

## Reset

### Part 4: Truths and Vision to Living Into

Last week, Pastor Steve looked at individual spiritual practices that help us to reset.

Today, we are talking about corporate practices that help us to pursue deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus in this season.

#### **Review:**

*Reset* is one of the redemptive assignments for responding to this season when COVID-19, racial unrest and injustice, political divisiveness, fear, and anger have knocked so many people off their center and game.

The Lord has spoken to us about pursuing deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus for 2020 (*Draw me after your heart and let run with you, Song of Songs 1:4*). Our journey began with a time of returning to our first love from August – December of 2019-- *First Love: Remember. Repent. Renew (Revelation 2:1-7)*. Then, we began 2020 with a *21-Day First Love Fast*. Then, COVID hit. And we found ourselves in the middle of a global reset.

In this season of reset, we can **be encouraged** because we have been hearing from the Lord. We can **have hope** because our God is leading us into his purposes and future. And, we can **have faith** that we can face anything because of our intimate relationship with God. He is the source of our wisdom, strength, and grace.

In *Reset Part 2*, we said that how we respond to grief, stress, anxiety, and crisis are opportunities to learn, change, and grow.

How are you responding to grief, stress, anxiety, and crisis?

**There are forces that want to rob you of your faith, hope, and love. They want you full of fear and hatred.**

1. Media
2. Culture
3. Politics
4. Principalities, powers, and world forces of darkness

**Here are some truths to live into:**

1. **Workability:** Is what you are doing working? Is there fruit? Look at where you are compared to where you were.
  - a. **What doesn't work:**
    - i. **Hiding or covering up your pain and hurts** with busyness, binge watching, video games, social media, alcohol, drugs, or other things, even other good things.
    - ii. **Denial:** pretending that nothing is wrong.
    - iii. **Coping:** some people just seek to find coping mechanisms, but don't really deal with the root issues that are affecting them.
    - iv. **Avoidance:** ignoring our stuff and hoping it goes away.
    - v. **Blaming** someone or something else for what you are feeling, thinking, and doing.
    - vi. **Cutting off:** get a new marriage, a new car, a new game, a new church, a new job; move to a new city; etc.
  - b. **What works:**
    - i. **Reflective life:** pursuing deep intimacy with the Lord; growing in the grace of **awareness**; learning to hear the voice of the Lord.
    - ii. **Authentic community:** walking in the light; sharing with others what you think, feel, and believe, and listening (trusting the process); growing in the capacity to be **authentic** (open and honest about what you think, feel, and believe); growing in interdependence.
    - iii. **Radical alignment (obedience):** pursuing full partnership with Jesus in what he is doing in your spheres of influence, in your responsibilities and relationships; **alignment** (radical obedience).
    - iv. **Application:** It is helpful for us to find some individual and corporate spiritual practices that help us connect with the Lord and with one another. Try them on and see what works for you, what helps you access your courage and the Lord's grace, or what helps you get a breakthrough.
      1. Last week, Pastor Steve talked about some individual spiritual practices you can try on.
      2. This week, I want to talk about some corporate spiritual practices that can help produce the fruit in our lives that we want to see.
  - c. Workability is one truth that we want to live into.
2. **Positive declaration:** Our places of breakdown are opportunities to learn and change.
  - a. Our breakdowns or mess ups don't have to be failures; they don't have to define us; rather, they can be learning experiences.

- b. Practice doesn't make perfect. Practice makes progress. Progress is made in public. And public progress is messy.
  - c. Our places of breakdown are opportunities to learn and to change. Such a positive declaration is another truth to live into.
3. **Invitation:** We can respond to the Lord's invitation to pursue deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus, even in the midst of this tumultuous season.
- a. *"Draw me after your heart and let me run with you!" (Song of Songs 1:4).*
  - b. May this be the prayer and intention for each of us in this season.
  - c. God is inviting us to come near and to join him. That is another truth to live into.

**Last week, Pastor Steve also talked about principles of spiritual practices.** I want to highlight why we engage in spiritual practice and what spiritual practices are and what they do.

#### **Why engage in a spiritual practice?**

1. It is your opportunity to acknowledge how great God's love is for you.
2. It involves remembering how much God cares for you. Our response is: I care about God because he loves me.
3. It brings us into a life of walking and talking with God.
4. It is our response to the longing in the heart of God to be with us.
5. It is our response to God's love; we are loving God back.

