

## Life Group Devotional #1 (week of Sept. 26. 2022)

From: CBC 40 Days: Pilgrimage (written in 2022) – by Mariann Naoom

**Editor's Note:** Who we are in the heart of God is foundational for our faith walk. Our identity as loved children of God, inspires us with fresh confidence, to live in His beloved place - assured of His eternal pace. It takes trust with surrendered reliance in God's faithful and abundant promises. Our relationship with Christ grows when we soulfully appreciate the transforming nature of His love, and in turn, willingly convey His bountiful love with others. Our growth in Christlikeness becomes a beautiful faith pilgrimage. *Thank you Mariann for your transparency during your journey and the attached verses to review.*

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**Before we begin, these are your pilgrimage (alone time) challenge questions:**

- What is God trying to tell you? What topics/concepts/verses have you been hearing over and over lately? Whether you are listening and being obedient or not, what might He be trying to teach you or work on?
- I recommend journaling to help you recognize patterns. As you look back at themes and prayers you'll see that God was present and listening all along—even if it's not always in the way that you thought.

### **The Cracked Pot**

A water bearer in India had two large pots, one hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it. While the other pot was perfect, and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to her master's house.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream: "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you must do all this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old, cracked pot, and in her compassion she said, "As we return to the mistress's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old, cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wildflowers on the side

of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? "That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. "For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

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We all have insecurities and quirks. I recently had to overcome one of mine when I spoke at our school's chapel in front of the entire student body and faculty. Insecurities may seem more obvious when it comes to introverts, but often your biggest extroverts have tons of insecurities they're hiding. That's why I believe in being transparent with my friends and family and my brothers and sisters in Christ. We don't do anyone any good when we pretend to have it all together in the moments when we really don't. It is great to share because we are called to bear one another's burdens and to help keep one another accountable. Our job is to be the body of Christ for one another.

In the story of The Cracked Pot, the water-bearer knew the pot's brokenness and imperfections and he used them to bring beauty that would honor the Master. God knows you and has a specific purpose for you. He has things for you to do that only you can do. He has people for you to minister to that I can't and vice versa because of our backgrounds, testimonies, and how we've been made.

In **Exodus 4:10-17** God had just shown Moses multiple signs of His power– turning a staff into a serpent and back and making his hand leprous and then healing it. Immediately Moses took his eyes off God and looked to his insecurities. God, in his frustration and grace, gave him Aaron to minister with him. But He **STILL** used Moses. In **Matthew 14:22-33** Peter had enough faith to step out of the boat when no one else did. He walks on water, but then takes his eyes off Jesus, looks to his circumstances and insecurities, and then starts to sink. God **STILL** uses him in huge ways after many failures and cracks. Despite Peter, but for the building of the Kingdom and for the glory of God.

We must battle to replace the lies the enemy tries to tell us about ourselves– like we're not good enough, no one will love me, I'm too weird, I'm too loud, I'm not pretty enough, I'm not strong enough, I'm not talented enough, etc. **ALL LIES.**

I want to share these "**Who I Am in Christ**" statements that I give to my students each year with you. These are tools to help you replace negative thoughts with God's truth about your identity. In **Psalms 139:11-16** it speaks about us being fearfully (Yare: to cause astonishment and awe) and wonderfully made (Pala-set apart). You are so intimately known and loved! You can also find so many more truths about who you are in Christ throughout the Bible.

## Who I Am In Christ

### I Am Accepted in Christ

John 1:12	I am God's child
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend
Romans 5:1	I have been justified
I Corinthians 6:17	I am united with the Lord and one with Him in spirit
I Corinthians 6:20	I have been bought with a price, I belong to God
I Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's Body
Ephesians 1:1	I am a saint
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ

### I Am Secure in Christ

Romans 8:1,2	I am free forever from condemnation
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good
Romans 8:33,34	I am free from any condemning charges against me
Romans 8:35	I cannot be separated from the love of God
2 Corinthians 1:21	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need
I John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

### I Am Significant in Christ

Matthew 5:13, 14	I am the salt and light of the earth
John 15:1,5	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ's
I Corinthians 3:16	I am God's temple
2 Corinthians 5:17-20	I am a minister of reconciliation
2 Corinthians 6:1	I am God's coworker
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

Taken from *Living Free in Christ*, by Neil Anderson, © 1993, Regal Books

My last point is found in **Romans 10:5-15**. Pushing our insecurities and doubts aside, what we do is by faith and by the strength of the Lord. It is by God's grace and strength that I am where I am today. It's time to decide about what side of the fence you are going to be on because we are living in a time that continues to feel more and more hopeless. It's time for you to choose if you will be the beautiful feet who will bring Christ's hope to the world and present beauty to the Master's table that will build the Kingdom and bring glory to God.