregiver for my father who had Alzheimer's. Various family members and friends made sure to check on her and give help as they could, yet she still grieved the loss of sharing life, making decisions, and talking over things with her best friend, my dad. Though present physically, he was "gone" significantly in so many other ways.

Survey data shows that over half of Americans often feel like no one in their life knows them well. \* Think about that for a minute—that's about one out of two people you will encounter today! Having lots of people around you doesn't always mean being less lonely, either. At the time of this writing, Florida is the third most populated state, yet according to research it is ranked the second most lonely.

The potential effects of loneliness are sobering as well, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, depression, and anxiety, among other issues.

Loneliness is something most of us will deal with at one time or another, but how?

**Help, Lord, for no one is faithful anymore;  
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.**

*Psalm 12:1*

**How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?**

*Psalm 13:1*

**Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.  
Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish.**

*Psalm 25:16-17*

Now *that's* loneliness, with a side of cynicism and despair. Who was the writer? David.

The shepherd-boy-turned-king spent a lot of time on the run from those who wanted him dead. Betrayed by his own son, David knew what it meant to suffer from the unique kind of loneliness that comes when someone you love dearly rejects you, to the point of even wishing you harm.

No amount of “just snap out of it” efforts or “join a club” advice will relieve that kind of emotional heaviness. I’m grateful that God, in His great wisdom, made sure that David’s most personal thoughts and gut-wrenching cries were written down for us to read, so many years later. How did David handle this loneliness? Did he take up a new hobby, or try to meet more people? There’s nothing wrong with those things. Or did he isolate himself even more, in his pain?

MAKE THAT MOVE

**But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.**

**I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me.**

*Psalm 13:5-6*

David turned to the Lord Himself. Notice those verbs- he chose to trust, rejoice, and sing, despite his pain, reminding himself that God had been good to him. One of the things I love most about this verse is that it's at the end of the same chapter where David felt that God had forgotten him. That's a tremendous change in perspective, in a short psalm!

It's okay to feel lonely. David did, and he expressed it honestly. Yet he also chose to dwell on the facts of God's faithfulness, and we can choose to do that, too.

*Father, being in a new place or situation feels lonely. Please bring new friends alongside me, but even more than that, may I trust, rejoice, and even sing of your faithfulness to me. Teach me to deal with loneliness in healthy ways.*



**A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.**

*Psalm 68:5-6*

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Romans 8:38-39*

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me”.

*Genesis 16:13*

\*[49 Loneliness Statistics: How Many People are Lonely? \(crossrivertherapy.com\)](http://crossrivertherapy.com)

## PURPOSE

DAY 26



Many of us have “aha” moments when we look back on a phase in our lives that finally makes sense, or we eventually recognize the growth we experienced during a challenging time. For me, many of those moments involve a location.

As mentioned before, moving far from family right after my wedding helped my husband and me to lean on each other, tightening up our marriage. Other moves and job changes helped me to mature and grow significantly as a teacher, get involved in various ministries I might never have considered otherwise, and enjoy proximity to family at a key time in our children’s lives.

Were *any* of those moves easy? Not a single one. Was I concerned about the “rightness” of some of them? Oh, yes. Were any of them mistakes? Looking back, the answer is an honest “no.” Every move had a purpose, not that we could necessarily see at the time, but in retrospect.

I recently chatted with a new friend in my current community, a woman of faith, who is struggling with this. As she confided, “I know God has a reason for me being here, but I wish He would *tell* me!”

**Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem.**

**The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns.**

**The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.**

*Nehemiah II:1-2*

Imagine your family being selected to move to a new location, by drawing names! And *not* a desirable location, at that!

At that time in history, Jerusalem was sparsely populated. After years of neglect due to the city being conquered and the citizens forced from their homes, efforts had been successful in rebuilding the broken-down walls, as well as the Temple. But the city needed more people to strengthen defense and build up resources. Apparently, not many wanted to take it for the team!

It meant giving up their existing homes and land, leaving family and friends, and uprooting or transporting their livelihoods, all reasonable concerns. Not only that, the people living in Jerusalem knew they would have a target on their backs; there was no shortage of enemies unhappy to see Jerusalem emerging from the ruins.

