AN UNSHAKEABLE JOURNEY PUBLICATION

The BECOMING JOURNEY

A 7-DAY DEVOTIONAL & REFLECTION GUIDE



Seven days. A little hope. A whole lot of grace.

STEPHANIE JOURNEY

Freely received. Freely given.

STAND FIRM. WALK FREE.

Copyright and publication information

The Becoming Journey • A 7-Day Devotional & Reflection Guide
Stephanie Journey | Unshakeable Journey

All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV).

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Complimentary reader edition: no purchase required. Intended for personal reading, reflection and printing for personal use. Not for resale.

Freely Received. Freely Given.

I never want someone's financial circumstances to stand between them and a message that might minister to their heart.

It is for that very reason that I have made these pages available to you as my complimentary gift. There is nothing you need to purchase, nothing you need to accomplish, and nothing expected of you in return.

Throughout the course of my life, I have been the recipient of extraordinary generosity. There have been precious people who have sown into my life in ways they may never fully comprehend. And now, I have the beautiful privilege of doing the same for others.

Wherever you find yourself in this particular season of your life, I pray these seven days serve as a gentle reminder of His goodness, His faithfulness, and His extraordinary grace.

May these words find you precisely where you are and minister to the places within your heart that need them most.

Consider this a little seed sown into your becoming.

With love, faith, and a whole lot of grace,

Stephanie Journey

"Freely you have received; freely give."

— Matthew 10:8 NIV (excerpt)

Before We Begin

My precious friend,

I don't know what brought you here. Perhaps you are walking through a season that has left you with more questions than answers. Perhaps you have spent years believing for something that has yet to come to pass. Or perhaps life is good, and yet somewhere deep within you, there is a longing to understand more fully who you are becoming.

Whatever brought you to these pages, I am grateful you are here.

If there is anything I have learned throughout the course of my life, it is that becoming rarely looks the way we imagined it would. There are seasons we would have never chosen, circumstances we would have gladly avoided, and chapters we would have written entirely differently had the pen been ours to hold. And yet, some of the most beautiful things about who we are today have been cultivated in the very places we once prayed to escape.

It has taken me years to appreciate that.

I have known what it is to celebrate the goodness of God while simultaneously standing in the midst of circumstances that made very little sense to me. I have known what it is to be deeply grateful and extraordinarily tired. I have believed with everything in me and still wondered when, or even how, certain things would come to pass.

Perhaps you have, too.

Over the next seven days, I want to spend a little time with you. I want us to explore what it means to become in the midst of the life we are actually living, not the one we thought we would be living by now.

There is no expectation that you arrive at the end of these seven days with every question answered, every wound healed, or every circumstance resolved. That isn't the purpose of our time together. My prayer is simply that you begin to see yourself, your circumstances, and the possibilities that still lie before you a little differently.

Give yourself permission to be honest here. Write what you really feel, not what you think you ought to feel. Take your time with the Scriptures. Allow yourself to linger over the things that minister to your heart.

And above all else, remember that God is not finished with you.

There is still life to be lived. There are still dreams to be dreamed. There are still beautifully unexpected things that may await you on the other side of the chapter you are presently walking through.

Yesterday was just a part of your becoming.

And I am so grateful to have the privilege of walking alongside you for this little portion of your journey.

Until Next Time,
With love, faith, and a whole lot of grace,

Stephanie Journey
Unshakeable Journey

Stand Firm. Walk Free.

Day One

The Breaking Was Not the End

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

— Psalm 147:3 NIV

A Moment Together

There was a time in my life when I desperately wanted God to restore things to the way they had been. I wanted certain circumstances reversed, certain losses recovered, and certain chapters rewritten. I had a very specific understanding of what restoration was supposed to look like, and, quite frankly, I could not comprehend why it was taking God so long to accomplish it.

What I did not understand at the time was that restoration would not necessarily mean returning to the life I had known.

There were things about that life I genuinely loved. There were also things about it I had outgrown without even realizing it. There were places within me that needed tending to, perspectives that needed to change, and aspects of who I was that had yet to be fully developed.

