

NEW LIFE

The Biblical Path to a Relationship with Jesus
A Devotional Series

“We too may live a new life.”

— Romans 6:4

INTRODUCTORY DEVOTIONAL

What Does It Mean to Be **New**?

An Orientation to the Journey Ahead

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

The One Question That Changes Everything

Most people come to the question of faith with the wrong category. They ask: “Am I good enough?” or “Have I done enough?” or even “Do I believe the right things?” But the Bible asks a different question entirely—a more fundamental one:

The Biblical Question

Have you been made new?

This is not a question about improvement. It is not a question about religious performance or moral scorekeeping. It is a question about whether something has happened to you—something that only God can do. The apostle Paul puts it with stunning simplicity: if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. Old gone. New here. That is not gradual. That is not partial. That is a total transformation of who you are.

This devotional series exists to walk you through that transformation—not as a checklist to complete, but as a description of what genuinely happens when God moves in a human life. The seven steps of NEW LIFE are not seven tasks. They are seven movements in one great act of God’s grace.

The Architecture of NEW LIFE

The letters of NEW LIFE divide naturally into two movements, and understanding this structure will anchor everything that follows.

NEW — GOD'S INITIATING WORK

- N — Need for Change: The Holy Spirit convicts and awakens.
- E — Embrace Change: The heart makes a decisive turn toward God.
- W — Willing to Repent: The direction of the soul changes.

LIFE — OUR RESPONSE & GOD'S COMPLETION

- L — Lord Jesus Confessed: Faith becomes public declaration.
- I — Identifying with Jesus: Obedience in baptism.
- F — Filled with the Spirit: God regenerates and indwells.
- E — Empowered to Walk: The new life begins and continues.

Notice the shape of this: God begins it. You respond. God completes it. This is not a formula—it is a relationship. And every step is grounded not in human tradition but in the pattern Scripture reveals again and again in the pages of Acts and the theology of the Epistles.

Why This Matters Now

There is a quiet crisis in much of contemporary Christianity. People have been told that following Jesus begins and ends with a single prayer—a transaction with God that, once completed, requires little else. The result is a landscape filled with people who have “done the prayer” but have never been genuinely transformed. They carry the label of Christian without the life of Christ.

This is not a new problem. The pages of the New Testament are full of it. What is new is the urgency. The world around us is searching for something real. When people who claim to follow Jesus live lives indistinguishable from those who do not, the witness collapses. Authenticity becomes the most powerful apologetic available.

NEW LIFE is a recovery, not an invention. It recovers what the early church understood about what it means to follow Jesus—and what it means to lead others to do the same.

How to Use This Series

Each devotional in this series follows a consistent pattern: a foundational Scripture, an exploration of what the text reveals, a biblical architecture tracing the step through the whole counsel of Scripture, a core thesis, and a closing prayer with a strategic question.

These are not readings to consume quickly. They are invitations to dwell. Read slowly. Let the Scripture work. Use the strategic question at the end of each session not as a homework assignment but as an honest inventory before God.

If you are working through this in a group, resist the urge to move fast. Linger where God is speaking. The most important thing that happens in this series may occur in the silence after a question, or in a conversation that continues long after the meeting ends.

What the Text Reveals

Before we enter the seven steps, consider what Scripture says about the nature of new life itself. Three passages form the theological foundation:

Reference	Scripture
Romans 6:3–4	<i>All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.</i>
Colossians 1:13	<i>He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.</i>
Philippians 2:12–13	<i>Continue to work out your salvation with fear and reverence, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in accordance with his good purpose.</i>

These three texts together give the full picture. Romans 6 shows that new life is union with Christ in his death and resurrection—not a private spiritual feeling but a publicly enacted reality. Colossians 1 shows that new life is a transfer of kingdoms—you have been moved from one dominion to another, and your entire orientation has changed. Philippians 2 shows that new life is an ongoing partnership—you work, and God works, and the two are not in tension because God's energy is what makes your effort possible.

The Central Thesis of NEW LIFE

CORE THESIS

New life in Christ is not an event to recall but a reality to inhabit. It is initiated by God, enacted through faith, completed by the Spirit, and lived out in the power of the same God who began it.

STRATEGIC QUESTION

Before you begin this series: What has your understanding of 'becoming a Christian' looked like? Where did that understanding come from—Scripture, tradition, experience, culture? What would it mean for you to let Scripture itself define what new life looks like?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Father, You are the author of new life. You invented it, you offer it, and you sustain it—not as a transaction but as a relationship. Before we take a single step through this study, we confess that we know less than we think we do. Strip away what we have assumed. Open us to what you have actually said. Make us people who do not simply know about new life, but who genuinely live it. Let this series be not an education but an encounter—with you, with your Word, and with the selves you intend us to become. In the name of Jesus, who makes all things new, Amen.

