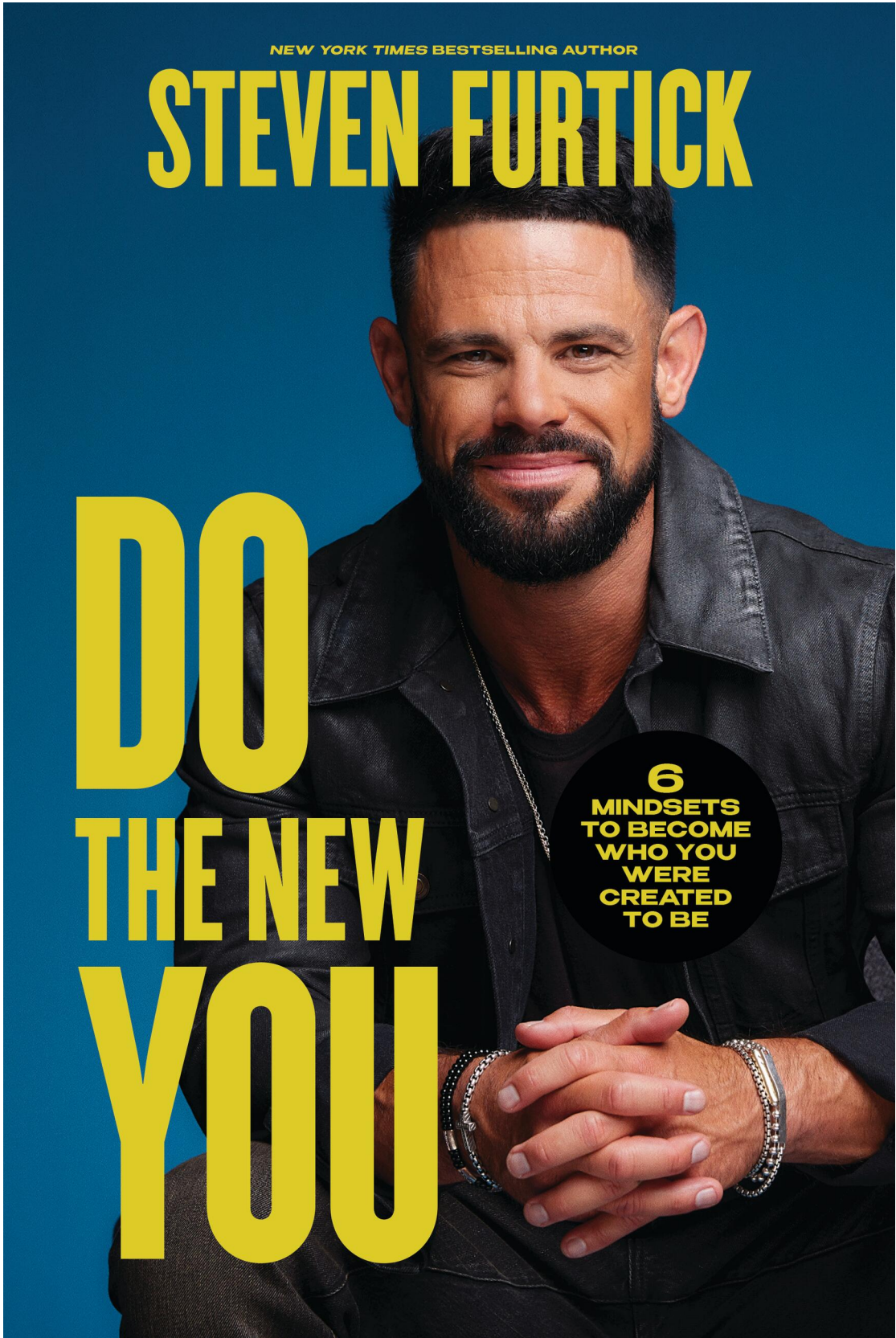


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

STEVEN FURTICK

**DO
THE NEW
YOU**

**6
MINDSETS
TO BECOME
WHO YOU
WERE
CREATED
TO BE**



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6 MINDSETS
TO BECOME WHO YOU
WERE CREATED TO BE

STEVEN FURTICK



NEW YORK NASHVILLE

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INTRODUCTION

THE TRAP, THE TREADMILL, AND THE TRUE YOU

A week before he left for college, my oldest son asked me a question. “Out of everything you’ve taught me, what’s the best advice you can give me right now?”

In that moment, no profound answer came to my mind. The very idea of “the best” advice freaks me out a little, like I’m expected to condense the world’s wisdom into a sentence and chisel it onto a stone tablet. I’m not Moses.

I don’t know the best advice, but I do know what the worst advice would have been.

“Just do you.”

Okay, maybe it’s not the absolute worst advice in the world, but it’s up there. Why? Because “you” is someone you haven’t fully met yet. Certainly not by the time you graduate high school. And, if we’re honest, probably not any time soon after that.

