

Denise S. Taylor

PIECES OF ME A PERFECT FIT

God Wastes Absolutely Nothing Of Our Lives

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CONCLUSION OF PIECES OF ME, A PERFECT FIT

What others are saying about Denise and
Pieces of Me, A Perfect Fit

Selina Pate, community leader and former Coordinator of Christian Women Job Corp (CWJC) Gastonia, NC

This book inspires women especially in their quest for wholeness. When I was coordinator of CWJC, I witnessed strongholds that bound the women participants of Christian Women's Job Corp be loosened as they discovered that their conflicts can be resolved. God truly has a plan and purpose for their lives. Denise is passionate about her calling, and God has bestowed upon her the time and energy to help women in need.

Angela Dreher, Former Executive Director of As One Ministries Inc. Gastonia, NC

Denise has done an excellent job of encouraging workshops participants to desire and pursue "wholeness." "Pieces of Me, A Perfect Fit" have allowed seminar participants the opportunity to safely dissect their lives (physically, emotionally, and spiritually), examine the pieces, and put them back together perfectly and wholly....

Dr. Nita Evans, President of Nita Evans Enterprises, LLC McKinney, TX

In the journey of life each of us encounters unexpected bruises and bumps. Fortunately, there are individuals like Denise who God has anointed to help navigate us through the painful places. *Pieces of Me, A Perfect Fit* offers practical wisdom for some of life's most difficult situations. Written in easy-to-understand language, this mentoring book is ideal for teens and adult use. Through a series of exercises at the end of each read, Denise effectively walks the reader through a process to discover personal wholeness. *Pieces of Me* speaks to the heart of every person; it speaks to the essence of the recovery of the human spirit.

Dr. Nita Evans, author, *Failure Is Not an Option: My Journey from Teen Mom to Ph.D.*

NOTE FROM AUTHOR

“Pieces of Me, A Perfect Fit” is a conflict resolve program, a quest for transformation within our communities involving male and female, the young and adults. It is a tool to reach the lost, hurt, despaired, abused, and even those with unfamiliar issues. It addresses and brings to surface the many struggles that we all face. It is not a clinical therapy, but a program which help navigate individuals through situations that may cause pain and dysfunction.

The initiative is to uncover, address and create a national move of healing from old endings into new beginnings. The program has been designed and proven through an assessment of participants from various group settings. It started at the Christian Women Job Corp (CWJC) of Gastonia, North Carolina in 2004.

This booklet includes work sessions that are intended to bring renewal, refreshing, and transformation to the lives of those who seek wholeness and fulfillment. My hope is that all who participate in this program, gleam from, and apply its contents to their lives, and expect the next level of maturity to be a great one.

Enjoy!

Denise S. Taylor

CHANGE IS A GOOD THING

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE IN EVERY SITUATION

It has been said many times and in various ways, that change is a constant we can all count on. For example, we may experience change in our careers, families, relationships, and religious affiliations. At times, transitions we experience in this world can be described as leaving one wilderness only to enter another. In many cases, the changes we think will be for the better does not always prove so. No matter what the change may be, it involves transition that affects us all in some way.

Change is transition that involves uprooting and moving from one place to another. Our good friend Webster Dictionary gives us a clear definition of change: it means “to make or become different, to replace with another.” From this definition, we see that something will be, or have been altered. Altered may mean to operate outside of an original plan – whatever that plan may be, or who may have made it. Or, altered may mean to operate within an original plan but get off track, off schedule, or even miss the mark intended.

The altering may come into our positions, routines, through people we know and meet; when dealing with issues that we are not quite comfortable with, going places we have not been before, and conforming to rules that we are not quite use to. But in any case, we must not compromise while in our struggle. We must desire to move in the direction of wholeness.

It is important to understand change. Daily, while in this state of change, whether it is physical or mental, - our decision making and the ability to do the right thing can get clouded with repeating behaviors and wrong turns if we do not understand the “dynamics of transition.”

The “dynamics of transition” often come with an energy that forces us to move in a direction other than what we are accustomed to. Maybe a direction that is unexpected, as we move too quickly and impatiently. Frustration may become one’s partner when this happens. The birth of frustration can mold a particular “idea” of you.

It is noted to say that we can become the products of our thoughts if we allow frustration to mold and shape an unauthentic model. Talk about framing our world. You think it, speak it, and it seems, you become it. Our thoughts have the propensity to ruin our life plans. We must not allow careless thoughts to carry us to any place that we do not want to travel, nor to a place that we do not belong.

There is a great possibility that our minds will become weakened by the instigation of struggles. Humanism has a way of kicking in (our own way of thinking and own way of doing things) and began to react oblivious to our purpose in life. It seems that our senses will react to change as if they were an entity of their own.

For example, when we ***begin to hear change***, it is just human nature to become curious. Our inquisitive minds want to know. The closer we get to the sound of change; ***we begin to smell change***. You know how we get when the aroma is in the air, and the nose cannot help but follow the path to where that smell is leading us. ***This could be a potential problem because leading is a role of principle***. There is a rule or code of conduct that is involved. What or who that pulls you into rendering your conduct, attitude, or behavior contrary to what is right or righteous is a problem.

I am not about to sugar coat anything for the world to believe that just a little indulgence into misconduct will be alright. We must be careful of what and who is leading us period. Being led or misled by anybody or anything while transitioning, especially if they are not part of our purpose, can hinder or delay our journey forward.

When trying to understand change, it would be foolish to seek council from those who are blind to our situation. For a blind individual cannot give sighted directions. The sign

can be pointing North and we end up going South simply because we followed the wrong directions that was given to us. Too often we find ourselves led back into bondage, misery, and/or pain because we follow wrong council of others. There is nothing wrong with self-help books, materials and attending motivational workshop. It is how we indulge our dysfunction without making necessary change to wholeness.

Sometimes we take the advice of those who are broken themselves. They may be dealing with the spirit of lust, the spirit of greed, the spirit of addiction, the spirit of brokenness, and many other adverse behaviors that cannot and will not fix any problem – but may add to it. We must know who to deal with to submit to change's resolve. Always remember, change is inevitable.

For a more vivid image, not only do we *hear and smell the sound of change*, but *our eyes photograph the image* of it. Then our minds capture the impression, hold it, not allowing its escape until we feel/touch, or rather, have the hands-on experience. Once our hands touch, there is only a matter of time before *tasting change*. Once we taste of change, we have just stepped into transition where there is no turning back from that experience.

As we breathe and eat, we experience change. But remember, CHANGE IS A GOOD THING. It is according to how we handle change is where our victory lies. In our everyday living, we will encounter obstacles, face challenges and risk and will be tested on every level.

As a reminder, we are not exempt from hardships and failures. Some say that hardships are steppingstones to getting to our next place in life. I say they are necessary to move us to our next level of maturity. There will be circumstances in life that are engineered to get us to move or transition into change. Just be prepared for it.

When you feel that trials and tests are overwhelming, count it all joy. It may be that it is time to transition to another level in life. You are getting ready to walk out an assignment that has been ordered just for your life. Whew!!

