The Luxury of True Strength

7 -Day Devotional

Embracing The Soft Side of Strength

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To the Woman Wearing the Emotional Armor

You've carried strength like a shield.
Showing up, holding it all together, even when no one saw the weight.
Somewhere along the way, softness started to feel unsafe—like something you couldn't afford.

But what if true strength didn't require armor?

What if you could breathe, feel, and be fully seen—and still be strong?

This devotional isn't about becoming someone new.
It's about shedding what the world told you to be,
and returning to the woman God always knew you were.

You don't have to prove anything.
You don't have to hide anymore.
God knows your name.
He sees beneath the armor.
And He still calls you His.

So exhale.
You're stepping into True Strength now.

Let's begin.

Day 1:
The Luxury of Softness

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near."— Philippians 4:5 (NIV)

You've had to be strong—resilient, dependable, guarded. But somewhere along the way, softness started to feel absent, almost like weakness.

For most of my adult life, I believed I had to be hard and strong. I was a female soldier in the Army and worked in male-dominated fields—mechanic, electrician, carpenter—the list goes on. As a young Black woman, it felt necessary to prove I could hold my own and would not be belittled or disrespected.

At 19, I entered a violent marriage. We fought almost daily, and eventually, I became a single mom. I didn't go into the marriage with a submissive outlook. My mom was submissive and, in my eyes, ran over, and I promised I wouldn't be that. (Later, I learned that she was the woman God intended us to be—but that's for another time.) Over time, my exterior grew so tough that not even my most vulnerable moments could penetrate it. I was armored up emotionally.

When I remarried and tried stepping into my "soft life" era but, I realized my past was still running the show. I would easily become loud, aggressive, and defensive toward my husband and kids. I couldn't fully enjoy my present moments because I hadn't learned how to let my guard down.

That kind of strength? It's called **Survival Mode**. It's a protective gear many of us wear like emotional armor—so long, we forget how to take it off.
But my God!

The moment we become aware that this is what's keeping us stuck, guarded, aggressive—or in some cases, single—is the moment we can begin healing. That awareness is the key to reclaiming what the world told us was weakness: **our softness.**

God is inviting you today to rest in this truth:

Gentleness is not the absence of strength—it is divine strength under control.

In a world that rewards hustle and hardness, choosing tenderness is a holy rebellion. You don't have to prove anything to anyone. You can rest in knowing the fruit of the Spirit—joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—are already inside you. They are the marks of a woman of God.

And not only will you "catch more bees with honey," but you'll find yourself walking closer with the Father—living in a way that pleases Him. Through faith in Jesus Christ, you're not just surviving anymore—you're thriving. That's the luxury of softness.
And that's **true strength**.

"I am safe to be soft—because I am held by the strength of God."

Day 1: The Luxury of Softness

Application:

- Where have I felt the need to "toughen up" to survive or be accepted?
- What would it look like to let my guard down with God?

Day 2:
The Luxury of Being Known

I have called you by name; you are mine. — Isaiah 43:1 (NLT)

There's something sacred about being known—not for what you do, what you've survived, or how well you perform—but simply for who you are.

I remember attending my high school reunion (now I'm telling my age), and for months beforehand, I kept playing it out in my head. I wondered how I could explain my life without sounding... unaccomplished.

"Oh girl, I'm married now, I have three kids—and a bonus baby!"
"Oh, who me? I'm out of the military now, working as a full-time substitute teacher."

No matter how I said it, it felt like it wouldn't sound impressive enough. But the truth was—I was more accomplished than ever. Because by then, I knew exactly who I was: a woman of God. And baby, there is no title on this earth that carries more weight than that!

Walking hand in hand with my husband that night was just a plus. My God had broken me down in the most beautiful way—vulnerable, feminine, but secure. The kind of secure where you just know your heavenly Father has your back. I didn't need to lead with worldly titles. I just needed to let His light shine through me—because I knew that my softness, my ability to be at peace with who God has created

me to be (without the emotional armor, or titles) **was my strength.**

We live in a world that rushes to label us:
Mom. Wife. Strong friend. Overcomer.
And while some of those labels are beautiful, they are not the root of who we are.
God doesn't just know your name—
He gave it to you.
He knows your story and still chose you.
He sees beyond the image you present to the world and loves you right there.
You are not overlooked. You are not forgotten.
Even when you feel hidden—Heaven is still calling your name.

"My identity is rooted in Christ—I lack nothing."

Day 2 – The Luxury of Being Known

Application:

- Where have I felt the need to "toughen up" to survive or be accepted?
- What would it look like to let my guard down with God?

Day 3:
The Luxury of Living in Rhythm

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. — Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

Balance isn't about doing it all—it's about knowing what's worth your energy.
perform—but simply for who you are.

Rest is holy. Boundaries are sacred.
I was divorced with a daughter. My family lived out of state. I had a brand-new house, and because I was "the strong one" in the family, I had very little emotional or financial support.

