

SEIZING 2023 IN THE 1ST WEEK



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Weekly Guide



THE GATHERING

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Mark 1:14-15

Lectio (Imagine): *Read the above Scripture (3x's) notice **how God's timing for good news is now.** After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.*

Oratio (Feel): *Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This could include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or resistance.*

Meditatio (Think): *Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you? How could you use these words to direct your path?*

Contemplatio (Be Still): *Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that is around you, with you and in you. Enjoy the peace, rest in the love, be content with the Holy Spirit.*

Actio (Do): *What will you do today in response to the Voice of God?*

Jesus' call to inner transformation is a work of the Kingdom of God, which he says, "is within you." How do we access this work? The words you meditated on indicate there are five transforming thresholds we walk through as we access the Kingdom.



HEAR

The first threshold is in hearing and resting in the "Good News" that God is for us as a Father is for his children, with us like a brother in with his own flesh and blood, and within us like breath and Spirit. Hearing this frees us from anxiety, striving, and fear.

IMAGINE

The second threshold is to 'reimagine' and is related to the Greek word *metanoia*, which is often translated as repent, and had two widely used meanings in biblical times. The first and literal meaning was to transform your thinking, to go beyond (meta) limited thinking (noia). Isaiah called this 'God-thoughts' which are "high above" our thoughts (55:8-9). And Paul said when we place our mind in this renewed state we access Divine will power (Romans 12:1-2).



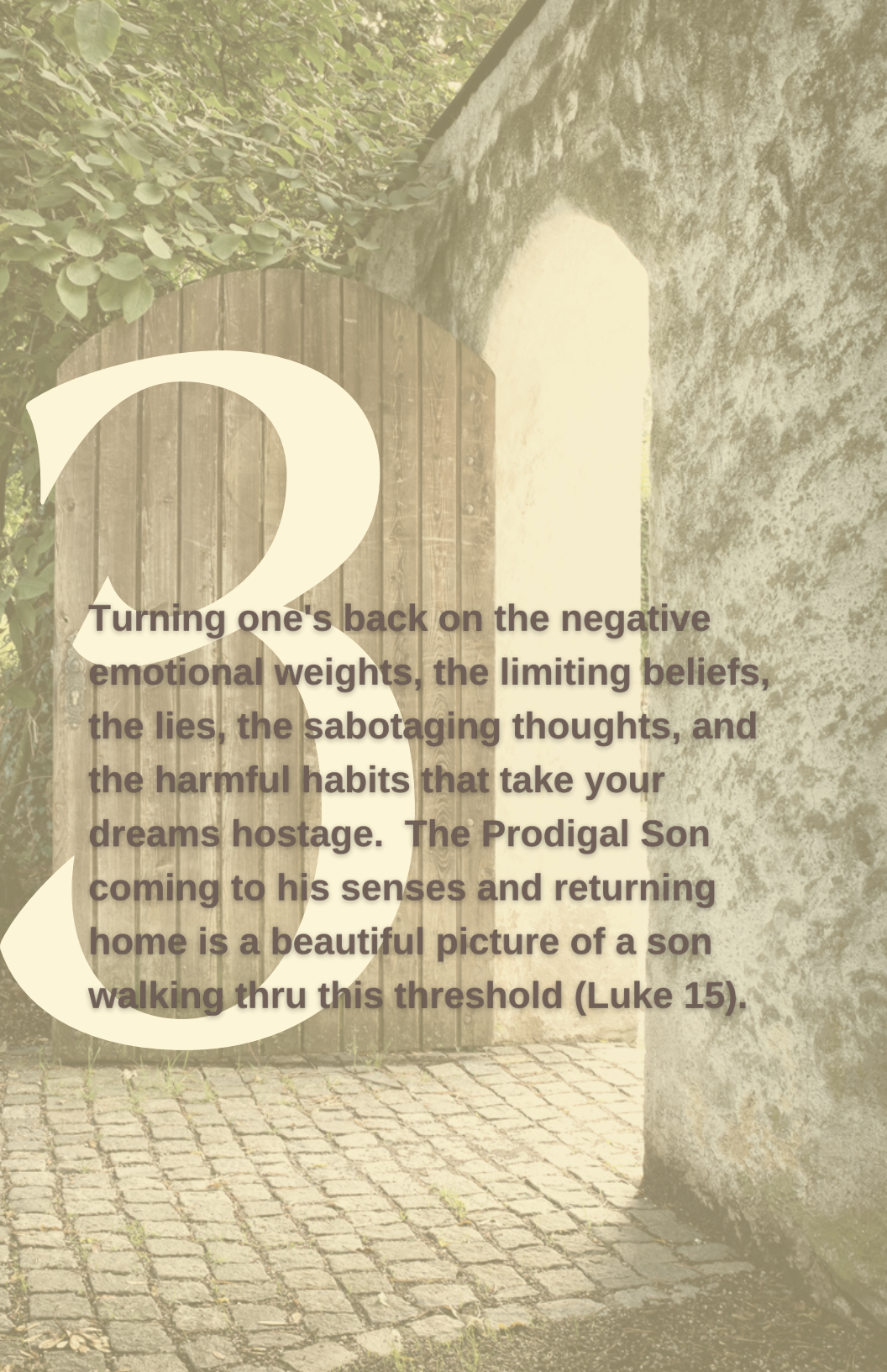
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**Once we walk through this threshold
we leave off low, small and limited
thinking and we free our imagination
to soar into God's goodness,
abundance, and greatness toward us.**

