



HOT TEA:
A YEAR OF STEEPED DEVOTION

God is still steeping beauty in your life.

by Latoya Hazell-Alcide

And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees
for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear
fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.
Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

Ezekiel 47:12 ESV

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“Lord, let my life steep in Your grace.”

Dedication

To every soul who sips slowly,
who has learned that healing and hope brew best in stillness.

To my fellow tea-sippers and grace-drinkers,
who gather around life’s table with stories steeped in faith,
laughter, and a touch of honeyed courage.

And to the One who keeps refilling the cup,
the Spirit who hovers, warms, and never lets it run dry.



Introduction



Steeped in Grace

- There's something sacred about a cup of hot tea. It requires heat, stillness, and time, three ingredients that also define spiritual growth.
- This book is an invitation to slow down and steep your soul in God's presence. Each month offers one devotional "blend" drawn from Scripture, experience, and reflection. Every theme carries a tea-tag message, short truths to meditate on as you sip.
- You'll notice the rhythm: reflection, Scripture, story, and a short Sip & Sit practice to help you live it out. As you journey from January's courage to December's overshadowing hope, may each page warm your heart, steady your faith, and remind you that transformation, like tea, takes time and heat.

Now, let's brew together.



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January: Hawthorn Tea

When Yesterday Dies, Rise: Step Fearless Into the Year God Has Prepared

Scriptural Honey:

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Reflection Quote:

We are born to die but in the meantime sunrises will be celebrated as a preview of God’s invitation to Rise again!

Latoya Hazell-Alcide

Health benefits of Hawthorn - Vinmec Health Systems

Provides antioxidants for the body | Has powerful anti-inflammatory properties | Helps to lower blood pressure | Helps to reduce blood fat | Has the effect of supporting the digestive system | Helps prevent hair loss | Helps relieve symptoms of anxiety | Used to treat heart disease | Can be flexibly incorporated in the diet

When the Year Ends and the Unknown Begins

There's a quiet moment when the steam from a fresh cup of tea curls upward, rising and fading into the air. It's that space between warmth and cooling, between what has been and what will be. January lives in that space; between the griefs we've carried from the year gone by and the hopes we have not yet dared to name.

Joshua's story opens in a similar moment. Moses, the great leader of Israel, is dead. The people are mourning, their hearts heavy with both gratitude and uncertainty. For decades they had followed Moses through wilderness and wonder. Now the familiar voice was silent, and a new leader, Joshua, stood holding both his staff and his fear.

The year may have ended, but grief does not follow calendars. Some of us are stepping into this January still aching from losses that cannot be scheduled away, relationships changed, dreams deferred, loved ones gone. Yet, just as God called Joshua to rise from the place of mourning, God calls us too. The voice that spoke across the Jordan now whispers across our thresholds: "My presence is not buried with what you've lost. I am still here."

So, we pause, not to rush into resolutions, but to steep in remembrance, to let the waters of grief mix with grace. For it is only when we allow ourselves to feel the sorrow of what's gone that we can begin to taste the courage of what is coming.



The Courage to Lead While Grieving

Joshua's courage was not the absence of fear; it was obedience in the midst of uncertainty. God didn't deny his trembling heart; instead, God commanded him to be strong and courageous. This was not a suggestion or an emotional pep talk, it was a divine assurance that Joshua would not walk alone.

Theologically, this moment marks a profound shift in Israel's history. The wilderness generation had ended; a new one was crossing into promise. Yet before they could step into victory, they had to walk through the valley of loss. The text reveals that courage and grief can coexist, that leadership often requires carrying the weight of both.

We too are called to lead; our families, our ministries, even our own hearts, through seasons of transition. We may not have a Moses to follow or a Jordan to cross, but we face uncertain terrain: economic fears, illness, fractured relationships, and unhealed memories from the year past. The call of Joshua 1:9 still stands,

“Do not be afraid or discouraged.”

Not because the path is easy, but because the Presence is certain. Courage, in God's kingdom, is never self-manufactured. It is steeped in trust; trust that what we need will be provided at the



right time. Like tea steeping in hot water, faith releases its strength through pressure. The hotter the water, the deeper the flavor. The harder the season, the richer the faith that emerges.

Moving Forward Fearless

As Joshua prepared to lead, he did so with a grieving people. The land ahead was promised but not yet possessed. That's the paradox of faith at the year's beginning, promise without possession, calling without complete clarity. Yet God's command came with God's company:

“I will be with you wherever you go.”

