

THE 1981 EDITION

VOLUME 01



forty

A DEVOTIONAL

BY CHARI OROZCO

40

Dedicated to

my parents who sat in that old truck in the hospital parking lot
and prayed that God would save and use my life.

Forty, a devotional by Chari Orozco

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Why Forty?

BECAUSE LOOKING BACK HAS THE POWER TO PROPEL YOU FORWARD.



My Prayer for you

Forty is significant in the temporal and in the kingdom. So, I'm taking a moment to commemorate forty years of life and forty game-changing life lessons that I pray will bless you and propel you forward. I've learned that sometimes you have to look back to move forward successfully. I pray my looking back launches you into the next season and pushes you closer to the creator.

Here's to the next 40,

Chari Pezco



“40 brief life illustrations
point Chari's readers to
life-impacting truth!”

PAM TEBOW
Author, Speaker

“Chari Orozco is an amazing communicator; really! Clear, not wordy to fill space, but gems that have been unearthed and placed in appropriate settings for all to enjoy and appreciate for what they are. No preaching or pretense here, just powerful lessons learned on the road of hard knocks. Absolutely worth your time...taste and see for yourself!”

PAUL WILBUR
Internationally-acclaimed worship artist, song writer, speaker, and award-winning author

“I have had the privilege of serving on staff together with Chari for almost seven years now. Before I even had a conversation with Chari, I sensed she was person who knew God and hungered to know him in deeper ways. The more I have gotten to know Chari the more I see Christ's life manifested in and through her. She has a voracious appetite for the things of God and is an anointed student and teacher of God's Word.

JOHN PHELPS
Dean, Awkng School of Theology

a few words from friends

40 is much more than a devotional. It is a voice “crying out in the wilderness” with the transparency desperately needed in this superficial age. Chari spares no personal expense with authentic testimony to bring encouragement to all who are willing to take this journey with her. The ability to turn pain into promise and setback into setup is what makes Chari a gift like no other to the worldwide church body. The combination of both humility and spiritual intellect sets this work apart as something that speaks to every season of life.

“

40 reminds us all that the best way to approach a lifetime of devotion to Christ is one bite or one day at a time. I’ve had the privilege to watch Chari’s faith and ministry throughout the years. Her testimony is forged through the fires of humility and anonymity. Now her voice explodes on the scene with global force and influence to spread the unmerited love of Jesus.

CARLOS + COURTNEY SERRANO

Lead Pastors, Celebration Church Amelia Island

05/13

“Dime con
quien andas
y te digo
quien eres”

foreword

ANDI/ANDREW

I remember the first day I met Chari at a pastors and leaders gathering in 2011. I had recently moved to New York City with my family to plant a church and was nervous for various reasons to be around a group of other women. I remember so clearly that she was full of joy and fire, kindness and intention. There was a light in her eyes that caused me to feel safe and seen. Right away I noticed that she was a genuine encourager and beautifully honest in the best of ways. It was evident that she was “a spiritual midwife”, one who comes alongside others to birth their dreams. Years later, Chari has become a true friend – a sister. She’s a woman in my inner circle, and one that I call on for wisdom and prayer in and through the seasons of life. Her friendship is a gift to me.

I believe this devotional will be a gift to your life. Each page will make you feel like you’re sitting on the couch with Chari, cup of coffee in hand, talking through the various facets of life. She will be a mentor, a friend, and a sister to you on these pages. One who has gone before you, and one that simply sees things differently than you, illuminating new perspectives and revelation. Chari navigates life like no one I’ve ever seen. Yes, she uniquely runs in her lane, but it’s more than that, she’s in love with Jesus and it shows, and she’s fought hard to remain in Him and go deeper in His love with each passing year.

I think it’s meaningful that this devotional is forty days, because forty is a significant number in the bible for various reasons. It often symbolizes testing and trial – which we try to avoid yet know that each challenge has the potential to change and grow us.

foreword

ANDI/ANDREW

The Israelites spent forty years in the desert, Elijah went forty days without food on Mount Horeb, Jesus fasted and prayed in the desert for forty days before he entered into 3 years of public ministry that led to the cross and resurrection for the redemption of our lives. I'd say forty is substantial, and Chari has the authority to share her life lessons with us through the lens of her forty years here on the planet earth. You will feel loved, seen, embraced, challenged, encouraged and inspired to move forward. At least, that's what every day, moment and conversation with Chari leaves me feeling. She's a friend for every season.

Chari will remind you of the importance of the basics of your faith, your God given identity and how to embrace it, your purpose and how to walk in it, and your authority as children of God. May refreshing come one day at a time as you dive into forty years of lived wisdom from the one and only Chari Orozco.

All of my love,

Andi

40 DAYS. 40 LESSONS.

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INTRODUCTION

BY GABY SULLIVAN (*chari's little sister*)

Surprise!

It's your besties, little sister, coming to rain on your parade in true little sister fashion. I know you're probably thinking, "lady, I don't even know you," but you know Chari, and let me be the lesson bearer - when you get one of us, you get all of us! So here are a few things you should know before proceeding:

SLOW YOUR ROLE:

She might be your "bestie" (as she so enduringly tells you in her book *Nomad*), but she's my sister. Which means I'm loaning her to you for 40 days. So get all of your love fest language out of the way on social media now. Because on day 41, I want her back!

FLUID LOSS IS REAL

I'm warning you now, grab some tissues and wine (a GLASS people - not the bottle) and hold on. The next 40 days are going to mess you up. I only know this because Chari gave me a sneak peek - and by the time I got to day five, I was worried that I needed an IV due to how much I cried.

DO YOU BOO

i'm going rogue here

Everyone always tell you in these Devo's to "get your Bible and highlighters". Let me be the first to tell you that Google and iPhone Notes work just fine. Everyone can chill!

BIRTHDAY'S ARE EVERYDAY

Share this devo, hashtag it, make a tiktok dance, do what you must - but let Chari feel like her labor of love and gift to you on HER birthday was not in vain. Because if you don't, I will pour nail polish on your clothes.

Your besties little sister,
Gaby

P.S. Please don't follow me on social media.

THE 1981 EDITION

Basics

Days 1-10

1981

01

LIFE IS A GIFT

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully
made. Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

Psalm 139:14

06

Day 01 Life is a gift

I spent the first three months of my life in an intensive care unit. I usually do not share this, but it feels appropriate in this context. My parents tell the story with tears and joy as they sat together in an old truck in the hospital parking lot and prayed that God would save me and use my life for his purposes.

Because this is how my life started, my perspective on life has always been that it's a gift. And because of its fragility, it should be cared for with

- the right atmosphere
 - the right sustenance
- and
- the right people speaking life over you

I spent the first days, weeks, and months of my life in an incubator. I lived with a feeding tube that changed its location daily, and I spent each of those moments with my parents and grandparents holding my hand and speaking life and promise over me.

Today, let's hit a hard reset.

Your life is a gift; because of this truth, your atmosphere matters; what you ingest and where matters, and finally, who you are allowing to speak over your life matters. Take a moment today to assess those three things and align them to God's purposes and will for your life.

And if you have a hard time figuring that out, here's a cliff notes version as God's purpose for you is simple, love God and love people. Just keep it simple, life is a gift and meant to be a vessel for God's love on earth. Now go, be awesome and live this life with care, intentionality, and love.

x Chagui

02

KEEP EATING

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Day 02 Keep eating

I weighed five pounds when I left the hospital, and at my first doctor's appointment at four months old, I weighed seven pounds. A woman ridiculed my mother at the appointment and insinuated she was abusing me because of my weight; she was, of course, unaware of my health issues and an 80's Karen. But I digress; seven is the number of completion and perfection. I don't think it was a coincidence that I was seven pounds at my first doctor's appointment. God was making a statement, and even though others saw brokenness and abuse, God saw me as wonderfully made and someone whose life would one day be used for His glory.

