



JUNE 2026 DEVOTIONAL

CHOSEN FOR THE SHIFT

30 Days of Grace, Growth & Godly Transition

The Historic St. James Missionary Baptist Church

The Year of Better: Rooted & Rising!

Love • Grow • Transform • Live

St. James Family,

One of the hardest things in life is transition. Change stretches us emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and sometimes even relationally. Yet many times, the very shifts we resist are the places where God grows us the most.

This month, we are reminded that while our past and even our present may seem disqualifying, God's grace and mercy still step in to sanctify us, prepare us, and position us for what's next.

The shift may feel uncomfortable, but it is evidence that God is still working on you.

And that's the good news: Despite our flaws, failures, fears, and frustrations—God still chooses to use us.

My prayer is that throughout this month you will embrace the process, trust God through every transition, and boldly walk into the "better" He has prepared for your life.

Let's grow together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Lowder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

Pastor Jonathan Lowder



WEEK ONE

GRACE
FOR THE
Transition



MEMORY VERSE —
WEEK ONE

ISAIAH 43:19

— — — — —
“Behold, I will do
a new thing...”



WEEKLY CHALLENGE —
Embrace the Shift

This week, stop fighting what God
is trying to grow through your life.



DAILY PRAYER: ♥

“Lord, help me trust You
in unfamiliar places.”



DAY 1 — GOD WORKS THROUGH TRANSITIONS

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1

Opening Reflection

Few people enjoy transition because transition disrupts comfort. It forces us to release what feels familiar while trusting God with what comes next. Yet throughout Scripture, God often does His greatest work in seasons of transition. Before there was growth, there was movement. Before there was elevation, there was stretching. Before there was “better,” there was change.

Biblical Insight

Solomon teaches that every season has purpose. Nothing in life happens outside the awareness of God.

Bridge to Daily Life

The uncertainty you feel may actually be preparation for where God is taking you next.

Hope Principle

Every transition carries purpose.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust You in changing seasons.

Reflection Question

What transition am I struggling to trust God with?



DAY 2 — LEAVING WHAT IS COMFORTABLE

Scripture: Genesis 12:1

Opening Reflection

Growth and comfort rarely live in the same place. God called Abraham away from what was familiar before revealing what was next. Sometimes the hardest step of faith is leaving behind what feels safe.

Biblical Insight

Abraham's obedience began before he had all the details.

Bridge to Daily Life

God may not always show you the full picture, but He will always guide your next step.

Hope Principle

Growth begins where comfort ends.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, give me courage to move when You call.

Reflection Question

What comfort zone is God asking me to leave?



DAY 3 — GRACE STILL QUALIFIES ME

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Opening Reflection

Many people disqualify themselves because of weakness, failure, or insecurity. Yet God specializes in using broken people to reveal His strength.

Biblical Insight

Paul discovered that God's grace was sufficient even in weakness.

Bridge to Daily Life

Your flaws do not cancel God's purpose for your life.

Hope Principle

Grace covers what insecurity questions.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me rest in Your grace.

Reflection Question

What weakness have I allowed to discourage me?



DAY 4 — GOD STILL USES IMPERFECT PEOPLE

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Opening Reflection

One of the enemy's greatest lies is convincing people that their past makes them unusable. But throughout Scripture, God repeatedly chose flawed people to accomplish His purpose.

Biblical Insight

God works through every part of our story for His glory.

Bridge to Daily Life

Your mistakes may explain your story, but they do not determine your destiny.

Hope Principle

God still uses imperfect people.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, redeem every part of my story.

Reflection Question

What part of my past do I need to release?



DAY 5 — THE SHIFT MAY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE

Scripture: Philippians 1:6

Opening Reflection

Spiritual growth is rarely comfortable. The process of becoming “better” often feels stretching, unfamiliar, and even frustrating at times.

Biblical Insight

God finishes the work He starts in us.

Bridge to Daily Life

The discomfort you feel may actually be evidence that God is developing you.