Devotional 1

N — Need for Change

Of Heart and Life | God Initiates

Foundation Scripture — Ezekiel 36:26

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

The Awakening

Every genuine encounter with God begins the same way—not with our initiative, but with His. Before you ever sought Him, He was already at work. Before you recognized your need, the Holy Spirit was already moving. This is where the new life begins: not with a decision you made, but with a conviction that came from outside yourself.

The prophet Ezekiel captures this with language that should arrest us. God does not say, “I will help you improve your heart.” He does not offer a renovation service for the human soul. He says: “I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” This is not surgery on existing tissue. This is replacement. Removal and restoration. The old gone, the new given.

That is the kind of change God is after. Not a better version of what you already are. A new creation entirely.

What the Text Reveals

The Nature of the Need: Internal and Total

Scripture is unsparing in its diagnosis of the human condition. Jeremiah calls the heart “deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (17:9). Paul declares that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). This is not pessimism—it is precision. The biblical diagnosis is accurate because the biblical remedy must fit the actual disease.

A heart of stone does not need encouragement. It does not need better information or more religious activity. It needs to be replaced. And only God can do that.

The Two Dimensions of Need

Scripture holds two dimensions of the need for change in consistent tension. The first is internal: the heart itself must change—desires, allegiances, loves, and nature. The second is external: the life that flows from the heart must change as well—actions, habits, relationships, and direction. Romans 12:2 captures the external dimension with its call to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

These two dimensions are not sequential. They are simultaneous. A genuinely changed heart will produce a visibly changed life. A life that shows no change gives evidence that the heart has not yet been transformed.

The Work of the Spirit in Awakening

How does a person with a heart of stone come to recognize that they need a heart of flesh? Only through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says plainly: “When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). Conviction is not the product of human preaching alone—it is the result of the Spirit using that preaching to penetrate what our own reasoning cannot reach.

This means the first step of NEW LIFE is not something you manufacture. It is something you receive. The sense that something must change—that you cannot go on as you are—that the direction of your life is wrong and you cannot fix it yourself—this is grace. This is God beginning the work He intends to complete.

Biblical Architecture

The pattern of God initiating the recognition of need runs through the entire biblical narrative. David, after his sin with Bathsheba, does not arrive at repentance on his own. The prophet Nathan comes to him with a story that breaks through his self-deception: “You are the man.” God initiates the awakening. David then responds: “Create in me a pure heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10).

At Pentecost, Peter’s sermon does not produce polite reflection. It produces crisis: “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said... ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37). The Spirit pierces. The recognition follows. The question erupts. That is the sequence Scripture gives us—God stirs, the heart recognizes, the will asks.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

The need for change is not a conclusion we reach through moral effort or religious comparison. It is a recognition the Holy Spirit produces in us—the gift of seeing ourselves clearly enough to cry out to God. This awakening is the first evidence of grace, not the precondition for it.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Ezekiel 36:26	<i>I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.</i>
John 16:8	<i>When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment.</i>
Jeremiah 17:9	<i>The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?</i>
Romans 3:23	<i>All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.</i>
Acts 2:37	<i>When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'</i>
Psalms 51:10	<i>Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.</i>
Titus 3:5	<i>He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

Where in your life right now do you feel the weight of needing something to change that you cannot change yourself? What would it mean to see that weight not as burden but as invitation—as God's grace bringing you to the place where He can begin His work?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Father, We confess that we have tried to manage what only You can transform. We have renovated what You wanted to replace. We have improved the surface while the stone remained beneath. Send Your Spirit now—not to condemn, but to awaken. Let us feel the truth of our condition clearly enough to stop pretending and start seeking. Let the recognition of our need be the first step toward the new heart You have promised. Create in us what we cannot create in ourselves. Begin what only You can begin. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Devotional 2

E — Embrace Change

Choose to Turn to God | The Crisis of Decision

Foundation Scripture — Isaiah 55:6–7

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the evil their thoughts; let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”

The Awakening

Conviction without response is tragedy. The Holy Spirit does not awaken the heart so that it can feel its condition and then settle back into comfortable numbness. Every genuine stirring of the Spirit is an invitation—and invitations require a response.

This is the crisis moment—and the word “crisis” here is meant in its original sense: a turning point, a decisive juncture where one path ends and another begins. You have recognized your need. The Spirit has done His awakening work. Now comes the question that divides everything: Will you embrace the change God is calling you to—or will you turn away?

Isaiah’s language carries unmistakable urgency. “While he may be found.” “While he is near.” The invitation has a quality of now about it that should not be domesticated into “whenever you’re ready.” God is patient—Scripture is clear about this. But Scripture is equally clear that the open door does not remain open forever, and that the person who keeps saying “not yet” may one day find themselves past the moment when the Spirit was near.