But when you are in the middle of something painful, you aren't necessarily thinking about who you are becoming. You are thinking about how to make the pain stop. You are thinking about how to get through the day, how to fulfill your responsibilities, and how to hold together the things that still require your attention.

And sometimes, you are simply trying to figure out how to get from one morning to the next.

I understand that.

A Moment Together

I think we must be extraordinarily careful when we speak to people about the beauty that can come from brokenness. There is a tendency to speak so quickly about the purpose of someone's pain that we fail to acknowledge the magnitude of what they have actually endured.

Pain deserves to be acknowledged.

There are things that have happened in our lives that were genuinely heartbreaking. We do not have to diminish them in order to testify of God's goodness. We do not have to pretend that something didn't hurt simply because we believe He is capable of bringing something beautiful from it.

Both realities can coexist.

You can grieve what was lost and still have hope for what is to come. You can acknowledge the severity of a difficult chapter and still believe that it will not be the last chapter of your story.

One of the most precious things about Psalm 147:3 is that it speaks of a God who tends to the wounded. He doesn't merely acknowledge the existence of their wounds. He binds them up.

There is such tenderness in that.

And perhaps today, rather than trying to understand everything that has happened, you simply need to allow yourself to be tended to by the One who understands it all.

You do not have to have an extraordinary revelation about your circumstances today. You do not have to know what comes next or how everything will eventually come together.

You need only to remember that the breaking was not the end.

There is still more to your story, my friend. And there is still more to you.

A Moment of Reflection

Take a few minutes to consider these questions. There is no need to rush through them. Allow yourself to answer honestly.

1. Is there a particular season or experience in my life that I have allowed to define what I believe is possible for my future?

2. Have I limited my understanding of restoration to getting back something I once had? What might it look like to remain open to something altogether different?

3. What is one area of my heart that I have been so busy protecting, managing, or carrying that I have not allowed God to tenderly minister to it?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

You know the places within my heart that still ache. You know the things I have lost, the questions I have carried, and the circumstances I have struggled to understand.

Thank You for being a God who does not overlook my pain. Thank You for Your tenderness toward the wounded places within me.

Help me to release my own limited understanding of what restoration must look like. Give me the courage to believe that there can still be goodness ahead, even if it looks different from what I once imagined.

Teach me to recognize Your presence in the unfinished places of my life. Remind me that my circumstances do not determine the fullness of who I am or who I may yet become.

And today, Father, help me to trust You with the pages of my story that have yet to be written.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Today, identify one possibility for your future that you have quietly stopped considering because of something you have experienced in your past.

Write it down.

You do not have to pursue it today. You do not have to know how it could happen. Simply give yourself permission to consider that it might still be possible.

Carry This With You

I can acknowledge what has been broken without surrendering what may still become beautiful.

Day Two

Waiting Is Not Wasted

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

— Isaiah 40:31 NIV

A Moment Together

I would venture to say that one of the most difficult aspects of walking by faith is the absence of a definitive timeline.

Wouldn't it be lovely if, when God spoke something to our hearts, He would also graciously provide us with a calendar invitation indicating precisely when we could expect it to come to pass?

I certainly would have appreciated a few of those over the years.

There is something particularly difficult about knowing what you are believing for and having absolutely no idea when, or even how, you will arrive there. It is one thing to endure a difficult season when you know there is an established date upon which it will conclude. It is another thing entirely when you have no such assurance.

And life continues in the meantime.

The bills still need to be paid. Children grow up. Birthdays come and go. Responsibilities change. People around us move into seasons we may have been believing to enter ourselves. And occasionally, if we are being truthful, we find ourselves wondering how much of our lives will have passed us by before certain things finally come together.

I think there is a distinction we must make between waiting on God and waiting to live.

For years, we can unknowingly place portions of our lives on hold because we believe that something else must happen first. We will pursue the dream when the circumstances change. We will allow ourselves to fully enjoy life when the uncertainty subsides. We will feel at liberty to celebrate when the answer finally comes.

A Moment Together

But what if there are beautiful things available to us right now, in the midst of everything that remains unresolved?

What if the season we have been so eager to leave contains opportunities that deserve our attention, too?

When I read Isaiah 40:31, I am particularly drawn to the progression of that Scripture. It speaks of soaring, running, and walking. And while we tend to celebrate the soaring, I have developed an extraordinary appreciation for the walking.