This January, we are invited to grieve what we must but not to stop there. The loss of the year past does not negate the presence of the One who holds our future. The same God who stood with Joshua on the banks of the Jordan stands with us at the doorway of this new year.

So, pour your tea. Let the warmth remind you that courage is not found in the absence of tears but in the decision to move forward anyway. Lay both your fear and your grief in God's hands, the hands that carried Moses to rest and lifted Joshua to lead. The hands that cradle every loss and every hope.

You do not have to know what this year will bring. You only need to know Who will be with you in it.





Weekly Sip & Sit Ideas for January

***Week 1:** Journal what you are grieving from last year. Name it before God.

***Week 2:** Write one courageous act you will take this month.

***Week 3:** Memorize Joshua 1:9 and pray it daily.

***Week 4:** Brew a cup of tea, sit in silence, and thank God for His presence in both your losses and your hopes.

***Week 5:** Light a candle or sit near a window. Reflect on what is still becoming in you. Write a short prayer of trust, releasing the pressure to rush healing or answers, and ask God to meet you in the waiting.

Prayer:

Lord of new beginnings,

As I step into this year, steady my trembling heart.

Teach me to release what is gone and trust what is coming.

Steep my soul in Your courage, And remind me that wherever I go,
You have already gone before me.

Amen

Now That's Some Good Tea...





February: Pomegranate Tea

Uncage Your Heart: “Free your heart, let it be wild.”

Scriptural Honey:

“Return home, my daughters... May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead and to me.”

Ruth 1:8

Reflection Quote:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give it to no one... Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket; safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.”

C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves

Health Benefits of Pomegranate Tea - Harvard Health

Supports digestive health | Good for your brain | May improve exercise endurance | Packed with nutrients | Low in calories and fat but high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals | Rich in antioxidants | Helps with inflammation | Supports the heart | Supports urinary health

Ruth: Love Beyond the Rubble

When we meet Ruth, her story begins not with romance but with ruin. Famine, displacement, and death have left her world hollow. Her husband is gone. Her future, uncertain. The plans once drawn in joy are now erased by grief. Yet, in the midst of the ashes, she utters one of Scripture's most unguarded vows:

"Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay."

Ruth's heart could have stayed locked in the grief of Moab. She could have built walls to protect herself from another loss, another goodbye. Instead, she chose to uncage her heart, to risk love again, to follow Naomi into an unknown land, and to trust that kindness could bloom again after sorrow.

Theologically, Ruth's journey mirrors the courage of every believer who dares to love after loss. Her loyalty becomes covenantal, not only with Naomi but with God Himself, whose providence is quietly arranging redemption through her willingness to move.

This February, Ruth teaches us that love requires vulnerability. To uncage your heart is to let it travel with God, even when you don't yet see the harvest. Love will always risk pain, but it also opens the door for resurrection.

Sip & Sit:

*Brew a cup of your favorite calming tea. As it steeps, name one place where fear has caged your heart. *Whisper Ruth's words: "Where You go, Lord, I will go."



Naomi: From Bitter to Blessed

If Ruth represents love's courage, Naomi represents love's recovery. When she returns to Bethlehem, she says, "Don't call me Naomi; call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter." Her name, once meaning pleasant, now tastes of loss. Naomi grieves not only her husband and sons but also the loss of meaning. In ancient Israel, widowhood carried social vulnerability and economic despair. Her lineage seems severed, her legacy erased. Bitterness becomes her armor, the cage that keeps love and hope out.

Yet, even in bitterness, grace is working. Ruth's steadfast love begins to thaw Naomi's sorrow. Each act of loyalty; gleaning in fields, sharing bread, walking beside her, loosens another bar of that cage. By the time Boaz enters the story, Naomi's heart has been softened enough to dream again. She begins to hope not only for Ruth's redemption but her own restoration.

Spiritually, Naomi reminds us that God can handle our honesty. Bitterness is not beyond redemption. When we dare to rename our pain before God, He begins to rename our future.

Sip & Sit:

*Write down what has made you bitter or guarded.

*Pray, "Lord, rename my Mara moments. Make them Naomi again, pleasant and whole."



Boaz - The Redeemer Who Frees the Heart

Then enters Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer. His name, meaning “in him is strength,” is a foreshadowing of Christ Himself. In the ancient Israelite custom, a kinsman-redeemer had both the right and responsibility to restore a family’s name, property, and future. Boaz does more than fulfill the law; he embodies mercy.

