HOW TO BREAK THE ILLUSION OF PRODUCTIVITY
AND BUILD A PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFE

# DISMANTLE HIGH-FUNCTIONING LAZINESS



JONATHAN DECUIR

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JONATHAN DECUIR
WITH QUANESHA MOORE

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STOP DOING **EVERYTHING** *EXCEPT* FOR WHAT **GOD TOLD** YOU TO DO.

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## INTRODUCTION

# SLOW DOWN

Usain Bolt, the fastest man in the world, once said, "I trained four years to run nine seconds." Think about that—four years of disciplined preparation for just nine seconds of performance. He understood that speed alone means nothing without direction.

But that's not how most of us live. We move fast, chase achievements, and fill our time with activities, but for what? Imagine a Ferrari racing down the highway, its engine roaring, and its speed exhilarating but the driver never checked the tires. It feels powerful, unstoppable—until, out of nowhere, a tire blows. Suddenly, that speed is the very thing that causes its wreck.

That's the illusion of success. You can be moving fast, impressing people, stacking up accomplishments—but if it's not aligned with your true purpose, it's just high-speed distraction. You look successful. You feel productive, but deep down, you know you're not where you're supposed to be.

So I have to ask you, how long are you going to continue life at this pace? Going day to day, week to week, doing everything except what you've been called to do? You may be reading this clear about your God-inspired ideas and dreams you've put on hold. Or maybe you think it's not God inspired, but you have a deep sense that your effort is misaligned. Maybe you're doing just enough to get by at work or in your business, putting up a front like you have it all together and you're happy, except you're not. You allow people to be impressed by your mediocrity and even settle for it yourself, calling it your best. If this is you, you may be experiencing what I call High-Functioning Laziness.

High-Functioning Laziness can be defined as the state of being consistently busy, productive, or successful in a way that appears impressive but ultimately serves as a distraction from one's true calling, purpose, or meaningful work. It is the illusion of effectiveness where effort is expended on everything except what truly matters. High-functioning Laziness is when you position yourself in a way that no one can call you lazy—because of how much you do and how well you do it. You leverage your talents, your service to God and others, and your great ideas to shield yourself from accountability. You wear the appearance of action and success like armor, keeping others at a distance. It's not just

you, if others were honest, we'd all realize how we're co-conspirators of mediocrity, at times.

This happens when I don't call you out on your settling, your inaction, and your lack of discipline and you don't call me out on mine. High-functioning laziness isn't just avoidance—it's a mask that keeps you from truly being accountable and putting everything at stake.

But here's the truth: God knows the vision and purpose He placed inside of you. There's no hiding from it. Whether you believe in Him or not, you were created for something bigger than yourself. You have to discover what that is and commit fully to seeing it realized. To be clear, this isn't about dismissing your efforts or actual success. It's about asking a deeper question: *Are you truly fulfilling your calling—or just staying busy enough to avoid it?*

This book is an invitation to slow down, to stop running on autopilot, and take an honest look within. It's an invitation to dismantle, meaning "to take apart; to destroy the integrity or functioning of; to strip."[1] But its deeper meaning reveals something even more powerful: it means "to destroy the defensive capability of fortification."[2] In other words, dismantling requires us to break down the walls

1. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dismantle
2. https://www.etymonline.com/word/dismantle

we've built—walls of fear, comfort, and distraction that have kept us stuck in high-functioning mediocrity. We've been held captive by these strongholds for long enough. It's time to strip away the illusions and confront what's been keeping us from moving forward. To support you in this process, each chapter includes reflection questions and journal prompts to help you pause, process, and realign.

This book is also a call to discipline—the kind of discipline that demands obedience, surrender, and trust. Obedience to God could be defined as doing what He said, at the speed He said it, even when it doesn't fit into our plans. This kind of discipline is a commitment to faith over convenience, purpose over preference.

Whether you subscribe to faith or not, discipline is non-negotiable. It's the ability to take control of your thoughts, words, and actions, rather than surrendering to distractions, emotions, or external circumstances. It's resisting the pull of comfort, choosing focus over noise, and embracing the discomfort of the unknown. True discipline is showing up—even when it's hard, when it requires more of you than you expected. Because commitment to a vision isn't about what's easy; it's about what's necessary. To help you cultivate this discipline in real, practical ways, each chapter will include actionable steps

and exercises designed to stretch you and move you toward true alignment.

Lastly, this book presents a challenge to be diligent. While discipline is about showing up, surrendering, and staying committed, diligence is about how you show up—consistently, thoroughly, and with intention. The Bible mentions diligence over 60 times, often in the book of Proverbs, linking it to fruitfulness, excellence, and reward. Even if you're not religious, the principle remains true: what you give consistent, focused effort to will grow.

Diligence produces the authentic success that high-functioning laziness only imitates. It's the difference between real impact and empty busyness, between building something meaningful and just looking productive. High-functioning laziness hides behind the appearance of effort; diligence ensures that effort actually leads to the right direction.

Like Usain, diligence is about training for four years just to run nine seconds—knowing that true success isn't in the performance, but in the preparation. It's not about performing for validation, but about doing the real work that leads to real impact.

Here's the thing about invitations, calls, and challenges—they can be accepted or declined. You can choose to keep up the illusion, and stay stuck in the cycle of busyness that looks like success or you

can dismantle the habits, excuses, and distractions that have kept you from fully stepping into your purpose. The choice is yours.

If you're ready, let's begin.

## CHAPTER 1

# EVERYONE HAS IDOLS

What if I told you that idolatry isn't just an ancient practice of bowing to golden statues or false gods? That, in fact, you have idols, right now, whether you realize it or not?

You don't have to carve an image or kneel in worship for something to have power over you. Worship, at its core, means "worth-shape". Whatever we hold as worthy is shaping us. What you give your time, money, and emotional energy to is molding you into a specific kind of person. Even if you have no spiritual background, you are actively being shaped by what you value most. The real question is: *Are the things shaping you actually leading you to the life you're meant to live?*

We all have idols. They may not be golden or carved statues, but they are just as powerful. Most common is the need to look good, be comfortable, be right,

and be in control. These things keep us feeling safe and in charge, but they also keep us stuck.

I was first introduced to this concept at a transformational workshop hosted by Gap Community, and since then, I've seen these four idols constantly show up and tempt me. They whisper the same lies: *Stay where it's familiar. Don't risk looking foolish. Make sure you're in control. Don't let anyone challenge you.* They promise security, but in reality, they keep us trapped in patterns that sabotage our growth.

Bestselling author Tim Keller once said, "An idol is anything more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, or identity." To make it plain, an idol is anything that, if taken away, would leave you feeling lost, unworthy, or without purpose.

Think about it. Have you ever stayed in a job, relationship, or situation longer than you should have simply because leaving would make you look like a failure? Or have you ever avoided taking a bold step because the unknown felt too uncomfortable? Maybe you've argued to prove a point, not because you were right, but because admitting you were wrong felt like losing. Or perhaps you've refused to let go of control because you were terrified of what would happen if you weren't in charge. These aren't just habits. They're the idols you worship unknowingly, but faithfully.

Let me make it real. Imagine two people with the same dream: starting a business, writing a book, or stepping into a calling. One takes the leap despite uncertainty; the other stays in research mode, waiting for the perfect moment that never comes. What's the difference? One was willing to dismantle their idols, the other wasn't.

Only you truly know what you spend your time bowing to and obeying its command. Maybe it's comfort that keeps you playing small, fear of failure that has you over-preparing but never starting, or the need to be right that stops you from truly listening. Here's the good news: whatever it is, you don't have to keep surrendering to it.