In this present-day experience, we find it almost impossible to endure struggles, anything that causes difficulties and trials. The thought of suffering in any capacity is enough to tuck our tails, run, and hid. Let us be honest about it.

The thought of another arrow in our heart is more than we can stand. We want the burdens of deep aches that we have sustained and carried to be unloaded fast; the burden of abuse that weighs heavily upon our emotions, we want to unload; the unstoppable flow of tears and lonely seasons of being misunderstood - unloaded; the burden of financial difficulties that leaves the bucket empty of all necessities – unloaded; the burden of addiction in any form that leads to the selling of all possessions – unloaded; the compromise of a healthy lifestyle – unloaded. But remember, these burdens, too shall pass. However, amid the chaos, it is hard to know its end.

In our time of change or transition, there are going to be opportunities, advancements offered us, relationships that look like it's the right one baby, but before we embark on any adventure, we must first consider this, if it's not an opportunity that inspires wholeness and fulfillment, then it could very well be designed straight from hell to throw us off course, to weaken our ability to gain wisdom for success, and destroy our witness as a good citizen of this beautiful world.

Our faith too is tested at times. Faith can only become our intimate possession ***through conflict***. Do not think that we are exempt from going through struggles while going through change/transition. Sometimes in the fire we see only the flames and not the Solution. Stay the course.

There is an example/story in Scripture in the book of Deuteronomy 32nd chapter – we can see our lives in the lives of the Israelite people. They were chosen out of all mankind to be God's peculiar people. He had a delight and concern for them. God fitted these Israelites for great things designed just for them in the land of promise. They needed to be **fitted** to enter the inheritance that God promised their ancestor Jacob.

As we look at the word *fitted*, it means to be suited for, correctly in place, in agreement to receive what is meant for us. Sometimes while being fitted, it could cause pain because of being separated from the things or people who we love, or the potential of exposure to the hidden things of the heart, like unforgiveness that we must deal with. We must be ready for anything that has the potential to stop our journey to wholeness.

We have given many ill contributions that have caused failures in relationships, finances, and/or career. Our behaviors, attitudes, and decision making has not always been on point. As a matter of fact, we may have made complete messes of our lives. Now is the time to settle the score, even with ourselves. There must be some shedding of old endings to get to our new beginnings. Fear not when moving from one place to another. Transition must start somewhere.

In transition we will face several things. First, we may enter foreign territory. The place may be so unfamiliar from that which we know and are comfortable. The Israelites went into this foreign land and was instructed to take over and destroy its inhabitants leaving nothing. That too must be our mindset. While moving forward into change, destroy all those things that are not part of the journey. It may be tempting enticements like money, fame, and even relationships that cause an unequally yoked union. Just a side note for the single individuals. Do not be caught wide-eyed for the physical appearance of the opposite sex. As women, we are more than “lips, hips, and fingertips.” And men, you are not a “sugar daddy to pay somebody’s rent for a special favor.” Hear this! We might be in a waste howling wilderness, but we will not compromise the journey with bad decisions and wrong turns. Enough is enough!

The example in the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy tells us how hope is found, even in our wilderness experience. We must trust God as life continues to unfold for us.

Deuteronomy 32:10 says, “**He found him** in a desert land.” Here we see the Lord honoring His promise to Jacob to bring his descendents into the Promised Land. “**And in the waste howling wilderness.**” The wilderness representing a poor state, bad character, the condition of barrenness and brokenness. These people were bond-slaves in Egypt and

cried because of their oppression. They were destitute of all the necessities and comforts of life. Their situation was very evident to God. “**So, He led him about**” – this suggests that God was out front leading them to the blessed place He had prepared for them.

When the Lord had them in the wilderness, He did not bring them directly to Canaan, but made them go a great way about so that He could instruct them, and to give them commandments as they were able to receive them. They could have gotten there sooner. But how many times have we been led into a place and not listened to instruction? It then took some time to get to our destination, which should have taken less time if only we had heeded instructions.

As students of life, we must take time to learn what is being taught via experiences and guided instructions. Whether in the storm or coming out of one, we must be able to receive help from those who are genuinely interested in helping us.

We get so bent out of shape when encountering change. In times of a struggle(s), we must weather it, by cleaning out junk that no longer belong to us. We must do away with the junk in our closets (minds). We cannot live fruitful lives with junkie closets. Junk begets junk, and when junk begets junk that equals more junk.

It is especially important that we heed directions and instructions while in transition. For some it might be to find a financial or career advisor; nutritional health mentor; friendship coach, or any mentor that will help one to succeed.

We must learn to view our circumstances and situations from a healthy perspective. As we are in an altered state, be encouraged to face tough situations. Do not assume that since the journey is long and suffering that there is no end. Our assumptions can at times act as blinders and lead us to overlook what otherwise might be obvious.

Change is inevitable, sometimes by our hands and often by the hand of others. But it is time to get moving. There is a story about a mother eagle who stirs up her nest in a

continual movement. She awakens her young and shows them that they have wings to fly. She moves her babies so that they could leave that nest by pushing, beating, or prompting and then actually thrusting them into the open air. Her baby eagles just experienced change that was engineered by their mother. She wanted to educate and teach them how to fly and then soar.

Our nest must be stirred sometimes to get us to not only move, but soar. We never realize what we are capable of until we are thrust out of our complacency, laziness, inactivity, and past dysfunction. Learning to soar into greatness, wholeness, fulfillment, and peace is the utmost reward.

To walk around feeling misplaced, broken, depressed, insecure, lonely, and unstable, does a disservice to us. Let us hold our head up high believing that we win regardless of our situation. No matter what the terrain, or the feeling of hopelessness, there is help awaiting. Accept it.

INTRODUCTION

My inspiration to write and coin "*Pieces of Me, A Perfect Fit*," was in the year 2001. Its' birthing came while I was being plagued by certain issues. I had dealings with several minor and major issues where my past interfered with my future, making it difficult to experience joy. I lived through a season that insisted on holding my past against me. I felt chained to my struggles; so, I thought. But thank God I was not condemned to a life of discredit. For had it not been for my bad experiences, I would not have experienced the goodness that came from them.

I would still be living the mindset of gloom and doom with bouts of self pity. It felt horrible to live such a pale life where genuine affirmation was not felt. There were some that witnessed the weathered me, while others saw me as having the "wow" life.

No one truly saw or understood the impact of what divorce, for one thing, - and there were several things that were my thorn in the flesh. I think that was my biggest issue; to have gone through rejection and the baggage that accompanied it. Many emotions overwhelmed me. Again, thank God for His loving me through it all.

Often time people see the outside of a broken life, and not recognize what an individual feel inwardly. The perception is clear, although painted; it cannot offer a solution to stabilize the thoughts to consider a new mindset.

As my struggle pierced my soul, I realized that the season for PROCESS had begun. It is so funny how PROCESS will sometimes proceed without you. Despite obstacles and objections that may surface, PROCESS dares not to be hindered. Ready or not, here PROCESS comes. In fact, PROCESS is so confident in serving us that it takes the time to render the job well done. It will be up to us to allow this maintenance upon our lives.

