



FOCUS in 2020

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Fresh Start

How many of you love Mondays? **I love Mondays**, a new day for a new week! **It is a fresh start.**

Humans are pretty much engineered for fresh starts. Our brain is hardwired to respond to new stimuli as a part of our learning processes.

I like new and different. There is something in the human spirit that naturally draws us toward new things and **fresh beginnings**.

A new **day**, new **week**, new **month**, new **year**, new **decade** ...

I love new **projects**, blank **pages**, new **adventures** ...

Every new beginning comes from some other beginnings end!
Seneca

Behold, **I am doing a new thing**; now it springs forth, **do you not perceive it?** I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
Isaiah 43:18-19

The life **before** you is more important than the life **behind** you.

How to Make a **Fresh Start**

The core message of the gospel is a **fresh start**.

Sinners, who have deliberately rebelled against their Creator, have been offered a new beginning, purchased by the blood of Jesus on the Cross.

The gospel is **also** one of **fresh starts, plural**.

No matter how many times we stumble, no matter how many times we rebel, no matter how many times we make the selfish choice, **God's grace gives us a fresh start**. His mercies really are new every morning.

We serve a God of forgiveness. We serve a God of patience. We serve a God of grace. Our Lord stoops down again and again, not because we are deserving, but because he is loving. And if he weren't, there would not be much hope for any of us.

1. Begin with a new **heart** ...

And I will **give them one heart**, and a **new spirit I will put within them**. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh ...
Ezekiel 11:19

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and **put their trust in the LORD**.

Psalm 40:3

Neither is **new wine put into old wineskins**. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

Matthew 9:17

If you keep **doing** what you are **doing**, you will keep **getting** what you are **getting**.

2. Let go of the **past** ...

You cannot reach for anything new if your hands are full of yesterday's junk.

Remember not the **former things**, nor consider **the things of old**.

Isaiah 43:18

This is in reference to the exodus; there is a new journey, a new exodus that God is taking us through and the exodus is a symbol of the journey that we all take leaving the slavery of sin and our past, letting go and journeying with God into an unknown future.

Does the past keep staying around? Does it keep reminding you of your failures, your faults, your shortcomings?

- Ask for and receive forgiveness from God and others.
- Forgive yourself – you are not God.
- See a Christian counselor.
- Take Faithwalking.

The past is always **present** ... it does not **define** you; it **informs** you.

3. Take hold of your **future**.

The future will just happen ... you do not have to do anything ... accept wait or do you? If God is calling you into a future of His making, then we are to prepare for that future by planning.

How to make a plan ...

- Pray for **direction**.

The heart of man plans his way, but **the Lord establishes his steps.**
Proverbs 16:9

Never be afraid to trust an **unknown** future to a **known** God.
Corrie Ten Boom

- Develop your **plan**.

If you **fail** to plan, then you **plan** to fail.

- A financial plan
- A family meal plan
- A vacation plan
- A spiritual growth plan
- A date night plan
- A neighborhood plan
- A business plan
- A bible reading plan
- A plan

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Luke 14:28-33

- In Humility, **trust** God for the **results**.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.**" As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

James 4:13-16

- When you **fall** ... get up.
- Do not just do something ... **stand** there.

4. Embrace each new day as a **Fresh Start!**

New **mercy**

Jeremiah writes in Lamentations 3:22-23

The **steadfast love** of the Lord **never ceases**; his mercies never come to an end; they are **new every morning**; great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:22-23

True **trust**

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, **I am making all things new.**" Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
Revelation 21:5