What the Text Reveals

Embracing Change Is an Active Decision

What distinguishes “embracing change” from merely “feeling convicted”? Action. Direction. The decisive wholehearted turn. Scripture never presents the response to God as a passive experience. The prodigal son did not simply feel bad about his circumstances. He said, “I will set out and go back to my father.” And then he got up and went. The decision and the action were inseparable.

This is the nature of embracing change: stopping the old direction, turning toward God, choosing to follow Christ with your whole heart, and committing to leave the old life behind. These are not four separate steps—they are four dimensions of one decisive movement of the soul.

The Four Dimensions of Embracing Change

WHAT EMBRACING CHANGE LOOKS LIKE

Stopping — The old rebellion against God ends. The old direction ceases.

Turning — A complete reversal of direction. Toward God rather than away from Him.

Choosing — Following Christ with the whole heart—not partially, not conditionally.

Committing — Leaving the old life behind. Not looking back.

Biblical Examples of the Decisive Turn

Zacchaeus did not deliberate after Jesus entered his house. The moment of encounter was the moment of response. He stood up and declared immediate, radical restitution (Luke 19:8). The Philippian jailer, trembling in the darkness, asked one question—“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”—and by dawn he and his household had been baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch, riding along the road, heard the gospel explained and immediately said, “Look, here is water. What can prevent me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36). In each case, the decision did not wait for a better moment. The crisis was the moment.

Biblical Architecture

The entire biblical story can be read as a series of these turning points—moments when God issued an invitation and human beings had to choose. Abraham leaving Ur. Moses at the burning bush. Isaiah saying “Send me.” Peter leaving his nets. Each of these moments required not just internal assent but external action. The turning was real because it cost something.

The same pattern runs through the New Testament accounts of conversion. Faith is never presented as a private interior experience that remains invisible. It expresses itself in a turn—a visible, costly, irreversible change of direction. Deuteronomy captures the stakes of this decision with unflinching clarity: “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life” (30:19).

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

Embracing change is the moment conviction becomes commitment. It is the wholehearted, decisive turn from your way to God’s way—not as a religious feeling but as an enacted choice. The door is open. The invitation is urgent. The response is yours to make.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Isaiah 55:6–7	<i>Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways...</i>
Acts 3:19	<i>Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.</i>
Luke 15:17–20	<i>When he came to his senses, he said, 'I will set out and go back to my father.' And he got up and went.</i>
Luke 19:8	<i>Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor.'</i>
Matthew 11:28	<i>Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.</i>
James 4:7–8	<i>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.</i>
Deuteronomy 30:19	<i>I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

What has been the obstacle—real or imagined—that has kept you from making a full, decisive turn toward God? What would it mean to embrace change not 'someday' but today? What would you have to stop, and what would you have to begin?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Lord, You are near. Your invitation is open. But we confess that we have lingered at the door rather than walking through it—weighing, deliberating, waiting for a better moment that never comes. Give us the courage of the prodigal son who did not simply feel sorry but got up and went. Give us the decisiveness of Zacchaeus who responded without hesitation. Let our turning toward You be real—wholehearted, costly, and irreversible. We choose You. We turn toward You. We come. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

W — Willing to Repent

Turn from Sin | The Evidence of a Changed Direction

Foundation Scripture — Luke 13:3

“Unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

The Awakening

Jesus does not say this gently. He does not soften it with qualifications or cultural sensitivity. “Unless you repent, you will all perish.” It is one of the most direct and unadorned statements in the Gospels—and it is spoken not to the irreligious but to the piously religious, people who were very sure that God was on their side.

Repentance is not a comfortable word. In the history of popular Christianity, it has been reduced to an emotional experience—feeling bad enough about sin to cry, or making promises about future behavior that are quickly broken. Neither of these is what Scripture means by repentance, and the difference matters enormously.

True repentance is a change of mind about sin that produces a change of direction in life. It is not primarily an emotion—though genuine repentance is often accompanied by deep feeling. It is a reorientation of the will. You once lived for yourself. Now you turn from that direction entirely. The Greek word *metanoia* means literally “a change of mind”—but biblical usage makes clear it is a change of the deepest kind: of allegiance, direction, and ultimate loyalty.

What the Text Reveals

What Repentance Is

Genuine repentance has three dimensions working together: a sincere change of heart and mind about sin (agreeing with God that what you have been doing is wrong), a turning away from sin (the direction changes), and a turning toward God (not merely away from sin, but toward the One you were made to know). These are not sequential steps—they are aspects of one movement of the soul.

What Repentance Is Not

THREE COMMON COUNTERFEITS

Worldly sorrow — Feeling bad about consequences, not about the sin itself. Paul calls this “worldly sorrow” that “brings death” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Promise-making — Committing to do better through willpower. This is moralism, not repentance.

Self-cleaning — Trying to make yourself presentable before coming to God. You come to God in repentance precisely because you cannot clean yourself up.