Many of us have taken the road called PROCESS. Many have succeeded at getting there, while others may have failed simply because perseverance through longsuffering, and at times, agony presented defeat. Some felt longevity was not worth it and relinquished their rights to be empowered by one of the best systems of relief. Others viewed the PROCESS as just that – another experience to endure.

My experience in PROCESS was to bring closure to certain people, places, and things. It caused more often than none, confusion, frustration, and isolation. Pieces of my life were scattered about and I had an exceedingly difficult time finding them. Some of those pieces were financial difficulties, relational, church hurt that took nearly 4 years to recovery from. Both internal as well as external pressures kept me in a mess. I knew, for sure, that I had to come out of the nomadic mindset that often-caused runaway thoughts. I had no other choice but to find fulfillment. Lord knows, I wanted and needed to be whole.

After deciding wholeness for myself, I begin to collect the scattered pieces of my life; place them together one by one. I now share my process with you in this mentoring workbook. As you gleam from this method of mentoring, my prayers are that your puzzle would be just as awesome for you. Being mindful, that as your life continues to unfold, continue to find other pieces of the puzzle, and await the placement into their rightful position.

Finally, you will realize the wilderness journey was just your assignment. Walk it out because the best is yet to come. Do not be angry that you were tossed out of that complacent crib (nest) so you could fly. Just take up those wings of yours and soar. Remember that God is there to scup you up when your wings cannot bear another wind.

CHANGE, IT'S A GOOD THING

Story example from Deuteronomy 32:10-12.

Major Events:

- Moses being found in the desert land & waste howling wilderness.
- The stirring up.
- The Lord's leading.

Our desert land and waste howling wilderness:

1. The problem is louder (howling) than your solution.
2. Seemingly never ending.
3. Being misunderstood while in the state of brokenness.
4. Crying out to *anyone* for help.

The stirring up in our lives:

1. The situation begins to get tiresome.
2. The need to recovery begins inside.
3. Shaken from procrastination.
4. We are tossed out of our complacency.

Leading is a principal role:

1. Everyone cannot lead you.
2. Leading that is timely, accurate, and fulfilling.
3. Enjoy what works.

Self-examination

PIECES OF ME NOTES

1. Your Desert land and waste howling wilderness:

2. The stirring up in your life:

3. Who and what is leading your life:

WEEK ONE

DEEP ACHES

Identifying Goodbyes

DEEP ACHES

Identifying Goodbyes

“It just hurts all over” – I have heard this lots of times. I have even voiced this aloud to myself, and whoever would listen. Did they get tired of hearing it? I know I did. Just as painful as I have spoken my deep aches to others, the gratification of its negative appeal warranted isolation for myself and for those who were caught in the crossfire. No one wanted to be around that sort of energy. And you wonder why struggle is so painful and lonely!!!

One could easily be misunderstood while going through a rough season or a test. Some people have that “so what” attitude as it is not their season in the fire. If you want their sympathy, you might be wasting your time getting it. Do not take it personally, for they have their own set of issues.

Deep aches are an inherit aggregate and total of experiences that could potentially be detrimental to the soul and spirit. It can be ancestral problems, relationships, surrounding difficulties, wrong choices and decisions that live deep within the soul if not dealt with responsibly. Stop them in their tracks immediately if you can. Sorry folk, again, we are not exempt from struggles. However, we must learn to say goodbye as we learn the lesson attached to them. Goodbye is inevitable as you start to truly identify bad attachments that hinder and slow the progress of your quest for wholeness. I said slow the progress, not stop it.

Deep ache can derive from a source that is closest to you. Deep aches can be epitomized when disagreements, misunderstandings, and the unexplainable happens between you and someone else. As the struggle grows, seek professional or legal assistance before retaliation is empowered. Have you ever seen an angry person? Have you ever conflicted with another? How does one remedy that? Watch out for false remedies, for they can become potent instigators that pacify real problems.

False remedies come in a variety of cases. Let us explore three that you probably have heard of, but with a different spin.

False remedy #1: Burying the problem.

Interruption of a personal bond, especially one that seems to be secure, hurts to the core. First thing we feel that need to happen, is to just get through it. Things that are debilitating will happen if we live long enough. However, we do not have to accept it as normal. Okay, so we were rejected. But we will not accept it as our plight.

The heart feels the impact of unsettled issues. Burying the problem is not the resolve, because concealing, hiding, or submerging the matter with the intent of riddance will eventually surface into a greater pain. There are reasons why exhumation is needed, where the pain must be unearthed and re-examined. It is called freedom to live with peace of mind, with purpose and dignity. Learn to respect process before dysfunction has its final stay.

False remedy #2: Denying the problem.

You got hurt, but it does not matter. You will just cry all night long and allow the heart to sulk, but it really does not matter. Please do not take that attitude. An old proverb advises us to “keep our heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” This means that we must guard our hearts with everything in us. If we continue to deny that we are hurt, in pain, struggling, or even mad as heck, we leave little room for healing. Sometimes we are our own enablers, unconcerned and complacent. How else would we bounce back from our traumatic experiences but through concern and self-love?

Refusing to admit truth in any tough situation, is denying the reality that healing really exist. Where is the confidence? One must not avoid the responsibility of gaining confidence or taking confidence back. Living listlessly is not a character trait to let mold internally. The lack of interest betrays in a cruel way. It becomes senseless, unenergized, and a worthless achievement at best. Acknowledge what is painful. Get the help needed to transition to wholeness.

False remedy #3: Giving inheritance to the problem.

Passing the legacy on to others is a travesty. It seems to be a curse that passes from one generation to the next. Never mind that our children deserve the kind of life that we had hoped for; never mind that the scars from incessant wounds, they will grow up and learn for themselves; never mind the deep aches that continue their consistent pattern in the lives of its victims. This is not the attitude one should take when it comes to passing on adverse character traits. Our children, grandchildren, and generations to come should have a resolution to any problem that they encounter. At least knowing how father and mother dealt with their issues. Negative learned behavior will either make or break anyone. Let us all be reminded that our children grow up and may mimic our character, take on our attitude, and behave in a minor worthy or unworthy of the ones who came before them. Let that open display be light and not darkness; joy and not depression; peace and not unrest. Give the next generation an inheritance to proudly pass on.

In all three (3) cases, resolution is to face and conquer false remedies. Finding balance in one's life tend to make us fighters. As fighters, we look forward to conquering any struggle head on. It does not mean we must follow attitudes and behaviors of other fighters. Everyone has their own fight to fight. But there is a time when that fight is over. Learn from it before the next one occurs.

Another thing, - what may have worked for our grandparents, may not necessarily work for our generation. People are different or rather unique. What affects some may not affect others. When there is an issue that renders one incapacitated, the one thing that may hinder healing for some, is seeking sympathy instead of resolve. Our confidence gets misplaced. *"Never give your confidence away to another"* was told to me once. It is a constant reminder that I must continue maturing into a woman who I will love and respect. Therefore, I must say goodbye to non-beneficials.

Identifying our goodbyes is necessary. Issues that have filtered into the heart need to be processed and eliminated. At another point in our lives, there will be another pain that finds its way into our heart. However, we will be more equipped to handle it. As we go through these lessons in this chapter, let us identify goodbyes and rid ourselves from them.