Mom took that seven pounds as a challenge and started feeding me; even when I threw up, she would make another bottle. She was going to make sure my tiny imperfect intestines were strong and working, and so no matter my response, she kept feeding me, and I kept eating, and eventually, the issues that plagued me as an infant subsided.

Today, I need you to change your perspective.

Others may see you as underweight in an area of your life, but God sees potential, and he sees you for who you are, which is his. You may have struggled to keep weight, but keep eating up

- His Words
- His Promises
- His Plans

All of those things are good and perfect and at work. Now go, rock your day and live this life with his words guiding you, his promises covering you, and his plans as your map.

x *Chari*

03

CLIMB A
TREE

I can do all things through him
who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

Day 03 Climb A Tree

My three-year-old birthday party was a legitimate bash! The entire family came, and my grandmother made me a beautiful dress for the occasion. It was white with lace and a yellow sash that I remember fidgeting with throughout the party. At one point in the day, I found myself in a tree. The whole climbing a tree in a dress was very on-brand for me and my childhood, but I think it was just a photo-op staged by my family.

As a kid, I would see that picture, and it would make me happy as I looked healthy, and my mom would tell me about my first few months of life and what a contrast it was to my early days and weeks. That picture at that moment was in itself a miracle. The truth is, each birthday was not just a celebration of life but of what God had done, and they didn't wait until May 13th to remind me. I found that my parents even celebrated the daily mundane things as a miracle, and awkward tree photo-ops were the norm. It was annoying as a child, but looking back now, I'm thankful they made those moments feel big and a miracle in themselves.

Today, I need you to climb a (metaphorical) tree.

Don't wait for a promotion to be thankful for your job. Don't wait for a gift to be grateful to your spouse. Please don't wait for your kid's report cards to come in before you celebrate them for their hard work. Every moment of every day is worthy of being thankful and has the potential of tree climbing photo-op.

- Every day is a miracle
- Every circumstance has something to be thankful for
- Every day deserves a handmade fit (*i.e. The full armor of God*)

Thankfulness is free; give it out in large doses. Now go, take on your day with gratitude in the everyday moments.

x Chari

04

NO TEETH? NO PROBLEM!

For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep
your foot from being caught.

Proverbs 3:26

Day 04 No teeth? No Problem!

At four years old, I knocked both of my front teeth out while playing at recess. Not one, both of my front teeth! It was a bit scary initially, but I wasn't overly affected by being toothless for some odd reason. When picture day rolled around, my mom did my hair, and I wore my favorite sweater, and regardless of the whole no teeth thing, I smiled like a pro. That moment is still one of my favorite pictures of my childhood because it speaks to who I am and who I am.

Life isn't always fair and doesn't always allow you to look your best, but joy is not found in our look; it's in our heart.

Today, I need you to guard your joy.

Storms of life will come for sure. In the Bible, trials are going to happen, but your joy is connected to Jesus. I showed up and smiled because I knew these three things to be certain

- I am loved
- I am valued
- I am seen

When life's trials knock out your two front teeth, remember that the creator of the universe LOVES YOU, VALUES YOU, and SEES YOU right where you are, and every day is picture day. Now comb your hair, put on your favorite hoodie, and smile for every picture.

x Chari

05

MIRACLES PART 02

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of
power and love and self-control.

2 Timothy 1:7

Day 05 Miracles, Part 02

I found myself sitting in my kindergarten class with a stomachache. Stomach issues I'd dealt with since infancy, but something felt different. It was so bad that my grandmother, who worked at my school, had to get me because I was in the fetal position crying in pain. The pain only grew worse as they took me home; within the hour, I was being strapped to a bed in a helicopter and being flown alone to the city ironically in which I now live. My mom would have to make the hour and a half trek alone and by car, as no one was allowed to ride with me.

I arrived to find my aunts and uncles already at the hospital awaiting me. I could see my uncle signing paperwork as my parents hadn't arrived yet, and the surgery needed to happen immediately. My aunt whispered, *"it's okay, God was with you when you were a baby, and he is with you now."*

Today, I need you to remember.

Life has a way of making you forget the way God has worked things out in our lives before. And when we forget God's faithfulness, fear creeps in. I had every right at that moment to be scared. But God placed the right people in every point of that trauma to remind me that he was with me, that I was never alone, and that he was my healer on day one and my healer on that particular day. I need you to remember

- You are not alone
- God is always ready to meet you and
- It's going to be okay

I awoke from emergency surgery to another scar, my dad asleep in a chair, and a new teddy bear my grandmother purchased for me to have in the hospital as the stay would be another long one. But yet again, God met me there, and I awoke to love in the room. No matter what you're walking through, love is in the room, don't forget that.

x Chari

06

ASK FOR HELP

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Matthew 16:24

Day 06 Ask for help

I asked Jesus to be my savior soon after the surgery ordeal. It was about ten o'clock at night, and my mother was at the kitchen table grading papers. Something woke me up, and I found myself with this overwhelming need to ask Jesus into my heart. We went to church regularly as a family, and I never felt like Jesus didn't love me or know me, but something clicked that evening that I needed to invite Jesus personally into my life. I wasn't too sure how to do that, so I crawled out of bed with my teddy bear in hand, and I walked over to my mom and asked her to help me.

She stopped and prayed with me, hugged me, kissed me goodnight, and then just like that, I crawled back into bed with my teddy bear and Jesus.

Today, I need you to be okay with asking for help.

When asking for help nowadays, people tend to ask Google, or Alexa, or some rando influencer on the social media train instead of asking.

- Jesus
- or
- Someone older who has successfully navigated your current circumstance with wisdom and success
- Please see the first two and repeat.

Wisdom asks for help, so be wise. Sometimes you need to do the work and find someone who's built the road you're currently traveling on and ask for help.

Now go and have a fantastic day, and if you need JESUS in any of it (*which you should*) stop and take a moment to seek him and ask him for help. And just for extra measure, find someone not on the internet to pray with you and maybe even give you a hug.

x Chari

07

PLANT
SEEDS

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

06

Day 07 Planting Seeds

I spent my early summers on my grandparent's farm in between significant moves. Mom and Dad would go to the new cities to get us situated, and we would stay behind with my grandparents memorizing scripture and taking naps. At seven and eight, I hated every minute of it, but now as an adult, I'm a fan of naps, and my Bible is an intricate part of my every day. My grandmother was brilliant and setting me up for a win; I didn't see it then. She was getting her hands dirty with the soil of my soul, and she was making sure that my roots were ready to receive the life lessons she was shelling out.

A few things that even then I was sure about:

- she made amazing pancakes
 - she always smelled like oil of Olay
- and
- she made sure I understood the importance of rest and the word.

I'm thankful every day for those seeds she planted in my soul, as they are foundational pillars in my life.

Today, I need you to look at your pillars.

I don't read the Bible to prepare for sermons or potential devotionals I'm thinking of writing. I read the Bible every day because I need to hear from Jesus. I need to drink the living water of the word of God daily, or I'm not a nice person. It's like cardio for my soul and mind. The truth is that when I'm not reading my Bible, I miss his voice. And when I'm not in the word, it's usually because I'm exhausted from life and all its stuff.

Today be awesome, but I also need you to make a plan. Like a beautifully highlighted plan to be immersed in his words daily, for more than five minutes! If you do, your words will be drenched in love, and the fragrance of your life will smell like all he is. And when all else fails, naps are always a win.

x Chaei

08

RED
TOOLBOXES

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

Day 08 Red Toolboxes

When I was eight, my dad owned a green Volkswagen beetle that, when things got stressful, he would venture out into the Michigan cold to work on it in our garage. I loved going out there with him to 'fix the car,' and he didn't mind my questions or my being there.

