

TALK IT OVER

When You Need a Fresh Start

The Awesome Power of Vision – Part 2

Rick Warren

January 16-17, 2021

Open your group in prayer, and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions in the message notes, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions towards the end of the document.

Message Notes

Talk It Over

God: “...I'll save the people of Joseph. I know their pain and I'll make them as good as new. They'll get a FRESH START, as if nothing had ever happened! Why? Because I am their God, and I'll do what needs to be done for them.” Zechariah 10:6 (Mes)

God: “I will make a FRESH START with Israel. They will burst into bloom like a crocus in the spring.” Hosea 14:5b (Mes)

“God gives a hand to those down on their luck, and he gives a FRESH START to those who are ready to quit.” Psalm 145:14 (Mes)

Question 1

God specializes in giving people fresh starts! What are the promises God gives his people in the verses above? How has God given you a fresh start—in small ways or big?

SIMPLE STEPS TO A FRESH S.T.A.R.T.

STOP MAKING EXCUSES FOR NOT STARTING

Talk It Over

Excuse 1: I don't have what it takes

“Then Gideon started making excuses: He said ‘But Lord, how can I save the nation of Israel? I belong to Manasseh, the smallest tribe, and my family is the weakest and poorest family in the tribe. And, I am the youngest and least important person in my family!’ Then the Lord replied, ‘But I will be with you.’” Judges 6:15-16a

Excuse 2: I've failed in the past

“The Lord says this: ‘Do not cling to events of the past and do not dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do! It is happening already. Just look and you can see it starting now!’” Isaiah 43:18-19a (TEV)

"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." Proverbs 28:13 (LB)

Excuse 3: There are things I can't control

"Don't give up and act helpless in times of trouble." Proverbs 24:10 (CEV)

Excuse 4: I don't know what the future holds

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." Ecclesiastes 11:4 (LB)

Question 2

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses! The story of life for so many. What can be learned from the verses above about taking the emphasis off excuses and instead moving forward as we listen to God and trust in Him?

TAKE STOCK OF WHAT I HAVE

Talk It Over

ASK: What are my assets?

"You have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He's the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power." Colossians 2:10 (LB)

ASK: What have I learned?

"You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope not!" Galatians 3:4 (ICB)

"You should continue following the teachings you learned. You know they are true, because you trust those who taught you." 2 Timothy 3:14 (NCV)

ASK: Who could help me?

"Get all the advice you can and you'll succeed; without it you'll fail." Proverbs 15:22 (TEV)

Question 3

How do the scriptures above encourage us to take a personal inventory as an important step to a fresh start? Which of these "ASK's" do you struggle with? What benefit have you received from getting advice from others in accordance with Proverbs 15:22 above? Discuss how your ego can hinder this step.

ACT IN FAITH!

Talk It Over

"According to your faith let it be done to you." Matthew 9:29b (NIV)

"We should make plans—counting on God to direct us." Proverbs 16:9 (LB)

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6a (NIV)

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com

Question 4

Why is setting goals a sign of having faith in God according to the verses above? Even in uncertain times, we can still make plans for things we want to DO (scenario planning) and who we want to BE (character goals). Scenario planning is setting multiple goals or plans depending on what scenario happens. What plans and goals can you set today based on scenario planning and character development?

REFOCUS MY MIND

Talk It Over

"Be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind, having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude."

Ephesians 4:23 (Amp)

- **Listen More to God's Word than the World**

"Happy are those who... are always meditating on God's Word.... They are like trees along a river... that do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do." Psalm 1:1-3 (TEV)

- **Think about what I think about**

"Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts." Proverbs 4:23 (TEV)

Question 5

As we're starting this New Year, we're challenged to change our focus from coping with the pandemic and election conflict to a more spiritual and Biblical point of view. According to Psalm 1:1-3 and the verses above, how can we renew our spirits by refocusing our minds?

TRUST THAT GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING

Talk It Over

"When the clay pot that the potter was forming on the wheel didn't turn out the way he intended, he simply started over, using the same clay to make a new pot." Jeremiah 18:4

"Then God said to Jeremiah, 'Can I not do with you as the potter does? Just as the potter works the clay in his hand, so are you in my hand and I am working on you.'" Jeremiah 18:5-6

"When anyone becomes united with Christ, he becomes a new person inside. He is not the same anymore. The old life is gone and a fresh new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

"God, make a FRESH START in me! Shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life." Psalm 51:10 (Mes)

Question 6

In the verses above, God gave Jeremiah and us a beautiful, life-changing principle and promise that surrender to him is the first step in reshaping our life, no matter the shape it may be in. Talk about what is keeping you from surrendering to God and allowing him to reshape your life for his glory and for yours. Spend time praying about constant surrender and note areas you find harder than others to let go. Ask God for focused help in these areas.

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

- Today if you prayed & gave your life to Jesus for the first time, TEXT NEWSTART (one word) to 83000 or EMAIL NEWSTART@saddleback.com
- We meet in small groups for support. To join an online small group during COVID-19, TEXT SMALLGROUP to 99000 or EMAIL SMALLGROUP@saddleback.com
- We give thanks to God for the past week by giving our tithe & offering. You can give online at <https://saddleback.com/GIVE>. Help us feed tens of thousands.

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