The Fruit of Repentance

John the Baptist did not call people merely to feel sorry—he called them to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). This fruit is not the condition of forgiveness—it is the evidence of transformation. A genuinely changed heart will produce a visibly changed life. If the direction of the life has not changed, the change of heart has not yet occurred.

Equally important: repentance is not a one-time event. It is the posture of the Christian life. The person who has truly repented continues to repent—not because salvation is insecure, but because the Spirit continues to illuminate areas of the heart that still need to be surrendered. Ongoing repentance is not a sign of failure; it is a sign of a living relationship with a holy God.

Biblical Architecture

Repentance is not a New Testament invention. It runs through the entire biblical narrative as God’s consistent call to His people. The prophets’ message—from Hosea to Ezekiel to Joel—is almost entirely a call to return, to turn back, to repent. The Hebrew word *shub* (return) appears hundreds of times in the Old Testament as the central movement God seeks from a wayward people.

In the New Testament, repentance is not reduced but intensified. Jesus begins his public ministry with it: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). Peter’s Pentecost sermon reaches its climax with it: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you” (Acts 2:38). Paul’s summary of his ministry to both Jews and Greeks is that he declared they “must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21). Repentance is not peripheral to the gospel. It is central to it.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

Repentance is not the payment you make to earn forgiveness. It is the direction change that proves the heart change is real. It is the visible form that genuine turning-to-God takes. You do not clean yourself up before coming to God—you come to God so that He can produce in you what you could never produce in yourself.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Luke 13:3	<i>Unless you repent, you too will all perish.</i>
2 Corinthians 7:10	<i>Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.</i>
Matthew 3:8	<i>Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.</i>
Acts 3:19	<i>Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.</i>
Acts 2:38	<i>Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.'</i>
2 Peter 3:9	<i>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.</i>
Proverbs 28:13	<i>Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.</i>
Mark 1:15	<i>The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

What is the difference between feeling sorry about something and genuinely repenting of it? Is there an area of your life where you have been living with “worldly sorrow”—grieving consequences rather than the sin itself? What would genuine repentance look like in that area, and what would it cost you?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Father, We have mistaken sorrow for repentance, and promises for change. We have come to You with feelings that did not go deep enough to alter the direction of our lives. Produce in us godly sorrow—the kind that grieves not the cost of sin but sin itself, because You are holy and we have chosen against You. Let that sorrow lead not to despair but to the genuine turning that leaves no regret. We do not come with cleaned-up lives. We come as we are, turning from the direction we have been going, and turning toward You. Receive us as You received the prodigal son—before we have finished our prepared speech. In the name of Jesus, who bore our sin so we could turn from it, Amen.

L — Lord Jesus Confessed

Public Declaration of Faith | Faith Speaks

Foundation Scripture — Romans 10:9–10

“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

The Awakening

We have crossed a threshold. The first three steps of NEW LIFE describe what God initiates and the heart receives. Now we enter the four steps of LIFE—the response that faith makes when it encounters the gospel. And the first response is not silent.

In an age that prizes private spirituality and personal faith journeys, the biblical insistence on public confession lands with peculiar force. Romans 10 does not offer an escape route: if you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord—and believe in your heart—you will be saved. Both. Heart and mouth. Inner conviction and outward declaration. The two together constitute the scriptural picture of saving faith.

This is not because God requires a performance. It is because genuine faith is not merely an interior experience. It is an allegiance—and allegiance has a social dimension. To confess Jesus as Lord is to take a public position, to align yourself with Christ before a watching world, to say with your voice what your heart has already determined: I belong to Him.

What the Text Reveals

What Confession Actually Declares

The content of the confession matters. You are not simply saying that Jesus exists, or that He was a good moral teacher, or that you find His teachings helpful. The confession is “Jesus is Lord.” Kyrios. The same word the Septuagint uses for the covenant name of God. To confess Jesus as Lord is to confess His deity, His authority, and His claim over your life.

This was a politically and socially charged declaration in the first century, when “Kyrios Caesar” was the expected confession of Roman subjects. To say “Kyrios Jesus” was to subordinate Caesar’s claim to a higher authority. It could cost you relationships, reputation, and in some circumstances your life. The early church did not treat this confession as a formality. It was an act of courage.

Why Public Confession Matters

THREE DIMENSIONS OF CONFESSION

It is an act of faith — You declare before others what you have already believed in your heart.

It is an act of identification — You align yourself publicly with Christ, before God, before others, before the spiritual realm.

It is an act of accountability — You have named your allegiance before people who will walk with you and hold you to it.

Faith That Cannot Be Said Is Faith That Has Not Yet Taken Hold

This is a challenging diagnostic. Jesus says plainly: “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32–33). The confession is not a secondary matter—it is integral to what faith is. Faith that remains entirely private, that never emerges into speech and public declaration, has not yet become the full-orbed biblical faith that saves.