RESIST

Q

Third, metanoia had an additional meaning in its Jewish context which was connected with returning from exile, this secondary meaning referred to turning your back on those things that keep you from your future destiny and hope.




Turning one's back on the negative emotional weights, the limiting beliefs, the lies, the sabotaging thoughts, and the harmful habits that take your dreams hostage. The Prodigal Son coming to his senses and returning home is a beautiful picture of a son walking thru this threshold (Luke 15).

BELIEVE

4

The fourth threshold was through trust. This had two movements as well, the first movement of trust was to let go of the things you cannot control and restfully surrender them to God. This movement says, "God will meet all my needs as I surrender to his work in my life."



All the needs that clamor for our energy and attention and demand that we handle them now or forfeit the dream; all these needs should be surrendered to God and we must trust that God will meet our needs as we go to work on doing the simple things we can control.

So the need to be recognized, the need to be in control, the need to not be rejected, the need to have more before I can become --to trust God to meet your needs while surrendering to this inner work of transformation.

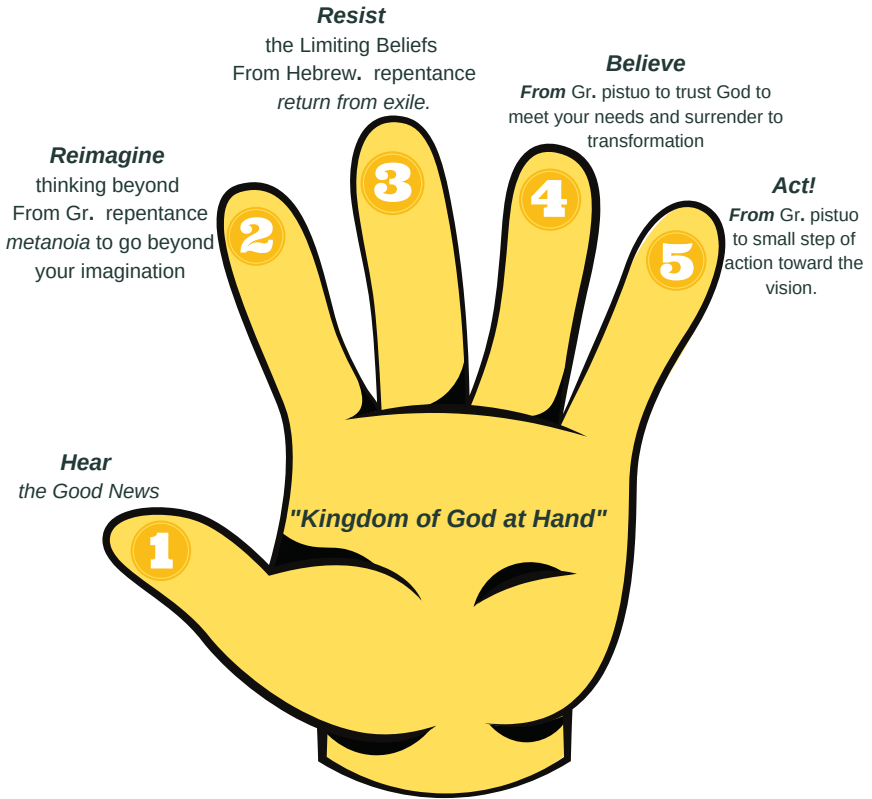
ACT!