There are seasons when walking is a remarkable accomplishment.

There are mornings when getting up, putting one foot in front of the other, and continuing to engage in the life God has entrusted to us requires considerable strength. It may not look particularly impressive to anyone else, but I believe there is something precious about the quiet faithfulness of continuing.

We may not always recognize what is being cultivated within us during those years. Some of it may only become evident much later, when we find ourselves possessing the wisdom, compassion, discernment, or capacity to steward something we would not have been prepared to carry before.

That does not mean every delay will eventually make sense to us. Nor does it mean we must be grateful for every circumstance that has caused us to wait.

But I do believe we can remain open to what God might do with the time we have been given.

My friend, please do not become so focused on the arrival of a future season that you overlook the life that is happening around you today.

Make the memory. Take the photograph. Accept the invitation. Laugh until your stomach hurts. Give yourself permission to enjoy the goodness that is presently available to you.

You can continue believing for tomorrow while fully participating in today.

Your waiting does not have to become a waiting room for your entire life.

A Moment of Reflection

1. What have I been waiting for, and how has that waiting influenced the way I presently live?

2. Is there something I have continually postponed because I believe another circumstance must first be resolved?

3. What goodness is already present in my life that deserves more of my attention and gratitude?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

You know how long I have waited. You know the prayers I have prayed repeatedly, the things I have believed for, and the moments when continuing to wait has felt particularly difficult.

Thank You that I do not have to conceal my weariness from You.

Renew my strength in the places where I have become tired. Help me to remain faithful without becoming so consumed by what has yet to happen that I fail to recognize what is happening around me.

Teach me to appreciate the life You have entrusted to me today while remaining hopeful for the things that may lie ahead.

Give me the wisdom to recognize opportunities, the freedom to experience joy, and the courage to continue walking with You, even when I cannot see very far down the road.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Choose one thing you have been postponing until life looks a little different.

Perhaps it is having coffee with a friend, beginning a creative project, visiting somewhere you have wanted to go, or simply allowing yourself an afternoon of enjoyment without feeling guilty.

Take one practical step toward it today.

Let it be a gentle reminder that your life is worthy of being lived even while some of your prayers remain unanswered.

Carry This With You

I will not postpone the goodness of today while believing for the promises of tomorrow.

Day Three

Strength for the Unfinished Season

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

— 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV (excerpt)

A Moment Together

I think there comes a point in a particularly long season of adversity when the thing we find most exhausting is the simple fact that it has yet to end.

We have prayed. We have believed. We have made the necessary adjustments, exercised considerable patience, and done everything within our ability to steward the circumstances before us. And yet, here we are, still navigating something we had hoped would have been behind us by now.

What makes these seasons particularly interesting is that life doesn't necessarily look miserable from the outside. We still laugh. We still celebrate birthdays, take vacations, enjoy our families, and experience moments of extraordinary joy. We can be genuinely happy and simultaneously be carrying something that requires a tremendous amount of strength.

I don't think we talk about that nearly enough.

We have somehow developed this idea that if someone is walking victoriously, they must no longer be struggling. And if they are struggling, perhaps they have yet to discover how to walk victoriously.

But I would submit to you that some of the most extraordinary demonstrations of faith are found in the lives of people whose circumstances have yet to change.

A Moment Together

There is a precious distinction between having faith for something to end and receiving the grace necessary to walk through it while it remains unfinished.

When Paul wrote about his own weakness, God did not respond by questioning the sincerity of his faith. He assured him of the sufficiency of His grace.

I find tremendous comfort in that.

There are times when what we need most is not another reminder to be strong. We need to be reminded that we have access to a strength that does not originate within ourselves.

We need to understand that our capacity to carry something does not necessarily mean we are obligated to carry it without assistance. We can ask for help. We can acknowledge our limitations. We can make adjustments to the things we have been doing, and we can allow ourselves to rest without interpreting that rest as an indication that we have somehow failed.

My precious friend, you do not have to exhaust yourself trying to demonstrate the authenticity of your faith.

God already knows your heart.