And yet, some volunteered! Knowing the risks and sacrifices, they appeared to have a positive, pioneering mindset. Even those who were selected by the lottery-type system, and not by their own choice, still submitted and moved to Jerusalem in obedience. Perhaps they recognized that they were part of a master plan, a story being written that was farther-reaching than their own individual lives.

Do you recognize yourself yet?

Whether God asks you to move somewhere or to remain where you are, there is a purpose in where you live or work or in that season of life you're in right now, challenging though it may be. Like the Jewish people in Nehemiah's day, you too are a part of God's remarkable story. Among all the daily details and conflicts, the bigger picture can be hard to detect. One day, however, all those dangling plot lines will be resolved!



MAKE THAT MOVE

*Father, as I adjust to a new home or situation, I trust that You will use me right where I am. Open my eyes to opportunities around me, and may I consciously establish the building of Your kingdom as my first priority.*



**For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

*Ephesians 2:10*

**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

*Romans 8:28*

**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**

*Ephesians 5:15-16*

## COMPARISON

DAY 27



My husband and two of his coworkers had just returned from a professional conference in a large city hundreds of miles away, in another part of our state. I picked them all up at the airport and our conversation went something like this:

Coworker 1: (*looking outside the car window*)- It was so *green* there. With trees. It's so... dry, here. You don't think about it much until you've been out of town and come back. Then you really *notice*.

Coworker 2: It rained while we were there! My daughter (*teenager*) loves the rain. She asked me the other day if we will ever move.

Me: Well, it did rain here too, with high winds at the same time! (*which whipped up all the dust*) See the mud on the car?

And so it went, with talk about the variety of restaurants the bigger city had to offer and the beautifully planned neighborhoods. In our situation, the grass literally *was* greener on the other side of the state!

Geography is one thing, but the other things we tend to compare and contrast? It can escalate quickly.

## MAKE THAT MOVE

- My baby is not hitting her developmental milestones as quickly as my friend's little girl.
- My new manager is younger than me! Shouldn't my career be more advanced than his, at this point in my life?
- In my old job/city/church/school, things ran much more smoothly.

**A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."**

**Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.**

*Matthew 8:2-3*

**Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.**

**Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.**

*2 Corinthians 12:7-9*

Two different people, two requests for healing. For the leper, his was immediate! In the second situation, however, God reassured Paul that it was best to live with this weakness, the "thorn" in his flesh.

We previously discussed the beauty of contentment, experiencing peace wherever you find yourself. Let's build on that, however, by taking a hard look at comparison.

Comparison is not a sin and can be helpful in obvious ways. My husband is taller, so he can reach that high shelf. My son is better at math than I am. That person's child studied harder and scored higher than mine on a test, a simple case of cause and effect!

As for the conversation with my husband and his coworkers, all

the comments we made were true. We *do* live in a dry, dusty area, our landscape more barren than most. We *do* miss colors, climates, and conditions from places where we each previously lived, and that's a fact. We weren't complaining, just acknowledging it. By the end of our conversation, we all agreed that we *like* where we live. We're not jealous of those with greener yards, and we sure do appreciate the lighter traffic and shorter commutes!

The way your life looks is very likely a different picture from mine. It's natural to notice this. In fact, in Hebrews 6:12 we are instructed to **"imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised..."** You can't imitate someone you never look at!

Just make sure that after our observations and comparisons, we get our eyes and attitudes right back where they belong...

...fixed on Jesus.

*Father, thank You for exactly where I am, and the way You created me. Like the leper and Paul, I will go to You for any changes I seek in my life. And also, like Paul, may I learn to trust Your answers, and believe that ultimately Your grace is all I need. Help me to imitate godliness, rejecting envy and resentment.*



**Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.**

*Galatians 6:4-5*

*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.**

*1 Corinthians 11:1-2*

**A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.**

*Proverbs 14:30*

## KEYS AND OPEN DOORS

DAY 28



Raise your hand if you have a junk drawer! Even if you don't, I sure do. It contains a whole bunch of stuff- rubber bands, receipts, small screwdrivers, magnets, tape measures, black Sharpies, matches, twine...useful items, actually. What gives the drawer its name are all the little things that I don't quite know what to do with but hesitate to throw away. What if I really need that screw one of these days? What if it's a missing piece to something that's not working, that I just don't know about yet? Right?