To make me feel part of the process, he found an old red toolbox and filled it with tools. As he tinkered with the car, so did I. As he turned the knobs, so did I. He would take moments to process his next move, and so would I. At one point, I dreamed of being a girl mechanic on race cars because of those moments. But my greatest takeaway was that my father always made room for me in a space I wasn't qualified for. He gave me tools to practice and room to dream; he allowed pauses for my questions, and I experienced those priceless moments because I chose to follow him out into the cold. My desire to spend time with my dad trumped the uncomfortable or the unknown.

Today, I need you to make a trek into the garage.

God wants to make space for you in your life for you to learn and grow safely. But that means you have to

- Follow him into uncomfortable spaces
- Be okay with working with tools that you're not familiar with and
- Make time to be in his presence.

His presence is life, and his guidance is like oxygen in a world where everything is toxic. Now go, venture out into the garages of life, ask all the questions, turn all the knobs; your heavenly father is there and ready to teach you how to make your life run properly.

x Chagui

09

PAPER
ROUTES

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14

06

Day 09 Paper Routes

My father picked up a 3am paper route when we were kids to help with our extra expenses. I didn't really understand why our entire family would pack into a very 1980's van in the Michigan winter to drop off newspapers, but we did it as a unit every morning for a season. Dad would drive, mom would sit up front and help get the papers ready and us three kids would sleep in the van.

Some mornings, when we couldn't sleep we would help mom wrap the newspapers and put them in their plastic wrap. It was fun, it was an adventure, and we loved it. I'm sure my parents didn't love it, but I have fond memories of those early mornings we spent together, and the sunrises that always followed.

Today, I need you to get in the van.

You should know I'm writing this on a plane and laughed out loud as my ask feels and sounds very Dateline NBC. Anyways, seriously. Get in the van! Ha! Still funny. When I say get in the van, I mean

- Wake up early, every day is worth an early start
 - Spend time with God and the people that would love you enough to help you on the paper routes of life.
- and
- Enjoy the ride

Paper routes didn't make a lot of money, but they were needed at that time. I sense as I write this that someone is looking down on their van situation, and even the people along for the ride. If that's you, you should know that the van situation will be something you look back on fondly. Don't miss it, it's character building!

Now go, throw some papers.

x Chari

10

LOVE FORGIVES

You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in
love to all who call to you.

Psalm 86:5

06

Day 10 Love forgives

Year ten was a rough one, and I was met with extreme heartache. In the first few chapters of my book, *Nomad*, I write about it so that I won't rehash the events here; I'll just say dad and mom split for a season. My perspective of my father shifted drastically during this season of my life as my desire to be near to him was replaced with a desire to never see him again.

My mother, the queen of seeing people like Jesus, modeled forgiveness at the highest level, and to be honest, I didn't appreciate her battle to love and forgive until adulthood.

Today, I need you to fight to forgive.

Forgiveness is one of the most challenging life lessons I had to learn in my early years of life and hasn't been easy in the years that followed. But what I found amid the heartache was that deserving forgiveness didn't warrant forgiveness, loving people like Jesus merits forgiveness. Also, forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation; thankfully, in this case, it did. But forgiveness does free us from bitterness and instead fills that broken pieces hurt brings with love.

Forgiveness looks like

- Choosing to love over bitterness
- Speaking life instead of speaking death
- Believing the best in people that have only shown you their worst

People may follow you on social media for your highlight reel, but they are inspired to love Jesus by how you navigate suffering. So be aware of those watching, and choose to forgive, even those who don't deserve it. Now go, be love, speak life, and believe the best in those who don't deserve it – After all, Jesus loved and forgave us at our worst.

x Chaei

THE 1981 EDITION

Identity

Days 11-20

1981

11

BE KIND

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving
one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32

Day 11 Be Kind

At eleven years old, I encountered a few things that shaped me, old man hats, denim, and my fifth-grade teacher! Sadly, it was a rough year academically, and it didn't matter what I did; my teacher seemed to have it out for me. If I raised my hand, she was annoyed. If I asked to use the bathroom, she rolled her eyes as if I asked her for money. After one of my many bad days, I came home crying and told my mom that my teacher hated me and I needed to switch schools. Mom, in response, stayed on brand and pointed me to some rando Bible verse and a life lesson I didn't think was necessary at the time, *"be kind; you never know what people are going through."*

Today, I need you to be kind and do what my mom said.

Everyone struggles in some silent way, and kindness gives us a larger, more transparent lens to see people. There is a good reason it's a fruit of the spirit, as when you cultivate kindness it

- resets your words
- resets your heart
- resets the circumstance

A year later, I found out my fifth-grade teacher was walking through a broken marriage, abuse, and a few other things that wouldn't allow her to see things clearly. I don't know who is grossly unkind to you in your world, but choose kindness as your response. You don't need to be the person's friend to be kind; you just need to be human. Now go, choose kindness, and if you can't choose it today, begin to plant the seeds of the word of God in your heart so that kindness will grow and flourish in your words, in your heart, and your circumstance.

x Chaei

12

JUST WAIT

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

Isaiah 40:31

Day 12 Just Wait

Twelve was the year I lost my infamous air Jordan's. We couldn't afford them, so my mom put those jokers on layaway, and every two weeks, we would walk into the mall hand in hand to put twenty bucks on those shoes. I would have worn them to the soles fell off, but they were stolen out of my gym locker.

Every time I wore those shoes, I was proud, not necessarily because they were terrific and I felt like I was the best basketball player in them, but because mom worked so hard to get them for me. The process moved me, the sacrifice shaped me, and it introduced me to the world of waiting.

Today, I need you to wait.

Waiting is the worst, and everyone wants the fast track, but I've found over the years that the fast track doesn't pour a firm foundation; waiting does. I've found that God has used that layaway process with my hopes and dreams and what it's built-in me as a result is

- Trust in his process
- Peace as he holds my hand through the process
- An appreciation of the process

What has God put on layaway for you? Is it character, is it maturity, is it unspeakable joy after a tough season? Whatever it is, you need the in-between time to work some stuff out. The in-between is where seeds of trust get planted deep in the soil of your heart. It's where the peace that surpasses all understanding begins to grow. And it's where the appreciation in the process flourishes so you can one day bring shade to someone else in the waiting. Now go, take his hand, and be okay with the wait.

x Chaei

13

GROWTH, RECOGNIZE IT

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:7

Day 13 Growth, Recognize it

I grew five inches the summer between seventh and eighth grade. Those five inches changed a few things for me, but I didn't recognize the significant shift it was meant to make. See, I was bullied pretty severely in seventh grade and was beat up on the regular as I was little, and my swag hadn't taken hold yet!

As a result, I walked into eighth grade without the understanding that I was now towering over my bullies, even though that summer an encounter with Jesus allowed me to come into my own; out of fear, I surrounded myself with brokenness. That brokenness gave me a reputation that fended off the bullies, but it sadly led me like a cloud by day and a fire by night through the rest of my middle and high school experience.

Today, I need you to recognize.