He knows what it has taken for you to arrive at this particular moment in your life. He knows the prayers you have prayed when no one was listening, the tears you have quietly wiped away, and the extraordinary effort it has sometimes taken to continue doing the most ordinary things.

Perhaps today is not about discovering how to carry more.

Perhaps it is about allowing His grace to meet you precisely where your own strength begins to diminish.

There is grace for the unfinished season, too.

A Moment of Reflection

1. Where in my life have I felt obligated to continually demonstrate strength, even when I am weary?

2. Have I mistakenly associated needing help or rest with a lack of faith?

3. What responsibility, expectation, or burden might I need to surrender, share, or approach differently in this season?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

There are things I have carried for so long that I have scarcely recognized how much strength they require of me.

Thank You that I do not have to prove my faith by pretending I am never weary. Thank You that Your grace is available to me in the places where my own strength falls short.

Give me the discernment to recognize what You have entrusted to me and what I have unnecessarily taken upon myself.

Help me to receive assistance without guilt, to rest without condemnation, and to acknowledge my limitations without questioning Your faithfulness.

Teach me to depend upon You in the ordinary moments of my day, not merely when I have exhausted every other possibility.

Let Your grace sustain me in the places that remain unfinished.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Identify one thing you can reasonably release, delegate, postpone, or simplify today.

Resist the temptation to immediately fill that space with another responsibility.

Allow yourself to receive the gift of a little margin.

Carry This With You

I do not have to exhaust my own strength to demonstrate the sufficiency of His grace.

Day Four

When You Don't Understand the Process

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

— Proverbs 3:5 NIV

A Moment Together

I appreciate understanding things.

I appreciate knowing why something is happening, what the anticipated outcome might be, and what steps are necessary to arrive there. Give me a plan, a reasonable timeline, and a few clearly defined objectives, and I am generally quite content.

Unfortunately, walking by faith has not always afforded me that particular luxury.

There have been circumstances throughout my life that I could not reconcile with what I believed God had spoken to my heart. There were seasons when the things happening around me appeared to be moving in the complete opposite direction of the very things I was believing for.

And I had questions.

I think sometimes we are reluctant to acknowledge how many questions we actually have because we are concerned that doing so might suggest we don't trust God.

But there is a difference between having questions about what God is doing and questioning whether He is worthy of our trust.

We can be completely confident in His character and still be extraordinarily confused by our circumstances.

A Moment Together

Throughout Scripture, we encounter people who walked with God and did not always understand what was unfolding before them. Abraham went without knowing where he was going. Joseph experienced circumstances that appeared entirely inconsistent with his dreams. Ruth left behind the familiarity of her homeland without any assurance of what her new life would look like.

Their understanding was limited to the portion of the story they were living.

And so is ours.

We have the benefit of reading their stories in their entirety. We know what happened in the subsequent chapters. We can identify connections between events that the individuals themselves could not possibly have recognized while they were experiencing them.

I often wonder how differently we might perceive certain chapters of our own lives if we had the benefit of reading them from the vantage point of their conclusion.

But we don't.

We are living them one page at a time.

Trusting God does not mean we have to manufacture an explanation for every difficult thing that happens. There are circumstances for which we may never receive a satisfactory explanation in this lifetime. There are losses that cannot be adequately explained away by pointing to something good that happened afterward.

What we can do, however, is allow our understanding of God's character to remain greater than our understanding of our present circumstances.

We can seek wisdom. We can make informed decisions. We can ask the difficult questions and pursue the answers available to us. And when we reach the boundaries of what we are capable of understanding, we can acknowledge those boundaries without surrendering our faith.

My friend, you are not required to understand the entirety of the journey before taking the next faithful step.

Sometimes, all we have is enough light for the portion of the road immediately before us.

And for today, that is enough.

A Moment of Reflection

1. What circumstance am I presently struggling to reconcile with what I believe about God's goodness?

2. Have I made my willingness to move forward contingent upon receiving an explanation for something that has happened?

3. What is one thing I know to be true about God's character, irrespective of what I presently understand about my circumstances?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

You know how much I desire to understand the things that have unfolded in my life.

You know the questions I have asked, the conclusions I have attempted to reach, and the circumstances I have struggled to reconcile.

