WEEK ONE: THE KEY TO CHANGE IS MORE OF THE SAME
Pastor Steven opened 2015 with The Power of Same series, preaching from John 15 on embracing the process of sameness to bring about the change we seek in our lives.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revelation 2:1-5</th>
<th>Genesis 26:18</th>
<th>Joshua 6:11-20</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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THE POWER OF SAME
-Pastor Steven opened this week’s sermon by setting the premise for the series as a whole. As we begin a new year, many of us are looking to set new goals, make new changes, and seek new results. However, the key to the changes we seek might not be in starting something new, but in committing to more of the same.
-In a society that celebrates whatever is “new” or “next,” the word “same” can have a negative connotation. Sameness can be seen as stagnant, stupid, stubborn, or scared. Therefore, it’s easy to overlook sameness so that we wouldn’t fall into a trap of doing things that don’t work, never change, and in fear the uncertain future.
-Yet while new is sought-after, change is celebrated. For example, successful marriages stand the test of time. Successful jobs are those that allow you to grow and progress within the same organization over time.
-As Pastor Steven preached, this series is all about realizing a sacred sameness. Our God stands unchanging through time as the source of our strength. The power of same is the culmination of our consistancy with Him.

IF YOU RESIST THE MONOTONOUS, YOU’LL MISS THE MIRACULOUS
-Jesus said in John 15:1, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” We cannot grow without being connected to Christ, our source, and allowing God to prune and clean and make room for growth in our lives.
-This is the power of same—committing to the process of staying close to God and allowing Him to shape us as we grow and change over time.
-This monotonous process can seem unappealing, but it is the only way to truly experience lasting change.
-Joshua, when told to take the city of Jericho, obeyed God’s commands to march his army around the city for seven straight days. It’s significant to note that in Scripture, the number six is representative of the incomplete efforts of man, while the number of seven is indicative of the perfect completion of God. If Joshua would have resisted this monotonous, he would have missed the miracle of seeing the wall fall on the seventh day.
-Many of the things we attribute to luck or happenstance can be achieved through a monotonous commitment to practice. If we want to meet our physical goals, we cannot resist the monotony of consistent diet and exercise. If we want to grow spiritually, we cannot resist consistent Bible reading, prayer, and worship.

REPEAT THE RIGHT THINGS UNTIL THE ROUTINE IS THE REWARD
-In John 15:2, Jesus says, “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”
-Spiritual growth is a continual process of allowing God to transform us by removing things that hurt us and opening ourselves up to allow His blessing to flow in our lives.
-Pastor Steven likened this to how we train for activities or goals. Many desire the reward, but fewer appreciate the routine. Many of us struggle with change because we can become dissatisfied with our progress until we actually reach our desired goals. However, the mark of our maturity is our ability to repeat the right things until the routine becomes our reward.
-Pastor Steven taught us that repetition is what takes an action from the intellectual to the instinctual level. Just like learning a new skill, when we lock in the right patterns of living, the routine becomes the reward.

YOU’LL NEVER ARRIVE IF YOU CAN’T ABIDE
-In John 15:3 (NKJV), Jesus spoke, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”
-This is the essence of the change we seek in any area of our lives—we will not arrive at our goals until we abide in the One responsible for creating, changing, and blessing us every day.
-The key to change is to remain with and abide in God everyday—He is the power of same.