The fifth threshold of access was the second movement of faith. Faith was always expressed in a small step, an action. Its seen in taking a small step today and trusting the outcome to God.

A step, an action, a movement brings the idea, the vision, the hope and the faith from a spiritual reality into the earthy reality. Abraham took small daily steps and Jesus modeled his discipleship after this, calling his disciples to take incremental steps of faith as they embarked on a life of the Kingdom.

Kingdom-At-Hand Tool

Let's take these inaugural words of Jesus and create a 5-point tool (like 5 fingers) that will help us grip the kingdom of God within us.



We are going to use the hand all week as a mnemonic (remembering) device for how to go about engaging, embracing, and seizing the Kingdom of God in our personal lives in 2023.

The hand is an adaptation from the One Minute Meditation by Patrizio Paoletti.

MONDAY

“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God” –Mark 1:14

New beginnings, in the Christian tradition, are initiated with Good News. Today we want to start with a meditation that orients us toward listening to the Good News.

The goal of this week is to be prepped for getting the most out of 2023. In order to accomplish that we will reflect on Mark 1:14-15 and put the Kingdom-At-Hand Tool to work.

Look at your hand, each finger represents a day.

Thumb=Monday

Index=Tuesday

Middle=Wednesday

Ring=Thursday

Pinky=Friday

This meditation follows the structure laid out in Mark 1:14-15, and can be practiced in 1-minute. This week we will practice 1 finger each day as you familiarize yourself with it.

The Thumb

The history of the, “thumbs up” comes from Ancient Rome’s gladiator days where a thumbs-up signaled death. Through time the gesture has been inverted in most English-speaking and Latin and even Asian cultures as a sign of positivity.

Thumbs up” means, it’s okay, all is well, this moment is good, life is good, it is possible. Thumbs up gesturing connects us to ourselves, and each other.



MONDAY

The meditation starts with a proclamation of Good News from God. This is a positive reflection on God, yourself, life. It begins by generating belief in the good news of God in the atmosphere, within you, and in everything. It believes that everything is possible with God, for the world, and for YOU. The thumb's up is a self-reminder that "I am ok, everything I need I have, right now, within me and within God. I need nothing."

Question:

What am I thankful for today? What "good news" has God brought into my life?

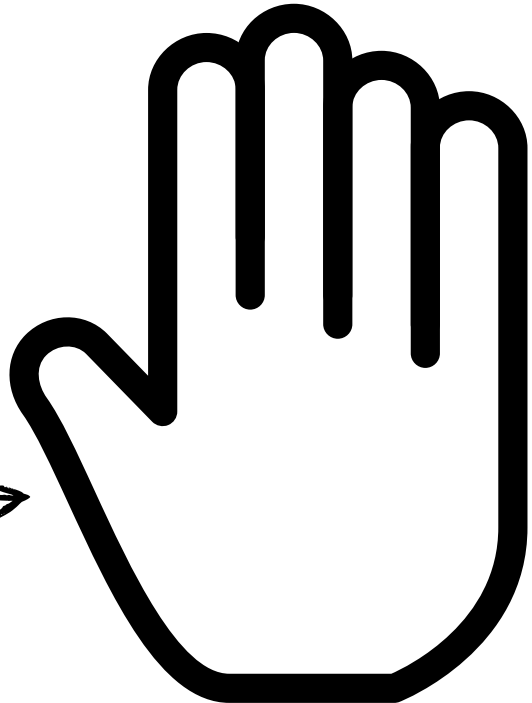
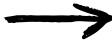
Quest:

Look at your thumb, focus your heart and thoughts toward positivity, belief, and possibility. Repeat, "I am okay. Thank you, God! I am here! Thank you. Everything I need for today and for preparing for 2022 is here, inside of me." Close your eyes and begin your meditation by generating a wordless gratitude from your heart and emotions to God. As your mental list expires, sit in the afterglow of gratitude.

Integration:

Give someone a friendly thumbs up today as a way of passing on goodness from your heart to their's.

list your gratitudes
in the hand.



TUESDAY

The Index or “pointer finger” is the finger of direction. We use it to direct attention toward something. Often, “look, look” followed by a chubby finger is a first gesture that toddlers learn. Even if we don’t know the language of the toddler, we know exactly what they mean when they start pointing and gesturing with the index finger.