Biblical Architecture

The pattern of public confession runs throughout Scripture as the expected expression of genuine faith. When the Ethiopian eunuch asks Philip what would prevent him from being baptized, the implied answer is: nothing—if your faith is genuine. His response is immediate public declaration: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). When the Samaritan woman at the well encounters Jesus, she runs back to her village and tells everyone. Her confession becomes the catalyst for a regional awakening.

The eschatological vision of Philippians 2 shows the ultimate destination of this confession: “Every knee should bow... and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” One day, the confession that was costly on earth will be universal in heaven. Those who made it voluntarily, in faith, in this life, are simply anticipating what all creation will eventually know.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

Confession is not the cause of faith—it is faith speaking. When the heart has genuinely surrendered to Jesus as Lord, the mouth follows. Public confession is not a religious formality added onto private belief; it is the natural and necessary expression of a transformed allegiance.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Romans 10:9–10	<i>If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.</i>
Matthew 10:32–33	<i>Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.</i>
Philippians 2:9–11	<i>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.</i>
Acts 8:37	<i>Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The eunuch answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'</i>
1 John 4:15	<i>If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.</i>
Romans 10:13	<i>Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.</i>
Hebrews 4:14	<i>Since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

Have you confessed Jesus as Lord publicly—in a way that was clear, intentional, and before people who understood what you were declaring? If not, what has held you back? If so, has your life since that confession matched the allegiance it declared?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Lord Jesus, You are Lord. Not a helpful resource, not one option among many, not a private comfort we keep to ourselves. You are Lord—of our lives, our futures, our allegiances, and our speech. Give us the courage to say so. In the workplaces and family dinners and friendships where confession costs something. In the places where acknowledging You creates friction. Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess—not as a social identity but as a lived reality that shows in how we speak and how we live. We confess You now: Jesus is Lord. Amen.

I — Identifying with Jesus

Obedience in Baptism | Faith Enacted

Foundation Scripture — Romans 6:3–4

“Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

The Awakening

Baptism is not the beginning of a conversation—in the New Testament, it is the immediate response to one. When the crowds at Pentecost were cut to the heart and cried out, “What shall we do?” Peter did not say, “Take your time. Consider your options. Find a church that feels right.” He said: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). That day, three thousand people were baptized.

The same pattern appears throughout Acts with remarkable consistency. The Ethiopian eunuch, having heard the gospel, sees water and immediately asks what could prevent him from being baptized. The Philippian jailer, trembling in darkness, is baptized before the night is over. The household of Cornelius, having received the Spirit, is immediately baptized. In every account, baptism follows faith without delay. There is no waiting period in the New Testament. Obedience was immediate.

This should challenge our common practice, in which baptism is often treated as a next step to schedule when convenient—or, in some traditions, as a symbolic ritual with no particular urgency. Neither of these reflects what Scripture presents.

What the Text Reveals

Baptism as Union with Christ in Death and Resurrection

Romans 6 is the most theologically complete treatment of baptism in the New Testament. Paul is not writing a manual on baptismal practice—he is making a moral argument to believers in Rome. But to make his moral argument, he appeals to their baptism as the ground of everything. You have already died, he says. Your old self was crucified with Christ. The burial is behind you. Now you walk in newness of life.

The imagery is physical and unmistakable. Going down into the water enacts burial. Coming up out of the water enacts resurrection. This is not accidental. The physical act is meant to correspond to the spiritual reality—death to the old self, resurrection to the new. This is why immersion has been the consistent practice of baptism: the going under and coming up are the physical participation in what Christ has done.

Baptism as Clothing

Galatians 3:27 adds a different but complementary image: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” To be clothed with Christ is not to add a layer over the old self—it is to change garments entirely. You have put off the old and put on the new. Your identity is now defined by Christ, not by your previous history.

Three Rejections and Three Affirmations

WHAT THE NEW LIFE FRAMEWORK AFFIRMS ABOUT BAPTISM

Baptism is not a mere symbol. Scripture consistently treats it as participatory, identificational, and covenantal.

Baptism does not save mechanically. Regeneration is the work of the Spirit alone (Titus 3:5)—not the water itself.

Baptism is faith enacted, not grace earned. It is the obedient response of faith, not an attempt to merit forgiveness.

Biblical Architecture

The connection between faith and baptism in Acts is not incidental—it is structural. Luke presents baptism not as a later addition to the conversion process but as the consistent, immediate expression of faith in the earliest Christian communities. To believe was to be baptized. To be baptized was to publicly enact one’s belief. The two were not separated by weeks or theological processing.