In this chapter, we're going to confront these four powerful idols: looking good, being comfortable, being right, and being in control. We'll uncover how they keep you small, distracted, and stuck in high-functioning laziness. And more importantly, we'll talk about how to break free. Because the life you're meant to live, the purpose you were created for, requires that you stop worshiping what's keeping you bound.

So let's get into it.

## THE IDOL OF LOOKING GOOD

I once heard someone say, "You can't heal what you hide." Yet, in a world obsessed with appearances, we do just that—polishing the outside while neglecting the mess within.

You probably know what this feels like. Maybe you've built a life that looks successful on the outside—your social media is polished, your career is thriving, and you always say you're *"doing great!"* But behind the scenes, you're exhausted from holding it all together.

The idol of *looking good* isn't just about vanity, it's about control. It's the illusion that if you maintain a flawless image, you can protect yourself from judgment, rejection, or the discomfort of vulnerability.

Take a moment and think about it: How much of your energy goes into making sure you appear competent, put together, or unbothered?

Maybe you avoid asking for help because that would mean admitting you don't have it all figured out. Maybe you hold back from speaking up in meetings or conversations because you don't want to risk looking foolish. Maybe you're so used to performing that you don't even know what it's like to just be.

Looking good builds walls instead of bridges. If you never show weakness, people will stop offering help.

If you always act like you're fine, no one will think to check in. Then you wonder why you feel alone.

As Brené Brown puts it, "Staying vulnerable is a risk you have to take if you want to experience connection." But vulnerability requires you to drop the act—to let go of looking good and start living *honestly*.

Here's the hard truth: The world rewards image, but real fulfillment comes from authenticity. Looking good might get you admiration, but it won't make you whole. It might protect you from scrutiny, but it will also keep you from growth. It might make you feel in control, but inside, you'll feel more fragile than ever.

The façade is exhausting.

If you've ever felt like you're putting on a performance, just know—you're not alone. The question is: *Are you ready to stop worshiping the image and start living in the truth?*

Because real success, the kind that actually satisfies, doesn't come from looking the part, it comes from doing the work.

## THE IDOL OF BEING COMFORTABLE

The only time you were ever truly comfortable was in your mother's womb—and the next time will likely be in the grave. Comfort is not the goal. It never

was. But if you're honest, you crave it. You chase it. You make decisions, sometimes big, life-altering decisions, just to avoid discomfort. And it's not your fault. Your brain is wired to seek comfort.

Comfort is a fundamental human need, tied to survival, security, and well-being. When you feel safe, when things are predictable, when there's no immediate threat, your brain rewards you with a hit of dopamine, the feel-good chemical that reinforces behaviors. Comfort soothes stress, reduces anxiety, and offers a temporary sense of peace. That's why it's so easy to stay in the familiar, even when it's not serving you.

But here's the problem, dopamine isn't just released when you achieve something meaningful, it's also released when you take the easy way out. That's why you feel good when you binge-watch a show instead of working on your goals. It's why scrolling on your phone is more appealing than doing the hard, unglamorous work. It's why choosing the easy path gives you instant gratification, but choosing the right path gives you long-term transformation. And that's the *tension*.

You're constantly torn between the pull of comfort and the call of something greater, because comfort will tempt you to settle. You won't just settle for less than your potential but also less than your purpose.

Think about Kobe Bryant, my all-time favorite athlete. He was already one of the most talented players to ever step on the court, but talent wasn't enough for him because he understood that greatness requires discomfort. While other NBA players slept, he was in the gym at 3 AM, drilling the same moves over and over. After winning championships, when most players would celebrate and relax, Kobe would ask, *"How can I get better?"* He never let comfort lull him into complacency.

That's the danger of comfort. It doesn't just keep you where you are, it stops you from becoming who you could be. Maybe you've already felt it. That moment when you know you should push harder, take the leap, or have the difficult conversation—but you don't. Not because you can't, but because you don't want to deal with the discomfort that comes with it.

And it's not just failure that keeps you stuck, it's success too. Comfort will tell you, *"You've done enough. You've made it far enough. Why push for more?"* Comfort makes you choose "good enough" over "great." It convinces you that "almost" is close enough, but almost is the enemy of all in.

Here's what makes it worse, the longer you worship comfort, the harder it is to break free. Every time you choose comfort over challenge, you train yourself

to avoid discomfort even more**.** It's a cycle, one that only you can break.

So ask yourself: *Where has comfort kept you small? Where have you traded growth for familiarity?*

Because the truth is, comfort isn't security, it's a slow, quiet suffocation and if you're not careful, it'll rob you of everything you were made for.

## THE IDOL OF BEING RIGHT

We all want to be right. There's something deeply satisfying about having the right answer, knowing the right thing to do, and feeling certain about our choices. In many ways, this desire is connected to our need for validation, confidence, and security. If we're right, we feel competent. We feel in control. We feel safe.

But here's the problem: When you worship being right, you stop growing. You stop listening. You stop being open to new possibilities, new perspectives, and new paths that could actually be better than the one you're stubbornly clinging to.

Just look at Blockbuster. At its peak, Blockbuster dominated the home entertainment industry. They had thousands of stores, millions of customers, and a business model that seemed unshakable. Then Netflix came along with a new way to rent

movies—first by mail, then through streaming. Blockbuster had multiple chances to adapt. They even had the opportunity to buy Netflix for $50 million in 2000. But they refused. They *knew* how the industry worked. They *knew* what customers wanted. They were so sure they were right that they ignored the changing landscape. And now? Netflix is a billion-dollar empire, while Blockbuster is a relic of the past.

That's exactly what the idol of being right does in our own lives. It keeps us locked into patterns and mindsets that no longer serve us. It makes us so focused on proving we're right that we fail to see better options.

High-functioning laziness isn't about doing nothing, it's about doing *just enough* to maintain the illusion of progress while avoiding real change. When you idolize being right, you become lazy in your thinking. You assume your current way is the best way, so you stop questioning, stop learning, and stop adapting. You tell yourself you're making the best choices when really, you're just reinforcing what's comfortable.

Think about it. How often have you clung to a decision simply because you didn't want to admit you were wrong? How many opportunities have passed

you by because you refused to consider a different approach?

This is why being right undermines your vision. Growth requires discomfort. Success requires adaptability. The vision you have for your life, the impact you want to make, demands that you release certainty and embrace curiosity.

Psychology Today wrote an article called *Why Is It So Important to Be Right?* The author explains that our brains release dopamine when we win an argument or prove our point. That rush reinforces our belief that being right is not just preferable, but necessary. But here's the hard truth: being right feels good, but it won't get you where you're supposed to go.

The most successful people aren't those who cling to being right—they're the ones willing to be wrong. Willing to learn. Willing to pivot. Claude Bernard said, *"It is what we know already that often prevents us from learning."*

## THE IDOL OF BEING IN CONTROL

Control feels safe. It feels secure. It gives you the illusion that you have a handle on life, that nothing can catch you off guard. But here's the truth, control is a myth. The more you grip it, the more it slips through your fingers.

We idolize control because it promises stability in a world full of uncertainty. Whether it's financial security, career success, or even how people perceive us, we cling to control like a lifeline. And let's be real, there's a reason for that. Human beings crave predictability. When things feel uncertain, our brain releases stress hormones, triggering anxiety and fear. In contrast, when we feel in control, here comes that dopamine hit; a sense of relief, a false reassurance that we're safe.

But here's the problem with control: when you worship control, you resist change. You avoid risks. You micromanage every detail of your life, trying to force things to go exactly how you think they should. You reject anything that feels uncertain, even if it's the very thing that could lead you to your breakthrough.