We are using the index finger to point to the vision that is beyond us. Envisioning is an important practice in transforming. Mark 1:15 says, “the time has come, he said, the kingdom of God is at hand.” Jesus enters Galilee offering a vision, the kingdom of God, that is within grasp. The call to prayer is one of getting a vision of the invisible, getting an imagination of the Spiritual. The Book of Revelation is the book of a prayer vision. Jesus frequently taught his disciples to pray, believe, and receive. That is to reach beyond themselves through spiritual effort and practice.

Question:

What kind of person do I want to become in 2023? What do I want to transform?

Quest

Look at your index finger, and imagine whom you want to become in 2023. Often, New Year’s resolutions take on answers to questions of goals, achievements, habits, etc. However, in this New Year, we will ask, who do you want to be? Your mind may transfer the question into doing, however, try to focus your thoughts on the qualitative aspects of being. What kind of person do you want to be, or become through the next year. An easier way to get at this is to ask, “what are my values?”



TUESDAY

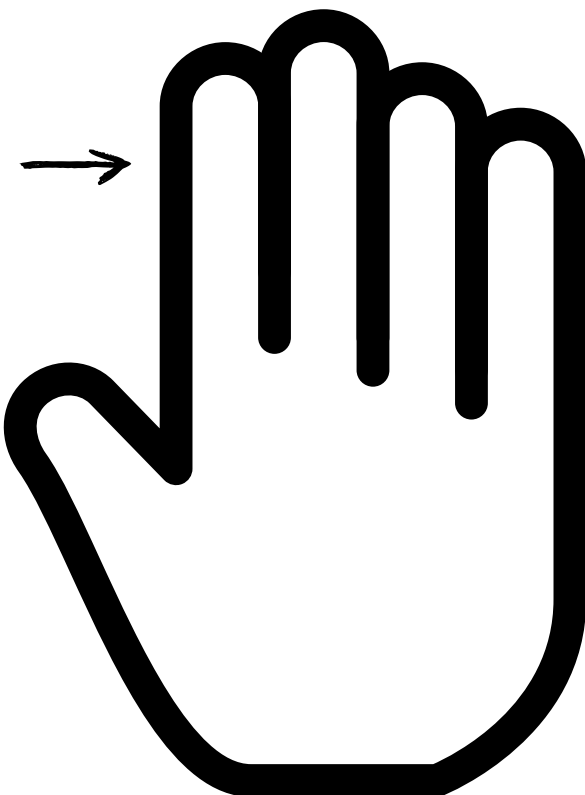
What do I value?" Consider the aspects of God or Jesus that you admire, consider a Bible character that you connect with. What aspects of God's nature do you want to more prominently emanate as part of the light you shine in the next year?

Close your eyes and envision you becoming that person. How does it make you feel? What do you see? How happy and joyful are you? Connect that vision with (1) your feelings, (2) the center of your will power, and (3) with your thoughts.

Integration

Tell someone today a beauty, virtue, or goodness that you see in them. As Jesus entered the city with good news, enter a conversational space with someone offering them a truer vision of who they are through a simple profession of good news about who they are. Then tell a close friend who you would like to become in the new year.

Describe what kind of person you want to become in the hand.



WEDNESDAY

Well, today we arrive at the middle finger! HA! We all know what that means. The middle finger represents a break from limiting beliefs. With the middle finger up, we are emphatically saying goodbye and good riddance to our limiting beliefs. The power of meditation is to become aware of what they are. Limiting beliefs are silent subverters. Our negative inner narrator can be such a constant companion that our own consciousness stops recognizing his voice and simply assumes his slander as truth. Stepping away to hear what he says, allows us to recognize the lies and detach our true selves from them. In this way, the middle finger then represents detachment.

In Mark 1:15, we find this connection with detachment as a central spiritual discipline in the word “Repent.” Repent (Gr. metanoia) held two meanings, (a) to return from exile, bondage back to promise and (b) to go beyond, in the sense of audaciously imagining life beyond our enslavements. We often associate repentance with contrition. While that is certainly part of a penitent process, stopping with contrition cheapens the power of repentance. Focusing on changing behavior alone, puts the onus of living righteously in the power of our determination, however, the full circle of repentance involves transforming, audaciously going beyond our current state. Repentance begins in humble contrition, continues in a denouncement of limiting beliefs and destructive inner dialogue and ultimately it completes itself in transformation, and for the latter we have God. Today we will focus on the first movement of repentance—detaching—by unhinging from our limiting beliefs and silencing the inner critic.