Acts 22:16 captures the urgency with startling directness. Ananias, sent to the newly-converted Saul, does not give him a theology course first. He asks: “And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.” The question assumes that any delay is inexplicable. The obedient response of faith does not wait.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

Baptism is not optional equipment for the Christian life. It is the first act of obedience after confession—the moment when faith stops being invisible and becomes publicly enacted in the most physical and permanent way available. You identify with Christ in his death. You rise with him to his new life. This is not ceremony. This is covenant.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Acts 2:38	<i>Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.</i>
Romans 6:3–4	<i>All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... we too may live a new life.</i>
Galatians 3:27	<i>For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.</i>
Colossians 2:12	<i>Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God.</i>
Acts 22:16	<i>And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.</i>
1 Peter 3:21	<i>This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.</i>
Matthew 28:19	<i>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

What has been your understanding of baptism—something essential or something optional? If you have been baptized, was it with a genuine understanding of what you were enacting? If you have not been baptized and you believe, what is preventing you from obeying now?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Lord, You went down into the water of death and came up in the power of resurrection. You have called us to follow You there—to enact in our bodies what has happened in our souls. To declare publicly that we have died and been raised. Forgive us where we have treated this as optional, as ceremonial, as something to schedule when convenient. Your early church knew that obedience does not wait for a better moment. For those who have not yet followed You through the water: give them clarity and courage. For those who have: let their baptism be not a memory to recall but a reality to inhabit every day—dead to the old life, alive to the new. In the name of the One who was buried and rose, Amen.

F — Filled with the Spirit

God's Regenerating Work | Born Again

Foundation Scripture — Titus 3:5

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

The Awakening

Every other step in NEW LIFE has involved your response—recognizing, turning, repenting, confessing, obeying. This step is different. This step is not something you do. It is something God does. It is the completing act of salvation—the moment when the God who initiated this work in you now finishes it by moving in.

Titus 3:5 is one of the most theologically concentrated statements in all of Scripture. It is also one of the most important, because it makes unmistakably clear the ground of salvation: not what we have done, but what He has done. Not our righteousness but His mercy. Not human effort but divine action. “He saved us.” Three words. Subject, verb, object. God is the subject. We are the object. This order cannot be reversed.

The instrument of that saving is “the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” This is not the washing of water alone—it is the Spirit’s work through water, alongside repentance and faith, completing what the previous steps have initiated. The Spirit does not merely assist the process. He is the agent of new birth itself.

What the Text Reveals

Regeneration: What It Actually Means

The word “regeneration” means new birth—and it means exactly what it says. This is not the renovation of the old nature. It is not a spiritual upgrade or an incremental improvement. It is a new creation. Jesus tells Nicodemus with striking directness: “You must be born again” (John 3:7). The necessity is absolute. The birth must be real. And like physical birth, it is not something the child accomplishes—it is something that happens to the child.

Paul captures the radicality of this in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” The language is eschatological—the language of the last things, of God’s new world breaking into the present one. Regeneration is not a spiritual improvement. It is the beginning of new creation.

The Spirit as Seal and Guarantee

Ephesians 1:13–14 introduces language that deserves to be received as the anchor of assurance it is. When you believed, you were “marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.” A seal in the ancient world was a mark of ownership and protection—it belonged to the owner and protected the contents. A deposit (arrabon) was a down payment that guaranteed the full amount to come.

The Holy Spirit is both. His presence within you is the proof that you belong to God—and the guarantee of everything God has promised. You are not left to determine your status as a believer by measuring your feelings or tracking your spiritual performance. The indwelling Spirit is the evidence. His presence is the assurance.

What the Spirit Does in You

THE SPIRIT’S PRESENCE MEANS

God himself lives within you — not as a vague spiritual energy but as a personal, active presence.

You have new desires — a genuine love for God and His Word that you did not have before.

You have power to obey — not the power of willpower but the power of the Spirit.

You have assurance of inheritance — the Spirit is the down payment of everything God has promised.

Biblical Architecture

The pattern in Acts is consistent: the reception of the Spirit is connected to the acts of repentance, confession, and baptism—and it produces visible transformation. Acts 2:38 promises the gift of the Spirit to those who repent and are baptized. Acts 19:1–6 shows Paul asking disciples in Ephesus whether they received the Spirit when they believed—and when they are baptized properly, the Spirit comes. The Spirit’s presence is not incidental to conversion. It is the completion of it.

At the same time, Acts 10 reminds us that the Spirit is not mechanically bound to any sequence. God poured out His Spirit on Cornelius’ household before they were baptized—as a sovereign sign validating Gentile inclusion. The Spirit blows where He wills (John 3:8). The normal pattern does not limit God’s freedom—it describes His consistent operation.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

Regeneration is the work of God alone—accomplished by the Holy Spirit, not produced by human effort or religious performance. When God fills you with His Spirit, you are not improved; you are made new. The Spirit is not a reward for your faithfulness. He is the agent and guarantee of everything you have been promised.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Titus 3:5	<i>He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.</i>
John 3:5–6	<i>Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.’</i>
2 Corinthians 5:17	<i>If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!</i>
Ephesians 1:13–14	<i>When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.</i>
Romans 8:9–11	<i>You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.</i>
Ezekiel 36:27	<i>And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.</i>
Romans 5:5	<i>God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