Give me wisdom where wisdom is available. Give me discernment where decisions must be made. And give me peace in the places where understanding remains beyond my reach.

Help me to distinguish between the uncertainty of my circumstances and the certainty of Your character.

Teach me to walk faithfully without requiring that every portion of the journey be revealed to me beforehand.

And when I am tempted to interpret my circumstances as evidence of Your absence, remind me of the many ways You have faithfully accompanied me throughout my life.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Write down one question you have been carrying that presently has no clear answer.

Beneath it, write down one truth about God's character that remains unchanged regardless of the answer.

Spend a few moments reflecting on that truth today.

Carry This With You

My understanding may be incomplete, but God's character remains unchanged.

Day Five

What You Survived Did Not Define You

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

— Isaiah 43:19 NIV (excerpt)

A Moment Together

There is something rather interesting that can happen when we spend a considerable portion of our lives navigating adversity. We can become so accustomed to being the person who overcomes difficult things that we scarcely know who we are outside of them.

We become exceptionally good at anticipating problems, making provisions for unexpected circumstances, and finding solutions when there don't appear to be any readily available. We develop resourcefulness, resilience, and an extraordinary ability to adapt.

And while I am tremendously grateful for those attributes, I have also come to recognize that there is considerably more to who we are than our ability to survive.

At some point, we must allow ourselves to become acquainted with the person we are outside of the circumstances that required us to develop those particular strengths.

What do we enjoy? What makes us laugh? What intrigues us? What would we pursue if our decisions were not continually influenced by the things we have had to overcome?

Those may sound like relatively simple questions. And yet, for someone who has spent years attending to the demands of difficult circumstances, they can be surprisingly challenging to answer.

We have become so accustomed to asking ourselves what needs to be done that we may have forgotten to ask ourselves what we would actually love to do.

A Moment Together

There is a difference.

One of the things I find particularly beautiful about the account in Isaiah 43 is that God speaks to a people who have a considerable history with Him. They have experienced His deliverance before. They have witnessed His provision. They have stories worth telling.

And yet, He invites them to remain attentive to something new.

Their history with Him was precious, but it was not the entirety of what He could do.

I believe there is something in that for us.

Our testimonies are worthy of being told. The things God has brought us through deserve to be acknowledged and celebrated. But our lives are not limited to the testimonies we presently have.

There are experiences we have yet to encounter. There are things we have yet to learn, places we have yet to go, and aspects of our personalities that may flourish under circumstances quite different from the ones that cultivated our resilience.

We are permitted to discover those things.

We are permitted to become people whose lives are characterized by more than what they have endured.

And perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of healing is arriving at a place where we can tell the story of what happened to us without allowing that story to dictate everything we believe is possible for us.

My precious friend, you have a testimony.

But you also have a life.

Give yourself permission to discover the fullness of it.

A Moment of Reflection

1. In what ways has my identity become associated with the things I have survived or the responsibilities I have carried?

2. What aspects of my personality, interests, or dreams have received very little attention during difficult seasons of my life?

3. If my past no longer dictated what I believed was possible for my future, what might I be willing to explore?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

Thank You for the strength, wisdom, and resilience that have been cultivated throughout the course of my life.

Thank You for the ways You have sustained me through circumstances I once wondered how I would endure.

Help me to honor my testimony without allowing it to become the entirety of my identity.

Remind me that there is more to who I am than the things I have experienced, the responsibilities I have carried, and the difficulties I have overcome.

Give me the freedom to discover new interests, embrace new opportunities, and recognize the beautiful possibilities that may exist beyond the familiarity of survival.

Help me to perceive the new things You are doing without continually interpreting them through the lens of what has happened before.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Make a short list of three things you would genuinely enjoy exploring, learning, experiencing, or doing.

They do not need to be productive. They do not need to serve another person. They do not need to accomplish some extraordinary objective.

Let them simply be things that bring you joy.

Choose one to give a little more attention to this week.

Carry This With You

My testimony tells the story of where I have been. It does not place limitations on where I may yet go.

Day Six

Beauty in the Becoming

... he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

— Philippians 1:6 NIV (excerpt)

A Moment Together

I think we have a tendency to reserve our celebrations for the conclusion of things.