Identifying Our Goodbyes

WHAT GOODBYES NEED FROM US – DETACHMENT

Goodbyes are:

1. Issues Severed
2. Disconnection from people, places, and things
3. Finals with or without cause

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

In this lesson you will learn to say goodbye to minor and major issues that attach themselves to our hearts. When disconnect begins, the unhealthy desires of the flesh will start to diminish. We would hope that struggles will disappear suddenly, but this is not the case. However, the remembrance of them will be different. You might even laugh a time or two at your experiences. Enjoy the purge. This is the sort of purge that we desire and need - to be whole from all the failures and struggles that has haunted us for a long time.

Often, we are confronted with various issues, circumstances, people, and self-afflictions that pose a threat to our well-being. We must not discard the possibility of healing simply because others may not understand our situation. We may be judged, but do not give in to the slight. The condemning from others tend to prolong our suffering. Then our conscience begins to condemn us because we have agreed with the adversary that things will not get better. But if you will agree with me this moment –we will strive for wholeness and fulfillment. Our life is not over yet. We still qualify to exist and live our best life.

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Walk Out Your Assignment

1. Condemnation is that which is of blame, guilt and declared by some as unfit for use. What have you experienced that has caused or is causing you to feel guilty or unfit?

In what way have others declared you unfit?

2. How do you walk through dysfunction?

3. How do you view your circumstance?

4. Do you feel you can overcome your circumstances?

5. What does life of dysfunction mean to you?

6. Are you living your best or worst life?

7. Has anyone condemned you?

8. If yes, do you accept or deny that condemnation?

9. Is it difficult for you to walk in confidence while in your struggle?

Identify Deep Aches that keep you from your best life.

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Fleshly desires

1. We often set our minds on tangibles, or might I say fleshly things, including individuals in our lives. Surrounding, positioning, and fixing our minds on fleshly things may eventually control us, and be more often than none, detrimental rather than beneficial.

How have certain decisions compromised or shaped your well-being?

2. Walking after certain pleasures can dominated you. What are the things that are dominating your life now?

3. Who and what is it that you *allow* to control you? Names need not be mentioned.

4. The nature of man is always to be unrelenting and in control. Life does not always happen the way we want. If this is true for you, explain.

5. How do you begin to release control to someone capable of assisting you in resolve?

6. We find ourselves at times feeling hopeless but desiring to walk in a new life.
How do you revive yourself when you feel hopeless?

7. To whom and where does your commitment lie?

Name Deep Aches that cause a war within your soul.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it is the issues of life.

Life verses Death

1. The body is still mortal and is not only subject to death but also to the temptation of wrong decisions and wrong turns. Name the temptations that hinder your walk to wholeness and are causing or have caused death. (Mentally, emotionally)

2. How are you kept accountable to striving for wholeness?

3. Imagine for a moment, the greatest life for you. Write your thoughts.

4. What precautions are you taking to assure that you will be a good steward over your life?

5. What does mortify the deeds of the flesh mean to you?

6. Contemplating something to give up? What is it?

7. Death signifies separation. Discuss ways to put to death those things that are not beneficial for you.

[illegible]

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it is the issues of life.

More than Conquerors

1. Conquerors are those who intend to fight their way into success, no matter what. What circumstance has made you feel unable to fight and succeed?

2. There are circumstances that are self-engineered and instigated by others. Both can cause pain and distress, but often cause you to ask for help in eliminating them. Name those self-engineered circumstances.

Name those engineered by others.

3. What are you experiencing now that you are blaming others for?

4. We can rest assured that as we encounter much in this lifetime, we can also overcome them. Name those things that you are still battling/trying to overcome.

Name those things that you have conquered.

5. We are persuaded by many things in life - whether that is career, financial, relationships, etc. By what persuasion has moved you to opposing interests?

6. Conquerors win by force and experience little defeat themselves. Being victorious means that one has set their issues out to be destroyed and has no fear of battle scars that may occur. Having experienced battle scars, what keeps you moving forward without fear of losing?

Identify Deep Aches that may stand in the way of being more than a conqueror.

Thought for today: Proverbs 4:23 – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it is the issues of life.

Deep Aches

FOR DISCUSSION

Example of a Deep Ache: Divorce

The emotions surrounding divorce could be: Hatred, disappointment, debt worries, depression, shame, and guilt.

Identify the goodbye of divorce: Say goodbye to unforgiveness.

Goodbye to hatred may mean going back to that ex-partner and initiating forgiveness. It does not matter who did the offense. Reconciliation with love dissolves hatred.

IDENTIFY DEEP ACHES FOR ELIMINATION

Puzzle Pieces to Say Goodbye To			
Relationships:	Divorce or Separation	Places:	Unsafe
	Domestic Violence		
	Unhealthy soul ties, abuse, neglect		
Addiction:	Substance abuse, debt, isolation	Behaviors:	Violent, uncaring
	Criminal behavior, obsession		Abusive
	Failure, Out of control, habits		Offensive & adverse
	Stress related emotions can lead to stress related diseases.		
Recommended read: “Deadly Emotions” by Dan Colbert			

WEEK TWO

THE PROCESS

Layers Off, Layers On, Level of Maturity

WEEK TWO

THE PROCESS

LAYERS OFF, LAYERS ON, LEVEL OF MATURITY

There are options to consider when advancing to another level of maturity. Some would say to gird yourself with proper armor when readying for possible battle; having the foreknowledge to discern the terrain; and being watchful of who and what is driving your success. But an important necessity is to move forward in confidence while shedding the load that hinders. We will call this the peeling process.

One must always allow the peeling process to work. The notion is to peel away the singed pieces to reveal the authentic you. As debris, grub, and instability begin to fall away, new life begins to emerge with power. Life is better in balance rather than out of balance. When we are burdened with insurgents of negativity, we forget that positive balance is much needed. The concern we need for ourselves is priority.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. This may be your season to get rid of old baggage, relationships, jobs, etc. The purpose of your life belongs to you. Is this the opportunity you have hoped for? It is up to you to live it, love it, and share it with those in your realm of influence.

Layers off, Layers on, Level of Maturity

Layers are:

1. Bindings
2. Coatings
3. Coverings
4. Garments

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Layers come in different forms and styles and take process to build up and process to tear down.

Processing is anything that is deliberately considered for recovering to or from.

Process:

Layers off (endings)

Layers on (beginnings)

= Level of Maturity.

In This lesson we will learn how moving from pit experiences takes patience and perseverance. We are no longer that old person who always make wrong choices and decisions. We become certain of who we are and where our future lays.

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Old Things are Passed Away.

1. It excites me that we all have an opportunity to transform and succeed in life.
What are you still holding on to that causes you not to succeed?

2. Change is always initiating in our lives, especially when we stray off the path to fulfillment. What makes it so difficult to trust and believe that you can become whole?

3. The old man of self-pity must be destroyed. Write down three old things that you are sure you must be disconnected from.

4. There are many pieces of the puzzle of your life that still holds bitterness, strife, jealousy, and any other emotion that hold guilt over your head. Name and release them.