Having a bird's eye view of your current season is a have-to, so take a moment today and assess your growth. If you don't realize how far you've come,

- You'll make wilderness decisions and mistakes in the promised land
- You'll use stones for your problems long after the goliath is dead and
- You'll deny Jesus even after you've walked with him and seen his miracles up close

Nothing is worse than God walking you into a promise land season, and you're mad at him about the giant grapes because you are used to a manna and quail diet. Nothing will set you up for a failure faster than throwing stones at a problem that wisdom and the King should solve. And finally, if you don't see how far you've come in your walk and that God is always walking with you, you'll easily walk away in challenging moments. Now go, recognize.

x Chaz

14

CLOSED WINDOWS

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Day 14 Closed Windows

I was a bit of a dramatic kid and extremely led by big emotions. In an attempt to help me steward these intense emotions, the Lord over the years has closed windows ahead of those very needed closed doors in my life. In his kindness, I found he was giving me a heads up that change was around the corner so I could ready my feels and my heart for his plans as I have always been a person that needed a well-manicured plan. When I fractured my ankle at fourteen and fractured what I assumed would be a fledgling WNBA career, I found myself for the first time processing a future without basketball. I know now that God was trying to give me a heads up as a closed-door would meet me at a later date. Looking back, I see now that the shut window was not meant to take my love for the sport; it was just a nudge in another direction. God was trying to detour me from a dream that wouldn't satisfy me. Sadly, I did not listen, and like Jonah, in the Bible, I ran in the opposite direction.

Today, I need you keep an eye open for the whales.

After I recouped from my ankle injury, I jumped head into programs and training for what I honestly thought would be college basketball and then the WNBA. Real talk, I wasn't that great, I was just tall and aggressive, and so because I didn't listen, I was met with a whale of the situation at sixteen because

- I wasn't truly surrendered to God's plan
 - I didn't trust God's best for me
- and
- I assumed the closed window meant I needed to find another way in

God's plan for your life will be met with closed window moments that are meant to guide you and build your trust. Now go, embrace the closures, and don't get creative; get surrendered. If you don't, you may run into a whale.

x Chaei

15

TAKE THE TIME

Come and see what God has done,
his awesome deeds for mankind!
He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the waters on foot—
come, let us rejoice in him.

Psalm 66:5-6

Day 15 Take the Time

I don't necessarily like to be celebrated; I also rarely take the time to celebrate anything. Maybe it's because I grew up with parents who struggled financially in my youth that I didn't want to be a burden. It's not that they didn't want to celebrate me or didn't attempt to on occasion; I just felt like if it took money or time away from essential everyday needs, it wasn't worth celebrating.

On my 15th birthday, my parents saved, and my great-uncle gifted me with enough to have a quinceañera, a Hispanic coming of age party that feels more like a wedding than a birthday party. I picked my fifteen girls and guys and chose the cake and colors, and it was such an incredible moment for my family and me as we took the time to recognize what God had done in my life up to that point.

Today, I need you stop, look around and celebrate.

Life moves fast, and I don't remember how I exactly got here. So that's why I'm taking the time to rehash it, to celebrate it, to put it to paper. As of now, I am well past fifteen, but I can remember that party like it was yesterday. If I close my eyes, I can see my mother reading allowed her letter to me in front of my friends and family and the feeling it evoked. I can remember the joy I found in the celebration. Full disclosure, it's still hard for me to celebrate my life and my moments, but it's imperative to take the time to stop and celebrate

- God's faithfulness
- God's blessings
- and
- God's plans

Life will move so fast that his faithfulness will become too familiar, his blessings will seem ordinary, and his plans obsolete. Now go, celebrate all God has done in you, through you, and for you. It's always worth the time.

x Charri

16

CLOSED DOORS

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

Day 16 Closed Doors

In my experience, closed windows are usually done with love and grace. Closed doors, on the other hand, typically feel like a punch to the throat. At sixteen, the door finally closed on everything the last four years had built. All the things I didn't recognize, windows I bypassed became painfully apparent, and life changed in an instant.

I woke up one morning with a life I'd built, and the following day it was gone. At that moment, I was so angry at God for removing what I'd grown accustomed to. I'd worked so hard to construct my private kingdom, and I was so happy. But the truth is, God is in the business of building his kingdom, and whatever version of happiness I was living out was not rooted in joy; it was rooted in comfort.

Today, I need you get uncomfortable.

Closed doors are never meant to steal your joy; they are intended to bring you hope. Closed doors are intended to give clear direction in a life with no maps, just one compass, and that compass is Jesus. I've found when I lose my compass and start making my maps in life; I tend to get

- comfortable
- familiar
- and
- forgetful

Comfort breeds complacency; familiarity breeds a lack of reverence, and then, of course, they both cause us to forget. Keeping God's resume fresh on our minds allows us to see the closed doors as opportunities, openings into the new. Today be okay with those closed doors he is padlocking in your life. Be okay with life feeling uncomfortable. Jesus was born, lived, and died in the uncomfortable, and ultimately, he brought freedom and salvation to the entire world. Now go, embrace the uncomfortable.

x Chagri

17

TASTE & SEE

Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalm 34:8

Day 17 Taste and See

I fell in love with Jesus at seventeen. I knew of him; I had even experienced his goodness over the years, but I didn't walk with him until the summer of eleventh grade. For those that just scoffed internally, it's true; you can totally be brought up by Jesus believing parents and attend church every week and still not have a personal relationship with Jesus that is thriving.

It's as if I'd been invited to dinner but never actually tried anything. I knew the courses and what order the entrees came out. I even knew how to use the silverware and what to wear to dinner, but I never ate anything. It was never appealing to me. It always felt like the courses were above my head, and I just wanted a hamburger. But at seventeen, life had swiftly slammed a door in my face, and I was spiraling; I was starving spiritually, emotionally, so out of desperation, I reached out and took a bite.

Today, I need you to see things with new eyes.

I once had a boss that I had to travel with periodically. She would go to these upscaled restaurants, and I would always order a hamburger. She noticed my habit, so she adjusted, and the places she began to take me to became very ethnic, and hamburgers were not on the menu. That shift caused me to

- ask questions
 - trust those around me
- and
- try something new

At seventeen, I began to ask questions about Jesus to people I trusted, and as a result, I experienced Jesus in a way I'd never encountered him before. I tasted, and as a result, I experienced a brand-new perspective of who Jesus was and is and is to come. Now go, step out of your comfort zone and what you'll find is that he is better than anything else you've ever experienced.

x Chari

18

FINISH
WELL

I have fought the good fight, I have finished
the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

Day 18 Finish Well

I didn't finish high school well. Honestly, I barely graduated. At that point in my life, I just wanted to play my guitar and sing to Jesus. My senior thesis was barely a C+, and I was at least ten minutes late to my first-period AP English class every day of senior year. I just wanted to love people and tell them about Jesus, but I didn't express that in every aspect of my life. I loved Jesus, and I loved people, but not enough to show up on time. Not enough to honor the season I was in, and not enough to realize my immaturity. I didn't know until many years later that living out and finishing one season well propels you into the next, and whatever you don't excel at in one season, sadly, you have to work through in the next.

Today, I need you to be awesome right where you are.

Living well and finishing well takes

- maturity
 - character
- and
- patience

Lack of maturity causes you to walk through seasons entitled and anxious for the next season instead of allowing your now season to mold you. I've found most seasons are meant to push you and grow you into the person God has created you to be. So, be awesome right where you are, show up on time. Actually, show up fifteen minutes early, always bring your best as every day deserves your best. In March 2020, I saw my AP English teacher at a local restaurant and immediately leaned over to tell my husband what a train wreck I was during that season. As I began to tell him, I realized that everything she taught me I now use in my everyday life. I jumped up, walked over, and I thanked her for being consistent every day. The truth is, I didn't bring my best every day, but she did. And for that, I am thankful.

Now go, be your best; people are watching.

x Chari

19

CHOOSE WISELY

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

Day 19 Choose Wisely

My lack of maturity in my late teens followed me into the next season, and that immaturity caused me to make hasty decisions based on feelings rooted in fear. I wish I could say I never made another decision like that, but I did; long into my late twenty's hasty and fear-based was how I made decisions. I lived trusting my gut instead of trusting God. I'm not saying trusting your gut is terrible; feelings are excellent indicators; they just shouldn't be driving the car of your life. But Jesus, in his awesomeness, allows us every day to choose. He allows us the option of handing our keys to him with love and trust or jumping into our lives and driving off in haste and fear.