We celebrate when the goal has been accomplished, when the prayer has been answered, when the dream has become a reality, and when we have finally arrived at the place we have spent so much time endeavoring to reach.

And rightly so. Those moments deserve to be celebrated.

But I wonder how many extraordinary things about our lives we overlook simply because they are still in the process of becoming.

Consider for a moment the person you were five years ago. Or perhaps ten years ago.

Think about the things that once troubled you, the perspectives you once held, the decisions you might have made differently, and the things you had yet to learn about yourself, about life, and about God.

There are likely things you handle today with a wisdom you did not possess then. There may be circumstances you once would have allowed to consume you that no longer have the same influence over your life. Perhaps you have developed the ability to extend compassion in places where you once would have been inclined to offer an opinion.

Perhaps you have learned to recognize the difference between the things that require your attention and the things that simply demand it.

These are not insignificant developments.

They are evidence of growth.

A Moment Together

And yet, because they did not necessarily arrive with a grand announcement or a clearly identifiable moment of accomplishment, we may have given ourselves very little opportunity to appreciate them.

I have developed a rather extraordinary affection for the Japanese art of kintsugi. It is the practice of repairing broken pottery with a lacquer traditionally finished with precious metal. Rather than attempting to conceal the places where the vessel has been broken, the restoration allows those places to become part of its visible beauty.

What I appreciate about it is that the vessel does not have to return to its original appearance in order to be considered beautiful again.

The evidence of its history remains.

And there is something remarkably beautiful about what it has become.

I think we must extend ourselves that same grace.

We are not obligated to become some previous version of ourselves in order to recognize that healing has taken place. We are not required to arrive at a particular destination before appreciating the work that has already been accomplished within us.

And we certainly do not need to have everything figured out before acknowledging the goodness of God in our lives.

Paul's words in Philippians remind us that the work God began within us is ongoing. We are not finished products, nor are we expected to be.

There is still room for growth, discovery, refinement, and wonderfully unexpected development.

What if, instead of continually measuring ourselves against the person we think we ought to have become by now, we took a moment to appreciate the person we are becoming?

What if we celebrated the boundary we finally established, the fear we finally confronted, the forgiveness we are learning to extend, or the courage it took to begin again?

Those things matter.

My friend, there is beauty here, too.

Not merely in the conclusion of your story, but in the very process of becoming.

A Moment of Reflection

1. In what ways have I grown over the past several years that I have given myself very little opportunity to acknowledge?

2. Have I been measuring my progress solely by changes in my external circumstances rather than recognizing the changes taking place within me?

3. What aspect of the person I am becoming am I particularly grateful for today?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

Thank You for the work You have been doing within me, including the portions of that work I have not always recognized.

Thank You for the wisdom I have acquired, the ways my heart has been shaped, and the opportunities I have been given to grow.

Forgive me for the times I have become so focused on what remains unfinished that I have failed to appreciate what You have already accomplished.

Help me to extend myself grace as I continue to learn, mature, and become.

Give me the discernment to recognize growth in its quieter forms and the humility to remain teachable throughout every season of my life.

May I never become so preoccupied with arriving that I overlook the beauty of the journey itself.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Write a brief letter to the person you were five or ten years ago.

Tell that version of yourself something you have learned, something you have overcome, and something beautiful about the person you have become.

Extend to that person the compassion you might readily extend to someone else.

Then take a moment to thank God for how far you have come.

Carry This With You

I do not have to be finished becoming to recognize the beauty of who I am today.

Day Seven

Step Into the Bountiful Years

May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised!

— Deuteronomy 1:11 NIV

A Moment Together

Of all the Scriptures that have ministered to my heart throughout the course of my life, there is a particular tenderness with which I regard Deuteronomy 1:11.

It is a Scripture that has become extraordinarily precious to me, not simply because of what it speaks concerning blessing and increase, but because of what it has invited me to consider about the years that lie ahead.

For those who have endured particularly difficult seasons, the idea of anticipating something beautiful can require a surprising amount of courage.

We become familiar with preparing ourselves for disappointment. We learn to temper our expectations, to consider the things that might go wrong, and to protect ourselves from the vulnerability that accompanies looking forward to something.

