

# GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF August 7, 2016  
“Old and New Wineskins”



## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 5:17, Luke 5:37-39, Philippians 3:13-14, John 8:36, Mark 7:13

## REFLECTION AND STUDY

### DAY 1

On Sunday we heard a lot about Jesus taking what was old and making it new. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.** The moment you believe in Christ, there's a spiritual metamorphosis — everything changes! This is a matter of faith and not sight. As the children of God we become “in Christ” a truly new creation. We serve a God of powerful transformations! All throughout Scripture God takes those whom the world deemed the lowest, the hopeless, and the helpless and uses them to change the world. No one is beyond this powerful transformation. If you think you might be beyond his full reach, God longs to break away that which inhibits you from experiencing fullness of life. He longs to heal you, deliver you, and set you free.

- Are you experiencing the fullness of life in every area of your life?
- What area of your life could use some transformation?

**Praise God that the old is gone and the new has come! Pray that your life be forever changed as you discover God's heart for transformation.**

### DAY 2

**Read Luke 5:37-39.** Letting go of old ways can be hard but it is necessary so that we can experience the fullness of what God has for us. Over time life has a way of hardening people, and we can become rigid. Jesus tell us that rigid vessels or fabrics don't take well to change and newness. We can go back to that childlike place when we were pliable and flexible, if we allow our hearts to soften and receive again. But many of us are too blinded by the rules to see the truth or too concerned with being right and less concerned with being joyful.

- Spend some time reflecting on your life. Are you a rigid vessel? Are there areas of your heart that are hard and need softening?

**Pray and ask God to help you let go of rigidity and love yourself and the other flawed people in your life today. Open yourself up to allow God to soften your heart and allow it to heal.**

### DAY 3

The word picture Jesus used when he spoke about the wine skins really didn't have much to do with wine and had everything to do with our desire or ability to embrace new things or changes. Never think you are through with change; life is a process of constant change. **Read Philippians 3:13-14.** The human mind is like an elastic band, the more you stretch it the more effective it becomes. The more pliable you are to positive change, the faster your personal development will be. So sit down and carry out a personal assessment of how quick you are to respond to positive change or how slow you are to respond to it. Are you more rigid or more flexible? Remember a person has to be first honest with their self before they can be honest with others.

- What changes are you ready to embrace to improve your life?

**Pray and ask God to help you embrace changes. Ask God what changes you could implement to improve your life.**

## DAY 4

**Read John 8:36.** On Sunday we heard a lot about the Jewish people remembering their freedom through the Pesach meal. We can choose to be freedom people as well. There is no question that God does not want any of us in bondage, no matter where on earth we live or whose authority we are under. If God wants us to be free, then what stops us from being free? It is ourselves. We are the ones who decide whether we will choose to worship God and obey him. It seems like an obvious choice. Everyone wants to be free, right? But we all know people who've made choices that have ruined their lives and people who have hurt others with their choices as well. Maybe you have made choices that were self-destructive, or hurt others. Maybe you aren't able to break the chains of past mistakes. Because God honors our free will, He has allowed us to choose our own path, with Him, or without Him. By making the choice to follow God, willingly obeying Him from the heart, we become disciples of Christ Jesus. The truth of the Son of God shall not only make you free, if you let Him, He shall keep you free.

- Have you made choices that hurt yourself or others?
- How are you living out your choice to follow God?
- Are you living in freedom?

**Praise the Lord for your freedom. Pray for your brothers and sisters who are not free. Pray for the captive and the oppressed.**

## DAY 5

**Read Mark 7:13.** Religions are full of traditions, and Christianity has many. There were certain experiences God instructed us to repeat on a regular basis like partaking in the Lord's Supper. These traditions are intended to keep us connected to God, but when a tradition overshadows the life-giving Word of God, the Word of God is not effective. How many times have you sung the doxology or repeated the Lord's Prayer? If we are not careful, the words begin to lose their meaning as they are repeated so often that we begin to take them for granted. Never allow the way you worship God to become nothing more than a series of routines or habits. Worship in church should never be the "same old, same old." Each time we gather corporately to worship the Lord, there should be an expectancy of something new from God's Word or the songs we sing that will touch and change our hearts. Guard yourself against letting your worship and quiet times become simply routine.

- How can you guard against letting traditions overshadow the living Word of God?
- Has your worship become routine?

**Pray for freshness and newness to come over you in praise and worship. Ask God to give you new ears to hear and new eyes to see the wonderful things He wants to share with you.**

## DAY 6

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life's demands do not squelch the whispers of God's language of love upon your heart.