5. Condemning yourself and allowing others to do the same is not good practice. Guilt and shame are two emotions that does not allow for healing in spirit, body, and mind. Discuss.

The Process: Layers off (endings).

Old thoughts, principles, and practices are all passed away. New life begins.

Thoughts on disconnect from debilitating issues, to embrace new beginnings:

[illegible]

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Behold, All Things Are Become New

1. Freshness, revival, structure, order, and organization are activity needed to become NEW. What does NEW mean to you?

2. When there is a sense of newness, it feels as if you have bathe in fragrant water and wearing new garments. It can also feel as though you have been rescued from the worst situation ever. Have you ever felt this way and why?

3. A heart that has the motive to walk in honor, is a heart that has the protection of its owner. What would it be like to have a heart that honors and respect self and others?

4. To be renewed in the spirit of your mind, you must put off anything that is corrupt and deceitful. Begin to change the way you speak of yourself and others. What are you saying about yourself or others that suggests the old you still control your thoughts and language?

5. After transitioning into a new you, are you mindful of the process of staying new?

The Process: Layers on (beginnings).

The renewed you act from new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company. List your new beginnings below:

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

All Things Are Beautiful

1. There is harmonized union that brings trust, security, protection, love, and an abundant life to those who seek it. What are the things that you could do to stay in commune with the beauty that surrounds you?

2. What is harmonized union?

3. What does a harmonized relationship look like to you?

4. How can you influence the world around you to become interested in having a harmonized lifestyle that is beautiful?

5. In a world filled with different expressions of beauty, what would be your expression of beauty?

6. Can you see beauty in others, regardless of their struggles?

The Process:

Trust, security, protection, love, and an abundant life are things we all strive for. Process through your struggle and find these things.

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Your Role in Life

1. You represent someone more powerful than you think. Your assignment in life goes farther than you could imagine. Have you figured out your role in life, and if so, what is it?

2. Do you believe that you have purpose, and can contribute to society while experiencing difficulties and hardships?

3. Has anyone dismissed your efforts to contribute to life because of your hardships?

4. Layers on means, putting off the old mindset and replacing it with priorities and principles that add value to your life. If you have not begun the renewal, are you ready to do so now?

5. We all have been in the storms of life that rendered us at times disqualified to carry out certain task, duties, and assignments. You qualify to live your life. How are you preparing for it?

6. In his speech, Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized that we are somebody. No matter what the color of our skin, race, creed, or color, we are somebody. What

has caused you to believe otherwise? Was it that abusive relationship? Is it that you do not fit in the category or in a certain class of people? List your reasons.

The Process: Learning how to fulfill your role.

Being your best self requires patience, energy, and the will power striving toward success in all that you do and believe about yourself. List those things that would hinder you from being your best self.

List those things that you know you can succeed at because you are as equality important as the next person.

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Level of Maturity

1. Maturity develops when we understand the need for it. What has in times past been your way of processing to the next level of maturity?

2. What does natural growth mean to you?

3. Stability in life involves balance. Balance for some mean to let go of the things that causes conflict of interest. What is causing such conflict that destabilizes your ability to grow?

4. Your next level of maturity has the potential to cause growing pains. Those growing pains may cause setbacks, grief, and/or brokenness. Many have gone through nervous breakdowns and emotional distress because of not knowing or understanding this sort of pain. Have you been disillusioned to believe that you are a victim that will never experience breakthrough?

5. As we grow and mature, we are aware of consequences that could debilitate us. If we are watchful, we can avoid danger. Are you watchful over your life?

6. In what ways are you maturing?

7. Can you take inventory of your life and determine which of your attributes need transformation?

The Process: Work it all out.

WEEK THREE

THE EXODUS

The Four R's

The Four R's to Recovery

The Exodus

Recovery is:

1. Recouping all that was lost.
2. Regaining strength to continue in purpose.
3. Obtaining favor.

Thought for today: Recovery is different for everyone. Embrace yours. <i>Denise S. Taylor</i>

This lesson entails the journey of recovery from brokenness that will be taken in four stages. The first stage will be to recall; the second to reflect; the third to recognize; and the fourth is to release. Enjoy your journey to freedom.

Thought for today: Recovery is different for everyone. Embrace yours. *Denise S. Taylor*

RECALL

The Journey Begins

RECALL – Defined as remembrance of things learned or experienced.

1. We find hope and relief in every new day. There are many ways to find optimism in bleak times of struggle. Recall moments when you felt you were defeated, and had to pick yourself up and get the help needed?

2. All suffering can be traced back to any tragic event. Recall the events that warranted the consequences that you have suffered.

3. Suffering tends to pry our attention away from the solution. Where has suffering taken you?

4. Whatever we experience, it can either strengthen or destroy us. My friends, we are stronger than we think. Do you believe you have strength to overcome any obstacles that you will ever encounter?

5. We all have faith to challenge any issue that may cause difficulties in our lives. Are you stable and consistent in your faith walk and believe that what you are experiencing will pass?

[illegible]

REFLECT – A Time to Meditate

REFLECT – To ponder and to think clearly.

1. Negative issues can corrupt the mind, leaving a trail of mistrust, hurt, pain, and even division. How can you guard a heart that receives bad news, abuse, addictions, heartaches, and distress and stop it from making life-changing decisions that are totally against your purpose in life?

2. We must make level paths that would help us avoid wrong relationships, wrong choices and things that would trip us up. Consider options carefully so that when unexpected situations arise in our lives, our discernment would quickly notice and discard it so it will not become part of us. Name those things that has tripped you up or has the potential to:

3. There is a place of confidence and security where one does not trip and fall over temptations or bad circumstances. Have you gotten to that place of confidence and security where nothing can sway or trip you? Explain yes or no.

4. We should scrutinize our own lives. We are too easy on ourselves and tend to be lenient in our examination of self. Does your situation/issue/circumstance cause you to be lenient on yourself?

5. As heavy as the weight of the struggle is, we must make haste to seek wholeness. What is holding you back from making haste to become whole?

6. To ponder is a form of meditation. Meditation is a combination of reviewing, thinking, examining, and reflecting. It is even enjoyable as a physical, emotional, and intellectual activity. After we have reflected on the things that we need to process through (the many issues), allow your thoughts to ponder and be filled with great and wonderful things that may lead you toward a healthier lifestyle. Connect your thoughts to action. What are ways to ponder new thoughts for yourself?

Reflecting:

RECOGNIZE It for What It Is

RECOGNIZE - To perceive clearly; to acknowledge with appreciation.

1. We are all familiar with the Biblical story of Esther. She was one of many of the Kings' concubines with little or no real administrative power. And just as the others, it was possible she was not often called into his chambers. But there was a plan in the making to set the Jews free. I can only imagine the frightened Esther when her cousin Mordecai charged her to go into the king to make supplication on behalf of their people the Jews. She sent word back to Mordecai that no one goes into the king unless they are called. Her time to go into the king was not until 30 days. Mordecai's reply was that if she remained silent at that time, relief for the Jews would come from another place, but she along with them would perish. Esther **recognized** it for what it was. She was not willing to take that chance. What in your life has the potential to destroy you and your family that you are unwilling to take control, recognize it for what it is, and take action to stop it from happening?