Today, I need you to let Jesus drive.

When feelings drive your car, you usually encounter tons of

- speeding tickets
 - random fender benders
- and
- moments where airbags deploy, and life feels totaled

At nineteen, I had a car that had a broken speedometer. So, I never knew how fast I was going. The first time I was stopped, I told the officer I didn't realize I was speeding because my speedometer was broken. He kindly told me to get it fixed and sent me home with a warning. The very next week, the same officer in the same exact place stopped me for speeding. This time he gave me a ticket, and my excuses were no longer valid. When you choose to let Jesus drive your life, you don't need to focus on anything else except what music you will jam out to on the way! When Jesus is driving the car of your life, the pace is always just right; there is no rush because he knows when you are meant to arrive. When Jesus is behind the wheel, you don't have to worry about the road ragers, as you are positioned to see them as Jesus does -- broken people who haven't allowed Jesus to drive their day. When Jesus is leading your life, the moments that have been totaled get restored; and your ride through life has a clean Carfax. Now go and let Jesus drive.

x Chari

20

NOT
YET

Blessed are those who listen to me, watching
daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.

Proverbs 8:34

Day 20 Not Yet

At twenty years old, the Lord told me to stop dating randos and that I had already met my husband; also, he let me know that I was dating other people's future husbands. Talk about an awkward revelation! I immediately cut off ties with the guys I was casually seeing, and I prayed for a few weeks for God to tell me who my husband was since I had already met him; I felt I had the right to know who he was. In one of my asking sessions, I felt the Lord whisper my husband's name to me.

Full disclosure, my husband and I had already dated, and I was horrible to him, so he moved on and was in a serious relationship with another girl. So, I thought the Lord was joking, and I kept praying for a new name, and the Lord responded with radio silence on the matter. I spent the next year with a picture of my husband in my car dash to remind me that he was my future, and I needed to be praying for him. And even though I couldn't have him right then, I was faithful to him in the not yet.

Today, I need you to remain faithful in the not yet.

Not yet is not a no; it's just a not yet. I'm not sure what you are dreaming or believing for, but I would highly suggest you keep it the dash of your heart as a reminder of what is to come. During the not yet season, I worked on myself, and I focused on my career and my walk with God. I stayed the course and I

- Believed for my not yet
- Prayed for my not yet
- and
- Matured for my not yet

The man that my husband was at twenty was drastically different from the man I married at twenty-two. We needed that time; we needed the growth. We needed the not yet. Now go, be faithful. God is working something out in you, and in others, don't jump the gun, don't lose faith.

x Chaei

THE 1981 EDITION

Purpose

Days 21-30

1981

21

WHAT NOW?

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation,
be constant in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Day 21 What Now?

I met twenty-one in a waiting season, a season where the concrete of my identity had been poured out, and while it dried and set, I searched out purpose. I didn't feel called to go directly to college, so I worked odd jobs and loved Jesus. I played my guitar in obscure coffee bars, wrote songs, and just fell in love with my savior. In that season, I cultivated a truth that would follow me into the next twenty years; *when I didn't know what to do, I could always choose love.*

I spent the years before marriage living out love, I spent my lunch breaks in the word, up to all hours of the night in prayer and writing love songs to the only love that mattered to me and the only love that would sustain me in the years to come.

Today, I need you to pursue love.

Love is what everyone is searching for; to feel

- seen
- known
- and
- accepted

is what the heart of man is desperately excavating in the wrong locations.

True love only comes from the creator as love in the temporal is fleeting, and love from the creator is eternal. You'll never be truly seen until you can see yourself through His eyes. You'll never know who you are until you wrap yourself around who He is. And acceptance is only found in the prince of peace, the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Now go, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and be constant in prayer as love is found there.

x Chaz

22

GROWING PAINS

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature
and in favor with God and man.

Luke 2:52

Day 22 Growing Pains

I was happily prepared to wait for my husband to finally realize how in love he was with me until I was about thirty as I was living out my dream of music and ministry and loving Jesus. But life happened, my appendix burst, I went into emergency surgery, and I awoke to a hallmark movie love story awaiting me. We were engaged within a few weeks and married within the year.

It was amazing and movie-worthy, but it was fast, and we had to work through some significant growing pains in the first year of our marriage. Bickering in our house early on was an Olympic sport, and before our first year came to an end, we both were talking divorce. The truth of the matter was that we had a plethora of unmet expectations, and our life and ministry were draining us. Thankfully, instead of staying in the trench angry at each other, we chose to climb out together and look for help.

Today, I need you to find help, again.

Help is needed in every aspect of life, but it's not meant to be a

- crutch
 - an escape goat
- or
- an easy way out

Help looks like healthy boundaries, mentorship, and in our case, finding a community that held us accountable. Today I want you to evaluate your relationships, work, and your heart. Ask yourself, where do you need the most help? Where can I ask for it? My advice is to go to someone who's already succeeded at whatever you're walking out; if it's marriage advice, ask an older and wiser couple. If it's work-related, ask someone successful in your field who can mentor you. If it's a Godly community, assess where you're planted. You can't produce apples in an orange grove, so you may want to assess your soil as well. Now go and ask for help. Asking for help doesn't make you look weak; not asking does.

x Chari

23

COMMUNITY
IS ESSENTIAL

Iron sharpens iron, and one man
sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

Day 23 Community is Essential

Community is water in the deserts of life, and in my case, it's cold sparkling water because I'm extra! In year two of my marriage, we found kindred spirits, young married couples who loved Jesus and who were walking through the same types of trials we were. It was so life-giving in that season, and it taught us the importance of community and healthy friendships.

I can happily say that some of those friends are still close with us almost twenty years later. These were the friends you called for anything and everything. They were the friends you could even call when you were moving houses, and they showed up with a smile! These were the ones who helped keep our marriage thriving and pointed at Jesus. These friends were gifts, and they still are.

Today, I need you to be that kind of friend.

Everyone is looking for a healthy community, yet we forget that we are also meant to be a healthy community for others.

- The type of community that shows up with kind words and a smile
- The type of community who lends a listening ear

and

- The type of community that pushes others towards Jesus

Before you search out community, be the community. God only gives you more people when you can steward the ones you already have. Now go, be that friend that shows up, loves big, and gives out living water in the desert seasons of life.

x Chari

24

STORMS BUILD YOU

And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Matthew 8:26

Day 24 Storms Build You

We bought a house at twenty-four that was every bit of a money pit. It was nothing like the Instagram house renovations that my generation so loves to share. Honestly, it was a home that didn't just have problems; it had every problem. From the location to the plumbing, from the heating and air to the rats crawling through the walls. Even the stories we learned later surrounding the house could have been a horror movie, yet for some reason, God saw fit to plant us there for a season.

Truthfully, the house was less than ideal, but the home that we built there was worth the storms we faced in it.

Today, I need you to build where you are.

Storms of life are inevitable, but so is refreshing after the rain if you could just see the storm as an opportunity for God to

- Build us up
- Keep us functioning
and
- Embrace the ugly

The floors of that home were literally falling out from underneath us! So, we grabbed some hammers, bought some boards, and learned how to build a firm foundation. There wasn't a kitchen, so we made one, it wasn't pretty as we didn't have a lot of money, but it was functional.

Sometimes God will allow you to build ugly as aesthetics aren't a Kingdom thing; functionality is. God is building something in you when you're facing a storm; it probably won't be pretty, but it's going to work out something in you, for you, and through you.