What some people don't know about Steve Jobs is that he was fired from his own company—the company he built—because things didn't go the way he wanted. Imagine if he had let that moment of losing control define him. If he had clung to the illusion that he needed to force things to work the way he originally planned, he never would have created Pixar. He never would have returned to Apple and built it into what it is today. By releasing control, by embracing the uncertainty of the unknown, he found a greater vision than he ever imagined.

This idol of control doesn't just affect your success, it affects your faith. For those who believe in God, control is one of the hardest things to surrender. Because if you admit you're clinging to control, it might expose the real issue: a lack of trust. This could sound like *"Is God really who He says is, will He do what He said He would?"* If you don't believe in God, control reinforces your doubt—because letting go feels like stepping into chaos.

It's the same when it comes to trusting others, all of the *"are they who they say they are?", "will they follow through?", "can they be trusted?"*But here's the paradox: the more you try to control, the more you actually lose control. The tighter you hold, the more life slips away from you. Jesus put it this way: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it" (Matthew 16:25 CSB).

Let that sink in. The control you're fighting so hard for is actually keeping you from the life you're supposed to live. The vision you're holding back on, the risks you refuse to take, the opportunities you won't step into because you don't know how they'll turn out—those are the very things that could change everything for your good.

* * *

Breaking free from these idols starts with recognizing them for what they are—illusions. Looking good, being comfortable, being right, and being in control all promise security, validation, and certainty, but in reality, they keep us stuck. They disconnect us from the truth, stunt our growth, and pull us away from our vision. And the only way to overcome an illusion is by grounding ourselves in reality. That requires honesty, sobriety, willingness to see ourselves clearly and admit where these idols have been running the show in our lives.

This is where repentance comes in. Repentance isn't just a spiritual concept—it's a shift in the mind and heart. The word literally means to turn and walk the other way. It's choosing to let go of what's been holding you back and stepping into something better. It's about rejecting the illusion and embracing truth.

But here's the challenge, we can't see ourselves clearly without a mirror. The greatest mirror we have is other people —the people who love us enough to tell us the truth, challenge our blind spots, and call us higher. The gift of trusted, honest feedback. Without those voices, we risk staying trapped in illusions that feel real.

And let's be real, these aren't the only idols we carry.

If we were to take a true inventory, we'd see all the subtle ways we bow to things that don't deserve our worship. Success. Validation. Productivity. Even good things can become ultimate things when we place them above what really matters. We become what we worship and if we keep shaping our lives around looking good, living in comfort, being right, or in control, we'll find ourselves small, stagnant, and stuck. The deeper truth is that we were never meant to worship these idols in the first place. The only way forward is to realign our worship—to God, to truth, or to something actually worthy of shaping us. Because when you reject and destroy these false idols, you don't lose yourself, you find yourself.

Paul put it this way in Romans 12:2: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Transformation starts with a renewed mind. When you stop chasing comfort and step into discomfort, you grow. When you stop idolizing being right and start embracing learning, you evolve. When you stop gripping for control and start trusting the process, you move forward. So, what illusions have you been holding on to? And are you willing to turn and walk the other way?

## YOUR INVITATION TO SLOW DOWN

Idols aren't always obvious. They disguise themselves as good things—security, confidence, wisdom—but when we build our lives around them, they keep us stuck. Take a moment to sit with these questions, be honest with yourself, and allow them to guide you toward realignment.

### Comfort

- Where have you mistaken comfort for fulfillment? Take a moment to reflect on the areas of your life where you've chosen ease over growth.
- What opportunities have you avoided because they felt uncomfortable?
- What vision or goal have you placed on hold because staying the same felt safer? What are you actually avoiding?

### Looking Good

- How much of your energy is spent managing other people's perceptions of you? In what ways do you try to appear successful, knowledgeable, or put together, even when it's not your reality?
- What would change if you focused less on looking good and more on truly growing?

## Being Right

- Are you more committed to being right or to becoming who you're actually meant to be?
- Take some time for personal inventory and write down what you notice you seek to be right about the most. Also, write down your observation about how you feel when you're not right. What do those insights reveal?

## Being in Control

- Where in your life are you gripping control so tightly that you're actually holding yourself back?
- What would happen if you surrendered—not to failure, not to chaos, but to the process, to the unknown, to the possibility of something greater than you imagined?

## YOUR CALL TO DISCIPLINE

Breaking free from these idols isn't just about recognizing them—it's about actively dismantling them. These practices will help you shift your mindset, realign your worship, and cultivate a life built on truth rather than illusion:

### 1. Seek Honest Feedback

We often see ourselves most clearly through the reflection of others. Ask for honest feedback from three different people: a family member, a close friend, and someone who knows you in a different context, such as a coworker or someone from your church community.

Use this prompt:

*"What's one area of my life where you see me holding onto control, seeking comfort, trying to look good, or insisting on being right—even when it's holding me back?"*

Write down what they share without defending or explaining yourself. Sit with the feedback and reflect on what it reveals.

## 2. Name & Burn Your Idols

Physically writing down the idols you've been worshiping and then burning (or tearing up) the paper is a symbolic way to break their hold over you. Make a list of the things you've been prioritizing over growth, truth, and surrender. Then, in a safe space, destroy the list. As you do, pray or reflect on what it means to release these attachments and realign yourself with what truly matters.

## 3. Fast from Your Idol

For the next week, choose one of your idols and intentionally disrupt it.

- If comfort is your idol, challenge yourself to do something uncomfortable daily.
- If looking good is your idol, practice vulnerability by sharing an imperfection or failure.
- If being right is your idol, spend a conversation only listening—without correcting, debating, or proving your point.
- If control is your idol, surrender a decision to someone else and go with their choice.

Notice how it feels and what it reveals about your attachment.

### 4. Practice Repentance & Realignment

Repentance isn't just about feeling bad—it's about shifting your mind and turning toward a new path. Every morning, spend five minutes asking: *Where am I clinging to an illusion today? What would it look like to live in truth instead?* Then, commit to one action that realigns your worship—whether through prayer, a mindset shift, or an intentional step toward surrender.

## CHAPTER 2

# WATCH YO' MOUTH

We often underestimate the power of our words—spoken, thought, or written. Scripture notes, in the beginning, God said "let there be" and there was. Whether you believe in God or not, one thing is true: words shape reality. They set the tone for our experiences, influence how we see ourselves, and determine the direction of our lives. The phrase "Watch Yo Mouth" is more than just a reminder to be mindful of your words; it's an invitation to recognize that what comes out of your mouth is shaping your future.

Your words are not just empty sounds; they carry weight. If you aren't careful, your mouth can become the architect of your own limitations, building barriers to the very things you're meant to step into. High-functioning laziness doesn't just show up in our actions, it begins in our speech. What

we consistently say reveals what we truly believe, and what we truly believe influences how we live.

## MANAGE YOUR INNER VOICE

Perhaps the most dangerous words aren't the ones we say out loud but the ones we rehearse in our minds. You have an internal voice that is constantly speaking—commenting, criticizing, doubting, and sometimes sabotaging. Author and speaker Mel Robbins calls this voice the "Inner Critic." Studies show that giving this voice a name can help create some distance from it. If left unchecked, this voice will ruin your life. Harvard researchers suggest that when you identify and address your inner critic as something separate from yourself, you take back power over it. Instead of letting it dictate your actions, you can challenge it.