And keys. Lots of keys.

To be honest, I actually threw away a whole bunch of keys before my last move. My junk drawers in multiple kitchens had held them for years. They would each unlock *something*- I just didn't know what that something was! A truck we owned years ago? An extra key to my parents' shed? Duplicate keys we forgot to give to buyers of our previous homes? Oops.

Keys are valuable. When buying a home or vehicle, the exciting moment comes, after all the papers are signed and the price is paid, when the new owner is handed the keys. They signify ownership. Access! Responsibility.

## MAKE THAT MOVE

As for any orphan keys still left in my junk drawer? They're not opening, or locking, a single thing right now.

**This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David.**

**What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open.**

**"I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close.**

**You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me."**

*Revelation 3:7b-8, NLT*

Who has the "key of David," or ownership and responsibility for the kingdom of heaven? Jesus.

Who opens doors that no one can close? Jesus.

Who shuts doors that no one, try as one might, can open? Jesus.

Jesus was opening an evangelistic door for the church at Philadelphia, to spread the culture of His kingdom to their neighbors and beyond. They had little strength on their own and depended on God. They were commended for two things in this passage- obeying God's word and not denying His name, or His character.

What doors of sharing God's love will He open for you, in your community? That might be the last thing on your mind while you're unpacking boxes or adjusting to new routines, but it can become part of your conversation with Him during this settling-in time.

What about those closed doors, though? Why and when does God choose to shut a door, or direct us to do so? Let's take a brief look at a few scenes in the Bible.

- God shut the door of the ark to *protect* Noah, his family, and the animals.
- Nehemiah shut the gates of Jerusalem to *prevent* merchants from dishonoring the Sabbath.

- Jesus instructs us to find a room and close the door, allowing us *privacy* to pray to our Father sincerely.

On a lighter note, another awesome thing about today's passage is that, unlike the keys in my junk drawer, the key that Jesus holds is eternally secure. It will be in His possession throughout eternity, and never, ever lost!

*Father, open my eyes to doors of opportunity for sharing Your love with others. I want to obey Your word and never deny You, no matter what situation presents itself. Give me courage and strength to do this. Thank You for the doors You open as well as the ones You choose to shut, in Your great wisdom.*



**But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

*Matthew 6:6*

**He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord.**

*2 Kings 4:33*



*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and  
found that the Lord had opened a door for me...**

*2 Corinthians 2:12*

**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so  
that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in  
chains.**

*Colossians 4:3*

## LOOKING FORWARD

DAY 29



“Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he will never sit.”  
(Old Indian proverb)

My husband and I planted trees at several of the homes we owned, knowing that it was highly likely we would never see them mature. This was done mainly to improve the landscaping and add to the value of the property. Though it was an investment for the future, it also brought us true pleasure in the present. The joy of seeing a small tree gradually grow bigger, and leaf out after a chilly winter, is something every gardener appreciates!

We have been able to drive by two of our former homes and check the progress of the trees we invested in years before. At one house, my husband had planted a little “forest” of pine trees in the backyard, to serve as a windbreak and provide privacy. They barely grew in the remaining three years we lived at that house, but when we drove by the year following our move, and the years after that, we noticed that those small trees were turning into his vision! The now-tall, stately trees provide a park-like atmosphere in that large backyard. (They are visible from the street, lest you think we are way too nosy!)

At the second house, we noted that the pear tree in the front yard, planted about 25 years before, now had a huge canopy! Providing

precious shade and refuge for the birds, we were pleased to see that our investment had paid off, even though someone else was benefiting from it.

I've mentioned my precious pecan trees on Day 20 and am appreciative that someone else planted them long ago. Another house had lovely landscaping, including a pergola covered with purple wisteria blooming in the spring, which the previous owner envisioned and constructed. We admire mature red oak trees in the front yard of our present home, a valuable commodity in our semi-arid climate.