Those are some reasons why we engage in spiritual practices.

#### **What are spiritual practices and what do they do?**

1. **Spiritual practices are proven activities to help our spirit to rule and reign over our bodies** (Galatians 5:16).
  - a. *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16 ESV).*
  - b. There are some things we do that have a track record of transformation and workability. And, they have been proven over the years in the Word of God and throughout church history.
  - c. By engaging in these practices, the Spirit of God rules and reigns in our lives.

- d. Our spirit and our flesh are meant to be harmonized, to work together. But the spirit is meant to reign.
  - e. Spiritual practices harmonize the body and spirit and allow the spirit to reign. If your flesh is in charge, then petty desires will rule and reign over you.
  - f. The body is something the Spirit can use for the glory of God.
  - g. Flesh is a flexible metaphor. It is your essential humanity. Like money, it can be used for good or evil.
2. **Spiritual practices help us to have fellowship with God** (1 Corinthians 1:9).
- a. In order to live godly lives, we need to be real with God. Spiritual practices help us to present ourselves to the Lord and to be present to the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).
    - i. *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB).*
  - b. Your spirit will wither if you don't connect with God.
3. **Spiritual practices are our pathway to freedom.**
- a. True freedom is not the power to do what you want to do.
    - i. Freedom is the ability to be what you want to be.
  - b. Spiritual practices establish the freedom in us to be who we want to be in God.
    - i. These practices foster the union of Spirit and flesh.
    - ii. This union gives us significance.

**Reset Part 4: What are some corporate practices that encourage reset?**

**What are some corporate spiritual practices that help us to grow in awareness, authenticity, and alignment?**

1. **The spiritual practice of walking in the light: spending time reflecting with the Lord and others what you think, feel, and believe.**
  - a. It is so important to keep sharing and connecting with God and others about what you think, feel, and believe (1 John 1:7; James 5:16). We need each other. We need to learn how to pour out our hearts to the Lord. And, I pray that you will find others with whom you can share your heart.
  - b. I have been encouraged as I have heard people opening up about what they are feeling and experiencing. I am encouraged that people are growing in awareness of the loss and grief that they have experienced.

And, I am glad that when we share, we are opening the door to new courage, strength, and hope.

- c. Spend time reflecting with the Lord and others what you think, feel, and believe.
2. **The spiritual practice of dialogue: discerning with others what the Spirit is saying.**
    - a. Acts 13:1-3. Barnabas and Saul sent off.
    - b. Acts 15:1-21. The Council at Jerusalem.
    - c. Acts 16:6-10. Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia.
  3. **The spiritual practice of corporate worship: seeking and encountering the Lord together** (Hebrews 10:24-25).
    - a. **Why do we gather together?**
      - i. To follow the example of Jesus (Luke 4:16).
        1. *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read (Luke 4:16 NIV).*
      - ii. To respond not the call of Jesus who calls us to follow him in committed communities of his followers (Matthew 4:19).
      - iii. To worship God together, to meet with God, and to encounter God, as is illustrated in the Word of God, in Heaven, and in the church throughout history.
      - iv. To recount our history, to tell our current stories, and to make a journey together. (See all of Psalm 145.)
        1. *One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts (Psalm 145:4 NIV).*
      - v. To get equipped, to receive inspiration, and to experience impartation. (See Acts 2:37-47).
      - vi. To mobilize around a common vision that we might go out and introduce the kingdom of God to our spheres of influence (Mark 1:14-15).
    - b. **Why do we gather together?**
      - i. *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24–25 NIV).*
      - ii. To stir one another to love.
      - iii. To provoke one another to good deeds.
      - iv. To encourage and support one another, especially since crisis is the context of the finish. We need each other.