According to Mel Robbins, "If you don't interrupt the habit of self-doubt, it will become the soundtrack of your life." Think about how often you let this voice talk you out of purpose, opportunities, and even God's promises. It whispers, "You're not ready," "You'll fail," or "They're better than you." These aren't just harmless thoughts; they're agreements you make with limitations—the more you say them, the more you believe them. But what if we stopped giving it so much authority?

## DON'T BE LIKE THE ISRAELITES

Imagine standing on the edge of everything you've ever wanted. It's right there—within reach. And then, because of the words you speak, you disqualify yourself from stepping into it. That's exactly what happened to the Israelites. After being freed from slavery and led toward the Promised Land, their own mouths kept them wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

They complained about what they didn't have. They doubted whether they could take hold of what was promised. They spoke fear instead of faith. And eventually, those words became their reality. An entire generation missed out on their destiny—not because they weren't capable, but because their mouths wrote a different story.

They saw giants in the land, and said to themselves "we're like grasshoppers compared to them." One of the things that fuels some of the most damaging internal conversations is comparison. You might not say it out loud, but when you think, "I'm not like them" or "I can't do what they do," you diminish your own value. The chasm between where you are and where you think you should be grows, making it easy to justify inaction.

Psychologists suggest that comparison is a natural cognitive process—we evaluate ourselves in relation

to others to understand our place in the world. However, when left unchecked, comparison becomes a breeding ground for dissatisfaction, self-doubt, and limiting beliefs.

Social media has only amplified this tendency, giving us a constant highlight reel of other people's successes, beauty, and achievements. Without even realizing it, we begin measuring our worth by someone else's journey, whispering silent agreements like, "I'll never be as successful as them," or "I don't measure up." These agreements, though unspoken, start shaping our actions—or worse, our inaction.

The truth is you weren't created to be anyone else and every time you compare, you silently agree that who you are isn't enough. That agreement will shape your confidence, your decisions, and ultimately, your life. Theodore Roosevelt put it this way, "Comparison is the thief of joy." The moment you recognize that your worth isn't based on external factors, you will begin to break free from the cycle of comparison and experience the fullness of joy and life you were meant for.

## CONSIDER NEUTRALITY AND THE POWER OF AGREEMENT

You might think that only negative words are harmful, but there's no such thing as neutral words. Every word you speak is either giving life or draining it. Even phrases like "I don't care," "Whatever happens, happens," or "It is what it is" create an atmosphere of apathy. They may seem harmless, but they strip you of agency.

Every word we speak is an agreement—either with truth or with a lie. Too often, we unknowingly come into agreement with words that limit us, words that keep us stuck in cycles of fear, insecurity, and doubt. "I'm not good enough." "This will never change." "I'll always struggle." These phrases might seem insignificant in the moment, but they shape the way we see ourselves and the world around us. What if, instead of accepting these lies as truth, we intentionally choose what we agree with? Just like we can come into agreement with the wrong things, we also have the power to break those agreements and replace them with words that align with life, growth, and purpose. This isn't just about positive affirmations—it's about taking control of the narrative we live by. It's about choosing to align our words with what is true, powerful, and life-giving.

Here's a starter list of things you need to come

out of agreement with—and the truth you need to come into agreement with instead:

| Come Out of Agreement With | Come Into Agreement With |
|---|---|
| "I'm not enough." | "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, created to do great things." |
| "This is too hard." | "I am equipped to handle challenges and grow through them." |
| "I'll always struggle." | "I am capable of breakthrough and abundance." |
| "I'm not as good as them." | "I am uniquely designed with my own gifts and purpose." |
| "I have nothing valuable to offer." | "My voice, story, and presence matter." |
| "I'll never change." | "I am always growing and becoming who I am meant to be." |
| "Things never work out for me." | "All things are working together for my good." |

| Come Out of Agreement With | Come Into Agreement With |
|---|---|
| "I don't deserve good things." | "I am worthy of love, joy, and success." |

Take a look at this longer list of categories and phrases of negative speech.

### Negative Words About Identity

- "I'm not good enough."
- "I'll never be successful."
- "I'm a failure."
- "I'm unworthy of love."
- "I'm not as talented/smart/capable as others."
- "This is just who I am; I can't change."
- "I always mess everything up."
- "I hate myself."

### Inner Vows of Self-Limitation

- "I'll never let anyone hurt me again."
- "I have to handle everything on my own."
- "I'll always struggle."
- "I can't trust anyone."
- "I have to be perfect."
- "I can't ask for help."
- "I'll never be enough."
- "I'm just not meant to be happy."

- Words of Fear and Anxiety
- “I’m scared of the future.”
- “Nothing good ever lasts for me.”
- “I’m doomed to fail.”
- “I can’t handle this.”
- “I’m too afraid to take risks.”
- “I’m always anxious, and it will never change.”

## Words of Death and Hopelessness

- “This will never get better.”
- “My dreams are dead.”
- “It’s too late for me.”
- “I’m too old/young for that.”
- “There’s no point in trying anymore.”
- “Things will always be this way.”
- Words of Bitterness and Resentment
- “I’ll never forgive them.”
- “They don’t deserve my kindness.”
- “I’ll make sure they regret what they did to me.”
- “I don’t have to love them after what they did.”
- “I’ll never trust that person again.”

### Words That Reject God's Promises

- "God has forgotten me."
- "God doesn't care about my situation."
- "I don't think God will come through for me."
- "I'm not worthy of God's love."
- "God can't use me because of my past."
- "I don't have what it takes to fulfill God's calling."
- "I'll always be stuck in this sin."

### Words of Comparison and Jealousy

- "I'll never be as good as them."
- "Why does God bless others but not me?"
- "I wish I had their life."
- "They don't deserve their success."
- "It's unfair that they have what I don't."

### Words of Laziness and Procrastination

- "I'll do it later."
- "I don't have the energy for this."
- "I'm just not disciplined."
- "It's too hard, so I won't even try."
- "I'm not capable of sticking to anything."
- "I'll never finish what I start."

## Words of Generational Curses

- "Everyone in my family is like this."
- "This is just how we are—it runs in the family."
- "I'll always be broke like my parents were."
- "I can't escape the family curse."
- "We've always had bad luck, and it won't change for me."

Which ones resonate with you the most and What can you come into agreement with instead? Write them down now in your journal and repeat those positive words until they become a part of you.

* * *

In conclusion, an old Cherokee chief once told his grandson a story about two wolves. He explained that inside every person, there are two wolves constantly battling. One wolf represents fear, doubt, negativity, and self-sabotage, while the other stands for faith, courage, truth, and perseverance. The grandson thought for a moment and asked, "Which wolf wins?" The grandfather replied, "The one you feed."

Your words are the food that fuels one of these wolves. Every time you speak doubt, fear, or limitation, you strengthen the wolf that works against you. But when you speak life, confidence, and pos-

sibility, you empower the wolf that will lead you to your purpose.

Proverbs 18:21 says, *"The tongue has the power of life and death."* This isn't just a poetic statement, it's reality. Your words are either pushing you toward growth or keeping you stagnant. Choose growth.

## YOUR INVITATION TO SLOW DOWN

Take some time to reflect and journal on the following questions:

1. What are some common phrases you say about yourself or your circumstances? Are they life-giving or limiting?
2. If your words were a mirror, what would they reveal about your beliefs?
3. Are there phrases you've inherited—things spoken over you as a child or by others—that you need to release?
4. What is one phrase or declaration you can begin to speak daily to shift your mindset and actions?

## YOUR CALL TO DISCIPLINE

Here are some practical things you can do to break free from the patterns of self-sabotaging speech:

### 1. Name your inner critic

Give that negative voice a name so you can recognize when it's speaking. Every time it comes up this week, call it by name and tell it to be quiet.