Hope Principle

Growth often feels uncomfortable before it feels rewarding.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me grow through this season.

Reflection Question

What challenge may actually be helping me grow?



DAY 6 — TRUSTING GOD WHEN I CANNOT SEE

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5–6

Opening Reflection

One of the hardest parts of transition is not knowing what comes next. Yet faith often requires trusting God before clarity arrives.

Biblical Insight

Trust means depending on God's wisdom above your own understanding.

Bridge to Daily Life

You do not need every answer to take the next faithful step.

Hope Principle

God's direction is trustworthy even when unclear.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, guide my steps.

Reflection Question

Where do I need to trust God more fully?



DAY 7 — BETTER REQUIRES CHANGE

Scripture: Isaiah 48:17

Opening Reflection

Many people pray for “better” while resisting change. Yet God often uses transition to prepare us for the very thing we’ve been asking Him for.

Biblical Insight

God leads His people in the way they should go for their benefit.

Bridge to Daily Life

The shift may not feel easy, but it may be exactly what your next season requires.

Hope Principle

God’s shifts prepare us for better seasons.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, prepare me for what’s next.

Reflection Question

What is God trying to develop in me?



WEEK TWO

TRUSTING GOD THROUGH THE *Shift*



MEMORY VERSE —
WEEK TWO

PROVERBS 3:5-6

*“Trust in the Lord with
all your heart and lean not
on your own understanding...”*



WEEKLY CHALLENGE —

Release Control

This week, surrender one area you've been trying to control and trust God with it.



DAILY PRAYER: ♥

*“Lord, help me trust You
beyond what I understand.”*



DAY 8 — WHEN THE FUTURE FEELS UNCLEAR

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11

Opening Reflection

One of the most difficult parts of transition is uncertainty. We often want God to reveal the entire plan before we move forward, but faith grows when we trust Him one step at a time.

Biblical Insight

God reminded His people that even in difficult seasons, His plans for them remained good.

Bridge to Daily Life

You may not know exactly what comes next, but God does.

Hope Principle

God's plan is still working even when life feels uncertain.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust Your plan.

Reflection Question

What future concern do I need to place in God's hands?



DAY 9 — WAITING WITHOUT WORRYING

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31

Opening Reflection

Waiting seasons can feel frustrating because they slow us down. Yet waiting on God is never wasted time.

Biblical Insight

Isaiah teaches that strength is renewed when we wait on God.

Bridge to Daily Life

The delay may actually be preparation for what God is building in you.

Hope Principle

Waiting with God strengthens you.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, renew my strength while I wait.

Reflection Question

How do I normally respond to waiting seasons?



DAY 10 — LETTING GO OF CONTROL

Scripture: Psalm 46:10

Opening Reflection

Control often gives the illusion of peace, but real peace comes from surrendering to God.

Biblical Insight

God calls His people to be still and recognize His authority.

Bridge to Daily Life

Some battles are not won by striving harder but by trusting deeper.

Hope Principle

Surrender creates peace.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me release what I cannot control.

Reflection Question

What situation am I trying too hard to manage alone?



DAY II — FAITH OVER FAMILIARITY

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:7

Opening Reflection

Transition becomes difficult when we become attached to what feels familiar. Faith often requires stepping into places we've never been before.

Biblical Insight

Paul reminds believers that faith means trusting beyond what is visible.

Bridge to Daily Life

The familiar may feel safe, but growth often happens in unfamiliar places.

Hope Principle

Faith moves forward even without full clarity.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, strengthen my faith for what's ahead.

Reflection Question

What familiar thing may be preventing my growth?



DAY 12 — PEACE IN THE PROCESS

Scripture: Philippians 4:6–7

Opening Reflection

Transitions can create anxiety because they involve change, uncertainty, and new responsibilities. Yet God offers peace even before the situation changes.

Biblical Insight

Paul teaches that prayer invites the peace of God into troubled hearts.