What does the indwelling Spirit feel like—or not feel like—in your daily experience? How do you distinguish between the Spirit’s work in you and your own religious effort? Where do you need to stop striving and start yielding?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Holy Spirit, You are not a feeling or a force—You are a Person. You live within those who belong to Christ, and Your presence is the guarantee of everything God has promised. Forgive us for treating the Christian life as a performance we manage rather than a life You produce. Forgive us for quenching You with self-sufficiency and grieving You with unrepentance. Fill us. Not as an experience to recall but as a reality to inhabit. Let the new life You have created in us be visible—in desires that surprise us, obedience that exceeds us, and love that is clearly not our own. In the name of Jesus, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, Amen.

E — Empowered to Walk in Newness

Sanctification | The Life That Follows

Foundation Scripture — Philippians 2:12–13

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and reverence, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in accordance with his good purpose.”

The Awakening

We have arrived at the step that never ends. Every other step of NEW LIFE has a clear beginning point. This one has only a beginning—no conclusion, no graduation, no moment when it is fully accomplished and can be filed away. The empowered walk in newness is the whole of the Christian life, from conversion to death to resurrection. It is the life that new life becomes.

Philippians 2:12–13 captures this with a paradox that must be held together and never resolved by eliminating one side. “Work out your salvation”—real effort, genuine striving, active obedience. “For it is God who works in you”—not as an excuse for passivity but as the source and power of the work you do. You work, and God works. Your effort is real. His energy is what makes it possible.

This is what distinguishes the Christian life from moralism on one side and passivity on the other. Moralism says: try harder. Passivity says: let go and let God. Scripture says: work, because God is working. Cooperate with the Spirit who is already at work in you.

What the Text Reveals

Sanctification Is Not Self-Improvement

The popular assumption is that the Christian life is a religious self-improvement project—that God saved you, and now it’s your job to get better. Scripture presents something more radical and more hopeful. Sanctification—the process of becoming more like Christ—is the Spirit’s work in you, not the product of your discipline. “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory—which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The passive voice is theologically significant: “being transformed.” You do not transform yourself. You are transformed. Your role is to contemplate the Lord’s glory—to fix your attention on Christ, to stay in the Word, to remain in the presence of the One who transforms. The transformation itself is His work.

The Kingdom Transfer

Colossians 1:13 describes what has happened to you in the most comprehensive terms possible: “He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” This is not a marginal shift. You have been moved from one kingdom to another. Your citizenship has changed. Your king has changed. Your entire orientation has been relocated.

The empowered walk in newness is the outworking of this relocation. You do not walk in the kingdom of darkness anymore—you live in the kingdom of light. Every act of obedience, every moment of surrender to the Spirit, every choice to walk in the way of Christ rather than the way of the flesh, is an expression of the kingdom you now inhabit.

The Mission That Follows

Acts 1:8 gives the scope of what the empowered life is for: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Spirit empowers you not only to be holy but to be sent. The new life you have received is not a private possession—it is a public gift, intended to flow through you to others.

WALKING WITH OTHERS IN THE NEW LIFE

Presence — You cannot speak into someone’s life if you are not in it (Acts 2:46–47).

Practice — The life must match the message before the message will land (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Perseverance — Sharing the gospel means staying with people after they believe (Acts 2:42).

Biblical Architecture

The empowered walk in newness is not an innovation of the New Testament. It is the consummation of the entire biblical story. God created humanity to walk with Him in the garden. The fall interrupted that walk. The entire Old Testament narrative is the story of God working to restore what was broken—covenant by covenant, prophet by prophet, pointing forward to the One who would make it possible again.

The new life that Christ makes possible is not a different life than what God intended at creation. It is the restoration and elevation of it. In Christ, by the Spirit, empowered by regenerating grace, you are now able to do what Adam could not maintain: walk with God. Not perfectly—not yet. But genuinely, progressively, and with a trajectory that ends in the complete conformity to Christ that resurrection will complete.

Core Thesis

CORE THESIS

The empowered walk is not the result of trying harder. It is the natural outflow of the new nature God has given, animated by the Spirit who indwells you, expressed in the community of those who walk together. You are not simply a recipient of new life. You are now a witness to it—a carrier of the same presence, practice, and perseverance that brought the gospel to you.