### 2. Challenge your words

When you catch yourself speaking negatively, **pause** and ask: "Is this really true?" Even more practically, you can implement something like a "negativity jar"—you have to put money in the jar every time you say something negative.

### 3. Speak life—intentionally

Instead of saying "I can't," say "I'm learning." Instead of "This is too hard," say "This is challenging, but I'm capable." Shift your language, and you'll shift your mindset.

### 4. Surround yourself with truth

The people you talk to, the media you consume, and the environments you spend time in influence your speech. **Intentionally choose and replace one thing you consume this week**. Maybe it's a podcast on the way to work, different music, or taking a break from social media altogether. Secondly, **ask someone close to you for feedback**, specifically, "What's something you consistently hear me say about myself that I should be aware of?"

## CHAPTER 3

# CHANGE OF PLANS

Have you ever met someone who is always busy but never seems to make real progress? Maybe that's even you. You're constantly moving, filling your days with tasks, checking things off your to-do list, but deep down, you know you're not actually getting anywhere. This is the trap of high-functioning laziness—where effort and motion replace intentionality and true progress. We often think of laziness as doing nothing at all, but one of the sneakiest forms of laziness is staying busy with the wrong things.

It happens in two ways: some people operate without a plan, doing whatever feels urgent in the moment, mistaking busyness for effectiveness. Others create a plan and refuse to deviate from it, even when it's clear that what they're doing isn't working. In both cases, the real issue isn't the effort, it's the unwillingness to surrender.

We hold onto our own agendas like they're law, convinced that if we just try harder, push more, and stay in control, everything will work out. But have you ever stopped to ask: *Is this actually what's needed? Am I willing to adjust?*

True success isn't about doing the most—it's about doing what's right for the season you're in. And sometimes, that requires laying down your plan for the one that will actually get you where you're supposed to be. This is where surrender comes in. Not as a sign of failure, but as an art—a powerful discipline that allows you to lay down your agenda for what's actually needed. Surrender doesn't mean giving up; it means adjusting, shifting, and making space for the right plan to unfold. And that's not always easy, especially when you're committed to a path that feels safe, familiar, or convenient but the end is rewarding.

There's an old story about a famous tightrope walker who would perform daring feats high above the ground. One day, he asked the crowd, "Do you believe I can walk across this tightrope with a wheelbarrow?" The crowd cheered, "Yes!" Then he asked, "Do you believe I can do it with someone inside the wheelbarrow?" Again, they shouted, "Yes!" Then he looked at a man in the front row and said, "Great. Hop in." The man quickly shook his head in disagreement.

That's exactly how we approach surrender. We say we trust the process, but when it's time to adjust, let go, or pivot, fear kicks in. But if you truly want to see your vision through, you have to ask yourself: *Am I willing to hop in the wheelbarrow?* It's one thing to believe in theory—it's another to surrender control and trust completely.

Surrendering isn't about abandoning responsibility; it's about shifting from striving to flowing. It's about being flexible enough to recognize when your plan needs to change and brave enough to release the plan that no longer serves you.

## CHANGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANGE

Our brains are wired for familiarity—it's why we cling to routines, habits, and expectations, even when they no longer serve us. Change feels uncomfortable because it disrupts our sense of stability. But what if discomfort wasn't a signal to retreat, but an invitation to lean in? What if resistance was actually proof that you're on the edge of growth?

Psychologists call this status quo bias—our tendency to prefer what's familiar, even when change could lead to something better. We crave predictability because it feels safe. The unknown? That feels risky. But here's the irony: real security isn't

found in clinging to control—it's found in learning to adapt. As leadership expert John C. Maxwell puts it, "Change is inevitable. Growth is optional."

Neuroscience shows that uncertainty triggers the release of cortisol, the stress hormone, making change feel threatening—even when it's positive. But research also reveals that reframing how we see change—viewing it as a challenge rather than a threat—rewires our response. When you embrace change instead of resisting it, frustration gives way to clarity. You start seeing obstacles as redirection, delays as preparation, and pivots as opportunities. More importantly, you stop wasting energy trying to force something that was never meant to work in the first place.

Surrender isn't about giving up—it's about adjusting with wisdom. Instead of seeing change as something happening to you, start seeing it as something happening for you. Every unexpected turn, every detour, every plan that falls apart is an invitation to realign with what's actually needed.

Think about a river—it doesn't resist obstacles; it flows around them, adapting and shifting without losing direction. The landscape changes, but the river keeps moving forward. That's the kind of surrender that leads to peace, rest, and sustainable

success—one that isn't riddled with overwhelm, performance anxiety, or burnout.

So, what's actually needed right now? Not what's convenient, not what feels safe, but what will truly move you forward. If you can release your agenda for the right one, you'll find yourself in alignment—making real progress with ease, rather than exhaustion.

Let's take a quick look at the difference between an actual plan and the appearance of a plan. High-functioning laziness disguises itself as productivity, but it lacks true intention and execution. It looks like a plan, but it ultimately leads to *stagnation*. Here's how:

### 1. Vague goals

A high-functioning lazy plan is full of big dreams but lacks clarity. It says things like *"I'll start working out"* instead of *"I will exercise three times a week for 30 minutes."*

### 2. Busywork instead of progress

It focuses on tasks that feel productive but don't actually move things forward. Example: Spending hours organizing your calendar but never taking action on the scheduled tasks.

### 3. Perfectionism as a stall tactic

It waits for the "perfect" time, environment, or feeling before starting. Example: "I'll start my business when I have everything figured out" instead of taking the first step now.

### 4. Lack of urgency

A plan marked by high-functioning laziness has no clear deadlines or accountability. It's a *"someday"* plan.

### 5. Avoidance of hard things

It prioritizes easy wins over real progress. It's spending hours designing the perfect logo instead of actually launching your business. It's reading books on discipline but never putting the principles into practice.

### 6. Lack of consistency

It starts strong but fizzles out quickly because there's no commitment to follow through.

A strong plan isn't just about having an idea, it's about creating a clear, actionable path forward. A good plan includes:

### 1. Clarity of purpose

It starts with a well-defined goal. A good plan is built around a meaningful, intentional outcome. What are you actually trying to accomplish?

### 2. Prioritization

It focuses on what truly matters, eliminating unnecessary distractions and busywork.

### 3. Actionable steps

A good plan doesn't just say "I want to do better," it outlines *how*—with clear, manageable steps.

### 4. Accountability

It includes a system for measuring progress and staying on track, whether through self-discipline, deadlines, or accountability partners.

### 5. Flexibility

A strong plan is adaptable. It allows for shifts without completely derailing progress.

### 6. Follow through

It doesn't just live in your notebook or vision board, it is actively worked on and executed.

At the end of the day, it's not just about having a plan, it's about having a plan that's aligned with purpose. Plans made out of fear, convenience, or resistance to change will always fall short, but plans made with wisdom, openness, and trust lead to lasting impact.

The good news? You don't have to figure it all out on your own. When you surrender your plans to God—your timelines, expectations, and need for control—He has a way of establishing what truly matters.

> *"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."*
> *—Proverbs 16:3*

So, change of plans? Good. That might be exactly what you needed all along. Consider it an invitation to something better. Trust that when you commit your steps to Him, He will guide them, sometimes in unexpected ways, but always for your good.