“Doing you” is about being yourself, but do you really know yourself when you’re eighteen? Or twenty-eight? Or eighty, for that matter? Often, your self-perception is mostly

made up of your life experience so far, which leads you to a belief about the way things are and always will be.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not saying *don't* do you. I'm not saying to be somebody else. Being your full, authentic, unique

If you overcommit to your concept of who you are today, it closes you off to what you could become tomorrow.

self is a solid goal to strive for and a healthy place to be. And letting go of the pressure of constantly comparing yourself to others is liberating. So I'm all in favor of self-acceptance. Who else would you be, after all?

And yet, if you overcommit to your concept of who you are today, it closes you off to what you could become

tomorrow. That's the problem with just "doing you."

It doesn't set you free. It keeps you frozen.

It's not self-awareness. It's self-sabotage.

It's not the truth. It's a trap.

THE TREADMILL

I think most of us instinctively realize, sooner or later, that "just doing you" isn't enough. Who we've been up until this point can only get us so far. I'm sure that there are some things about yourself you want to tweak, and a few others you want to completely transform. I know there are for me.

So here's what we usually do. We escape the "do you" trap, only to climb onto the "future you" treadmill—which turns out to be almost as limiting and even more exhausting.

What is future you? It's you, but with greater faith, better friends, a flatter stomach, total financial freedom, and near-absolute perfection in every moment, forever and ever, amen. Future you is the shiny, perfect version of you. It's who

you wish you could be. Who you think you should be. Who you would be if you just tried a little harder.

After chasing future you for a while and never quite catching it, you're left exhausted, and often a little embarrassed. But don't worry—there's always another course, product, diet, plan, church service, or New Year's resolution promising that *this time*, you'll really become future you. So you stay on the treadmill, running in place, pursuing a goal that's just out of reach.

Meanwhile, days, weeks, months, and years are slipping by, but you can't fully enjoy them because you're out of breath, chasing the person you think you could be. The person you would be proud of. The person who will finally be worthy of acceptance, success, love, fulfillment.

The problem, of course, is that future you is largely an illusion. It's a mirage that stays just out of reach. And often, that vision doesn't even come from inside of you. It's more like a highlight reel of everyone else's supposed strengths and successes. You only see their highlights, though. You don't know what's hidden inside them—or hidden inside you.

If *doing you* is a trap that keeps you from growth, *future you* is a treadmill that kills contentment. If you are constantly working from the assumption that you need to become something you're not, you'll never be happy with who you are today, and you might die trying to produce something that was never put in you to begin with.

THE TRUE YOU

So, if *doing you* has left you stuck, and *future you* has left you discouraged, where should you turn? Where should the pursuit of self-identity and self-acceptance lead you?

To the *true you*.

The you God created you to be. The person he knows, sees, and believes in. That person includes who you are today, but it isn't stuck there. It probably encompasses many of the yearnings and dreams you have for the future, but it isn't frustrated by the fact that you're not there yet.

I believe with all my heart that God wants you to see yourself as he sees you, which is a lot more fully than you see yourself. Then, he wants to help you live out that God-given identity. That is the heart of this book: to help you align your mindsets with God's vision for you so you can live the most authentic version of yourself.

After all, you haven't fully met you yet. But God has. He met that version of you because he made that version of you. The truth of you is still unfolding to you, but it is fully known by God.

Only God sees past the personality you've displayed so far, past the circumstances you've experienced that helped shape today's edition of you, all the way back to the person he created you to be. God has known you since before you were born. He knows what he put in you and what he's calling out of you.

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, he first had to convince Jeremiah that he was enough for his prophetic ministry. Jeremiah was having a tough time seeing beyond the person he had been up to that point. God said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

**Align your mindsets
with God's vision for
you so you can live
the most authentic
version of yourself.**

Jeremiah didn't see himself as a prophet: he thought he was too young, too weak, too scared. But God told him, "I knew you before."

Think about that.

Before.

He knew Jeremiah before he was born, before the world had hurt him, before people had mocked him or fear had silenced him.

God knew the real Jeremiah because he created him. So he said, "Jeremiah, listen to me. I imagined you. I formed you. I set you apart. I appointed you, and I'm going to be with you. What more do you need?" When Jeremiah believed that, it changed everything.

It will do the same for you.

God knew you before. He knew you before you were born. He knew you before this world got ahold of you. He knew you before depression set in. He knew you before false accusations threatened you. He knew you before you were abused and abandoned. Long before the mistake, before the failure, before the addiction, God said, "I knew you."

He. Knew. You.

He knew you'd be in financial difficulty. He knew you'd have trouble getting pregnant. He knew you'd be struggling with your health. He knew you'd be dealing with depression. He knew you'd need a job. He knew the challenges your marriage would go through and the needs your kids would face.

He knew it all and he saw it all. And he declared, "I have plans for you. I have a place for you. I have a purpose for you."