4. **The spiritual practice of worship through giving: learning to live generously and breaking the power of materialism and greed.**
  - a. **Malachi 3:8-12 is a word to the community of faith, not just to individuals. It has individual application, but it is a corporate word.**
  - b. 2 Corinthians 8:1-11.
  - c. **We have some guidelines for giving from this passage:**
    - i. Learn from the way others give.
    - ii. Give in proportion to what you have.
    - iii. Share what you have with those who are more needy.
    - iv. These principles can be applied to many more areas of life than wealth, for we called also to give of our time and our talents.
    - v. Yet genuine giving never works by rules and Paul never kept the rules! There is no carefully balanced equalization in 4:12 or 12:15. The widow who gave her all (Mark 12:41–44) did not make herself financially equal to others, and she was commended by Jesus. So Paul drops a blockbuster into his neat argument, and it all blows up in our faces: “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (v. 9). Here is no careful consideration by Christ of the proportion to be given out of what he had and no expectation that in his need he would receive from those to whom he was giving. Paul is not thinking of the actual poverty of Jesus’ earthly life: a poor wandering preacher with no place to lay his head. He is not contrasting the poverty of the cow shed of his birth with the magnificence of the palace where he might have been born. Rather Paul is contrasting heaven with earth. Before his incarnation Jesus was rich in every way; incarnate he lost all. The final standard of our giving is not to be the result of a careful calculation of how much will be left when we have given. Nor ought we to be thinking of how much we will receive from others should we fall into need. The only standard is the love of Christ. In the light of that can we hold back anything? (Best, E. (1987), *Second Corinthians* (p. 80), Atlanta, GA: J. Knox Press.)
5. **The spiritual practice of doing life with others in small groups: discovering our interdependence and synergy (Acts 2).**
  - a. Acts 2:36–47.
  - b. Acts 5:12–16.
  - c. **Where did the followers of Jesus meet?**
    - i. In their homes (from house to house).
    - ii. In the large corporate gatherings (in the portico of the temple).

- iii. In missional communities, like on the streets for example.
- d. **What did they do?**
  - i. They were partnering with others to serve the poor, the marginalized, and those in need; to work for the common good; and, to restore individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God's design.
  - ii. Doing life together in small groups or missional communities is where we are known and can be known.
  - iii. Doing life together in small groups or missional communities where we practice doing ministry and receiving ministry.
- e. **How do we do small groups today in a time of pandemic?**
  - i. Meet in person as is possible.
  - ii. Use technology as a necessary, useful tool, to connect with others.
- f. **What can you do when you get together?**
  - i. Practice authenticity. Here are some check in questions you can use to help you grow in your capacity to be authentic. Answer one or two of the following questions.
    - 1. What are you celebrating?
    - 2. What are you learning?
    - 3. What challenge(s) are you facing?
    - 4. What transformation are you currently working on?
    - 5. Where are you stuck or stopped?
    - 6. Where are you resistant?
    - 7. What do you need to say?
  - ii. Consider reading and processing the Word of God or processing the sermons you have heard.
  - iii. Spend time worshipping and celebrating the Lord.
  - iv. Have ministry time and pray for one another.
  - v. Seek to meet needs.
  - vi. Reach out to others.
- 6. **The spiritual practice of serving others: going about doing good in the name of Jesus** (Acts 10:38; Acts 6:1-7; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:9-12).
  - a. The spiritual practice of serving others increases our capacity to love God and to love others (Matthew 22:37-39). In serving alongside the Lord and others, we encounter the Lord and are transformed.
  - b. You can serve on ministry teams and practice praying for others.
  - c. You can serve in your neighborhoods.
  - d. You can serve in your local schools.
  - e. You can serve in food pantries, pregnancy assistance ministries, and other compassion efforts.
  - f. You can serve those in prison, in the hospital, and in need.

- g. You can work to bring wholeness to any area of brokenness in the community, like victims of sex trafficking, victims of natural disasters, etc.
  - h. The ideas for missional service are as diverse as the contexts where you live, work, and play.
7. **The spiritual practice of corporate prayer: getting together with others for worship and prayer is one of the most transformational activities you can do.**
- a. In small groups of prayer (Acts 13:1-3).
  - b. In larger corporate prayer meetings (Joel 2:12-19; Acts 4:23-31).
  - c. As modeled by what is going on around the throne of God in huge gatherings of worship and prayer (Revelation 4 – 5).
  - d. The Lord has used the spiritual practice of corporate prayer to significantly transform my life. In the place of corporate prayer, I have learned to hear the voice of the Lord, to discern what the Lord is saying and doing, and to grow in the revelatory.

**Summary:**

There are individual spiritual practices that help us to reset.

And, there are corporate spiritual practices that help us to pursue deep intimacy and full partnership with Jesus in this season.

I want to encourage you to find a rhythm of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly spiritual practices that help you to grow in **awareness** of God, in **authenticity** with God and others, and in **alignment** (radical obedience) with the ways of Jesus and the mission of Jesus.