## YOUR INVITATION TO SLOW DOWN

- How do you typically respond to change? Do you resist, avoid, or embrace it? Why do you think that is?
- Take a moment to create a "let-go" list: Write down three things you've been holding onto that might need to change, whether it's a mindset, a habit, a plan, or an expectation. For each item, ask:
  - What's keeping me attached to this?
  - What would happen if I released control and let it shift naturally?
  - What's one action I can take to surrender this?
- If you fully trusted that change was happening *for* you, not *to* you, how would that change your mindset today?

## YOUR CALL TO DISCIPLINE

Here are some practical actions and activities that will serve as a call to discipline for surrendering and embracing change:

- **Practice change**
  Find an item in your house that represents change (e.g., a clock, a plant, a book, a photo). Move it to a different spot each day for a week. Each time you move it, reflect on how change, though sometimes inconvenient, creates new perspectives.

- **Document the detours**
  Every night for a week, write down one unexpected thing that happened that day, big or small. How did you respond? What did you learn? Over time, you'll start to see patterns in how you deal with change and where you can grow.

- **Ask for feedback**
  Identify a trusted friend, mentor, or colleague and ask them:

  » "Where do you see me resisting change in a way that's holding me back?"
  » "What's one area where I could be more flexible or open to new possibilities?"

» “Have you ever seen me adjust well to change? What was different in that situation?”

Reflect on their insights and how they challenge your perspective

## CHAPTER 4

# THE ANTIDOTE TO LAZINESS

Beyoncé is one of the most celebrated artists of our time, not just because of her talent, but because of her relentless work ethic. She doesn't just rely on natural ability; she outworks everyone. During preparation for *Coachella 2018*, she rehearsed for eight months, training for up to 15 hours a day to perfect every detail. She followed a strict diet, refined every move, and demanded excellence from herself and her team. The result? A historic performance that became a cultural phenomenon. Her discipline wasn't just about that moment, it's been the foundation of her entire career. She once said, *"I dream it, I work hard, I grind till I own it."*

High-functioning laziness is deceptive—it makes us feel busy but keeps us from real progress. We fill our schedules but neglect what truly matters.

We start projects but don't finish. We dream big but delay action.

Diligence is the antidote. It's the quiet, steady persistence that separates those who wish from those who achieve. It's a dare—to refuse complacency, to reject excuses, and to commit fully to the work God has called you to.

In scripture, often in the book of Proverbs, laziness is rarely mentioned without being contrasted with diligence. The two are always at odds—one leads to purpose and abundance, the other to stagnation and lack.

Here are a few ways diligence is described:

### 1. Diligence is skillful work

> *"Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings."*
> *—Proverbs 22:29*

Diligence is not about doing the bare minimum—it's about growth, learning, and refining your craft. It's about honoring God with excellence, not just effort.

### 2. Diligence is working with purpose

> *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."*
> *—Colossians 3:23*

It's easy to work hard when people are watching. But true diligence happens in the unseen moments—when no one is looking, when there's no applause.

### 3. Diligence is staying the course

> *"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."*
> *—Galatians 6:9*

Diligence isn't a sprint—it's a marathon. It's showing up even when the results aren't immediate.

## WHAT KEEPS US FROM BEING DILIGENT?

If diligence is the key to breaking free from high-functioning laziness, why do so many of us struggle with it? What holds us back from showing up consistently, pushing through resistance, and staying the course?

- **Fear of failure**

We hesitate to be diligent because we're afraid of messing up. We fear that our efforts won't be good enough, so we procrastinate or avoid the work altogether. But diligence isn't about perfection—it's about faithfulness. God never asks us to get everything right; He asks us to keep showing up. Progress is made by those who are willing to take the next step, even when they're uncertain.

- **Distractions**
  We live in a world designed to pull our attention in a thousand directions. Social media, endless to-do lists, and even good things can keep us from the best things. True diligence requires focus, the ability to say "no" to what's urgent but unimportant and "yes" to what truly matters.

- **Lack of focus**
  Without clear goals, diligence is impossible. It's like trying to row a boat without knowing which way to go. We spend time and energy moving, but we don't actually get anywhere. Clarity is the fuel of diligence—when we have a clear purpose, we're able to push past obstacles and stay the course.

- **Impatience**
  Diligence requires patience. It's about trusting God's timing and continuing the work, even

> when we don't see immediate results. In today's culture of instant gratification, we expect quick wins. But real success, especially in the things that matter, comes through perseverance.

Angela Duckworth, a researcher known for her work on *grit*, studied what makes people successful. She found that talent and intelligence weren't the biggest predictors of success, grit was. Grit is a combination of passion and perseverance, the ability to stick with something over the long haul.

One of her most famous studies took place at West Point Military Academy, where new cadets undergo a grueling initiation process called *Beast Barracks*. Many drop out, but Duckworth discovered that those who succeeded weren't necessarily the strongest or smartest. Instead, they were the ones who simply refused to quit. They had grit, the same kind of diligence Scripture calls us to cultivate.

Diligence isn't about talent, speed, or perfection. It's about commitment. It's about showing up, putting in the work, and trusting that, in time, faithfulness will bear fruit.

## WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF DILIGENCE?

Just like a farmer tends to a field, diligence requires planting, watering, and patiently waiting for the harvest. It's not always glamorous, and it rarely brings instant gratification, but over time, it yields fruit that laziness never will.

Think of a tree. It starts as a seed, buried in the soil where no one can see its progress. With consistent care—sunlight, water, protection from harsh conditions—it begins to sprout. At first, it's small and fragile. But over time, as roots grow deep and the trunk strengthens, it becomes unshakable. That's what diligence does in our lives. It turns unseen effort into undeniable results. Here are some fruit, or benefits, we experience from practicing diligence:

- **Fulfillment**
  There's a deep satisfaction in knowing you've given your best effort. When you commit to something and see it through, you experience a kind of fulfillment that shortcuts and quick fixes can never provide. Diligence allows you to stand back, look at your work, and say, *I built this. I grew this. I endured this.*

- **Real success**
  Success isn't just about external achievements, it's about mastery, discipline, and the ability to

persevere when things get tough. True success comes to those who are consistent when no one is watching, who choose discipline over comfort. Whether it's a thriving career, a strong marriage, or a deep relationship with God, lasting success is always built on diligence.

- **Influence and leadership**
  Proverbs 12:24 tells us that *"the hand of the diligent will rule."* Diligence positions you for leadership. It earns trust, respect, and authority because people recognize the value of consistency and hard work. Those who are diligent don't just advance in their own lives—they inspire and lead others.

- **Stability**
  Diligence creates a firm foundation. Just like a tree that withstands storms because of its deep roots, a life built on diligence can endure challenges without being easily shaken. The lazy person is always looking for a way out, but the diligent person is prepared, steady, and able to weather difficulties with resilience.

- **Favor and opportunity**
  Opportunities come to those who are prepared. Many times, what looks like an "overnight success" is actually the result of years of quiet diligence. God opens doors for those who are faithful with what they've been given. When you

steward your time, gifts, and responsibilities well, favor follows.

Diligence may not always be easy, but it always produces something worthwhile. It takes time, effort, and patience, but in the end, it leads to a harvest that laziness never will.

## HOW DO I MAKE DILIGENCE A LIFESTYLE?

> *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."*
> *—Will Durant*

Diligence isn't a personality trait you're born with—it's a practice you develop. It's not about working endlessly or burning yourself out; it's about showing up with consistency, focus, and perseverance. The people we admire for their success aren't just talented, they are diligent. They make small, intentional choices every day that add up over time.