The you he sees is the one who is still kicking, still going, still holding on. It's the you just waiting to break forth. It's

the you who is coming up alive. It's the you this world won't corrupt. It's the you drama didn't distract and trauma couldn't kill.

You were fashioned and formed by a God whose creativity knows no end. He says that you were fearfully and wonderfully made, that he knit you together in the womb, that your days are written in his book. He is a God who counts the stars and calls them all by name. He numbers the hairs on your head and sees the life span of every sparrow. His knowledge of you is as specific as it is infinite. It encompasses everything from hairs to sparrows to stars, so it definitely includes you—every part of you, including the parts that you don't know yet and the parts you called a mistake.

God knew you before he created you, like he knew Jeremiah, and the you he knew is the you he is calling to the surface. You're the same person, but it's a new version, a fresh iteration, a greater understanding, a fuller experience, and an expanded definition of you.

The *new* you is the you God *knew*.

And that's the real you.

It might be unknown to you, at least in part and at least so far, but it's been known to God since before he created you.

Learning to “do the new you” gets you out of the trap of doing you and off the treadmill of future you. You don't have

His knowledge of you is as specific as it is infinite. It encompasses everything from hairs to sparrows to stars, so it definitely includes you—every part of you, including the parts that you don't know yet and the parts you called a mistake.

to settle for less than you are, and you don't have to strive to be what you're not. You just have to see yourself as God sees you and then walk in that "new you."

Are you ready to get out of the trap? Out of the thought patterns and default settings of your past? Out of the present-day story where you see yourself as a slave to your personality and programming?

Are you ready to get off the treadmill? No more wasted days making yourself miserable by measuring yourself against an ideal, an unrealistic version of a person God didn't create you to be to begin with? No more waiting to feel worthy or killing yourself to live up to something that's beyond you?

It's possible. But it's not always simple. I wish I could tell you there was a one-time decision you could make to accept yourself as you are right now, weaknesses and all, while simultaneously growing into the next level of strength God has for you. But it doesn't work that way. The true you is always trying to break through, but it's a breakthrough that isn't without tension. It's a tension I'm all too familiar with.

I know the tension of living with who I am now and wishing and wanting to become what I know I was meant to be all along. I know the embarrassment of not living up to my expectations for my own maturity when I've gotten stressed or angry. Times when I know I'm capable of doing more, of getting it right, and yet once again I've fallen short. It can feel so confusing, so contradictory.

I've had moments when I shared wisdom with my oldest son while we were lifting weights together, and I felt like Yoda, Warren Buffett, and Billy Graham all rolled into one. But then I've had other moments where I felt more like Homer Simpson.

I've had moments like the one where I took my daughter to see *Hamilton* in New York, and we created a tournament bracket of the best *Hamilton* songs, and I told myself she'd probably never find a man as good as me. But I've also had moments where I hoped to God she would never marry someone as impatient and irritable as I can be.

I've had both.

We've all had both.

We're all familiar with the trap of doing you and the treadmill of future you. I'm sure you've had moments of breakthrough followed by moments of breakdown, but the breakthroughs serve a purpose. They let you know it's possible to become that person you glimpsed ahead. Not just occasionally either. Not just once in a while.

That person you see is the *real you* breaking through.

Think about that. Let yourself believe that.

The moments when you act on an instinct to be generous. The moments where you choose freedom over addiction. The moments where you choose compassion over judgment. The moments where instead of sliding into self-destructive behavior, you actually do the thing that you know is going to make you feel better at the end of the day.

Have you had those moments? Do you feel a tugging toward something that God is doing within you? Do you sense that there is more inside you than you have seen up until now? That's what we are talking about in this book—that tension. That space. That gap between who you are today and where God is taking you.

Those breakthrough moments are reminders that you were created in the image of God to do good works, and the

true you, the new you, is letting you know, “I’m here. I’m ready. I’m waiting. This is your invitation. Let’s go!”

In this book, I’m going to share six mindsets, six affirmations, to put deep into your spirit. I want you to have a voice in your head that sounds more like the Holy Spirit and less like your old habits. Think of them as six downloads from heaven to update your mind and refresh your life. Some of it might feel unfamiliar to you, but it’s been in you all along. It just hasn’t taken root yet. Some of it you’re already doing, but God wants you to experience more of it.

The advice I would give my son is the message I’m excited to share with you.

Don’t settle for just “doing you.” And don’t waste another day chasing “future you.”

The new you is not waiting in the future.
You can walk into it right now.

ONE

THE (K)NEW YOU

WHICH ME WILL I BE?

Every day around 6:00 a.m. when my alarm summons, the decisions begin.

Scroll mindlessly for fifteen minutes or open my Bible app and read the next chapter? One cup of coffee or two? (Because zero cups is not an option.) Black T-shirt or . . . black T-shirt? (Because most days, I'm pretty boring when it comes to my wardrobe.) Brush my teeth and then make the bed, or the other way around? Gratitude journal first, or prayer? Cold shower like that guy on YouTube suggested, or hot shower, like a normal human?