I'd left active duty and joined the Army National Guard, where I worked one weekend a month. During the week, I was juggling multiple roles: working full time at a prison on the night shift, attending college full time as an in-seat student, and working part time five days a week at a warehouse during the day—all just to make ends meet and live the life I thought I wanted.

Procrastination didn't help my circumstances either. I never really learned how to organize and prioritize. Sure, the Army taught me to how to organize per their standards, but that wasn't something I carried into my life as a civilian. Eventually the lack of these skills brought on an even heavier weight.

That was my life. And although I thought I had a rhythm, it wasn't intentional.

There was no space for the soft side of me to show up.
No time to cry.
No time to be vulnerable.
Let's pause here:
Why do you think you entered survival mode?
– Is it because you're working hard just to stay afloat financially?
– Is it because you feel you have to show up a certain way just to be heard?
– Is it because others depend on you?
Whatever the reason, know this:
You were not created to run on empty.
God is inviting you into rhythms of grace—rhythms that honor both your purpose and your peace.
Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Christ will give you rest—but we must come to Him.
So, what does that look like?
It looks like coming to Him with child-like faith—a faith so raw and pure that it helps you see the Father as your Father.
Your Protector.
Your Peace.
Your Confidant.
Your Savior.
Your Way Maker.
Your Redeemer.
Your Best Friend.

Coming to Him wholeheartedly means showing up with honesty and humility. It means being intentional about the time you spend with Him. And when you do, it will shift your entire outlook on what strength really is—and where it comes from.

In that quiet place with Him, vulnerability becomes safe. And it's there that you begin tapping into your softness again.

"I choose rest and rhythm—my peace is part of my purpose."

Day 3 – The Luxury of Living in Rhythm

Application:

- What areas of my life feel out of rhythm right now?
- What would it look like to steward my energy with wisdom?

Day 4:

The Luxury of Inner Healing

He restores my soul.— Psalm 23:3 (NKJV)

Healing doesn't always shout—it often whispers. It takes place in quiet rooms where God meets you in your brokenness. Growth isn't always visible to others, but heaven sees every inch of your progress. Becoming whole is the real glow-up.

I joined the Army at 17 years old. A little after six months of training, before heading to my duty station, I was raped.

I had met a guy a couple weeks earlier at the mall. We exchanged numbers, and after I completed Advanced Individual Training (AIT), I was sent to another advanced training. By coincidence—or maybe not—we ended up being housed in the same building.

Though we never spoke over the phone, I was happy to see a familiar face. Later, after I got settled in, he texted me and offered to take me to the store since I didn't have a vehicle. It was around 5 p.m.—still bright out—so I accepted. When we returned to the barracks, we sat in his car talking. Then, before I could process what was happening, my jeans and underwear were being ripped off. I was literally fighting for my body.

Afterward, I shoved it all behind me and moved on—at least that's what I thought. It took nearly 15 years for that memory to resurface and haunt me.

I can't fully explain the pain I felt when those thoughts came rushing back. The nightmares were relentless. But the hardest part? Feeling like my mind had betrayed me.

How could my brain bury something so traumatic—only to stab me with it later?

I get it—fight or flight. But I didn't think I'd be forced to fight the facts fifteen years later.

It became clear that I needed more than prayer—I needed help. I started therapy, and over time it became easier to talk about. But the emotional bruises were still showing. It affected my marriage. I avoided cars with dark tinted windows. And my insides would shriek anytime I saw someone who looked like my violator.

But girl... God.
God has restored my soul; do you hear me?

Even when I couldn't trust my own brain, my own emotions, or even my own reactions—I knew I could trust every word that came from Him.

God wants complete authority over every area of your life—not just the spiritual parts. He cares about your social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and personal growth too.

When you think about the different aspects of your life, think about it in all six dimensions:

1. Social
2. Emotional
3. Intellectual
4. Physical
5. Personal Growth
6. Spiritual

Then—invite the Holy Spirit into each one of them. That's how you stay grounded in the fruit of the Spirit: Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control.

Your healing journey may be layered, but God is in every layer.

And yes—you are healing, you are whole, and you are holy.

"I am healing, whole, and holy—one layer at a time."

Day 4– The Luxury of Inner Healing

Application:

- What broken parts of me still need God's gentle touch?
- How have I already grown in ways I haven't celebrated?

Day 5:
The Luxury of Obedience Over Perfection

Be strong and courageous… for the Lord your God goes with you.— Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)

You don't have to get it all right—you just have to move when God says move.

After I got married (this time around), I completely separated from the military. I didn't want to deploy anymore. I just wanted to be a new wife and have a couple more babies. So, I started working from home.

In many ways, working from home was a luxury. But slowly, it became depressing. I started to lose myself. I wasn't prioritizing self-care, and it showed—I gained weight and lost the motivation to do anything at all.

Once I got serious about my spiritual journey, God completely shifted my mindset. I no longer wanted to stay cooped up in the house. I wanted to be out in the world, meeting new people and talking about the goodness of God.

