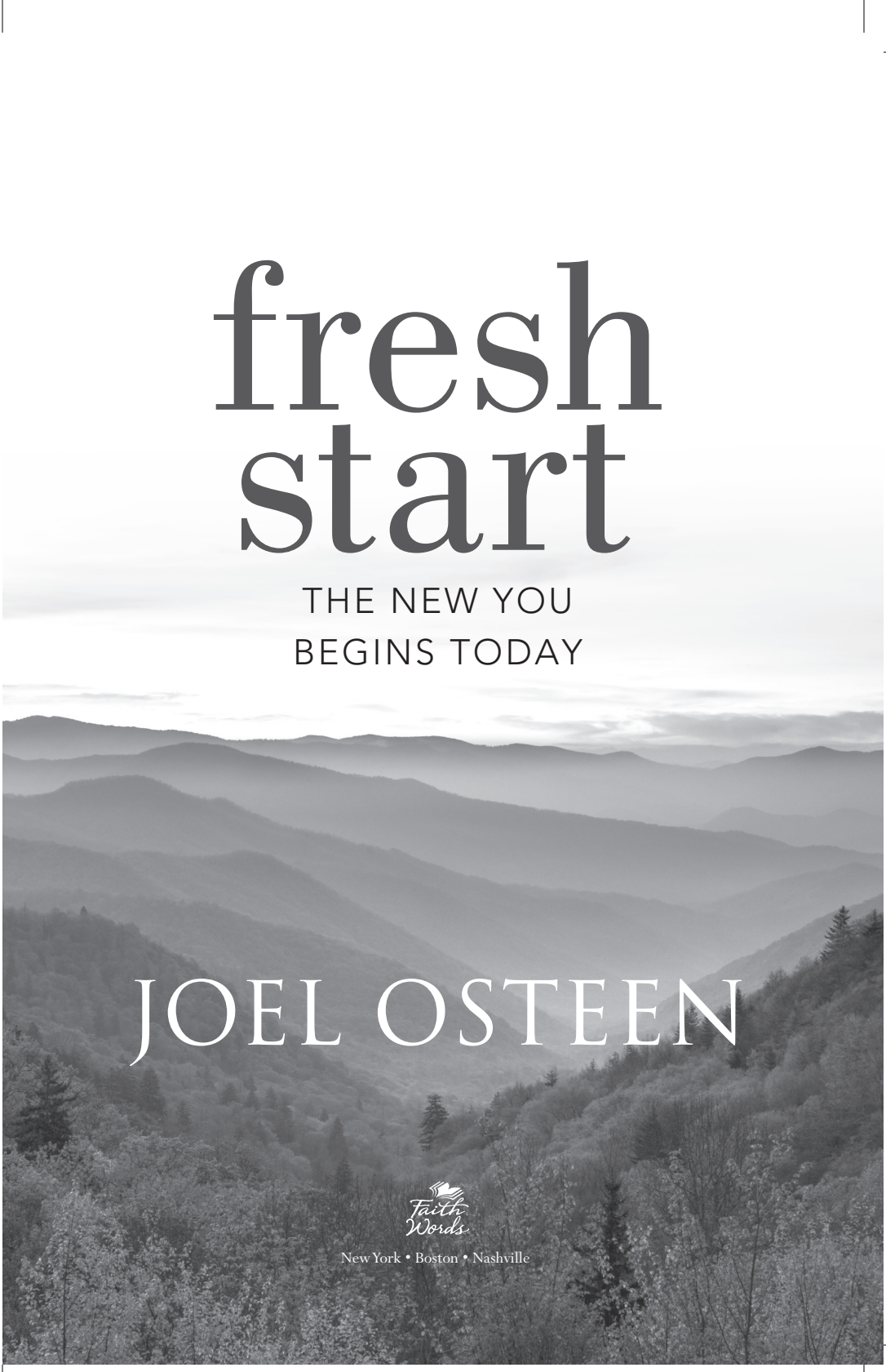
fresh start

THE NEW YOU BEGINS TODAY



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Introduction

The best decision of your life was to live your life with God at the center. That was the essential *first step* to living at your full potential. Now the key to experiencing an extraordinary life every day is to *grow* in your relationship with God. Scripture talks about how life with God is like a tree and its branches. When a branch is connected to the tree, it receives nourishment and life. It's able to produce fruit. In the same way, we have to stay connected to God so we can receive His strength and be empowered to accomplish all that He has for us.

In any relationship, growth happens over time. God doesn't expect you to be perfect. He doesn't expect you to know everything. He just wants you to keep moving forward with Him one step at a time. He wants to show you His goodness and be a part of your everyday life. It may feel a little strange at first, but just like any new relationship, the more time you spend with Him, the more comfortable it becomes. That's why I wrote this book—to help you connect with God and learn about His ways!

Today, know that God is bigger than your past, your disappointments, and your problems. You may have made a lot of mistakes, but God can turn those things around. People may have hurt you, but if you'll trust God, He'll restore you. Just stay focused on the new life you have with Him. Think of it like a change in seasons. When winter turns to spring, the old is gone

and the new begins. The past may have been cold and dreary. Maybe your dreams have been dormant and covered. But now it's Springtime! Spring symbolizes a fresh start. It's a time for new growth and multiplication!