Options fly a mile a minute through my mind. I really should get this morning routine nailed down. The decisions are overwhelming and I'm barely out of bed.

I walk into the kitchen. Should I ignore the dishes in the sink or do them? Mutter about my kids being helpless and lazy or approach this simple act of responsible fatherhood as a quiet martyr? I hear them arguing upstairs, pushing each other's buttons with professional precision, inventing issues to

fight about that would impress a politician. How will I respond? By yelling at them to stop yelling, or by staying in grown-up mode, knowing that no problem can be solved by matching the level of teenage hormonal energy that created it?

I have a to-do list I wrote out on a legal pad, I have kids with schedules they never write out, and I have a wife who deserves all of me. I have a staff to lead, a sermon to write, a songwriting session I'm low-key dreading and simultaneously anticipating because I don't know if we'll get anything good . . . but what if we do? I'm seeing the day through a thin residue of regret from things I didn't mean to say yesterday or kindness I meant to extend but couldn't quite get to come out of my mouth.

Sometimes my mind feels like one of the anthills we used to kick over in my grandmother's yard when we went to visit in the fall. Back then, we'd run away from the ants, but there's nowhere to run from the constant movement in my mind. I guess that's why psychologists call it ANTS syndrome: Automatic Negative Thinking. All I did was wake up and start thinking about my day, and the tunnels started collapsing, and now the ANTS are after me.

Permeating the decisions and doubts, the regrets and resolutions, the plans and preoccupations, there is a decision I must make. It's the bigger decision, the one that shapes all the others.

Which me will I be?

Life shifts and slides, sometimes subtly, sometimes suddenly. Which version of me will I bring to the next stage of my development? Will it be the me who is wiser from the wounds of yesterday, or the me who is trapped in the bitterness of resentment and the guilt of regret?

Who will answer the door when temptations knock and a voice in my head whispers, *No one will know, you deserve it, it's not that bad?* The me who is focused on what I truly want, which is to be close to God and honor him in all my ways, or the me who is fixated on what I crave now: pleasure, escape, relief?

Which me will I bring to this struggle?

Which me will I bring to this moment?

Which me will I bring to this season?

It's the choice you face too. Which *you* will you do? Whether by default or design, you make this decision every moment, in every situation, in every relationship, at the open door of every opportunity and the closed door of every disappointment. You choose who to be and how to show up.

The other day I was on my way to the recording studio for a songwriting session. I had a lyric in my head that I didn't want to forget, so I recorded a voice memo while I drove. It went like this: "Jesus, please be patient with me. I'm so far from the person I want to be."

Which you will
you do?

The exact moment I finished singing that line into my phone, somebody cut me off in traffic. Without thinking, I yelled, "Idiot!"

Of course the guy didn't hear me, but my phone was still recording. So now I had a voice memo that went, "Jesus, please be patient with me. I'm so far from the person I want to be. IDIOT!"

The irony was obvious. I couldn't even write a song about being a work in progress without interrupting my song to prove how much progress I still needed to make.

I often feel so far from the person I want to be. From the person I know God sees in me. From the person I'm capable of being, but must choose to be, over and over again.

That's why it is imperative that you see who you are *capable* of being, not just who you've always been. That you catch a glimpse of the you God sees, not just the you that you've always known.

Catch a glimpse of
the you God sees,
not just the you that
you've always known.

GOD KNOWS THAT YOU . . . DO YOU?

In this book, I'm using the term "new you" to describe the concept of the truest, most authentic version of you. The one God sees in you. The phrase is inspired by a passage in Ephesians that talks about seeing this God-created version of you and then making it a reality. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
(4:22–24)

In other words, there is an old self and a new self. There is an old way of doing you, and there is a new way of doing you.

Now, I'm not saying the "old you" is a horrible, awful worm of a person. This isn't a book about hating yourself. But the old you isn't you at your *best*. It was you surviving. It was you reacting. It was you living according to your view of

who you were and what you could do, but that view was based on your perspective.

There's so much more to you than that.

There is a God-empowered way of doing you, and that is you at your best. That's the you he created and the you he sees. That person might feel new to you, but it's not new at all.

Remember what God told Jeremiah? "Before I formed you in the womb *I knew you . . .*" God was asking Jeremiah to put off the old way of seeing himself and put on a new one. The old Jeremiah was small, scared, and quiet. The new Jeremiah was called to preach boldly and prophesy courageously.

Which was the real Jeremiah? In a sense, both of them—but the old needed to give way to the new, because the new was the way God had created him to be.

God is calling you to do the new you. The new you is who you really are, you just haven't seen the fullest expression of it yet because it's a lifelong process of self-discovery.