Quest:

Look at your middle finger. Connect with an attitude of “good riddance” Remind yourself of the vision you set forward for the New Year. Who did you say you want to become? Look at that person, see their expression in the world. How does that person show up at work, at home, in the marketplace, in private? Next close your eyes and proceed with the following movements:

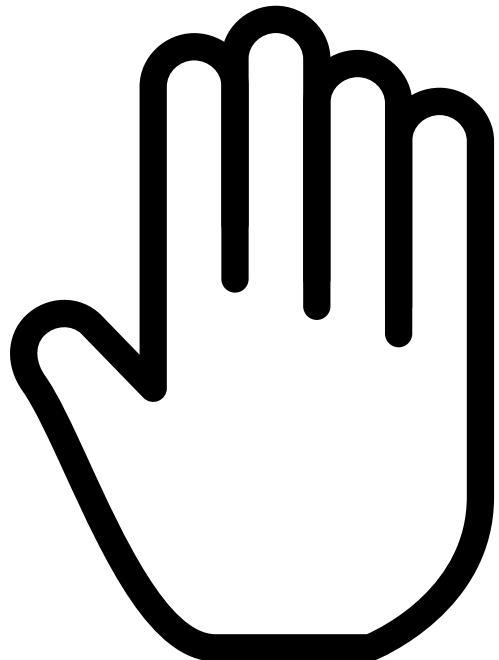


WEDNESDAY

Quest:

- 1. Listen for the limiting beliefs. What lies do you hear that attempt to foil your becoming? What needs do you have that make you feel enslaved, that prevent access from your better self?*
- 2. Detach from the limiting beliefs. No matter how attached they are to you, simply let them go. Say, "It's ok that I felt that way, believed those untruths, I accept that I have been a bit harsh on myself. Today I identify the beliefs, lies, attitudes and inner dialogue. I don't need them anymore."*
- 3. Detach from your needs. It could be an annoying need for perfection, security, safety, recognition, productivity. The only way to let go of something is to focus on trusting God. So as you let go, let the needs go into the atmosphere of trust, trust that all is well, trust that you are provided for, supported, seen, considered and loved.*

Write down in the hand the lies and limiting beliefs to the better vision of you.



Integration

- Write down 3 things you like about yourself*
- Ask for trust: Father, I am afraid to let go of my needs. In fact, I don't know how to begin. I want to replace my needs with trust in you. I want to feel the trust in my heart and reflect it in the way I live my life. Will you give me one thing I can do this week to respond in trust to you as it relates to detachment from my needs?*

THURSDAY

I find it difficult to think of the ring finger without thinking of marriage, engagement or commitment. As you might imagine, the ring finger represents promise and surrender.

After Jesus casts the vision of the kingdom at hand, he guides listeners to repentance (go beyond their current self-constructed kingdoms) and do so by believing. "Repent and believe the good news." Essentially, Jesus is saying Resist the old kingdom and commit to the new vision.

The ring finger, therefore, involves resisting and surrendering. Considering your "true self" can feel very abstract, so let's default back to the values you listed. With the ring finger, you are committing to live according to your values, not your needs. You entrust your needs to God and resist living down to your needs. You live up to your values by surrendering to the transformation that is happening inside of you. Consider Mother Theresa who lived according to the value of love and allowed God to meet all her needs. With the ring finger, you give yourself permission to change for the better, to lean into your higher self. This can only be done by both resisting and surrendering.

Quest:

Look at your ring finger. Make an agreement with yourself: I love and accept who God created. I love and accept whom I am becoming. I give myself permission to let go of old oaths, old default behaviors, old ways of thinking, I give myself permission to transform

*Connect with Love. Focus on your commitment to the person you are becoming in 2023. Entrust your needs to God so you can be liberated to live into your values. Sit with this agreement, let the agreement grow in seriousness and sincerity. Slowly surrender to this new version of you. As you become, you will be surprised at how you change, that is why surrendering is important. **Now close your eyes and sit with this for two minutes.***