Bridge to Daily Life

Peace is not the absence of problems—it is the presence of God in the middle of them.

Hope Principle

God's peace guards uncertain hearts.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, fill my heart with peace.

Reflection Question

What anxiety do I need to give to God?



DAY 13 — TRUSTING GOD'S TIMING

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:3

Opening Reflection

Sometimes the hardest part of transition is not the change itself but the timing of it.

Biblical Insight

God reminded Habakkuk that His promises would come at the appointed time.

Bridge to Daily Life

God's delays are not necessarily denials.

Hope Principle

God's timing is always purposeful.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust Your timing.

Reflection Question

Where have I become impatient with God?



DAY 14 — GOD GOES BEFORE ME

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:8

Opening Reflection

Transition feels less frightening when you remember that God never sends you somewhere He has not already gone before you.

Biblical Insight

Moses reminded Israel that God would remain with them as they entered a new season.

Bridge to Daily Life

You are not walking into your future alone.

Hope Principle

God's presence goes ahead of you.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, remind me that You are with me.

Reflection Question

How would my attitude change if I fully believed God was with me?



DAY 15 — CHOSEN DESPITE MY PAST

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:15–16

Opening Reflection

Many people believe their past disqualifies them from being used by God. Yet Scripture repeatedly shows God choosing imperfect people.

Biblical Insight

Paul acknowledged his failures while celebrating God's mercy.

Bridge to Daily Life

Your past may explain your journey, but it does not cancel your purpose.

Hope Principle

Grace is greater than your past.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me embrace Your mercy.

Reflection Question

What past mistake am I still holding onto?



DAY 16 — GOD USES UNLIKELY PEOPLE

Scripture: Judges 6:12

Opening Reflection

Gideon saw weakness in himself while God saw potential.

Biblical Insight

God often calls people who feel unqualified.

Bridge to Daily Life

Your limitations do not limit God.

Hope Principle

God sees more in you than you see in yourself.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust what You see in me.

Reflection Question

Where have I underestimated myself?



DAY 17 — MY WEAKNESS IS NOT FINAL

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:10

Opening Reflection

Weakness often becomes the place where God's strength shines brightest.

Biblical Insight

Paul learned to depend on God instead of himself.

Bridge to Daily Life

You do not have to be strong all the time to be useful to God.

Hope Principle

God's strength works through weakness.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, strengthen me where I feel weak.

Reflection Question

Where do I need God's strength most?



DAY 18 — GOD STILL CALLS ME

Scripture: Romans 11:29

Opening Reflection

God does not change His mind about the purpose He has placed on your life.

Biblical Insight

The gifts and calling of God remain.

Bridge to Daily Life

Even after failure, God can still restore purpose.

Hope Principle

God's calling remains steady.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me walk in my calling.

Reflection Question

What has God called me to do?



DAY 19 — HUMILITY IN THE SHIFT

Scripture: James 4:10

Opening Reflection

Growth should increase gratitude, not pride.

Biblical Insight

God lifts those who humble themselves before Him.

Bridge to Daily Life

The more God blesses you, the more humble and thankful you should become.

Hope Principle

Humility keeps you grounded in grace.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, keep my heart humble.

Reflection Question

How can I remain grateful during growth?



DAY 20 — PREPARED FOR BETTER

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

Opening Reflection

God prepares people before He positions them.

Biblical Insight

Believers are created for good works already prepared by God.

Bridge to Daily Life

The process you're in may be preparation for what's next.

Hope Principle

Preparation always precedes purpose.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, prepare me for what's ahead.

Reflection Question

What might God be developing in me right now?



DAY 21 — STILL CHOSEN

Scripture: John 15:16

Opening Reflection

Sometimes people reject us, overlook us, or underestimate us. Yet God's choice matters more than human opinion.

Biblical Insight

Jesus reminded His disciples that He chose them.

Bridge to Daily Life

You do not need everyone's approval when you already have God's purpose.

Hope Principle

God's choice outweighs people's opinions.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me walk confidently in Your calling.

