

# RESTART YOUR HEART

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21 ENCOURAGING DEVOTIONS  
SO YOU CAN  
LOVE LIKE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN HURT

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE POWER OF EXPECTATION

*I*t's time to restart your heart. Too many of life's challenges and challenging people have filled our minds with doubt, frustration and bitterness. Check yourself by checking your self-talk. What kinds of thoughts occupy your mind these days? Are they thoughts of a hope and a future? Are they thoughts about whom you can bless and who has blessed you? Do you spend more time thinking about what you don't have than praying prayers of thanksgiving for what you do have? The conversations we have in our heads tell us a lot about the condition of our hearts. Why don't we restart those thought processes right now—today? Do you need a miracle? Do you desire a breakthrough? How about a word from God or a healing? It's time to expect great things!

Nothing can derail our pursuit of God like an offense or a hurt at the hands of another. When it comes at the hands of those we least expect to hurt us, the effects can

# INTRODUCTION

last for years. If there is anything I have learned as a pastor, it's that time does not heal all wounds. In fact, sometimes time can be our worst enemy as that root of bitterness grows deeper, the walls go up, and the hurt turns into bitterness and isolation.

Over the next 21 days, I believe all of that can change. That *needs* to change. A restart is what is needed, and there is no time like the present to begin that process. The only requirement is expectation. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that our faith pleases God. We need to understand that if God is going to do something, He looks for people who live with great expectation. In Luke 3 we see desperate people in eager expectation of their Messiah's coming, on tiptoes in anticipation:

Now as the people were in *expectation*, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not, John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Luke 3:15–16, emphasis added

Our God is all-powerful, yet we limit His work in our lives when we refuse to believe in His ability and His victory. We need to activate our faith and stand in tiptoe expectation, knowing He can do the impossible! Let's take a look at one man in the Bible who held great expectation.

## The Lame Man at the Temple

There was a man who was lame from birth, but despite his disability, he managed to get people to carry him to the Temple to beg for money each day. His life, his livelihood and his identity revolved around his sickness. But that all changed at three o'clock one afternoon with an event that altered the trajectory of this man's life forever. The Bible tells us that Peter and John, as they were heading to the Temple, took notice of this beggar and stopped and looked intently at this spectacle of a man. The Bible says that Peter looked right at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us." So the lame man "gave them his attention, *expecting to receive something* from them" (Acts 3:4–5, emphasis added). The rest is history as that lame man was healed instantly as his feet and ankles became strong.

The man activated his faith and received his miracle right then and there because of his great expectation. What if that lame man had said to Peter and John, "I've been here every day of my life up to this point. I guess I'm just destined to be here every day from here on out." His miracle would not have taken place without his faith. He expected a gift that day—and he got a life-changing one. But, day after day, his expectation overcame his pessimism as he would awake and say, "Maybe today!"

Here's the best part of the story. He got up from that place, and, while he could have gone anywhere he wanted to go with healthy feet and ankles, he chose to go with

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Peter and John to the Temple courts jumping and praising God. His heart had been restarted—and yours will be, too, as you begin to see the broken places you have learned to live with healed and made useful again.

## A New Day

God has so much for you. It is no accident that you are reading these pages right now. These 21 days are a divine appointment for a surgical procedure you need. Allow the Lord to restart your heart the way He has, story after story, for readers of the companion book for this devotional, *Love Like You've Never Been Hurt* (Chosen, 2018). More than 150,000 people have read that book. Testimonies are pouring in from people who were holding on to hurt like a life preserver only to discover it was the very weight pulling them under.

Now, just like that lame beggar, it's your turn. He had his day, and his simple act of faith changed the rest of his life. It's your turn. It's your season of healing. You are one look—one touch—away from Jesus, from freedom and joy unspeakable.

You don't have to see it to believe. Start now. Praise in expectation. Sow in expectation. Pray in expectation. Expect the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in every area of your life. What area are you expecting God to break through? I want you to begin to live and speak with great expectation.

DAY 1

# IT'S TIME

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*“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.*

*“Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”*

*Zechariah 4:6–7*

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# DAY 1

There is a medical procedure used by heart surgeons worldwide called *cardioversion*. Cardioversion uses electricity or chemicals to activate the heart and return it to its normal rhythm. Total cardioversion involves stopping the heart and then restarting it.

An irregular heartbeat can cause great damage to internal organs, even death. Cardioversion restarts the heart, allowing it to regain its ability to do what it was designed to do, which is to supply life-giving blood to the rest of the body, in just the right measure and at the intervals required to sustain life. This amazing procedure saves thousands of lives every year.

Unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, offense, hurt and injustice can have irregular and damaging effects on our spirits. These effects disrupt our spiritual health and can harm our physical health as well. Many times, this devastation cannot be solved through usual means; the hurt is too deep. When pain is this entrenched, there is only one way back to renewed health and strength for the assignment God has for your life: You need to restart your heart.

We have to learn to love like we've never been hurt. . . .  
As you read these words, you may be picturing the face of the person who has caused you pain. . . . Whatever [or whoever] it is, you have loved hard and were wounded. This someone has cut off your love supply. And you are not living fully, the way God intended, because you do

not know how, or if it is even possible, to love like you've never been hurt.

*Love Like You've Never Been Hurt*, pages 13–14

It's amazing that our minds want to dwell on the past, the film reels of our failures—those who have hurt us or rejected us, and the injustices we have experienced. I used to play those experiences over and over in my mind thinking about what I wish I had said, the things I wish I had done differently and the injustice of it all. We do this, partly, because we can't make sense of it, and our computer-like minds look for logical conclusions. But because we can't reason our way to the justice we long for, the offenses are never resolved.

And that is just where the problem lies in these endless imaginations: We try to reason through the pain, but injustice and hurt are not usually based in truth or logic or any kind of reasoning.

### The Point of Attack

In my thirty-plus years of experience in ministry I have learned a profound set of truths.

1. When a problem makes no sense on a physical level, then there is something spiritual going on.

As you spend hour after hour racking your brain for answers or trying to reason things through with

someone, even with God, you find you are stuck in an endless loop that leads you back to the beginning. That's not your fault. It doesn't mean something is wrong with you. It means that you aren't dealing with reasonable people. It means that the hurt you suffered is not something you deserved, and there is no human logic that will help you rationalize it. It means that the rejection you suffered was not because of anything you did, but because some selfish soul chose to delete you from his or her life. You will never make sense of this in your mind because it is only spiritually discerned.

Let go. Shift your focus. Forgive and move on. Leave that person to the Lord to deal with, and trust that God has you, will always have you, and that His justice is on His timetable and not yours.

2. Spiritual issues will not be solved by normal means (logic, reason, justice) and must be dealt with on a spiritual level.

When pain or hurt cannot be solved through physical means, step back and take action in the spiritual realm. Pray. Forgive. Love and bless anyway. Allow the Lord to give you a greater obsession. Trust with extraordinary faith for your extraordinary situation.

This one is hard to grasp because, being human, we always want someone to blame. We want to put a face on our hurt so we can know where to direct our anger. But the fact is that our struggle is *not* against

flesh and blood. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Only prayer and faith will help you with these kinds of offenses and hurts.

3. No amount of thought or planning or worry will solve a spiritual issue or a spiritual attack.

We replay the bad memories again and again. We talk about them repeatedly to anyone who will listen. We think of ways we can exact revenge. We poke and prod at our gaping wounds. In the process, we become bitter. Hardened. And, often, we withhold our love from those who need it most.

*Love Like You've Never Been Hurt*, page 15

## Restart Your Heart

You can spend your life looking back, and many do, or you can trust God with that face you see and trust God with that injustice you have suffered, knowing that your God is not blind. *You can't fix this.* But God can fix you. God can create a new heart in you . . . His heart in you. And He will give you His eyes to see what He sees, His ears to hear what He hears and His heart to feel what He feels. His ways are higher, as are His thoughts, but He will give you His thoughts and His ways if you will ask for them.

But before He can give you His thoughts and His ways, you have to be willing to let go of the hurt, the offense, the injustice. Let those things fall to the ground. Empty hands are required in order to receive the new thing. The old and the new cannot coexist in the same hands.

This is a lot to take in on Day 1, but if you will give yourself as an offering before God during these 21 days, He will do a work in you. You will finish as a changed person with a heart that has experienced a restart.

[God] wants to give us a new beginning. A new story. A fresh start. He wants to heal what has been broken. He wants to reconcile what has been torn apart. . . .

It is never wrong to love. It is never out of order to love. You do not compromise when you love. You never lower your standards when you love.

*Love Like You've Never Been Hurt*, pages 15–16

## Prayer

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*Lord Jesus, as I embark on this 21-day journey, help me to take every step, not with fear, but with great expectation for all You are about to do. Speak, Lord. Heal, Lord. And teach me Your timeless truths.*