**This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those**

**I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:**

**“Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce... Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which**

**I have carried you into exile.**

**Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”**

*Jeremiah 29:4-5, 7*

Jeremiah wrote these words to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. Basically, he was telling them to make themselves at home right where they were, to settle in and make the best of things. He also instructed them to be good citizens and neighbors. As one commentator notes, “Ultimately, God *caused* them to be in Babylon, and they should be a blessing where they were set.” (David Guzik)

Hopefully, in your new home, relationship status, or phase of life, you don't think of yourself as being in exile! Even if you do feel that way, the wisdom Jeremiah conveyed to his people rings true to this day. And for all of you non-gardeners out there, relax. I don't think the intention of this passage is that everyone must go plant a vegetable garden and live off the land!

But how *can* you settle in? What can you plant, whether it's an actual tree or seeds of kindness, not just to benefit yourself but for future generations? What are some challenges unique to your new

community or workplace that you can pray about? How can you help your neighbors prosper?

Jeremiah 29 continues with a verse many are familiar with. Let's look at it in context:

**This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.**

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

**Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”**

*Jeremiah 29:10-13 (emphasis mine)*

*Father, help me settle into my new situation in practical and positive ways. Bring peace and prosperity to my community. Show me how to be a good citizen and neighbor, sharing Your love with others.*



**Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.**

*Romans 15:2*

*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.**

*Romans 12:10*

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves...**

*Philippians 2:3*

## FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

DAY 30



As a teacher, there was a time or two when I wondered - did God move me to a new community for the specific reason of helping this one particular child? On the other side, would He ordain this move because He knew that same student would impact *my* life in a powerful way?

Did He want my own children to meet certain people? To be taught by specific teachers? To introduce my husband to a ministry opportunity he never considered before? Would God physically move my family for reasons of His own, that we could not have known ahead of time, or might *never* know until we reach heaven?

I believe the answer is yes.

I do not believe in coincidences. Looking at the lives of different men and women written about in the Bible, some things seemed so random in their lives. And yet.

Consider Moses, and the risk his mother took when she put her baby in a basket, in a river. Was it coincidence that an Egyptian princess found that child, and decided to raise him herself?

Joseph, in all his excitement when revealing his dreams, never saw the revenge of his older brothers coming. Was it a coincidence that he was sold into slavery, eventually winding up in Egypt?

## MAKE THAT MOVE

One boy offered what he had at a large gathering, never thinking his lunch of bread and fish would become part of a great miracle. Mary expected just an ordinary life, marriage, and motherhood, yet said “yes” to an unforeseen future. Peter decided to leave his fishing nets behind to follow a man who was resented, even hated, by many.

**The Lord directs the steps of the godly.  
He delights in every detail of their lives.**

*Psalm 37:23, NLT*

**For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish.**

**And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?**

*Esther 4:14*

Many of Esther’s circumstances were beyond her control. A Jewish orphan raised in her older cousin’s household, she was taken as a young woman into a pagan king’s harem. There is nothing to indicate that she had any choice in this matter! Esther was chosen to become the queen, keeping her heritage hidden upon her cousin’s advice. Eventually revealing her identity, however, she risked her life to save the Jewish people from destruction.

As her cousin pointed out in the verse above, if Esther chose *not* to act God would still save His people, some other way. But the opportunity was clear. Here she was, in the right place at the right time, in a unique position of access. Hardly a coincidence.

My friend, if you are following Jesus, then He directs your steps. He knows and *delights* in the details of your life. You are part of a much bigger story than you may comprehend. Choosing to serve God day by day, hour by hour, no matter what, with humility and grace, makes an impact none of us may ever be aware of this side of heaven.

*For such a time as this.* If God is leading you, then make that move. Accept that transition, with anticipation and hope. Go forward.

Then *dwell*, learning to abide day by day, step by step, with our loving Savior.

*Father, what a relief that You direct my steps! I am humbled by Your delight in the details of my life, and I commit my days to You. Please grant me the wisdom I need to serve You faithfully, right here, right now, and always.*



**I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.**

*Psalms 32:8*

**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.**

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

**Lord, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps.**

*Jeremiah 10:23*



*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my  
life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

*Psalm 23:6*

## YOUR NEXT MOVE

DAY 31



I once worked with a colleague who taught me more about teamwork in one simple action, or more specifically a habitual practice of that action, than I learned in any education class or seminar. What was her superpower?