Reflection Question

Whose opinion affects me too much?



DAY 22 — GROWTH REQUIRES STRETCHING

Scripture: Isaiah 54:2

Opening Reflection

Growth rarely happens while staying comfortable. God often enlarges our capacity by stretching our faith, patience, and perspective. Stretching may feel uncomfortable, but it is often evidence that God is preparing you for more.

Biblical Insight

Isaiah encouraged God's people to enlarge their tents in preparation for increase. Expansion required preparation before manifestation.

Bridge to Daily Life

The responsibilities, challenges, and changes you are experiencing may not be punishment—they may be preparation for your next season.

Hope Principle

Stretching is often a sign of growth.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, prepare me for the increase You have for my life.

Reflection Question

What area of my life is God stretching right now?



DAY 23 — GOD USES PRESSURE TO DEVELOP ME

Scripture: James 1:2–4

Opening Reflection

No one enjoys pressure, but pressure often reveals strength we did not know we had. The process may feel difficult, but God uses trials to shape endurance, maturity, and faith.

Biblical Insight

James teaches believers to view trials differently because testing produces perseverance and spiritual growth.

Bridge to Daily Life

What feels like pressure today may become part of your testimony tomorrow.

Hope Principle

God develops strength through pressure.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me grow through every challenge I face.

Reflection Question

How has difficulty helped strengthen my faith?



DAY 24 — BETTER REQUIRES SURRENDER

Scripture: Luke 22:42

Opening Reflection

One of the hardest parts of transition is surrendering our plans for God's will. Yet true growth begins when we trust God enough to let go of control.

Biblical Insight

Jesus demonstrated complete surrender to the Father's will even in a difficult moment.

Bridge to Daily Life

Sometimes the "better" God has for you requires releasing what you wanted for yourself.

Hope Principle

Surrender creates room for God's purpose.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust Your will above my own.

Reflection Question

What am I struggling to surrender to God?



DAY 25 — BECOMING MORE LIKE CHRIST

Scripture: Romans 12:2

Opening Reflection

The goal of spiritual growth is not simply changing behavior—it is becoming more like Christ. God uses every season to shape our character, mindset, and heart.

Biblical Insight

Paul teaches that transformation happens through the renewing of the mind.

Bridge to Daily Life

Growth often begins when we allow God to change the way we think, respond, and live.

Hope Principle

Transformation begins inwardly before it appears outwardly.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, renew my mind and shape my heart.

Reflection Question

What mindset does God want me to change?



DAY 26 — LETTING GO OF WHAT WAS

Scripture: Philippians 3:13

Opening Reflection

You cannot fully embrace your future while constantly looking backward. Some seasons must be released in order for new seasons to begin.

Biblical Insight

Paul chose to forget what was behind him so he could move forward into what God had ahead.

Bridge to Daily Life

Holding onto past pain, failures, or disappointments can delay your growth.

Hope Principle

Releasing the past creates room for the future.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me let go of what no longer belongs in this season.

Reflection Question

What do I need to release so I can move forward?



DAY 27 — WALKING INTO NEW SEASONS

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19

Opening Reflection

God often introduces new seasons in unexpected ways. What feels unfamiliar today may become the very place where God reveals His faithfulness tomorrow.

Biblical Insight

God promised to do a new thing for His people, even making ways in difficult places.

Bridge to Daily Life

New seasons may feel uncertain, but they also carry new opportunities, growth, and grace.

Hope Principle

God provides grace for every new season.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me embrace the new thing You are doing.

Reflection Question

What new season is God leading me into?



DAY 28 — TRUSTING GOD WITH THE OUTCOME

Scripture: Proverbs 16:9

Opening Reflection

We often want certainty about how everything will turn out before we move forward. Yet faith means trusting God with outcomes we cannot control.

Biblical Insight

Solomon teaches that while people make plans, God directs their steps.

Bridge to Daily Life

You are responsible for obedience—God is responsible for the outcome.