Now go, build the Kingdom right where you are.

x Charri

25

TRYING FOR LEGACY

And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

Genesis 1:22

Day 25 Trying for Legacy

We started trying to have a family when I was twenty-five. I was plagued with chronic health issues our entire marriage, so it wasn't shocking when we didn't get pregnant. Regardless of the hiccups, we started to dream, choose names, and plan the future roads of our legacy. Looking back on the planning and dreaming that took place, I can now see that God was redefining legacy for me as in that season, I thought legacy was what I could produce in the flesh.

Today, I need you to write this down and post it somewhere.

Legacy in the Kingdom isn't something you have to try for; it's something you have to surrender to.

Before God created man, he created locations and the animals which thrived in those locations. He didn't skip to day six. He happily worked days one through five and every day said, "*it is good.*"

Trying for legacy isn't bad, but it's *so good* when you just surrender to God's plan daily by

- Understanding your seed
- Understanding your soil
and
- Understanding your fruit

What is God giving you right now to be faithful with? That's your seed.

Where is God asking you to be faithful right now? That's your soil.

Who is God asking you to be faithful to and with right now? That's your fruit.

Legacy isn't about what you attain or what you can produce; it's about what you can surrender. Now go, be faithful with the what, the where and the who.

x Chari

26

MIRACLES PART 03

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

Day 26 Miracles, part 03

Twenty-six was met with cancer. Not only could I not get pregnant, but I was now facing cancer. I headed into the week of the biopsy filled with fear and overcome by emotions. I only told a few close friends, and we all began to pray. I didn't ask God for wisdom for the doctors; I didn't ask God to give me peace; I asked God to make what they saw disappear. I asked God to confound the wise and heal me like he'd done so many times before. Even though I felt fear, I was rooted in victory.

It wasn't hard to believe in what seemed impossible as I'd faced the unimaginable before, and God always showed up. In my three-month ICU stay, when I was life-flighted and had to have emergency surgery, and now with cancer, he was going to show up.

Today, I need you to keep God's resume fresh on your mind

Struggle tends to wipe our memory of past miracles and God's faithfulness. And in response, we have to diligently guard those moments so we can hit a replay when storms of life come our way. I'll never forget the look on that doctor's face when he told me everything he had seen weeks before was now gone. He then said, *"I don't say this as a doctor, but as a believer, this is a miracle!"*

When faced with the impossible, what and how do you pray? Do you pray from a filter of fear or a filter of victory? Spoiler alert: God always wins in the end. So, when you pray, pray with

- thanksgiving in mind
- his resume on replay
- and
- rooted in the truth of his word

Now go, believe in the impossible, be filled with thanksgiving because he wins in the end; you just need to believe it.

x Chari

27

SUCCESS FADES

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Matthew 6: 19-20

Day 27 Success Fades

I owned my own media company in my twenties, and I very aggressively chased success. I also very aggressively caught it. Catching success young was incredible, but I didn't have the character or grit to sustain it or the right mentors in place to help me guide it. My job and my gifting set became my identity, and when God asked me to walk away from it at thirty, I spiraled.

At twenty-seven, I watched the songs I wrote be sung by thousands. I designed for high society, and I traveled and hosted events that helped raise money to stop human sex trafficking. But I was on empty. Success wasn't filling my life; success was draining my life, as it was rooted in pride and not my creator.

Today, I need you to redefine success.

You may already have this principle tattooed on your heartstrings but humor me a bit and pretend you don't. In my early twenty's success was all I wanted. I believed if I were a success, all my struggles would fade away as life would just become more manageable. But that wasn't the case.

The more success I accumulated, the emptier I felt, and the more my brokenness was apparent. Success won't fix your problems, fam; it will just reveal them.

- Success is a temporal gauge; favor is an eternal gauge.
- Success fades; favor is forever.
- Success masks your identity; favor marks your identity.

Now go, pursue favor. Pursue living under the shade of your creator as his shade is full of peace, and blessings, and all that you actually need. Success may be what you want, but HE is all you need!

x Chari

28

OBEDIENCE DOESN'T FADE

And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.

Deuteronomy 28:1-3

Day 28 Obedience Doesn't Fade

Twenty-eight stumbled upon a dream realized, my very first book! When God asked me to write the book, I jumped at the task; as you already know, I had huge issues with chasing worldly success. Full disclosure, I legit thought I would write a New York Times bestseller out the gate! But God wasn't trying to add to my accolades; he was building my obedience.

God is in the obedience business, and he knows if he can build our heart's capacity to follow his words, ways, and plans, our lives and our world will be better. You can usually find him stretching out that obedience muscle within you when he asks you to do or say something difficult and or uncomfortable. That's right; obedience grows in the soil of the uncomfortable.

Today, I need you to be uncomfortable, again.

Comfort is the arch-nemesis of obedience! If you're comfortable, why would you even listen or obey? I'm not saying God doesn't want you to be blessed (i.e., living comfortably). I'm just saying; you'll never get up from the metaphorical couch you're happily sprawled across with the remote in your hand and with a mini-fridge at close distance.

Daily obedience in the big things and the smalls things kills away the pieces of your heart that prefer comfort over Jesus. Just like the life of Jesus, obedience to the difficult and uncomfortable to the point of death was a have to, and it's the same for all of us that call ourselves followers of Jesus. We have to embrace

- Death to self
- Death to sin
- Death to comfort

Now go, be besties with the uncomfortable, as it will be a reoccurring them in this life and until eternity.

x Chari

29

GROUNDED

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith—that you, being rooted
and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:17

Day 29 Grounded

A very uncomfortable and challenging ask was thrown my way at twenty-nine. I was sitting in church listening to a sermon, and I felt the Lord say, "I need you to step away from leading worship." I'd been a worship leader all of my adult life at that point. I was a songwriter; I had just completed my first nationally released album, and I had fabulous short hair in a mohawk. I must have been hearing the Lord wrong because my music career was just about to launch! I won't lie and tell you I said, "Yes, Lord, whatever you want!" I did what we all would all do, and I started asking for details...

Me: What?

God: You heard me,

Me: Um, okay? When?

God: Today!

Me: What?! It's Sunday, I'm in the middle of church.

God: Okay, do it after.

Me: Okay, But why!?

God:

Today, I need you to step away.

You may be wondering, why would God ask me to walk away from something that I was not only successful at but that I loved? Well, I'll tell you.

- I loved it more than him, and I didn't realize it
- My identity was hog-tied to it, and I didn't realize it
- My serving overshadowed who I was serving, and I didn't realize it

Today I need you to look inward and ask yourself if there are loves you've set above Jesus? Are there things that speak to your identity more than Jesus? And is your heart fully surrendered to serving Jesus? Yep, simple enough. Now go... (*Awkward Cricket Noises)

Sorry, not Sorry.

x Chari

30

LOST DREAMS

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

Day 30 Lost Dreams

I called my husband sobbing as I'd just received the news that kids the old fashion way would not be part of our future. I was a wreck on that phone call, and I kept saying, "the lady who is great with kids and has cool kid names and came from a long line of awesome moms is not going to be a mom?" Through the tears and panic attacks, my husband said with all the confidence; I the world, "Babe, I didn't marry your womb, I married you. This changes nothing!"

I was super mad at him initially as this news, I believed, changed everything. I was too sad to hear that what he was saying was his love for me, his commitment to our family, and our purpose to pastor and push forward the Kingdom was not changing.

Today, I need you to listen closely.