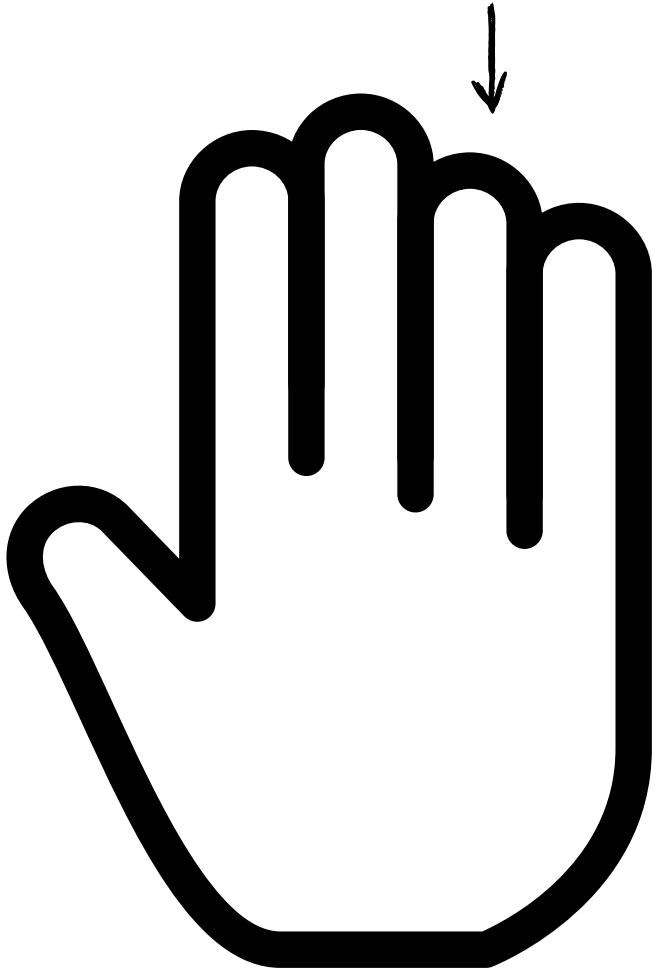


THURSDAY

Integration:

Make a list of your values, the list can be as long as you want. Review the list. Which values are connecting with you the strongest? Often the first 3-4 things you write down are the ones to start with...

Write your agreement to surrender to your transformation and to resist living a need-driven life



FRIDAY

If I told you must exchange your life for a finger, which finger would you choose to part with?

If you're like me, you may have answered with your pinky finger or ring finger. I mean consider the thumb or index finger, it seems we use those ALL THE TIME. However, after reviewing just a few articles, surgeons agree that the pinky finger is the keeper and that the index finger is the one to lose. Apparently, your brain quickly bypasses the loss of the pointer finger and uses the middle finger as its replacement for any task the pointer did. However, the pinky is vital to your grip strength. It seems that with the loss of your pinky or ring finger, your grip strength is totally gone too.

How perfectly paradoxical that the smallest finger is the tallest in importance to the function of your whole hand. The seemingly weakest finger is the one most vital to keeping a grip on your inner transformation. Consider doing a pull-up without your pinky finger, or pulling a heavy object towards you, or throwing a football, shooting a basketball without a pinky finger.

So how do we keep this grip on the New Year, on our true self, on our promise to resist and surrender? Of course, the answer is not one simple thing, but in terms of the pinky finger, the finger of "small actions," we must tend to the smaller things in your everyday life, [...] it is the small concrete actions that will change your life forever." For example, returning to your meditation corner each day, faithfully to connect with God.

When Jesus says repent and believe (Mark 1:15), the word belief means to take a bold step in the direction of the vision. Faith always has some actionable movement to it. To believe is to move, to act, to respond.



FRIDAY

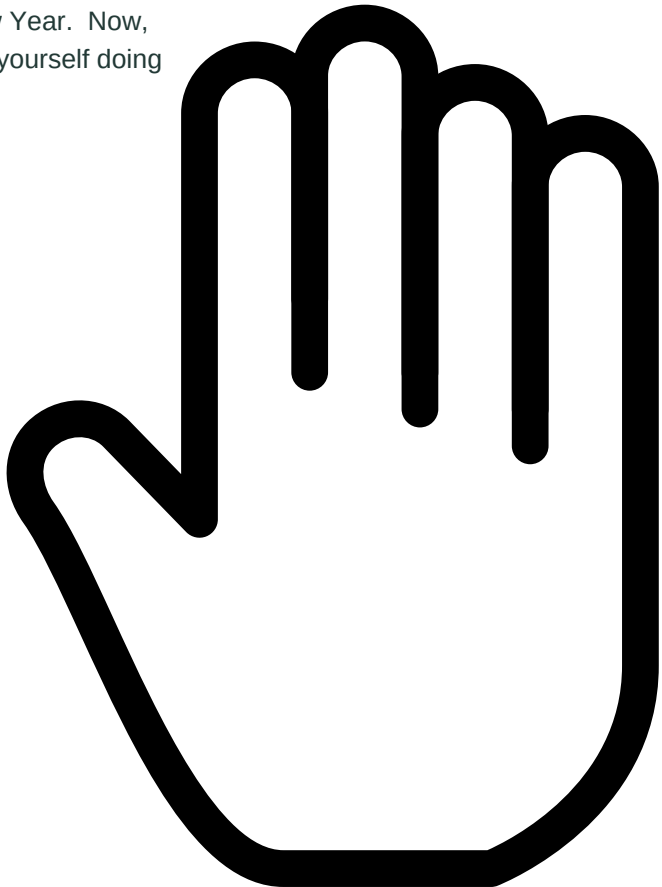
Quest:

Consider your vision (who you want to become), and your values (the building blocks of who you are). Now focus on the question, what are a couple of small actions I can take to begin my journey? Sit in silence and let the considerations come to you. Don't worry about remembering everything. If distracting thoughts come, give them permission to move on and come back to your question.

Integration

When you are finished, write down 3-5 small actions that you will nurture, tend to and commit to in the New Year. Now, close your eyes and see yourself doing these actions today.

Write down 2-3 small things you will do each day. this new year in the journey of becoming a better you



SATURDAY

Let's put this all together. On the next page you will see a picture of a hand. You can use that for our final exercise or you can trace your own hand on a larger piece of paper.

Fill in for each finger the answers to the questions from this week.

Look at your drawing, and say, "the kingdom of God is at hand" I repent and believe in this good news and how it's transforming me.

Notes:

Other uses for the hand. This summer Deborah and I drew out a new hand each week for about 6 weeks. We found that this simple meditation tool is quite versatile. It can be used to focus on a single vision or on multiple qualities you want to integrate. You can stick with one version of the hand until you feel you have transformed, or you can create a new one each week, month, or quarter.

Also, the One Minute Meditation book by Patrizio Paoletti is available on Kindle. It is a very short read, but dives a bit deeper into the meaning of each finger and the corresponding exercises.

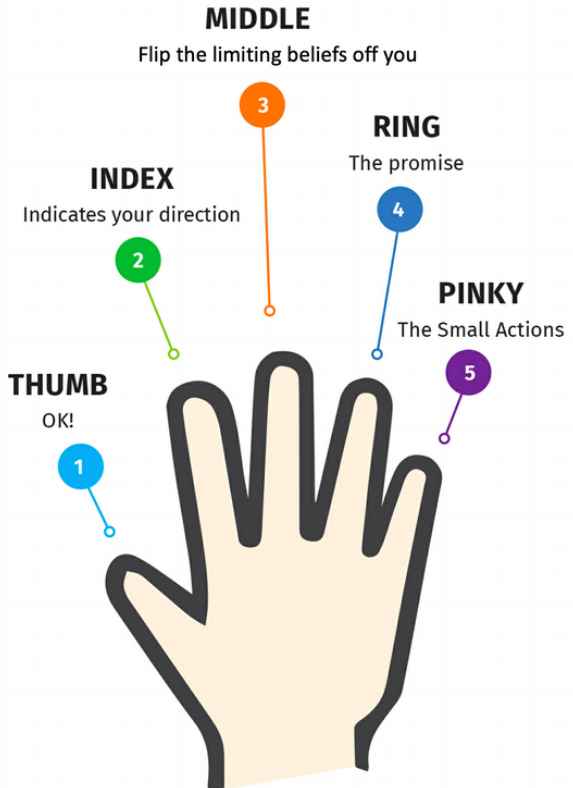
THE THUMB
This indicates that it's okay, you don't need anything else.

THE INDEX FINGER
This marks your direction, advising you to "look beyond" and "aim high."

THE MIDDLE FINGER
Identify your limiting beliefs about your needs and denounce them.

THE RING FINGER
This indicates the promise, the promise you make to yourself to resist and surrender.

THE PINKY
This indicates the small things to do, the small actions that we take to reach larger, important personal goals.



What beliefs are limiting
this from my life?

What agreement am I
making with myself?

Who do I want to
become?

What one tiny action will I
do today toward this
vision?

What am I grateful for?