Ask yourself: *What does God know about me that I don't know about myself? What does God see in me that I've overlooked or even denied? Are there ways in which God has chosen me, but I still need to choose myself?*

Are there ways in which God has chosen me, but I still need to choose myself?

You have a version of yourself in your mind, but it might not be the vision God has for you. If today's version of you doesn't match God's vision for you, it's time to come up higher. It's time to learn how he sees you and who he created you to be.

Nobody else can be that person: only you. That's why comparison is such a trap. You aren't trying to become like

anyone else. Why would you sell yourself short like that? Strive to become like *you* instead.

The next time the old self tries to hold you back, remember the you God already knew. He has always known who you really are, so you can become all you were created to be. There is no shame in that, only endless possibility.

God doesn't see you as addicted or trapped or broken; he sees you as free, and he's with you in the fight. He sees that you struggle with those habits that feel like chains, but he also sees the strength in you by his Spirit to break those chains. He sees a version of you that is able to rise above feelings, a version that walks in faith even in the midst of uncertainty. It's a version that might seem unfamiliar and uncomfortable at first, but it's you.

Imagine yourself free. God knows *that* you.

Imagine yourself whole. God knows *that* you.

Imagine yourself overcoming habits that sabotage you. God knows *that* you.

Imagine yourself able to be patient and self-controlled, not giving in to every feeling that passes through your central nervous system. God knows *that* you.

Now, I'm not saying you can be or do anything you imagine. God doesn't always give you exactly what you pictured in life. If you're 5'4" and forty-seven years old, you're probably not going to play in the NBA. I think that is a healthy limitation to embrace. Your family will be happier and you'll put food on the table by acknowledging who you are not and choosing a different career path.

But I can tell you with confidence there is more to who you are than what you've experienced up until now, and God wants to give it to you.

You have to opt into the process, though. You have to choose to do the *new* you.

GRACE AND GRIT

In the coming pages, I want you to see yourself the way God sees you and to believe that you can make that vision your reality. As you walk it out, it will become natural. You'll find yourself saying, "I guess I *am* a patient person. I *am* a kind person. I *am* a good parent. I didn't used to feel that way, but I'm seeing it more and more now. I don't always act like it, but that's who I am, and I want to become more of it. And by God's grace, I can."

Stop saying, "This is who I am, so get used to it," and instead say, "This is who I am *so far*, but I'm not dead yet, so God's not done yet. I'm still growing. I'm still changing. I'm still learning. I like a lot of things about this edition of me, but I don't like all of them, and I'm not stopping until I become who God says I can be!"

Doing the new you is always more about God's grace than your grit. That's why God says that *he* who began a good work in *you* will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). He tells *you* to work out *your* salvation because *he* is at work in *you* to will and to act in order to fulfill *his* good purpose (Philippians 2:13). And he says that by *his* grace, *you* are what *you* are, and *his* grace is not without effect (1 Corinthians 15:10).

He . . . you . . . he . . . you . . . he . . . you. Do you see the partnership? The teamwork? God creates, defines, and empowers, and you and I live it out.

Doing the new you is
always more about
God's grace than
your grit.

As you are growing, as you are changing, God always has grace for you. Grace is God's patience with you and his power in you. Thank God for grace!

Let me be clear, though. Grace is patience *and* power. Grace is never an excuse to be lazy or a way to avoid change. That's the polar opposite of what I'm saying. Sometimes you hear people use grace as a cover-up for consistent, hurtful behavior. "I'm just a sinner saved by grace," they say, as if grace means they never need to change.

No, grace is the very means by which God changes us into the people he knows we can be. It comes from him but it flows through us. It's a work that happens in unison, and it happens over time.

So, when you have an outburst of anger, or when you reach for the pills, or when you manipulate and lie to get your way, or when you watch porn until three in the morning and can't connect in real life, or when you hold on to a grudge until it corrodes you from the inside—remember that's not who God is, so it can't be who you really are, and his power is at work in you to change.

God knows you are capable of kindness even if you struggle with your temper. He knows you were created to be generous even if you've settled into a pattern of hoarding what you have. He sees you as honest, patient, wise, faithful, loving, stable, and kind. That's who Jesus is, and Jesus is in you, so that's the real you, the new you. That's the you that you can choose.

GET THE RIGHT VOICE IN YOUR HEAD

Now, it may take a while for the version of you that God knew all along to become the version of you that you know in

your everyday life. And to be honest, in some ways you'll always struggle with the switch.

I know I do. I'm not writing this book because of my victories. I'm writing because of my struggles and my belief in a God who gives victory incrementally. I'm writing this to you as a man who is determined to step more fully into his role as a parent, as a pastor, and simply as a person loved and known by God.

I'm not the person I want to be. Not by a long shot. I can preach on Sunday about God's never-ending grace for our mistakes and talk about how his strength is made perfect in our weakness, but Monday morning I can find myself deep in a funk, feeling like I failed, because I replay the mental tape of what I said in the pulpit and I think it's not good enough, so *I* must not be good enough. I can find myself snapping at the people that I love because my emotions are burned out. And instead of replenishing myself in healthy ways, I numb or scroll to the point that I feel like a zombie.