Life will throw you curveballs and breaker balls, and you may get hit a few times when you step up to the plate. But God's dreams and purposes for us don't change just because life gets hard. We live in an imperfect world, and because of sin, we will have to deal and work through imperfect things. But this I promise you

- God's love for you does not waiver
- God's commitment to you does not waiver
- God's purposes for your life does not waiver

If you're facing a broken or a lost dream or if you know someone who's walking through a disappointment of some kind, choose to remind them today that they are still loved and full of purpose. Make sure to do what my husband did for me; hug them in despair, but don't let them stay there.

Now go, this changes nothing.

x Chari

THE 1981 EDITION

Authority

Days 31-40

1981

31

BASIC REFRESH

I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 24:7

Day 31 Basic Refresh

At thirty-one, I found myself in a season of forgetting. I'd sold my business, stepped away from leading worship, and I was still reeling from the no kids thing. I was depressed and in desperate need of a refresh.

The infamous they said my thirties were supposed to be my best years! These were the years where I'd finally see fruit from an identity that was set in stone and an unwavering purpose. But truthfully, I was so shaken up by the category five hurricane that hit me the year before, it was as if I forgot not only who I was and what I was purposed for, but I forgot the basics

Today, I need you to go back to the basics.

Though there will be seasons where things feel dormant, frustrating, and you aren't producing the fruit you thought, life is a gift. Life should be filled to the brim with tree climbing photo-ops, smiles with no teeth, and a refresher course of God's miracle-working power and faithfulness.

And if that perspective doesn't seem to work,

- Ask for help.
- Plant some seeds of thankfulness.
- Walk out to the garage and spend some time with the father.
- Go on an early morning paper route with your community.

And when you don't know what else to do, you can always choose love and forgiveness.

Now go, implement the basics in your everyday. You will never be able to walk out who God called you to be and what he's purposed you for if these basics aren't part of your all day, every day.

x Chari

32

YOU HAVEN'T ARRIVED

But from there you will seek the Lord your God
and you will find him, if you search after him with
all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

Day 32 You Haven't Arrived

You should know my car lives on empty. My husband always complains that when we drive my car, it's always in need of gas. For some reason, I look at that almost empty light as a challenge, and instead of being responsible and stopping for gas, I push the car to fumes just to get home. I usually do this because

- It's an inconvenience to stop
 - My husband always fills my tank
- and
- I forget that it's needed

Today, I need you to fill your own tank.

Thirty-two was a bounce-back year. I was thirty, not flirty, and thriving. I was teaching all the time, traveling, in very cool rooms with very cool people, and pretty much killing it with my empty light on. Thirty-two was terrific, but I was pouring myself out in a way I'd never poured myself out before. As a result, I didn't arrive where I needed to go in that season. I missed out on opportunities that were right in front of me that God was using to prompt me to learn how to rest and fill up my empty soul.

Stopping to fill yourself up with the word, with prayer, and with rest will sometimes feel like an inconvenience. But if you don't do it, you'll end up on fumes. Also, no one can do this for you, and you have to get great at it. Yes, rest isn't something you do when you're done with work. It's a sacred, beautiful necessity that gives your mind, body, and soul a chance to refill. It's the gasoline to get you from point A to point B. Also, seeking God isn't something you do so that you can preach or teach or check off devo from your daily list. Seeking God is the oil change to your life, and helps your heart run smoothly, and keeps you from overheating.

Now go, fill your tank and change your oil.

x Charri

33

BE LIKE
JESUS

Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with
Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him
be crucified!"

Matthew 27:22

Day 33 Be like Jesus

Everyone wants to be like Jesus. They want to experience his miracles, his close friendships, his strength, and his ministry. Yet, no one seems to enjoy his wilderness seasons, the weirdo demoniac scenarios, the betrayals, or his beating.

I realized this at thirty-three as I encountered the most profound loss of my adult life and didn't know how to respond like Jesus. It was a year where loss and pain found me in a way I'd never experienced. It was a pain that left me in a garden feeling betrayed. It was a pain that pierced every part of my soul, and it would throw me into a tailspin for several years to follow. It would also shape me in a way that the easier years would not, and it led me to a level of freedom that also affected people I would never meet.

Today, I need you to embrace the uncomfortable, for the 3rd time.

Responding like Jesus is what we are supposed to do in every scenario, yet it's not always our go-to. We love to respond like Jesus when people are waving palm branches in our direction, but we usually don't react like Jesus

- When we are offered 30 pieces of silver in seasons of lack
- When Jesus pauses for two days, and Lazarus is dying and
- When it's four in the morning, we've been walking for miles, and homeboy is asking us to stay up and pray.

Thirty-three taught me that responding in the ugly like Jesus is what a true relationship with Jesus looks like. It's so uncomfortable to respond in love and with a kingdom mindset when you feel broken. Still, Jesus modeled it throughout his thirty-three years in the good, the bad, and especially at the crucifixion.

Now go, respond like Jesus no matter what you are facing.

x Chari

34

ALONE ISN'T BAD

fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

Day 34 Alone Isn't Bad

I was alone at thirty-four, friendship-wise. Most of my closest friends moved out of state, and life changed drastically career-wise as well. I fell into an incredibly lonely season, and it felt like Jesus had taken a break from being my friend as well. I did what most people do in sad bear seasons, and I isolated myself from everyone to find some semblance of who I was before thirty. Also, I hated my thirties during this season as I couldn't hear God past the gong of past betrayal, loss, and unmet expectations. I couldn't hear his still small voice whispering that he was working something out on my behalf. Life felt like a drastic stop on everything that I thought mattered, and it's as if his voice was stuck on pause, and all I could hear was noise.

Today, I need you to read Genesis 1.

God spent the first six days creating with the words, "let there be." He got to day six, and things shifted. He brought in the divine counsel and seemed to pause before he created man. I believe he did this because before he can

- Impart Identity
 - Impart Purpose
- and
- Impart Authority

He always pauses. He paused things when I was ten and dad left. He paused things at twenty when I wasn't supposed to be dating anyone, and he had been hitting pause for several years, and I'd missed it! This time, he was trying to drop authority in my hands as he was about to gift me with people to steward. If you are in a season where things feel paused, rejoice! God could be doing a few things. He could be working out your identity, he could be shining light on your purpose, or he's about to ask you to steward his people in some way.

Now go, be okay with being alone because he is actually with you and about to hit play.

x Charri

35

LOOK OUT AND UP

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

Day 35 Look Out and Up

I finally pulled myself partially together midway through my thirties. Stewarding a handful of millennials shook me into shape as the reality that I was now in charge of people's professional well-being scared me straight. As a response, I began to seek God with an enthusiasm that I'd lost in my early twenties. I read anything and everything I could get my hands on, and I read and re-read Psalm 121:1-2. I needed help, and I knew how to ask for it, look for it, and be it, but this go-round, the help I needed was beyond my temporal reach.

Today, I need you to look up...for help.

Asking for help and learning to thrive in uncomfortable situations have been common themes that I've walked through over the last forty years. They have also equally sharpened my grit and vulnerability.

Jesus was full of grit and lived from an authentic vulnerability that was only built by his constant understanding that he

- needed to hear from the father
 - needed to be close to the father
- and
- needed to surrender his life to the father's plan

to truly thrive in life!

Today I need you to look up and ask for help. Whether it's a significant people problem or something mundane like a parking space, God wants to hear from you every day. He wants to help you, be near to you and help guide your day. The more you flex that help muscle upward, the easier life will be as he is at work and knows the end from the beginning.

Now go, ask for help, again. It's doesn't make you weak to ask for help; it shows your strength!

x Chari

36

YOU ARE
HERE

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 29:7

Day 36 You Are Here

Someone once told me, “wherever you are, be there!” and on year thirty-six, the Lord taught me to do just that. Full disclosure, I have never been great at just focusing on the day. I’m always ten steps ahead and concentrating on tomorrow and whatever goal I have placed in front of me. But 2017, I found myself drowning in some of the most demanding professional days and tasks to date and learning to thrive day to day was all I could do.