Scripture Treasury

Reference	Scripture
Philippians 2:12–13	<i>Continue to work out your salvation with fear and reverence, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in accordance with his good purpose.</i>
Romans 6:4	<i>We too may live a new life.</i>
Colossians 1:13–14	<i>He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.</i>
Acts 1:8	<i>You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.</i>
Galatians 5:16	<i>Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.</i>
2 Corinthians 3:18	<i>We all... are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory—which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.</i>
Acts 2:42, 46–47	<i>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... And the Lord added to their number daily.</i>

STRATEGIC QUESTION

What does it look like for you, practically, to 'walk by the Spirit' in a normal week? Who in your life is walking with you—and who are you walking with? Who needs someone to walk with them through the early steps of NEW LIFE?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Father, You did not save us to leave us where we were. You transferred us to a new kingdom. You gave us a new nature, a new Spirit, a new King. Now You call us to walk as what we have become. Forgive us for walking in the old kingdom when we have been relocated to the new one. Forgive us for living by the flesh when the Spirit is within us. Empower us to walk in the newness You have given. Not by trying harder but by surrendering more. Not in isolation but in the company of those You have given us. And let the new life You have placed in us overflow—to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of our world. For Your glory and their good, Amen.

CONCLUDING DEVOTIONAL

Now Walk

Living the NEW LIFE You Have Received

Romans 6:4

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

The Journey in Review

You have walked through seven movements of one great act of divine grace. Before we step forward, it is worth pausing to see the whole shape of what we have traveled through—not to memorize an acronym, but to see the living, breathing, biblical reality it describes.

NEW	God's Initiating Work	Need for Change • Embrace Change • Willing to Repent
LIFE	Our Response & God's Completion	Lord Confessed • Identifying in Baptism • Filled with the Spirit • Empowered to Walk

The Shape of What God Has Done

The biblical shape of new life is not a ladder you climb or a checklist you complete. It is a river you enter. And once you have entered it, the current carries you—not passively, not without your participation, but with a power that is not yours. God initiates. You respond. God completes. And the life that results is genuinely yours—and genuinely His.

This is the paradox at the heart of Christianity: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). You are more fully yourself than you have ever been. And you are more fully His than you have ever been. These two truths are not in tension. They are the same truth from different angles.

Three Questions Worth Living With

QUESTION 1: HAVE YOU BEEN MADE NEW?

Not: have you prayed a prayer? Not: have you joined a church? But: have you gone through the death and resurrection that Scripture describes—conviction, turning, repentance, confession, baptism, reception of the Spirit? Is there a before and after in your story that corresponds to what Romans 6 describes?

QUESTION 2: ARE YOU WALKING IN THE NEWNESS YOU'VE RECEIVED?

New life is not an event to recall—it is a reality to inhabit. Are you walking by the Spirit? Are you being transformed? Are you producing the fruit of a life that has genuinely changed direction? Or have you settled for the label of Christian without the life of Christ?

QUESTION 3: ARE YOU WALKING WITH OTHERS?

The empowered life flows outward. Presence, practice, perseverance. Who are you walking with? Who needs someone to walk beside them through the early steps of NEW LIFE? Who in your Jerusalem needs to see the new life you have received?

The Unfinished Work

Every revival in history has produced the same dynamic: transformed people who could not stop talking about what had happened to them. The Welsh revival of 1904 emptied the pubs and filled the churches—not through programs but through the overflow of genuinely changed lives. The East African revival spread through testimony, through the visible change in individuals that made their neighbors ask what had happened.

The most powerful evangelistic force available to the church is not clever programming, not sophisticated argument, not cultural relevance. It is the unmistakable presence of new life in the lives of people who were obviously once different. When the nations see that God is with you—not as a slogan but as a visible, credible, irresistible reality—they will ask what you have and how to get it.

This is what Zechariah saw in his vision of the restoration: ten people from every nation grabbing the robe of one Jew and saying, “Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:23). The centripetal force of genuine new life draws people toward Christ. You do not have to manufacture that force. You only have to inhabit the life that is already yours.

The Final Word

This series has not been about information. It has been about invitation. Every devotional has been an opportunity to move from knowing about new life to actually living it. If that movement has happened—if God has met you in these pages and something has genuinely shifted—then the series has accomplished what it was meant to.

If you are still on the threshold—still weighing, still deliberating, still keeping one foot in the old life while the invitation stands—then the invitation is still open. The door is still there. And the God who initiated this awakening in you is still patient, still near, still waiting with open arms for the prodigal who finally says, “I will set out and go back to my father.”

Romans 10:13

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

STRATEGIC QUESTION

Looking back over this series: which step of NEW LIFE has most challenged you, and why? Which step do you feel you have most genuinely experienced? What is the next step you need to take—not conceptually, but actually?

A PRAYER FROM THIS DEVOTION

Father, You began this work before we knew You were working. You stirred our hearts, awakened our need, called us to turn, invited us to confess, commanded us to be baptized, filled us with Your Spirit, and empowered us to walk. We stand at the end of this series aware that we are really just at the beginning of the life it describes. Do not let these words remain words. Let them become reality—lived, inhabited, visible. Send us into our Jerusalem with the new life You have given. Let us walk with people the way someone walked with us. Let the multiplication of new lives be the fruit of this season. For Your glory, from now until You come, Amen.