Sometimes I'm glad to be me, sometimes I'm proud to be me, and sometimes I'm embarrassed and scared to be me. But "me" is all I've got. And you know what? It's who God wants.

I'm not who I want to be yet, but I'm not giving up either. I'm determined to keep revamping and remodeling my inner self by the power of the Holy Spirit as I grow into the image of Christ in me. It's a choice. I have to constantly decide to be the more mature, more self-aware version of me, even when my moods are volatile and my emotions run high.

Ephesians 4 makes it sound so simple: just put off the old self and put on the new. The imagery here is like a change of clothing. It's like coming home, taking off your button-down and putting on your favorite hoodie.

If only it were that simple! I wish putting *off* the old self were as easy as slipping out of a suit. But it's not. It feels more like struggling out of a straitjacket. Old habits die hard, after all. And I wish putting *on* the new self were as simple as throwing on a sweatshirt. But it's not. You have to work at it.

You have to embrace the process.

The point is constant progress, not instant perfection. Perfection is an illusion anyway. Real transformation comes by making countless small, right choices that align with who you are in Christ, rather than making small, wrong choices that align with who you used to be.

Doing the new you means reframing and retraining your mind to react differently. After all, you might be new, but the world you live in is the same one it's always been, and the neural pathways that have developed from your habits are deeply grooved. That means you need mental models and philosophies that are aligned with God's Word, not with your past experiences or current circumstances. It means you're going to have to practice too.

That's why I want to walk with you into this new you, almost like a coach would do.

That's where the six mindsets come in. You can preach these six things to yourself wherever you go. Whether you're walking into a job interview, waiting for a medical report, pulling an all-nighter to study for finals, or just trying to get the kids through the Chick-fil-A drive-through, what you say to yourself matters a whole lot more than you might think because it has the power to change you from the inside out. No matter how people have labeled you or how you've labeled yourself in the past, if you get new language to define yourself and to describe who you are in Christ, you're going to be

shocked at the person you become six weeks from now, six months from now, six years from now.

Each of these truths is very personal to me. These are the things I repeat to myself when I'm going to preach on Sunday morning, or when I'm trying to get my act together as a parent, or when I'm just pulling myself out of bed on a Monday morning. I preach these things, I pray these things, I say these things, and I believe these things for you and for me.

With each of these mindsets, there is a call to action that God will enable you to take. It's one thing to say you are changed, forgiven, and redeemed, but it's another thing to *be* that in your daily life.

I'm going to share the whole list with you now, just to give you a preview before we move forward.

1. *I'm not stuck unless I stop.*
Action Step: Commit to progress.
2. *Christ is in me. I am enough.*
Action Step: Accept your Self.
3. *With God there's always a way, and by faith I will find it.*
Action Step: Focus on possibility.
4. *God is not against me, but he's in it with me, working through me, fighting for me.*
Action Step: Walk in confidence.
5. *My joy is my job.*
Action Step: Own your emotions.
6. *God has given me everything I need for the season I'm in.*
Action Step: Embrace your now.

I'm getting fired up just listing these declarations! I hope you are too. In fact, if you can, say a few of them out loud right now. See how they feel coming out of your mouth. I want you to get a good sense of what God is speaking over you so you can step into it with expectation. As you incorporate these things into your belief system, you'll begin to act and talk in new ways.

I know these six statements are simple, and that's on purpose. They are meant to be easy to memorize, like a song or a slogan would be. In fact, I have written songs based on some of these. I want them to be like tracks on repeat in your heart so your faith can work in real life.

God's power at work in you gives you the freedom to do the new you. As long as you have breath in your lungs, you are not locked into the current version of you. You have

autonomy. You have options. You have the power to get out of traps, off of treadmills, and into truth.

Stop before you even read the next sentence and celebrate how far God has already brought you, how many obstacles you've overcome, how many paths he's already opened for you, and how many amazing things he's done through you.

If you think you have to fix yourself in order to get God to love you more, you're starting from the wrong assumption. *You'll never be*

more loved than you are right now. You'll never be more accepted than you are this instant. The work of Jesus settled

You'll never be more loved than you are right now. You'll never be more accepted than you are this instant. The work of Jesus settled that once and for all. You don't need to stress and strive to somehow prove yourself to God.

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God is close to you, and he blesses you, and he is proud of you, and he is cheering you on *right now*. He's not just barely tolerating the present-day you because he's holding out hope that someday you'll be worthy.

Every version of you is still you. It's all intentional. It's all working together to serve a big-picture purpose. Even those things that haven't worked out yet are going to fit into the plan God has for your future.

You are the one God loves. That needs to be your starting point. But where you start isn't where you have to stay. That's why I'm so excited about these six mindsets. When you choose to think and live in these ways, you are choosing *you*.