And understandably so.

When we have experienced considerable loss or prolonged uncertainty, hope can feel like a rather audacious thing.

But I wonder how much goodness we might inadvertently overlook when we approach every new chapter with the apprehension cultivated in a previous one.

A Moment Together

There comes a time when we must give ourselves permission to lift our eyes again.

Not because we have received assurance that nothing difficult will ever happen to us again. Not because every circumstance has been resolved or every question has been answered. And certainly not because we have somehow earned a life exempt from adversity.

But because the presence of difficulty in our history does not require the absence of expectation in our future.

I love the context surrounding this Scripture. Moses is recounting the journey of the Israelites, a people whose history included extraordinary deliverance, unfamiliar territory, tremendous challenges, and the provision of God. And in the midst of that history, he speaks a blessing over them.

He speaks of increase.

He invites them to consider that the goodness they have already experienced is not the limit of what God is capable of doing.

I think we would do well to remember that, too.

When I speak of the bountiful years, I am not speaking exclusively of material abundance. I am speaking of a fullness of life that encompasses so much more.

The richness of meaningful relationships. The freedom to experience joy. The ability to enjoy the things we once were too weary to fully appreciate. The opportunity to pursue dreams, create memories, serve others, and discover aspects of ourselves we have yet to encounter.

A Moment Together

There is bounty in peace.

There is bounty in laughter around a dinner table. In the privilege of loving and being loved. In a quiet morning when our hearts are not consumed by the demands of the day ahead. In the ability to recognize the goodness of God in the ordinary details of our lives.

And there is something particularly precious about arriving at a place where we are no longer afraid to desire beautiful things.

My precious friend, I don't know what the next chapter of your life will hold. I cannot tell you how every circumstance will unfold, nor would I attempt to make promises on God's behalf concerning things He has not promised.

But I can encourage you to remain open to the possibilities.

Allow yourself to dream again. Give yourself permission to look forward to things. Make room for the wonderfully unexpected.

Do not assume that the most beautiful experiences of your life are behind you simply because a considerable portion of your life has already been lived.

There is still room for God to surprise you.

And as we conclude these seven days together, my prayer is that you carry with you a renewed appreciation for the life that is presently yours and a genuine excitement about the life that may still lie ahead.

You have spent enough time wondering whether you will make it through.

Perhaps it is time to begin considering what it might look like to flourish.

A Moment of Reflection

1. Have the disappointments of previous seasons influenced my willingness to anticipate good things in the future?

2. Apart from material possessions or financial accomplishments, what would a truly bountiful life look like to me?

3. What dream, desire, or possibility would I like to give myself permission to consider again?

A Prayer for Today

Father,

Thank You for every season in which Your faithfulness has sustained me.

Thank You for the things You have restored, the ways You have strengthened me, and the countless expressions of Your goodness throughout my life.

As I look toward the years ahead, help me to do so with a heart that remains open to hope.

Free me from the apprehension that has caused me to limit my expectations because of the things I have experienced before.

Give me the wisdom to recognize abundance in its many forms, the freedom to enjoy the life You have entrusted to me, and the generosity to share what You have placed within my hands.

May the years ahead be rich in purpose, meaningful relationships, laughter, discovery, and opportunities to serve others.

And whatever those years may hold, may I remain ever mindful of Your presence, ever grateful for Your grace, and ever willing to follow where You lead.

In Jesus' name, amen.

One Small Step

Take a fresh page and write these words at the top:

The Bountiful Years

Beneath them, begin writing the things you would love to experience, cultivate, discover, or pursue in the years ahead.

Do not immediately edit your list according to your present circumstances. You are not making commitments or establishing timelines today.

You are simply allowing yourself to hope.

Keep this page somewhere you can return to it. Add to it as new dreams and possibilities come to mind.

Let it become a living reminder that your story is still unfolding.

Carry This With You

I will not allow the difficulties of yesterday to diminish my expectation of the goodness that may still lie ahead.

And Now, My Friend, Your Journey Continues.

Here we are.

Seven days have come and gone, and I find myself wondering what these little moments together may have stirred within your heart.

