

☞ Routes to Renewal

Last week: Plant the good we know to do; Plow up the hardened parts of our lives; Pursue God wholeheartedly as our top priority.

☞ Have you ever felt like your life was **empty and dry**?

Have you ever felt **run down spiritually**?

How about being **disillusioned**? Perhaps a Christian let you down in some way.

There are seasons to life and we all go through “winter” or a “dry season” from time to time. We’ve all been there. But recently God has been speaking to us about renewal. **It’s ☞ time to be renewed** so that God can pour the new wine of his presence into us once again.

David experienced a dry season when he was living amongst the Philistines. He was avoiding Saul out of sincere respect for his office. And, he was fighting the enemies of Israel even while he was away from his homeland. So, he was doing the right thing, and yet life happened to him, and his friends were turning against him.

☞ **1. You can Strengthen Yourself** in God

1 Samuel 30:6

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. NKJV

We’ve talked a couple of times already about simply making a decision to get on the right track. It won’t always be the dry season and there are things we can do to be renewed.

☞ **There is hope! You don’t have to stay down.** You can come back. You can be renewed!

Samson was a mighty man of God, but his compromise led him to losing all of his power when his hair was cut off. He had become a prisoner and a laughing stock of his enemies.

Judges 16:22 (Samson)

But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

☞ **2. If sin is the cause then you’ll need to Repent**

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

Until you come to see the horror of sin as God does, you will never grow spiritually

--Oswald Chambers... *Never mistake remorse for repentance; remorse simply puts a man in hell while he is on earth.*

Repentance is to be sorry enough to quit.

*Many times, when someone asks for counseling regarding a troubled situation they are dealing with, the simplest fix to the problem is repentance. **Stop doing what you know is wrong** and your problems will begin to fade.*

☞ **Brutally Honest Pastor - video**

In The Essential Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Watterson, the cartoon character Calvin says to his tiger friend, Hobbes, "I feel bad that I called Susie names and hurt her feelings. I'm sorry I did it."

"Maybe you should apologize to her," Hobbes suggests. Calvin ponders this for a moment and replies, "I keep hoping there's a less obvious solution."

Psalms 24:3-4

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart (*so, repent*)

☞ **3. Sometimes you just need to Do what you used to do**

Revelation 2:4-5

You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.

Before center consoles and seatbelt laws....

Wife: Remember how we used to sit close when we were dating? You'd drive with one arm and put your other arm around me? I miss those days.

Husband: I haven't moved anywhere!

Psalms 42:1-4

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.

- ☞ **When you were first saved, what did you do?**
- Think about times **when you really experienced the presence and power of God.** What were you doing then?

- Things like... praying a lot; reading your Bible; telling others about your faith; being faithful to go to church; worshiping with your whole heart, etc.

Do those things again!

☞ **4. Read God's Word**; it has supernatural power to change us

Ephesians 5:25-27

...washing with water through the word...

Acts 20:32

...the word of his grace, which can build you up...

Hebrews 4:12

the word of God is living and active...

We've talked a lot about this one over the past several weeks. Dust off your Bible and read it. Spend time just soaking in the Word of God.

Matthew 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

☞ **Personal devotions; Discipleship 1:1; Small Groups**

When a Soviet official was asked why a study of the Bible was frowned upon in his country, and why those who dared to print and distribute it were severely punished, he replied, "We find that the reading of the Book changes people in a way that is dangerous to our state!"

☞ **5. You might need to Spend more time with other Believers**

Hebrews 10:24-25

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.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

--Corrie ten Boom... Be united with other Christians. A wall with loose bricks is not good. The bricks must be cemented together.

Some have been very slack in church attendance and that can lead to spiritually dry times. So, be faithful; come early; stay late; hang out outside of the church.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

☞ Therefore **encourage one another** and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. (Christians who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.)

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. (If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.) When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. (It pays to take turns doing hard jobs) The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. (What do we say when we honk from behind?)

☞ **6. There's power in Gratitude**

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I keep coming back to this Attitude of Gratitude. It is so simple and yet people miss it all the time.

It is probable that in most of us the spiritual life is impoverished and stunted because we give so little place to gratitude.

--Henry Ward Beecher... Pride kills thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grows. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.

☞ Don't grumble because you don't have what you want--**be thankful you don't get what you deserve.**

Dr. Paul Tripp says that Gratitude is the DNA of Joy.

If you've been feeling down and lost your joy, then begin expressing gratitude for something and keep adding to it.

☞ **7. Turn up the volume by Praying in the Holy Spirit**

Jude 20

But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
NKJV

Romans 8:26

the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the
☞ **Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.

--William Barclay... Real prayer is simply being in the presence of God. When I am in trouble, and when I go to my friend, I don't want anything from him except himself. I just want to be with him for a time, to feel his comradeship, his concern, his caring, and then to go out to a world warmer because I spent an hour with him. It must be that way with me and God. I must go to him simply for himself.

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

☞ **Prayer Meeting today at 5:00 pm.**

R. A. Torrey lamented the average believer's indifference to prayer by writing: How little time the average Christian spends in prayer! We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little... the power of God is lacking in our lives and in our work. We have not because we ask not.

1. ☞ **Strengthen yourself**
2. **Repent**
3. **Do what you did at first**
4. **Read God's Word**
5. **Be with other believers**
6. **Express gratitude**
7. **Pray in the Spirit**

The King is Among Us