Hope Principle

God can be trusted with what you cannot control.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, help me trust You with the results.

Reflection Question

What outcome do I need to place in God's hands?

DAY 29 — DON'T QUIT IN TRANSITION

Scripture: Galatians 6:9

Opening Reflection

One of the greatest temptations during transition is giving up too soon. When progress feels slow, doors seem closed,



and prayers appear unanswered, discouragement can quietly settle into our hearts. Yet many times, the breakthrough we're praying for is closer than we realize. The enemy often attacks our endurance because he knows what faithfulness can produce.

Biblical Insight

Paul encourages believers not to become weary in doing good because there is a harvest connected to perseverance. The promise is not merely for those who start well, but for those who remain faithful through the process.

Bridge to Daily Life

There will be seasons when doing the right thing feels difficult and continuing forward feels exhausting. During those moments, remember that God is working behind the scenes even when visible results are absent. Faithfulness is never wasted in God's Kingdom.

Hope Principle

The harvest belongs to those who refuse to quit.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, strengthen my endurance and help me remain faithful even when I cannot see immediate results.

Reflection Question

Where am I most tempted to give up, and how can I trust God to help me keep going?

DAY 30 — GOD FINISHES WHAT HE STARTS

Scripture: Philippians 1:6

Opening Reflection



As we conclude this month, it is important to remember that the shift in your life is not dependent upon your strength alone. The same God who called you, sustained you, stretched you, and grew you throughout this season is also committed to completing the work He began in you. Your journey is not finished simply because a chapter has ended.

Biblical Insight

Paul reminds the church at Philippi that God is faithful to complete the good work He started. Their confidence was not in their ability to hold on to God, but in God's ability to hold on to them.

Bridge to Daily Life

There may still be unanswered questions, unfinished goals, and areas where growth is needed. Yet God's faithfulness does not depend upon your perfection. He continues to work through every season, every challenge, and every transition until His purpose is fulfilled.

Hope Principle

The God who started your transformation is committed to completing it.

Daily Prayer Focus

Lord, thank You for every lesson, every challenge, and every blessing that came through this season. Help me trust You with what comes next.

Reflection Question

How have I seen God's faithfulness throughout this season of transition, and what am I believing Him for in the season ahead?



St. James Family,

As we come to the end of this month's journey, I pray you have been reminded that transition is not something to fear—it is something to trust God through.

The shifts in our lives are rarely easy. They stretch us, challenge us, and often move us beyond what feels comfortable. Yet every transition carries evidence of God's grace. The fact that God continues to work on us, develop us, and prepare us is proof that He has not given up on us. This month we've learned that while our past may have disqualified us in the eyes of others, God's grace and mercy stepped in and declared something different. He still chose us. He still called us. He still decided to use us.

As we continue through _ The Year of Better: Rooted & Rising_, remember:

The shift is not punishment.

The shift is preparation.

God is growing you because He has greater for you.

God is stretching you because He is preparing you.

God is moving you because He is not finished with you.

Walk into your next season with confidence.

Trust His process.

Trust His timing.

Trust His purpose.

And never forget:

**You were chosen for the shift.*

Walking with you in faith and expectation



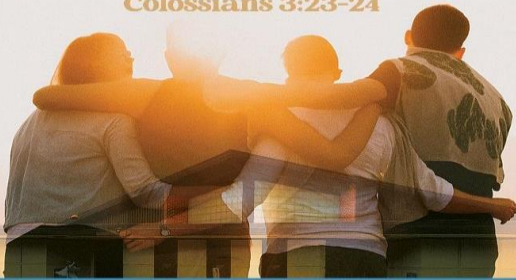
Jonathan F. Lowder Sr.

Pastor Jonathan Lowder

20 **YEAR** **F**
26 **BETTER**



Colossians 3:23-24



After the "Year of Victory": We are Rooted and Rising!





*We Are St. James
The Year of Better: Rooted & Rising!*