James Clear, in *Atomic Habits*, describes the power of 1% change. It's the idea that tiny, daily improvements compound over time, leading to radical transformation. Think about it: if you get 1% better every day, that may seem insignificant at first, but after a year, that 1% improvement compounds to nearly 37 times better than where you started. On

the flip side, if you get 1% worse every day, you decline into stagnation.

For years, the British cycling team was mediocre at best—no Olympic golds or no Tour de France wins. Then, their coach, Sir Dave Brailsford, introduced marginal gains—small, 1% improvements in everything from bike seats to sleep habits. The results? The team won 5 Tour de France titles and dominated the Olympics. This is the essence of diligence—choosing small, intentional actions daily that, over time, yield results far beyond what you imagined.

So, how do you turn diligence into a lifestyle?

### 1. Start Small and be Specific

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to overhaul your entire life. Instead, pick one area and make a small, specific commitment.

- Want to strengthen your prayer life? Start with 5 minutes a day instead of aiming for an hour.
- Want to write a book? Commit to 100 words a day instead of waiting for the "perfect" writing session.
- Want to improve your health? Swap one unhealthy snack for a nutritious one instead of jumping into a restrictive diet.

Jesus taught this principle in Luke 16:10 BSB: "Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful

with much." Diligence starts with small acts of faithfulness.

### 2. Create a plan and track your progress

A goal without a plan is just a wish. Break your goal down into **manageable steps** and track your progress.

- Use a habit tracker, journal, or a simple checklist.
- Reward yourself for consistency (but not with things that sabotage your goal!).
- Don't let perfectionism stop you—done is better than perfect.

Proverbs 21:5 ESV says, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty." Success isn't about speed, it's about staying the course. This includes making sure you prioritize wisely. Not everything deserves your time. Use discernment to determine what is truly important. Saying "no" to distractions allows you to say "yes" to what matters.

### 3. Stay consistent, even when it's hard

Diligence requires showing up even when you don't feel like it. The best athletes, artists, and leaders don't rely on motivation alone—they rely on discipline. NBA legend Stephen Curry didn't become the greatest shooter overnight. He practiced 500 shots a day, refining his form and routine. Even on bad

days, he showed up. *"Success is not an accident. Success is actually a choice,"* said Curry. Consistency is hard, but it's what separates those who dream from those who achieve.

### 4. Find accountability and community

You weren't meant to do this alone. Having someone to check in with—whether a mentor, a friend, or a small group—keeps you going when motivation fades. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us:"Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up." Tell someone about your commitment to diligence. Let them encourage and challenge you.

# CONCLUSION

As we've discovered, laziness isn't always obvious. Sometimes, it disguises itself as busyness, distraction, or even well-meaning plans that never turn into action. But at its core, high-functioning laziness keeps us stuck—moving, but not progressing.

So how do you break free? Let's Review:

- **Turn Away from the Idols That Keep You Stagnant**
  Whether it's comfort, control, looking good, or being right, anything that shapes who you are and your actions more than it should becomes an idol. High-functioning laziness thrives on misplaced priorities, whispering that you have more time, that you need to feel "ready" before you begin, or that small steps don't matter. But the moment you surrender the excuses and allow your heart to be reordered, everything changes.

  Ezekiel 14:3 warns: *"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all?"* Idols don't just steal your

time; they infringe upon who you were destined to be**.** When you lay them down, you make room for the life you were created to live.

- **Master What You Say—Out Loud and Inwardly** Your words shape your reality. What you declare over your life, your work, and your future matters. But just as important as what you say aloud is what you whisper to yourself in the quiet moments. Do you speak life or defeat? Do you declare diligence or settle for passivity?

  Remember, *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.," Proverbs 18:21.* If you constantly say, *"I'm just not disciplined"* or *"I never follow through,"* you reinforce those beliefs. But when you shift your words and say, *"I am diligent. I am faithful. I finish what I start,"* your mindset begins to align with your actions.

- **Embrace Change Instead of Resisting It** Laziness clings to the familiar. It convinces you that doing what you've always done is safer than stepping into the unknown. But diligence requires openness to change—to new habits, new rhythms, new levels of responsibility.

  As leadership expert Robin Sharma puts it, *"Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end."* Change isn't com-

fortable. It requires you to break cycles, let go of old excuses, and commit to new ways of living. But in that discomfort is where transformation happens.

- **Choose Diligence as Your Alternative**
  Diligence is like the work of a stonecutter. With each strike of the hammer, the rock remains unchanged—until, on what seems like an ordinary blow, it finally splits. But it wasn't just that final hit that did it; it was the accumulation of every strike before it. In the same way, diligence isn't about one big moment of effort—it's about showing up daily, making small but intentional choices that build over time.

  As Benjamin Franklin once said, *"Energy and persistence conquer all things."* This isn't about perfection—it's about persistence. The battle against high-functioning laziness is won in the small, daily choices—what you pursue, what you say, what you believe, and how you respond to discomfort. Every decision to keep going, even when it's hard, moves you closer to the life you were created to live.

And here's the good news: You don't have to do this alone. You are already equipped with everything you need to walk in diligence. The question is—will

you? The time for hesitation is over. The time for diligence is now.

Are you up for the challenge?

## 21 DAY DILIGENCE CHALLENGE

# #21HARD

You've probably heard of 75 Hard, the intense mental and physical toughness challenge that pushes people to their limits. But here's the truth, while discipline and endurance matter, diligence isn't just about grinding harder, doing more, or pushing through exhaustion. It's about showing up with intention, working *wisely*, and staying consistent in the things that truly matter.

That's where #21Hard comes in. They say transformation takes 21 days. Not because change is instant, but because consistency rewires your mind, resets your patterns, and realigns your habits. This 21-day challenge isn't designed to break you—it's designed to build you. In fact, it's only as hard as you make it. The more you resist, procrastinate, or negotiate with yourself, the harder it will feel. But if you embrace the process, and lean in instead of pulling back, you'll realize that diligence isn't about willpower, it's about trust, alignment, and taking the next step, one day at a time. Over the next three

weeks, you'll commit to practicing diligence in a way that disrupts high-functioning laziness and cultivates lasting transformation.

For the next 21 days, you'll commit to:

✅ **Meditation & Reflection:** Get still. Listen. Be honest with yourself.

✅ **Personal Affirmations & Agreements:** Speak truth over yourself daily.

✅ **Intentional Risk-Taking:** Do something that stretches you every day.

✅ **Accountability & Community:** No more doing this alone—invite others in.

✅ **Radical Awareness:** See your habits for what they are, no more illusions.

Your job isn't to be perfect. Your job is to show up—daily, intentionally, and wholeheartedly.

Each day, you'll focus on three key areas:

1. **Mindset Shift:** A daily reflection to disrupt old thinking patterns and rewire your perspective.
2. **Diligence in Action:** A practical, tangible step to break past resistance and strengthen your commitment.
3. **Daily Check-In:** An honest assessment of how you showed up that day—no shame, just awareness and realignment.

You'll track your progress in a diligence journal and use a calendar or habit tracker to mark your consistency. The goal is to see patterns, build momentum, and recognize your growth.

Here's the plan:



## WEEK 1:
## AWARENESS & DISRUPTION

### **Day 1:** The Wake-Up Call

- **Mindset Shift:** *"You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."* *—James Clear, Atomic Habits*
- **Reflection Question:** What systems in your life are currently keeping you from your next level?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write out 3 areas where high-functioning laziness has kept you stuck.

### **Day 2:** Disrupting the Illusion

- **Mindset Shift:** High-functioning laziness looks productive but keeps you stuck
- **Reflection Question:** Where in your life are you busy but not actually progressing?
- **Diligence in Action:** Identify one "productive" habit that's actually avoidance. Replace it with an intentional action.