You are deciding to overcome distraction, defeat, and discouragement so you can press into all God created you to be.

I know this to be true: wherever you are in your journey, God has good things planned for you. I'm not saying you won't face challenges or make mistakes along the way, but I believe God sees good days ahead for you. He has prepared good works for you to do. His calling is your confidence, and his grace is your guarantee.

The *knew* you and the *new* you are the same you, and they are the right you. They're the best version of you because they're God's version of you, and by faith you can step into what God already sees.

The first mindset we're going to look at is the foundation for all the rest: *You aren't stuck unless you stop*. Why does

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this matter so much? Because without a commitment to progress, you're defeated before you start. But if you can get deep into your heart and mind that you serve an unstoppable God who is leading you forward, no distraction, deception, difficulty, or devil can stand in your way.

MINDSET (01)

**I'M NOT STUCK
UNLESS I STOP.**

**ACTION STEP:
COMMIT TO PROGRESS.**

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE

Recently I was at a wrestling match watching my son Graham. A lady behind us was cheering at the top of her lungs for her team, the Spiders. The Spiders were not doing well. This particular match was in the heavyweight division, which goes up to 285 pounds. The boy who was winning was every bit of those 285 pounds, and the Spider trapped underneath him was not. No matter how hard he tried, the kid couldn't move.

From behind me I heard the lady yelling, "Get up! Get up! Stand up!"

The kid couldn't hear her, of course, but if he could have, I can only imagine his response. "Oh, yeah! I forgot! That's what I'm supposed to do—*stand up*. Thank you, lady at the top of the bleachers, for reminding me what I'm supposed to be doing here. It's easy. It's obvious. Just stand up."

But we all know it's not that simple.

When you're stuck, the last thing you need are condescending voices from the nosebleeds telling you to do the

thing you already wish you were doing, the thing you're trying with all your might to do, the thing that's so easy to advise from the comfort of someone else's life.

You want to tell them, "Yeah, why don't you try it? Why don't you get down here on the mat? Why don't you try dealing with my boss's impossible demands? Why don't you try being a single parent juggling two jobs and three kids? Why don't you try paying off school loans while making a rent payment every month? Why don't you try recovering from the loss of a loved one? You don't know my life, so don't tell me why it's so easy."

When you're stuck in a rut, in a habit, in a creative slump, in a dead-end job, in an addiction, in a toxic relationship, in an illness, in anxiety, in a bad mood, in depression, in debt, in discouragement—what you *don't* need are shame and blame. You don't need someone yelling at you to just get up and get over it. What you need is someone who understands your situation to be with you in the middle of it. Someone to encourage you through it. Someone to help you carry it.

That's exactly what God does.

God doesn't just yell at you from heaven, "Get up! Stand up! Do more! Fight harder! Sin less! Stop doubting! Be better!" He doesn't shame you for being stuck, because he knows what you're going through. The Bible says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:15–16).

Instead of yelling at you from the stands, God jumps into the battle with you. Life isn't a high-school wrestling match, after all, and you don't have to fight alone. In your time of need, his mercy is there for you. His grace is with you. His strength is in you.

Instead of yelling at
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I know that can be hard to believe if your child is in the hospital, or if your car breaks down and the mechanic says it will cost two thousand dollars to fix it, or if you just found out your husband is cheating on you. When you are crushed and suffocated by the weight of opposition, giving up can feel like the only option.

But it's not.

That is what I want you to get deep into your heart and your mind: you're not stuck unless you stop, and you don't have to stop because God is with you in the fight.

When facing difficult circumstances, the old way of doing you might have said, "I'm stuck. That's why I stopped. That's why I quit praying. That's why I quit trying. That's why I gave into cynicism. That's why I quit taking care of my body. That's why I started medicating with alcohol. That's why I'm such a bitter person. In fact, I'm not bitter, I'm just realistic: I'm trapped. I tried all the church stuff, the religion stuff, the God stuff, but it didn't work. I tried being kind, but people used my niceness as an opportunity to take advantage of me, so I stopped being the bigger person."

That was the old you and the old me. That version of ourselves saw *stuck* as a reason to *stop*. It was a mentality that relied only on you and always on you: your strength, your

resources, your experience, your intelligence. When the old you was pinned underneath a 285-pound challenge, it gave up. It tapped out. What else could you do?

But the new you knows a different truth. The new you embraces the mindset “I’m not stuck unless I stop.”

This version of you does not live in denial, but it doesn’t surrender to disappointment either. It doesn’t give up easily. It doesn’t hide from challenges. Instead of avoiding life’s giants, it attacks them with confidence in God. The new you does whatever is needed for as long as it takes until you regain your momentum and can move forward again.

The new you is aware of problems but committed to progress. That means asking for help if needed. It means opening yourself up to new ideas and greater creativity. It means getting advice from people who have been where you are before.