She listened.

As a newbie to this school campus, I would often pop into her classroom to ask a quick question, usually during her own time-challenged free period. Every single time, she would stop whatever she was doing, turn physically to face me, make eye contact, and give me her full attention. She would listen carefully and provide whatever specific info I needed, or at least how to find it. If she was in a hurry or had a meeting to attend, she would simply let me know and ask me to come back later. I had only to look at the papers stacked on her desk to understand how busy she was, just like every other teacher, but my friend never, ever expressed impatience or distraction. For a new employee like me, her patience and welcoming actions were a gift.

Listening is a simple thing but must still be cultivated. The grace I was given made me want to become a better listener as well, and years later I'm still working on it. My colleague unknowingly gave me

MAKE THAT MOVE

a goal, one that has positively affected my own students, family, and friends, most of them people she may never know.

**So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone;  
without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and  
killed him.**

*1 Samuel 17:50*

The Philistine is estimated to have been a nine-foot giant, and David was just a teenager. But David had a simple defense method he had been practicing for years, while guarding his father's sheep. Rejecting the use of heavy, protective armor which he was unaccustomed to, David used his slingshot and one stone to take down an enemy dreaded by much more mature and experienced soldiers. I love one of the preceding verses in the chapter:

**As the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly  
toward the battle line to meet him. (v.48)**

Oh, the confidence David had, running to meet the enemy! He knew he would not fail because he had the skills he needed and, more importantly, the Lord was on his side. As David tended his father's flock, spending hours on target practice, he could not have known that one day those slingshot skills would take down Goliath, an enemy of his country.

In a similar way, when my colleague demonstrated her listening behaviors to me, she did not know it would be motivating enough for me to improve my own skills, thus positively affecting other people in my life in a chain reaction.

What should your next move be? What goal can you set? What skill can you practice, or habit can you establish? Perhaps it's something you've already been mulling over or admired in someone else. If nothing comes to mind, take some time to think and dream a little.

This doesn't have to be something huge and daunting. What can you do *today*, right now?

We probably all hope to do pleasing things for God, yet don't always see our daily habits as significant in the grand scheme of things. Consider this observation by John C. Maxwell: "You'll never change your life until you change something you do daily."

*Dear Jesus, I may never own a slingshot, but help me to develop strategies to defeat the enemy of my soul. Among all the choices that clamor for my attention, may I practice behaviors or set goals that equip and strengthen me for situations I currently face, as well as circumstances and opportunities yet to come. Thank You that in Your kingdom, even small gestures or "moves" can make a profound difference in other people's lives, as well as my own.*



**So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.**

*Hebrews 12:12-13, NLT*

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

*Colossians 3:23-24*

*MAKE THAT MOVE*

**Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.**

*1 Corinthians 9:24-27a, NLT*



**DEAR READER,**

**May the Lord bless you  
and protect you.  
May the Lord smile on you  
and be gracious to you.  
May the Lord show you his favor  
and give you his peace.**

*Numbers 6:24-26*

Thank you for reading this book!

If you have enjoyed this devotional, please take the time to leave a review on Amazon. Even just a line or two is appreciated.

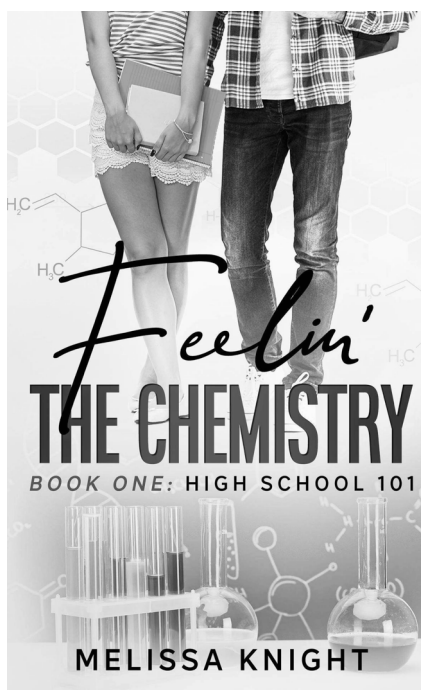




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