### **Day 3:** What's Your Why?

- **Mindset Shift:** Without vision, discipline feels like punishment.
- **Reflection Question:** What is the deeper reason you want to show up fully in your life?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write down your long-term vision and WHY it matters.

### **Day 4:** The Power of Small Wins

- **Mindset Shift:** Big change starts with small, consistent steps.
- **Reflection Question:** What small habit can you commit to today that will build momentum?
- **Diligence in Action:** Pick one small habit (making your bed, stretching) and commit to it daily.

### **Day 5:** Taking Ownership

- **Mindset Shift:** No more excuses. If you don't own it, you can't change it.
- **Reflection Question:** What's one area where you've been blaming circumstances instead of taking action?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write down 3 areas where you've made excuses. Decide on one step to change each.

### **Day 6:** Breaking the Comfort Addiction

- **Mindset Shift:** Comfort zones kill dreams.
- **Reflection Question:** What's one way you've chosen comfort over commitment?
- **Diligence in Action:** Do something uncomfortable today—wake up earlier, have a hard conversation, push past resistance.

### **Day 7:** Discomfort is the Path

- **Mindset Shift:** Growth never happens inside your comfort zone.
- **Reflection Question:** Where in your life have you mistaken discomfort for a sign to stop?
- **Diligence in Action:** Do something that scares you—make the call, have the conversation, take the first step.



## WEEK 2:
## REWIRING & COMMITTING

### **Day 8:** Reprogramming Your Mind

- **Mindset Shift:** *"We are what we repeatedly do."* *—Aristotle*
- **Reflection Question:** What current habits reinforce the identity you're trying to break free from?
- **Diligence in Action:** Create a morning routine that sets the tone for your day.

### **Day 9:** Managing Your Words

- **Mindset Shift:** What you speak, you become.
- **Reflection Question:** What words have you spoken over yourself that have shaped your current reality?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write down 5 affirmations that reinforce diligence. Speak them aloud every morning.

### **Day 10:** The Agreement Audit

- **Mindset Shift:** You live by the agreements you've made—consciously or unconsciously.
- **Reflection Question:** What's one belief or agreement you've made that is keeping you small?
- **Diligence in Action:** Identify one limiting belief and rewrite it with truth.

### **Day 11:** Resistance is a Liar

- **Mindset Shift:** *"The hardest thing in the world is to act; the rest is just tenacity."* *—Amelia Earhart*
- **Reflection Question:** What is something you keep postponing that you know would change your life?
- **Diligence in Action:** Set a timer for 30 minutes and just start.

## **Day 12:** Asking for Accountability

- **Mindset Shift:** Success is a team sport.
- **Reflection Question:** Where have you tried to go alone when you should have invited others in?
- **Diligence in Action:** Ask someone to hold you accountable for a goal.

## **Day 13:** Doing It Scared

- **Mindset Shift:** Fear doesn't mean stop. Fear means go.
- **Reflection Question:** What's one thing you've been avoiding because you're afraid?
- **Diligence in Action:** Take one small step toward the thing you fear today.



## WEEK 3:
## MASTERY & COMMITMENT

### **Day 14:** The Discipline of Joy

- **Mindset Shift:** Joy isn't just a feeling—it's a practice.
- **Reflection Question:** Where have you been waiting for external circumstances to bring you joy instead of cultivating it?
- **Diligence in Action:** Do something today that brings you joy—on purpose.

### **Day 15:** Seeing Yourself Accurately

- **Mindset Shift:** The most dangerous lies are the ones we tell ourselves.
- **Reflection Question:** What truths about yourself have you been avoiding?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write down 3 truths about yourself that you need to fully believe.

### **Day 16:** Protecting Your Priorities

- **Mindset Shift:** Distractions are the enemy of diligence.
- **Reflection Question:** What are the top distractions pulling you away from your priorities?
- **Diligence in Action:** Identify 3 things stealing your time and set boundaries.

### **Day 17:** Commitment Over Convenience

- **Mindset Shift:** Your future is shaped by what you do on hard days.
- **Reflection Question:** Where have you been choosing convenience over your true commitment?
- **Diligence in Action:** Follow through on something today, even when it's inconvenient.

### **Day 18:** No More Negotiating With Yourself

- **Mindset Shift:** The moment you start negotiating, you've already lost.
- **Reflection Question:** Where do you most often negotiate your way out of progress?
- **Diligence in Action:** Follow through on something even when you don't feel like it.

### **Day 19:** Finishing What You Start

- **Mindset Shift:** Half-done is still undone.
- **Reflection Question:** What's something you started but never finished? Why?
- **Diligence in Action:** Choose one unfinished task or project and complete it today.

### **Day 20:** Integrity With Yourself

- **Mindset Shift:** The most important promises are the ones you keep to yourself.
- **Reflection Question:** What promise(s) to yourself have you repeatedly broken?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write an apology letter to yourself about your broken promises to yourself. If you've broken promises to others that you feel convicted by, write a letter to them as well.

### **Day 21:** Your New Standard

- **Mindset Shift:** This isn't the end—it's the beginning.
- **Reflection Question:** What have these 21 days shown you about who you are and who you are becoming?
- **Diligence in Action:** Write a declaration of who you are now and what you are committed to moving forward.

## YOUR NEXT STEP

This challenge doesn't end at 21 days. This is your new standard. Keep tracking. Keep showing up. Keep surrendering to the process. You are no longer enslaved to high-functioning laziness, you are fully engaged in your purpose.

## ABOUT SESSION 5

# WHERE VISION BECOMES REALITY

Session 5 was created for one reason—to make vision obtainable. Too often, people feel stuck, stagnant, or overwhelmed by the gap between where they are and where they want to be. But vision isn't just an idea; it's something you can live out.

At Session 5, we push you beyond procrastination, fear, and hesitation. We help you break free from the cycle of overthinking and step into intentional action. You don't need more time—you need movement. And we're here to give you the strategies, support, and mindset shifts to make that happen.

## YOUR PURPOSE IS THE SOLUTION

If this book and challenge has ignited something in you, I highly recommend getting a copy of *Your Purpose Is the Solution*. This book will take you deeper into your why, offering practical tools for uncovering your purpose, pursuing your vision, and applying the exclusive Session 5 strategy to process yourself and your vision effectively.

### Join the Session 5 Community

Transformation doesn't happen in isolation. If you're ready to stay consistent, grow, and connect with others on the same journey, we invite you to join the Session 5 Community. Visit session5institute.com to learn more about our trainings, coaching opportunities, and resources.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Blending multifaceted talents as motivator, minister and music maker, Jonathan DeCuir successfully intersects these three passions to help create more fulfilled and enriched lives. He has spent the majority of his life inspiring others, motivating, and helping connect resources to dreams. His vision is to impact over 1 million people by helping them to discover their purpose is the solution.

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# ARE YOU DOING EVERYTHING *EXCEPT* WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS?

You're busy. You're productive. You're making things happen.
But deep down, you know you're avoiding the real work—the calling, the assignment, the obedience that actually shifts things. Dismantle High-Functioning Laziness exposes the subtle self-sabotage that shows up as overachievement, people-pleasing, control, and the desire to always look good.

This book is for purpose-driven people who feel stuck in cycles of busyness, procrastination, and avoidance. You'll confront the beliefs that keep you bound, the patterns you've normalized, and the comfort you've made an idol. With direct truth, reflective insight, and practical steps, this book calls you out—and calls you higher.

It's time to trade the illusion of effectiveness for the freedom of alignment.

It's time to do the things that truly matter.