When he notices Ruth gleaning, he sees not a foreign widow but a woman of valor. His kindness protects her dignity. His provision answers her lack. His covenant restores not just one woman, but a family line that will birth King David, and generations later, the Messiah.

This is the gospel hidden in a field: when we bring our broken, caged hearts to the Redeemer, He does not discard us. He covers us with grace. Christ, our true Kinsman Redeemer, frees our hearts from every chain; fear, shame, bitterness, and restores us to belonging.

To love again after loss is to believe that redemption is possible. Ruth’s courage, Naomi’s honesty, and Boaz’s compassion weave together a story of divine restoration. When we uncage our hearts, we make room for God to write something new.





Weekly Sip & Sit Ideas for February

Week 1: Reflect on Ruth’s courage. What relationship or dream do you need to follow in faith?

Week 2: Identify one “Mara” place in your heart and rename it in prayer.

Week 3: Write about someone who showed you undeserved kindness, like Boaz.

Week 4: Take a slow walk outdoors. Feel the freedom of your own heartbeat; a heart uncaged, redeemed, and alive.

Prayer:

Redeeming God,
Break open the cages I’ve built around my heart.
Teach me to love again,
to trust again,
to hope again.
Redeem the bitter places with Your sweetness,
And let my heart run wild in Your grace.

Amen

Now That’s Some Good Tea...





March: Rosehips Tea

Gratitude That Stops The Foolishness:

“When your heart is free, gratitude makes room for peace.”

Scriptural Honey:

“Blessed be your good judgment and blessed be you, for keeping
me from bloodshed this day and from avenging
myself with my own hands.”

1 Samuel 25:33

Reflection Quote:

“My place of gratitude is forever in my spiritual GPS, rerouting fears
and anxiety, and leading me to the freeway of worship
whose destination is peace”

Latoya Hazell-Alcide

Health Benefits of Rosehips Tea - Healthline

May fight skin aging | May reduce inflammation and pain |
May protect against type 2 diabetes | May aid weight loss | May protect
against heart disease | May support a healthy immune system |
Rich in antioxidants

Abigail - Wisdom Poured Like Peace

The steam rising from a freshly poured cup of tea spreads warmth before the first sip is taken. That is exactly how Abigail enters David's story; quietly, steadily, but radiating a calm that breaks through the thickness of chaos. David had been protecting the flocks of a wealthy man named Nabal, whose name in Hebrew literally means "fool," not an insult, but a spiritual diagnosis. Foolishness in Scripture is not about low intelligence; it's about a heart too proud to perceive God.

When David later sent men to ask Nabal for provisions, Nabal responded not with gratitude, but with contempt, insult, and arrogance. And something in David snapped. The man anointed to be Israel's future king: the psalmist, the shepherd, the giant-slayer, prepared to stain his calling with vengeance. Rage burned hot. Destiny trembled. One foolish man was about to provoke a king into sin.

Into this rising storm stepped Abigail, Nabal's wife, described as "intelligent and beautiful," a woman whose discernment was sharper than the desert wind. Before panic could paralyze her, she moved with holy urgency. She gathered food, mounted a donkey, and rode toward David like a steady hand reaching for a trembling cup.

When she bowed low before him, she carried more than supplies. She carried peace. Her integrity interrupted folly. Her posture softened fury. Her gratitude for David's restraint called him back to



his sacred purpose. Abigail teaches us that gratitude and integrity are peacemakers. They do not deny foolishness, they simply refuse to become it.

Her gentle words cooled a fire
that could have scorched David's destiny.

Her courage preserved
what could have been shattered.

Her humility held together
what rage was ready to tear apart.

Sip & Sit:

*Pour a warm cup of tea and picture Abigail approaching David with quiet courage.



*Pray: "Lord, let my words pour peace, not poison. Make me wise enough to interrupt foolishness with grace."

David - Gratitude and the Guarding of Honor

David's reaction to Abigail is one of the most beautiful portraits of humility in Scripture. Her words did not shame him, they disarmed him. Her presence did not belittle him, it reminded him who he truly was. He responded with overflowing gratitude:

***“Praise be to the Lord,
who sent you to meet me today...
Blessed be your discernment...
You have kept me from bloodshed.”***

1 Samuel 25:32-33

David realized that Abigail's wisdom saved not only Nabal's household but his own legacy. His gratitude was not sentimental; it was spiritual. It realigned him with the heart of the God he served. David was being tested that day:

- **Would he lead like a king of self, or a king under God?**
- **Would he respond from ego, or from destiny?**
- **Would he let foolishness pull him into folly?**



His gratitude transformed a violent impulse into a testimony of divine mercy. For us, gratitude is not mere politeness; it is a spiritual posture that keeps the heart from retaliation. When we remember that God fights for us, we are released from the exhausting burden of proving ourselves right.