One day, I drove past the school district office—and the Holy Spirit told me to stop. I didn't have a degree yet, so I knew I couldn't be a substitute teacher, but I went in anyway.

While working from home, I'd been virtually teaching and training new hires in a classroom-style environment. That's where I discovered my love for teaching.

To my surprise, the school district immediately offered me

a position as an instructional aide. They told me that once I graduated with my bachelor's degree, I'd be eligible for a permanent substitute teaching position.

I took the role—and the pay cut—with full confidence that the Lord would provide. That move was huge for me. I had never held the mental space to choose something that could put my finances at risk—married or not.

But real faith? It's not just trusting Christ—it's walking in boldness and obedience.

Boldness isn't the absence of fear. It's obedience in the presence of it.

You were created for more than comfort zones. There is a divine assignment attached to your name. And God? He's already gone ahead of you.

Your softness pours over you when your strength comes from a real Provider—a real Father—who you know is leading your every step.

"I am healing, whole, and holy—one layer at a time."

Day 4– The Luxury of Inner Healing

Application:

- What dream or calling have I been too afraid to pursue?
- What's one step of obedience I can take this week?

Day 6:
The Luxury of Emotional Honesty

"Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." — Psalm 62:8 (ESV)

It's okay to cry. It's okay to feel deeply. Emotional honesty is not immaturity—it's intimacy.

All three of my pregnancies were marked by a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum—an extreme and prolonged form of morning sickness. It wasn't just "a little nausea"—it felt like a relentless virus I couldn't shake. Each pregnancy, no matter the gender, brought with it intense physical suffering.

During my second pregnancy, things got especially difficult. I was hospitalized for nearly two weeks, and for the first week, I couldn't even keep down water or food. It was one of the hardest physical battles I've ever faced.

I'll never forget the moment everything changed. I was sitting on the toilet, of all places, and realized I hadn't thrown up that entire day. I had eaten real food—real food—without being overwhelmed by smells or nausea. In that ordinary moment, tears came flooding down my face. Not from pain this time, but from peace. I could finally breathe. I might finally enjoy my pregnancy.

Then my daughter, who was about 11 at the time, walked in. Her eyes filled with concern. She'd never seen me cry without anger, and honestly, the setting probably made the whole thing even more confusing for her. But through my

tears, I reassured her: “These are happy tears, baby.” It opened a door between us that had never been opened before. From that moment on, we shared a new level of closeness—and we embraced it fully.

That moment taught me something: Emotional honesty is healing. It creates connection. And most importantly, it invites God into the realest parts of us.

With God, you don’t have to clean up your feelings before you bring them to Him. You don’t have to hide behind strength or composure. He wants your truth. He wants your tears. And He will meet you there—with refuge, not rejection.

“My emotions are safe with God—He meets me in truth and love.”

Day 6– The Luxury of Emotional Honesty

Application:

- What emotions have I been avoiding or numbing?
- What do I need to pour out to God today?

Day 7:

The Luxury of Becoming Her

Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.— Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

You're not who you used to be—and that's something to praise God for.

About five years ago, God sent me a friend who would change the course of my life. She was a sweetheart who shared the same personal trainer. After getting to know me, she shared that God had been prompting her to pour into someone by offering free life coaching services. And she offered them—to me.

During our coaching sessions, she remained professional and completely invested in serving me. Never in a million years did I think her obedience would help transform my entire life.

We covered topics I'd never even considered before—things like the balance wheel and how to set and achieve SMART goals. After about four weeks, the sessions ended, and I was on my own again.

Eventually, I slipped back into old patterns—procrastination, slacking on savings, feeling overwhelmed, and not being intentional about my relationship with Christ. But today, I reflect on those sessions and think:
"Wow. She really helped change my life in every area."
My coach introduced me to tools that helped me see the life I could build. But it was God who truly renewed my mind.

If God never did another thing for me, He has already transformed me.
He has delivered me.
And I am forever grateful.
From my finances to my career, to my Kingdom goals—every step has helped me become the strongest, yet softest, woman I know.
Becoming her—the soft, whole, balanced, bold woman God designed—is not a destination.
It's a divine process.
You are being shaped daily by His love and grace.
And that, beloved, is the soft side of strength.

"I am becoming the woman God designed—strong, soft, and full of His glory."

Day 7– The Luxury of Becoming Her

Application:

- What fruit is evident in my life because I chose softness and strength?
- Who is the woman I am becoming—and how is God shaping her?

Closing Prayer: A Prayer for True Strength

Father, Thank You for seeing me beyond my armor. Thank You for calling me worthy, even when I felt worn down.

In You, I've discovered that softness isn't weakness—it's sacred. It's strength.

Help me to live from the truth of who I am in You—
not in my past, not in my titles,
but in my identity as Your daughter.

Teach me to protect my peace, to move with wisdom, and to honor the rhythm of grace over grind.

Continue healing the parts of me that feel broken.
Shape me into the whole, bold, soft, and strong woman
You created me to be.

I surrender my fears.
I choose obedience over perfection.
And I trust You with my calling.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Your Next steps...