Perhaps there was a particular Scripture that ministered to you. Perhaps one of the questions prompted you to consider something you had not given yourself permission to think about in quite some time. Perhaps you discovered that there were portions of your own story you had yet to view with the tenderness and compassion they deserved.

Whatever these seven days have been for you, I pray they have served you well.

One of the greatest privileges of my life is having the opportunity to go back for others. To reach into the places I have known and extend a hand to someone who may presently find themselves navigating something similar.

It is the reason I write. It is the reason Unshakeable Journey exists. And it is the reason I wanted to place these pages into your hands.

There is something extraordinarily beautiful about discovering that the things we once wondered how we would survive can become the very things that enable us to minister to someone else.

And perhaps, in time, you will discover that there are portions of your own journey that will afford you that same precious privilege.

But for now, my friend, give yourself permission to live.

Take the time to discover who you are becoming. Enjoy the people God has placed in your life. Pursue the things that intrigue you. Extend yourself a little more grace. Allow yourself to be pleasantly surprised by the things you could not have anticipated.

And please, do not spend the entirety of your life waiting for a particular circumstance to change before giving yourself permission to enjoy it.

There is goodness to be discovered here, too.

I would love for our time together not to end with these pages. Through The Becoming Letter, I share personal reflections, encouragement, things God has been stirring within my heart, and glimpses into the journey we are continuing to walk together.

You are always welcome there.

And should our paths cross again through one of my books, at a speaking engagement, or simply through a little message that finds its way to you on a day when you need it most, know that I count it a privilege.

My prayer for you is that you become so deeply acquainted with the goodness of God that no difficult chapter has the authority to determine what you believe is possible for the remainder of your story.

Stand firmly in what you know to be true.

Walk freely into the life that is still unfolding before you.

And never forget, my precious friend, that yesterday was just a part of your becoming.

Until Next Time,

With love, faith, and a whole lot of grace,

Stephanie Journey

Unshakeable Journey

Stand Firm. Walk Free.

Our Journey Doesn't Have to End Here.

The Becoming Letter

A little encouragement for the beautifully unfinished journey of life.

Join me for personal reflections, faith-filled encouragement, conversations about life and becoming, and first glimpses into the things that are unfolding at Unshakeable Journey.

You're always welcome here.

Subscribe complimentary at liveunshakeable.com

Discover the Books of Stephanie Journey

The Becoming Collection

The journey through adversity, restoration, and becoming.

Beautifully Broken, But Bountiful

What if the breaking wasn't the end—but the beginning of who you were always becoming?

An intimate memoir of faith, perseverance, redemption, and the extraordinary goodness of God throughout life's most difficult seasons.

Available Now

Beauty in the Becoming

An invitation to discover the beauty of who we are becoming, even when the journey looks nothing like the one we imagined. A celebration of the extraordinary work God does within us along the way.

Coming Soon

The Hidden Cost of Surviving

An exploration of the often-unseen emotional, physical, and spiritual costs of prolonged adversity, and what it means to finally make room for restoration.

Coming Soon

The Art of Living Collection

The freedom to live fully, dream boldly, and embrace the fullness of who you are.

Permission to Enjoy Your Life

An invitation to stop postponing joy, release the guilt associated with enjoying life, and give yourself permission to fully embrace the beautiful experiences available to you—even while portions of your story remain unfinished.

Forthcoming

The Audacity to Want More

A celebration of the courage to dream again, pursue new possibilities, and refuse to place unnecessary limitations on the life that lies ahead. Because there is no expiration date on becoming, dreaming, or discovering something wonderfully new.

Forthcoming

Unapologetically Me

An invitation to embrace the fullness of who God created you to be, free yourself from the exhausting expectations of others, and live authentically without continually feeling the need to explain, diminish, or apologize for who you are.

Forthcoming

There is a season for becoming.

And there is a season for discovering the extraordinary freedom of living as the person you have become.

I would be delighted to walk alongside you through both.

UNSHAKEABLE JOURNEY

www.liveunshakeable.com

Stand Firm. Walk Free.

Freely received. Freely given.

Seven days. A little hope. A whole lot of grace.

UNSHAKEABLE JOURNEY

www.liveunshakeable.com