**The new you is
aware of problems
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to progress.**

Several years ago I realized I needed to learn more about managing my money and long-term planning. My dad had taught me everything he knew about finances, but I didn’t understand the different types of investments the way I needed to, and I knew it. I felt trapped. I felt frustrated. The fear of risk and loss seemed to be greater than the reward of learning and growing.

Then I remembered a friend of mine who is ten years ahead of where I am financially who had offered several times to help me with financial planning. I reached out and asked him for two hours of his time. We scheduled a phone call, and he gave me a list of the different categories of investments,

along with the goals he's hit and the mistakes he's made along the way.

I remember feeling a sense of freedom after that call. I wasn't a master of money by any means, but at least I had a map. I could see a way forward.

It's funny how quickly you can go from exasperated to excited.

From agitated to animated.

From immovable to unstoppable.

All it takes is a glimpse of the next step.

See, stuck is a way of saying you can't move forward and *there's nothing you can do about it*. Circumstances have assumed control. Things are hopeless and you are helpless, so you might as well quit trying. It's a frustrating, powerless feeling.

But that's not how God operates. That's not even his nature. He's not a frustrated, powerless God, and he didn't create you to live a frustrated, powerless life.

God is the waymaker. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-consuming. He causes valleys to be raised up and mountains be made low. He turns graves into gardens and bones into armies. Our God is a sea-splitting, stone-rolling, wind-whispering, fire-from-heaven, water-from-the-rock, stop-the-moon-in-the-sky kind of God.

When you feel hopeless, he is nearer than ever. As an old country preacher said, "When you're down to nothing, God is up to something!" In those moments when your story seems stuck and hope is lost, God will make a way for you. He wants to give you back your courage, your power, your expectation.

That phone call about financial advice is just one example. I could list a hundred times I've said I was stuck, but I wasn't—I had just stopped. I had stopped thinking about the problem creatively and started self-sabotaging and withdrawing into isolation out of fear. I had stopped praying and asking God to show me my next step. I had stopped strategizing with the mind of the Spirit, and I was walking only in the limitation of my own experience.

Now don't get me wrong, this isn't a name-it-and-claim-it approach to faith. I'm not saying that obstacles are all in your head or that every problem you face can be prayed away overnight. I realize some situations and variables are outside of your control. I also realize that change doesn't happen in a moment, and some states of mind require a long time to be rewired by the Holy Spirit. And of course, in certain situations you might need to seek professional help or advice.

You can expect to put work into moving forward. You should plan on knocking on a lot of doors and asking for a lot of help. Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7–8). There's no shame in asking, seeking, and knocking. It doesn't mean you lack faith, and it doesn't mean God fell asleep on the job.

It just means you're putting in the work to get to where you need to be.

But if you don't believe you can move forward, you won't ask or seek or knock. You'll just sit there, miserable under 285 pounds of weight, wishing you were somewhere else while people in the nosebleeds holler at you.

Now, keep in mind that the way forward might not be what you thought it would be. God's idea of progress and his definition of success don't always make sense to us at first. Sometimes we get so caught up in our expectations of what we think is supposed to happen that we don't recognize the doors God is opening right in front of us. How often do we miss an opportunity because our idea of what should happen is too narrow? Too small? Too human?

Maybe God didn't heal you, but that doesn't mean he abandoned you. It doesn't mean your faith failed. He is doing other things in you and through you. His grace is sufficient for you.

Maybe you got fired from that job, but that doesn't mean your life is over. God has something else ahead, but you might have to pivot. You might have to cast your net on the other side.

Don't give the obstacle, the enemy, the failure too much credit. No matter what has made you feel stuck, God is bigger than that thing, and he's already on the other side of it. It's not the end of the road. It's just a curve you can't see past. Maybe it's even a fork that will open up new opportunities. If you give up now, you'll never know what miracle God has just ahead.

Say it to yourself: "I'm not stuck unless I stop. I might be temporarily incapacitated. I might be facing something I've never faced before, something that seems too big for me.

I might have to rethink, recalibrate, reset. But God is on my side. I can go to his throne of grace in this time of need. God is bigger than my battle. He's

**If you give up now,
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sovereign in this situation. He's greater than my circumstance, so it's only a matter of time before I find the way forward."

That might not be how the old you treated obstacles, but you're not doing the old you anymore. You're doing the new you. You're stepping into the you God sees, and that version of you is committed to progress.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

STEVEN FURTICK is a pastor, *New York Times* best-selling author, and Grammy® Award-winning songwriter and producer. As founder and senior pastor, he has helped grow the multi-site Elevation Church into a global ministry through online streaming, television, and the music of Elevation Worship. He holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Theological Seminary and is the author of *Crash the Chatterbox*, *Greater, Sun Stand Still*, *(Un)Qualified*, and *Seven-Mile Miracle*. Steven and Holly live in Charlotte, NC, with their two sons, Elijah and Graham, and daughter, Abbey.