2. What are your action steps to eliminate the culprit of destruction in your life?

3. If we examine our hearts and minds, and empty out the garbage, then are we able to move forward in great plans for our lives. What does empty out mean to you and how can you continue cleansing in your life?

4. Recognizing weaknesses in our lives is the beginning of strength. What do you see as weakness in your life? Also, what has caused you to not face those things that seem inevitable?

5. What happens to us if we keep silent about the difficulties we face?

6. Why are you so sure that you will succeed if you do not expose those things that are damaging to you?

7. We must appreciate and value life's lessons. After any test, we may no longer be the same. Circumstances can take a toll on us. But we will begin to understand that wrong choices in our lives exist because we have not taken the time to study the pattern of reoccurring acts and wrong turns a little closer. Then, are we able to scrutinize it is influence before it consumes us. Is the load in your life easier to bear and/or are you now recognizing that it is but to teach you a valuable lesson?

Appreciating those things that were life's lessons:

RELEASE – Go Forth

1. I love the Book of Esther. Its' contents are full of power. The 10th chapter tells of how King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire. And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king had raised him, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia. Mordecai was able to go forth and accomplish much for himself and his people the Jews. But not until the **release** came. He was now free to live an abundant life and not be afraid to step into his destiny. Do you know that you have a certain power that can work on your behalf?

2. Power can create positions of status. What position of power do you see in yourself? Home, work, community?

3. Wouldn't you like to enjoy the unlimited opportunities to shape lives and be trusted with such responsibility? How do you get there (release)?

4. A lot of the times we do not know when or where we go next. Things, places, and even people seem foreign. Even if you do not know your next move, GO.

5. What puts you at a disadvantage of going forward?

6. "Go forth" is moving on a course that benefits the individual who partakes the journey. One is moving in a specific manner to the advantage of change. See and

plan your move knowing that it may not be an easy trip, but nevertheless, you are moving. What are some of your goals for going forth?

Releasing:

No Looking Back

1. Soul ties are strong connections that cause us to “look back”. How could you rid the soul tie that keep you bound?

2. What have been the consequences of your looking back?

3. Reluctance will cause you to take one look too many at the life that has been burdensome to you. There are and will be times that will force us to flee a situation. What have you been forced to flee from?

4. Things will become uncomfortable for you when it is time to flee/move or transition. But let it not be a struggle to get free. Just do it. The first step toward this goal for you would be:

5. There are times that we are unwilling to separate ourselves from the world simply because of our friends, family, and loved ones. Are you willing to go forth and not look back anyway?

6. Culture imposes itself on us. Our conscience at times is not bothered by what it proposes. What stronghold does your culture have on you and how do you break free from its tradition?
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Examples of the Exodus

<u>The Exodus</u>		<u>Old Endings (Layers Off)</u>	<u>New Beginnings (Layers On)</u>
1. Recall	>	1. Unforgiveness	1. Forgiveness
2. Reflect	>	2. Bad influence/relationships	2. New relationships
3. Recognize	>	3. The impact of the past	3. Planned goals/dreams
4. Release	>	4. Failures	4. Goals to Success
Bridge the gap between failures & successes takes time. Be prepared for its season.			

PIECES OF ME NOTES

WEEK FOUR

GOODBYE OLD ENDINGS

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap

Endings are:

1. Conclusions
2. Finished/Done

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:6 – A time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

In ~~This~~ lesson we will learn how to begin again by taking steps to saying goodbye to old endings. Remember that procrastination *equals* stagnation. Stagnation *equals* no determination. No determination *equals* no motivation. Cast away the old endings to start afresh and new.

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:6 – A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

Face It. Trouble Is Around

1. When coming to an end of a season, moment, time, opportunity, and even the not so good things that happen to us in life, we must remember, we are still alive and well. How is it that you know that you are at the end of a time and season in your life, and that something new is stirring?

2. Although we suffer great distresses, we too can experience great things. What are you yearning for?

3. An individual's troubles may not change overnight. Patience has it works. Often arrogance, denial and pride hold us back from moving forward. What position are you holding that stops you from moving past old endings?

4. Name two of your old endings that you are struggling to say goodbye to:

5. Name a time when you were delivered from a negative situation and others marveled that you did so.

6. From the above statement, you finally said goodbye to an old ending. Did you realize it was easy or difficult doing so?

Name the troubles, say goodbye, and replace it with something positive. Name the positives replacements below:

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:6 – A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

There Is Help Out of Being Stuck

1. Several years has passed since I have processed being stuck, depressed, overwhelmed, and distressed. Amid my troubles, I found the strength to confront STUCK. How is your life being preserved through the many struggles that confronts you daily?

2. What symbolizes strength, power, love, honor, and authority for you?

3. Circumstances do not always seem to conform to the process of wholeness/fulfillment. What is your situation?

4. Can you recall self-imposed trouble that has come directly by wrong decisions/turns?

5. Can you recall trouble that has come to you directly by someone else's hand?

Name the things that concern you. What are you doing about it?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:6 – A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

Recognize Substance in You

1. When we go through any type of brokenness, we rarely see the good in us until someone else does. In the Bible, in the book of Psalms 139:13-14, David says, and I quote, “I will praise You God because I have been fearfully and wonderfully made.” Have you gotten to that point in which you believe that you are a wonderful piece of work, being fearfully and wonderfully made by the hand of God?

2. We all have a present, past, and future. There are going to be things that would hurt and break us. How do you or have you dealt with longsuffering?

3. We must be involved in every detail of our life. Is this your stand?

4. Well before birth, the parents prepare for the role they must render in their child/children’s development. However, there are issues they may face, such as the baby’s birth defects, experience a miscarriage, adopting a child because of infertility. Can you see these issues having an impact on your life if occurred, and how would you seek healing? Remember, substance is value, potential, and worth. We all have this.

5. What do you feel has been missing out of your life as a parent or as a child?

6. What did you carry in your dreams and aspiration that has suffered a miscarriage?

7. What method of birth control have you used to stop the purpose and destiny for your own life?

8. The prenatal (that which takes place before birth) and neonatal (the care of the newborn) made you substance (potential, worth, and value). How do you nurture that in yourself?

Thought for today: Ecclesiastes 3:6 – A time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

The Way We Should Go

1. If you have ever been to a Light House, the light beams far and wide. Consider the light house of your soul, and how it brings those things to the forefront that needs to be corrected or destroyed. How do you begin a search like this?

2. When our conscience is clear of debris and junk, we feel a sense of freedom. How do you free your conscience from junk/wrong thoughts and desires?

3. On February 8, 2006 at 1:56 am, I was awakened with this question on my mind, and wrote it down to recall often – “Are you running toward that which completes you?” I will ask you the same with an addition to it. Are you running toward that which completes you or depletes you?

4. What has been your biggest test thus far?

5. When we are tested, our integrity and true character is often revealed. What has been revealed in you that you did not see before?