Gratitude becomes the guardrail for the soul.

Sip & Sit:

Write a short note or prayer of thanks to someone whose wisdom kept you from a harmful decision. Reflect on how gratitude realigns your heart with God.



The God Who Fights for Us - Christ Our Redeemer

After Abigail's intervention, God acted. The text tells us that when she returned home, Nabal was holding a feast ***“like that of a king,”*** drunk, arrogant, oblivious to the danger he had created. The next morning, when Abigail told him what had happened:

***“His heart failed him and he became like a stone.
About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.”***

1 Samuel 25:36-38

Nabal: “fool,” a man lacking spiritual perception, stands as a sobering reminder that pride is not loud; it is lethal. Foolishness is not a personality flaw; it is a spiritual fracture. His story mirrors the stubborn places in our own hearts: the relationships, habits, patterns, and attitudes where pride makes us deaf to God's quiet wisdom.

But this passage is ultimately about God's mercy and protection. David's restraint allowed God to act righteously on his behalf. David did not have to stain his future with vengeance because God defended his integrity. When we choose gratitude over retaliation, God takes responsibility for the justice that would otherwise consume us. This is the rhythm of grace:

When we walk with integrity,
God handles the fools and the follies.
He removes what would entangle us.
He clears what would corrupt us.



He protects what bitterness seeks to poison.
And then comes the gospel thread:
Just as Abigail stepped between David and destruction,
Christ stepped between us and judgment.
Abigail interceded with gifts of bread and wine.
Christ interceded with His broken body and poured-out blood.
Abigail turned wrath away from a man she barely knew.
Christ turned eternal wrath away from all who would believe.
Jesus steps into our chaos with calm.
He meets us on the road of our anger.
He lays His peace across our path.
At the cross, *He* bore every offense: ours and others,
so that we could walk free.
When we live in gratitude, we mirror the heart of *Christ*
Gratitude leads to love.
the kind that refuses bitterness,
restores peace,
and trusts the *Redeemer*
to fight the battles
we were never meant to carry.





Weekly Sip & Sit Ideas for March

*Week 1: Read 1 Samuel 25. Note every act of wisdom Abigail.

*Week 2: Identify one “Nabal” situation or relationship in your life, and release it to God.

*Week 3: Express gratitude daily to someone who brings peace into your world.

*Week 4: Reflect on Christ’s restraint at the cross, the love that fought your greatest battle.

Prayer:

Prince of Peace,

Thank You for stepping into my chaos with calm.

Teach me integrity when anger tempts me,

Gratitude when foolishness provokes me,

And love that reflects Your heart. Fight the battles I cannot fight.

Keep my soul uncaged and my witness intact.

Amen

Now That’s Some Good Tea...





April: Hissop Tea

In All Things of Nature, There Is Something Marvelous

Scriptural Honey:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”
John 12:32 (KJV)

Reflection Quote:

“In All Things of Nature, There Is Something Marvelous.”
Aristotle

Health Benefits of Hissop Tea - WebMD

Reduced Risk of Ulcers | May Help with Asthma |
Reduced Risk of Cancer | May Reduce Inflammation | Hyssop is rich in
flavonoids

The Humility of Creation

There is a quiet holiness in nature, a whisper that creation itself participates in redemption's story. As Aristotle observed, there is something marvelous in all that God has made. During Holy Week, even the earth bowed low in humility.

Consider the donkey that carried Jesus into Jerusalem: a creature of labor, not majesty. Yet in divine irony, the King of Glory chose this humble animal as His chariot of peace. The palm branches waved by the crowd, once lifted high in celebration, soon found themselves trampled underfoot, the praise of one day becoming the path of another's betrayal.

Creation was not silent during that week. It mirrored the humility of its Creator. The sun darkened at His death, the earth quaked, the stones threatened to cry out. Even the wood of the cross...a once-living tree now cut down... bore the dead weight of the world's sin. And here lies the mystery: the tree that was felled carried the One who had carried it into being. In its dying, it fulfilled divine purpose. So too, the "trees" of our lives; the fallen dreams, the cut-down plans, the hollowed seasons, can become the very instruments through which redemption is carried.

Sip & Sit:

*Hold your cup. Feel its weight. Reflect on something in your life that once felt cut down.

*Whisper, "Lord, even in this, let there be something marvelous."