You may not see all the changes you want right away, but remember, you don't see the fullness of spring instantly either. It takes time for the leaves to grow back and the blossoms unfold. It doesn't happen all at once, and neither do things with God. Just trust that He is at work bringing about good in every area of your life.

As you read these pages, be open to what God will reveal to your heart. In Part One, I provide eight keys to staying connected with Him and living your life in the fullness of His blessings and favor. In Part Two, I'll help you confront what is often the greatest obstacle to staying connected with God—allowing your past to be a barrier between you and the pathway of new beginnings with Him. Then in Part Three, I am excited to provide you with a treasury of insight into the foundation and greatest source of inspiration to your relationship with God—living by the power of God's Word and His promises for your every need.

No matter what is going on in your day-to-day life, keep making time for Him so that your relationship can grow strong and you can walk in the fullness of the blessing He has prepared for you!



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PART ONE

KEYS *to* STAYING CONNECTED *with* GOD

It doesn't matter what your present circumstances look like, today is a brand-new day, and God wants to do a new thing in your life and in your relationship with Him every day. He has placed seeds of greatness within you that are about to spring forth. He wants to give you a fresh, new vision for your life, one that's filled with His blessings and favor in amazing ways. But it's up to you to respond to Him. Here are eight keys to your staying connected with Him that promise to take your life to a whole new level and make all things new in your life!


BE *on the*
LOOKOUT
for GOD'S
GOODNESS

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.

James 1:17

KEY #1

Be on the Lookout for God's Goodness

Just like the sun radiates heat, God radiates goodness. It's not just what He does; it's who He is. God's very nature is good. It's important that we recognize God's goodness. The Scripture says *every* good gift comes from our Father in Heaven, both large and small.

Too many times, God is working in our lives, showing us favor, protecting us, sending us healing, but we don't recognize His goodness. Don't take things for granted. It wasn't a coincidence that you met your spouse and fell in love. God was directing your steps. It wasn't a lucky break that you got that job. It was God's hand of favor. The fact that your children are strong and healthy is not just good fortune. That's God being good to you. All through the day we should be saying, "Thank You, Lord,

for Your goodness. Thank You for my health. Thank You for my spouse. Thank You for the opportunities and good breaks You've given me."

You need to be on the lookout for God's goodness. Our attitude should be, *I can't wait to see what God is going to do today.* Anything good that happens, be quick to give God the credit. It may be something small. Maybe you suddenly have a good idea. "Lord, thank You for that idea. I know it came from You." You finish a project at work sooner and easier than you expected. "Lord, thank You for Your grace with that project." God is constantly working, showing us His goodness, but too many times we don't recognize it. We're waiting for the big, spectacular things.



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Whenever something good happens, I'm going to give God thanks. When I see favor, "Thank You, Lord." When I'm reminded of something I need to do, "Thank You, Lord." When somebody lets me in on the freeway, "Thank You, Lord." When the temperature drops below 100 in Houston, "Thank You, Lord." When I'm protected, "Thank You, Lord." When I see the breakthrough, "Thank You, Lord." I'm talking about living with an attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness. God blesses a thankful attitude.

When something good happens, you're seeing God. Make sure you thank Him for it. Make sure you give Him the credit. You may not think God is doing anything in your life, but God is constantly showing us His goodness. My question is: Are

you recognizing it? Look around this week. Be more aware. Psalm 34:8 says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good." If you're going to taste God's goodness, you have to realize that every good break, every time you were protected, every door that opened, and every advantage you've gotten has been God working in your life. Don't take it for granted.



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I heard about this man who was driving around a crowded parking lot trying to get a space, going around and around. He got so frustrated that he finally said, "God, if You'll give me a parking spot, I'll go to church every Sunday." Right then, immediately, a car backed out of a space, and as he pulled in, he said, "Never mind, God. I just found one." That's the way we are a lot of times. We forget that every good thing comes from God.

Every one of us can look back and remember times God protected us, spared us from an accident, gave us a promotion, caused us to be at the right place at the right time, or made a way when there seemed to be no way. Don't ever get tired of thanking God for His goodness. Remember your victories. Tell the people around you. Keep bragging on the goodness of God. The more you brag on God's goodness, the more of God's goodness you'll see.

Too many times today instead of remembering our victories

we're remembering our defeats, our failures, our disappointments. When we remember what God has done for us, it causes faith to rise in our hearts. We know if God did it for us before, He can certainly do it for us again.

I encourage you to do three things:

1. *Expect* God's goodness. Get up every day looking for God's favor.
2. *Recognize* God's goodness. There are no coincidences, no lucky breaks. It's the goodness of God.
3. Always *thank* God for His goodness. Whenever something good happens, large or small, be quick to thank God for it. Live with an attitude of gratitude and praise.

If you do these things, you'll experience more of God's goodness and favor, and your life will go to a whole new level.

Action Plan

But be doers of the word,
and not hearers only . . .
James 1:22

1. Get into the habit of thanking God throughout the day for every blessing, big and small.
2. Start a "Blessing Journal" and write down every significant blessing, breakthrough, or promotion God brings your way. When you're tempted to get discouraged, look through the journal and remind yourself of everything God has done in your life.
3. Psalm 9:11 tells us to declare God's good works among the people. Tell others about the good things God does in your life and give Him credit. It will encourage them and strengthen their faith and give glory to God.

KEEP GOD FIRST PLACE *in* YOUR LIFE