6. What and who is priority in your life?

CHAPTER FIVE

HELLO TO NEW BEGINNINGS

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap

Beginnings are:

1. To start fresh
2. Anew

Thought for today: Positive reinforcements are good. Make them great. *Denise S. Taylor*

In ~~This lesson~~ we will be bridging the gap to our new beginnings. It starts with a new determination, motivation, and insight. To fit every piece of your puzzle, you must understand that your failures and successes are most important as you continue your life's journey. Embrace this very thing – nothing has been wasted in your life, no matter what you have gone through.

Opened to a Fresh Start

1. Just a reminder - we are a marvelous piece of work, full of substance. Our divine design is full of potential, worth, and value. Allow that seed to be planted in your heart and live it in integrity. What holds you back from believing this?

2. We all need a fresh start in our lives. Getting through rough times warrants that excitement for **release**. But complacency rules if you are not willing to go that extra mile to rid yourself of the bad stuff. Seasons of difficulties will eventually come to an end. The next step is promotion to the next level of maturity. What motivates you to get up and move into that reality?

3. Fear causes us to procrastinate at times, especially when we know “not” where we are going. Do you have a plan for your fresh start? If not, now is the time to start writing the vision steps:

4. Discovery yourself in each of these:

1) Potential

2) Worth

3) Value

5. As we journey from one place to another, leaving friends, family, and loved ones, if necessary, we discover something even more awesome. That is the ability to reach and accomplish things we never thought we could. What are your steps to conquer fear and move to your goal of freedom?

Thought for today: Positive reinforcements are good. Make them great. *Denise S. Taylor*

Journeying Without Fear

1. Fear blocks unmerited favor, and births doubt and unbelief. We cannot afford to start afresh carrying old baggage into our new beginnings. If there is any blockage of fear, do you recognize it?

2. At times we go through barren lands when journeying to our new beginning. What are some of the things you have encountered while you were in your wilderness?

3. Listen, we cannot be haunted by apprehension because of the unknown. Venturing out into the unknown take faith. We concern ourselves with the difficulties that we see and feel. But when we realize how feeble we are in facing difficulties, the difficulties become giants and we become grasshoppers. How would you dispel apprehension?

4. Name the fears that are blocking you from recovery:

5. How do you eliminate the fears one by one?

6. How do you replace fears with courage?

Thought for today: Positive reinforcements are good. Make them great. *Denise S. Taylor*

Day of Discussion

1. Take this time now to write down your feelings as you begin your transition.

2. Are you able to relate to your former self that had issues?

3. Are you able to relate to your new and fresh start?

4. Both the former and present self can share the same puzzle. What does that look like to you?

5. There are new expectations for you. What are they?

Your expectation of your best self:

Thought for today: Positive reinforcement are good. Make them great.

Time for Restoration

1. Restoration means the state of being restored and given back that which was lost. Yes, we have all lost quite a bit over the years – eaten up are our finances, our relationships, our health, and even low spirited. How are you restoring the things you lost?

2. Just like locusts, we go through devastated times. Address an experience that have brought destruction upon you.

3. A palmerworm is a chewing or gnawing locust. The stage at which the locust is first hatched is characterized by its gnawing activity. Whatever it gnaws, it also wears it away. The persistent biting and nibbling are irritating. What is it that continues to gnaw at you with persistence and cause irritation?

4. The cankerworm refers to the crawling locust, meaning to lick off and is the stage in which it does its destructive work. Crawling has a connotation of creeping. It is a slow process in destroying its target. What is licking away at you that you cannot get a handle on, or even get to the root cause of

5. ?

6. The caterpillar is the consuming locust. It is the final stage in which the locust reaches its full growth and devours everything in its path. The locust has a way of consuming without ever being detected. How can you become better watchman or overseer of your life?

Thought for today: Positive reinforcements are good. Make them great. *Denise S. Taylor*

Blessings

1. Imagine enjoying all sorts of delicacies and sharing them with others. You are well on your way to recovery. Are you willing to share how you got there?

2. Who and what are you giving credit to?

3. How are you growing and developing in this season of change?

4. Obese individuals have gotten there by improper nutrition. At times they eat for comfort, not considering a healthy diet. Image this as your plight. List ways to continuously flow in good health, spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally, etc.

5. How do you know that you are being successful in your transition?

CHAPTER SIX

TOTAL LIFE INVESTMENT

Life Anew

Total Life Investment

Investments are:

1. Advantages
2. Endowments
3. Favor

Thought for today: Invest wisdom, stature, and favor into your life. It comes out –
BALANCE. *Denise S. Taylor*

In This lesson is we will learn to invest in ourselves in spirit, body, and mind. BALANCE.
We will learn how to walk in the present keeping an open mind that stuff happens. We
can conquer obstacles by abandoning the thought that “we can’t.” Let us get to work on
that one.

Thought for today: Invest wisdom, stature, and favor into your life. It comes out –
BALANCE. *Denise S. Taylor*

Old Things Have Passed

1. The journey is always movement. We encounter good and bad along the way. However, as we move forward into destiny, the elements all around us tend to dictate challenges and risks. We must not get comfortable waiting for the process to disable negatives. What is hard for you to abandon that has influenced your choices?

2. When facing our greatest trial, we will encounter someone or something that will help navigate us through the rough terrain, with provision to help along the way. Do you see provision that has been set for you OR have you a misplaced loyalty in people or things that have inconsistently provided for you? You figure they will do it again if you need them too.

3. Our life is new every single day. What is it that you have today that you did not have this time last year? (Ex: spiritual maturity, wisdom, passion, debt freedom, genuine friendships, etc.)

4. What have you discovered that has fallen away from your life and you did not miss it or realize it was gone?

5. What way has been made for you in your barren state?

6. What streams has been carved out for you in your wasteland?

7. In this new place of grace, we shall never be in lack. Even the beast of the field, the birds of the air, and the flowers are satisfied. According to your previous experience in lack, do you feel you have been blessed beyond measure or are you still functioning in lack?

8. Make agreement now to leave the old stuff in the past. Let go of the unforgiveness against your brother; let go of the criticism against your friend; learn to love your enemies. Agree? Agree!!

Walk Circumspectly

1. Circumspectly means to walk upright and to carefully consider all circumstances and consequences. A Scripture verse in Galatians 6:7 says, "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." There is nothing that stops the consequence of any action. Whether it is good or bad, you shall see the fruits of that action. How do you live a life that reaps great and awesome benefits from sowing good things?

Bad things? _____

2. We all have a nature about us that constantly wages war against our flesh. What war is going on inside you (your nature) that cause a searing of the conscience? (This question is meant to open dialog, not to embarrass anyone).

3. Conflict grows inside an individual who does not examine his/her life carefully. Sometimes one does willfully, and even justify wrongful actions. If one is to walk upright, what is the path he/she must take to avoid pitfalls?

4. Our character can come under scrutiny at times. Do you recognize wrong behavior in yourself? If so, do you make excuses for yourself and blame others for what you should be responsible for?

5. How would you redirect your interests to invest and indulge in those things that are good and wholesome?

Thought for today: Invest wisdom, statue, and favor into your life. *Denise S. Taylor*

Bear Good Fruit

1. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness (meekness), goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (temperance).”
How would you develop these fruits/attributes in your life?