Notice I said thrive and not survive? Let’s dissect that a bit.

- Thriving is thankful; surviving is not
- Thriving is loving; surviving is not and
- Thriving is at peace; surviving is not

That year taught me to focus on every bit of those twenty-four hours with care and precision. I would give each day my best and if I finished everything, great, if I didn’t, great! The quantity of my output was no longer my goal, loving people and keeping my peace and joy was my goal. And when my focus changed to love and Jesus, my quality and output shifted drastically in the best way.

Today, I need you to just be here.

Life is so short, and your days are not promised. I don’t know if I’ll get another forty years, so today, I’m choosing to be intentional to love from a foundation of gratitude, love, and peace.

Don’t wait until tomorrow to be better, be better today. Don’t wait until it’s convenient to say sorry, or ask forgiveness, do it today. Choose love today. You are here and meant to be a light in the darkness, right here. When you thrive here, those around you thrive, those you love and care for thrive.

Now go, thrive and be awesome here!

x Charri

37

I CRY IN CORNERS

And when he came to the place, he said to them,
"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."
And he withdrew from them about a stone's
throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying,
"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from
me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be
done." And there appeared to him an angel from
heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony
he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became
like great drops of blood falling down to the
ground.

Luke 22: 39-44

Day 37 I Cry in Corners

I was always an emotional kid and an emotional adult. Sadly, in most circles, it was always perceived as immaturity or my cultural upbringing, and for many years I believed that my tender heart and passionate spirit were negatives. Thankfully God surrounded me with life-giving voices that helped me mold and mature my emotions through heavenly principles. I even started studying people with tons of feels in the Bible.

- Jeremiah, the prophet with tons of feels
 - David, the king with tons of feels
- and
- Jesus, in the garden with some major feels

And as a result, at thirty-seven, I launched 'I Cry In Corners,' a podcast dedicated to those with feels! So pretty much a podcast for all of us. It was a dream come true, rooted in something that I once perceived as a broken part of me.

Today, I need you to relook at your broken parts.

Feelings aren't a bad thing; they are a God thing. They just need to be surrendered for God to use them. God used my feelings and gave me feelings so I could show empathy, authenticity, and compassion. It was all in his plan for me to be a feeler.

What is something in your life that you have perceived as a weakness? Maybe God is trying to refine it to use it for his glory and the Kingdom. I found that searching the word of God for people who were like me or who responded to challenging situations like me helped me find what God was refining in me.

Now go, get in the word, do the work; the searching will be worth it in the end.

x Chari

38

YOU WERE MADE FOR THIS

Then God blessed them and gave them this directive: "Be fruitful and multiply. Populate the earth. I make you trustees of My estate, so care for My creation and rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that roams across the earth.

Genesis 1:28

Day 38 You were made for this

At eighteen, I thought I'd be a musician for the rest of my life. At twenty-eight, I thought I'd be working in the creative field for the rest of my life. At thirty-eight, I realized I just wanted God to use my life, and wherever and whatever he asked of me, I was going to do it.

Thirty-eight also found me on the shores of a book release, a successful podcast, touring the country, and I realized quickly that something was about to change. I'd felt these windows closing before in moments of extreme success and comfort, and so I braced myself for whatever God had in store.

Today, I need you to understand following.

God didn't save my life as an infant for songwriting, creative ministry, or writing. He saved my life because he knew I'd follow him and love people along the way and that, my friends, is what I was created for.

In life, gifts, and talents, and job titles tend to become what we think we are purposed for. But the truth is we were meant and created to follow Jesus and be his image bearer of love on the earth. Now, we can do that through our giftings and talents and job titles, but if you don't really understand the following, you'll miss it. Also, following doesn't mean

- You can see where you're going
 - You have the full context of what's going
- Or that
- You feel ready or qualified

Following Jesus isn't attending services on Sunday, it's loving people all week and building a community that loves and reflects the love of Jesus. Following isn't rules or religion; it's relationship. And that's what you and I have been created for. A beautiful, loving relationship that is worthy of our loyalty and trust. Now go, follow well.

x Chari

39

ALMOST THERE

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Day 39 Almost There

I sat on my couch, running on no sleep in the middle of a pandemic, working the craziest hours I'd ever worked in my life, and I said, "Jesus, I'm not sure if I believe in you. This can't be the life you want for me." Thirty-nine years of miracles, signs, and wonders. Thirty-nine years of faithfulness and lessons and three months into the pandemic, I cracked. It's not my proudest moment, but I feel compelled to tell you that life hasn't always been perfect, and my faith hasn't always been rock solid, but God has. He's always been perfect, and he's always been rock solid. This devotional isn't an ode to my faithfulness; it's an ode to his. I'll also tell you in that moment, where I was so completely overwhelmed, I felt God's presence. I felt His love, and I felt his peace. And the truth is nothing changed from that moment, except me. I was still stuck in a pandemic working crazy hours, but I chose to trust. Trust is a choice. And that choice caused me to dust off my feelings and doubt and unbelief and trust that the God who'd walked me through thirty-nine years would meet me in the middle of this unknown season. I can see now on the brink of forty that it was an attack of the enemy on my perspective as the promise land was just around the corner. And now, as I'm here on the edge of the banks of that promise land season, I can see that I just needed to trust his process.

Today, I need you to trust the process.

I never thought at thirty-nine while sitting on my couch doubting faith that I'd have one of the most fruitful years of my life. But it's true. Sometimes God deconstructs

- What we think we need
- What we think we want
- What we think about ourselves

So we can carry a fresh revelation of who he is and what he has for us. Now go, trust the process; it's leading us to exceedingly above all that we could ask or imagine.

x Chari

40

DEFINING LEGACY

“Sing, O barren one, who did not bear;
break forth into singing and cry aloud,
you who have not been in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than the children of her who is married,” says
the Lord.

Isaiah 54:1

Day 40 Defining Legacy

Leading up to my fortieth birthday, someone said to me that I was heading into the promise land season of my life and asked if I was excited about it. Since we are besties at this point and you've just walked through my entire life, I'll tell you my honest thoughts on it; whatever is next will be more of the same.

- Same God
- Same faithfulness
- Same promises

The promise land in the Bible still had issues. Just because there is big fruit in your life doesn't mean there won't be big giants. I don't say this as a Debbie Downer, and I say this as a person who walked through hardships and awesomeness, and God met me in all of it. Whether I'm walking through a wilderness of dust or a wilderness of promise, God will meet me there. I am sure of it for myself and you.

Today, I need you to be certain of this.

At the end of my life, I pray that people will say when they encountered me in any way that they could tell I loved Jesus by the way I loved them. In the end, that's all that matters to me; that's what I hope my legacy will be.

This is my challenge to you, live out love. Live it out in your speech, in your actions, and your heart. The world is broken, and we are all in need of love. The kind of love that is sacrificial and consistent and steadfast, and that love is Jesus. In forty years of life and twenty-two years of ministry, love has been the overall etching theme.

Nothing else matters.

Now go love and be loved.

x Charri

40



ABOUT CHARI

Chari Orozco (pronounced Cha-dee) is an author, teacher, podcaster, and executive producer at AWKNG+TV. She is passionate about sharing the love of Jesus and using her gifts of speaking, writing, and design to positively impact the lives of those around her and to build the local church.

“I don’t want people to be inspired by my highlight reel. My prayer is that they are, instead, impacted by my struggles. Highlight reels are temporal, but everyday struggles have the power to change us.”

When Chari isn’t working, you can find her reading too many books at once and hanging out with her husband, Esteban, who also serves on staff at AWKNG+TV.

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