2. Which of these attributes have been the toughest to acquire? Explain.

3. Do you see a generational passion or desire that has become your pattern of life?

4. There is nothing wrong with passions and desires if they are wholesome and beneficial for you and others in your sphere of influence. What are your passions and desires?

5. What interrupts your flow of prosperity and well-being?

6. Faith without works is dead. How do you work out the kinks in your life and move forward in wholeness, fulfillment, and willingness to accept it?

Thought for today: Invest wisdom, statue, and favor into your life. *Denise S. Taylor*

Give No Offense in Anything

1. Webster's Dictionary gives definition of offense as a misdeed. If we allow scrutiny of ourselves to someone who can properly discern our situation, then our walk will be much smoother to the road of success. Are you truly on the right road? (This question is meant to open dialog. Do not be fearful of answering truthfully).

2. We are often judged as those who should have character and integrity that is far above the normal standard. We should not be a stumbling block to offend anyone; but to be a role model for those who have not found their way in life. Are you a stumbling block to someone or is someone a stumbling block to you, causing an offense?

3. Whether hardships, or distresses, our goal should be to make investments in our character to sustain a life of purity and peace. Are you doing this?

4. Are you committed to your full potential?

5. We can have victory over any circumstance if we take the time to process through the storms and chaotic messes in our life. Getting unstuck is a chore. Are you stuck and do not know how to overcome it?

Thought for today: Invest wisdom, statue, and favor into your life. <i>Denise S. Taylor</i>

No Middle Ground or Compromise/Clean It Up

1. Compromise can lead to consequences that are debilitating. In compromising, there are ideas and concepts that make for a great conversation but often end in disagreements. Those disagreements may mean settling for less than the best in health, careers, and even relationships. Have you settled for less or living your dream life?

2. In marriage, a business, or a friendship, any partner that cannot see the value in another has no empathy. Can this be unequally yoked union?

3. How much can we associate with those that are not on the same path as we are?

4. There is no room for linking something false with what is true. There really can be no middle ground; either we discipline ourselves to accommodate the new life or sell out to that which makes us fail. Which is it for you?

5. Are you finding it hard to separate yourself from those who you have come to love even if they do not have your best interest at heart?

6. Challenge yourself to the best life ever. Where will you start?

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOALS, DECISION MAKING, & COMMITMENT

Vision Manifested

Goals, Decision Making, & Commitment

Vision:

1. Sight/Insight
2. Revelation of walking by faith and not by sight
3. Vivid picture created by wisdom.

Thought for today: Having self-confidence is the start of a great and beautiful commitment. *Denise S. Taylor*

This final lesson is one that you must make part of your mentorship. We all have goals and aspirations that we strive for in the spirit of excellence. There is a saying that “failure is not an option.” But remember, failure is the *stepping-stone* toward success. We cannot have success without it. For that is the learning ground that we must explore and research for better understanding – to not repeat those things that caused us to fail. These sessions will cause you to probe a bit inward and to express your most wanted allegiance. Set your time to carefully write out your vision, making it plain, and along with everyone else that reads it, RUN.

Decision Making

1. Learn to step down (analyze/examination).
2. Decide what you are going to do with your life and make the plans to do so.
3. Your future becomes definite as you allow change (new level of maturity).

Goals

1. Make plan.
2. Initiate Plan.
3. Follow through.
4. Follow up.

Commitment

The Process is on-going as your life continues to unfold.

PROCESS = Layers off = layers on = level of maturity.

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Standing Watch

1. What does it mean to stand and watch?

2. Standing watch is representative as one standing guard against possible invasion and/or to watch for messengers that has lent themselves to the good of the cause. In this position one can see beyond the barriers, walls, and is the first to see danger. Are you waiting and watching patiently for a resolve from issues?

3. Sometimes we convince ourselves that we can get through the struggle without help from anyone. We want to figure it out on our own. Is this your struggle – trying to figure out things or trying to figure out you?

4. Be very watchful, for there is always an adversary lurking and prowling around to devour progress forward. How can you keep this from happening?

5. Set your mind on positive things that are beneficial for your well-being. Are you developing and watching over your thoughts so as not to give in to temptations that may lead you from your wholesome goals?

6. There are many voices competing for your attention. Who are you listening to?

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The Vision Answer

Write the vision exercise.

1. We can get done whatever we are seeking. Let us write the vision and make it plain. This is the first step and prerequisite to the vision coming to past. Take 15 minutes to write: (You will need paper to document).

2. Back in ancient days it was a common practice of writing public notices with large characters on clay tablets. Whenever someone came running by it they were able to easily read what was on them. Today, we must make it a practice to journal our plan and carry it out. Have you made a clear plan? If not, let us do so now. Take 15 minutes to write. (You will need paper to document).

PIECES OF ME NOTES

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Certainty is a Scarce commodity

If individuals are willing to invest in themselves, they can achieve greater certainties in their everyday decision-making processes. For example, there are many different negative pulls in life that will cause us to take two steps backward for every step forward. But when we believe in ourselves enough to get rid of baggage that weighs us down, we begin to make decisions that propel us forward in life.

1. Write those things that you are believing for yourself.

2. Write those things that you believe causes you to take two steps backwards for every step forward you make.

3. There is such a thing as genuine faith put into action. How have your faith been tested over the last year, month, or week as you journey forward in destiny?

4. We give up too easily right before our breakthrough or the birth of our dreams and vision come to past. Imagine this. What if a pregnant woman in the delivery room decides to keep her legs closed and not deliver her baby whose head has crowned? The potential is that the baby may not survive the ordeal and the witnesses would not have a chance to feel the joy that a newborn brings. What dream or possibility have you killed lately?

[illegible]

The design of our lives continues to unfold.

CONCLUSION OF PIECES OF ME, A PERFECT FIT

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted.
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to
refrain from embracing.
A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away.
A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.”

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

A puzzle has many pieces, and it takes time to put them all together. Time has the most pieces to its section, because in this place you are being shaped and sharpened to fit.

A puzzle also represents or symbolizes a season. Once the pieces are organized for structure, (time), then season begins. In this position is power because not only is this the appointed place to be but it is time to act on the things that you have been given insight. Also, in this place you realize that season is an opportunity, you take what you know and put each piece in their precise/particular position.

The puzzle then goes into the phase of purpose. This is the goal that has been determined and acted upon to reach. Realizing that you finally have all the pieces put together, you can then begin to walk in the fullness of life. Not only is the goal attainable, but it can be accomplished precisely.

Time, season, and purpose are a continual movement to stay in the flow of life. Each phase will take you to the next level of maturity.

Where have transition in life taken you, and what has it made you today? There are and will be obstacles that will confront and try to dictate a life that may totally be opposite of your purpose. Learn to live out each piece of your puzzle, knowing that nothing that you have gone through is wasted. There is a season for everything in your life. Embrace it with cheer.

“To everything there is time, a season for every purpose under heaven.”

Take every moment of your life and make a difference in accomplishing every dream and aspiration. Make your puzzle a great one.