

THE TAKE AWAY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sunday, February 6, 2022

Message Summary:

This week, Pastor A.R. Bernard launched us into a new series called RENEW and taught us the five elements of renewal. Everything God does, he does according to a pattern and based on a principle. A principle is a broad and basic truth. A pattern is an arrangement of things that produce certain results. Your life is a pattern based on the result of the rhythm of how you have arranged your life. If the pattern is healthy, you can continue in that pattern. It is working for you. But if the pattern is bad, you have to introduce change to change the pattern so that it stops working against you, and starts working for you. Life requires and is reliant upon structures, systems or patterns that we depend upon.

We as a church family are now in a cycle of renewal. While our pastor is being renewed, we will be going through a parallel process of renewal, rejuvenation and strengthening. The transformation of one individual can transform a whole society or community. Renewal goes through a process that begins with the individual. When we think of renewal in the Christian context, we immediately think of revival. Revival that is initiated by God starts small, but will begin to spread. God is breathing on us a spirit of refreshing and renewal. When we renew, we get refreshed. And it is a partnership with God. We are engaged together.

Renewal Defined: *Reawakening of passion, fervor and creativity towards purpose.*

Renewal stirs hope – hope in the future. Isaiah 43 is God saying to us: “Never mind what I did in the past. It is the future I want you to look toward.” We have a choice to make. We can look to the future with fear or faith, but remember, God calls us people of faith and hope, those called to look expectantly to the future. Hope has a powerful effect on the mind, will and emotions. And what you hope in is critical. When you think from the framework of hope, you should get excited about the future. Here’s why:

1. **Hope opens the mind to new creative possibilities.** Because when you’re in hope, you think about what is possible. Hope stirs possibilities and energizes creativity. And we are most like God when we are creative.
2. **Hope motivates the will.** It activates you to begin to make choices.
3. **Hope empowers you with joy which leads to courage.** You are most courageous when you are filled with joy and hopeful about what God is doing and will do in your life.
4. **Hope helps you heal faster.** Renewal is about healing. Over time, systems and structures wear down and must be renewed. Hope aids the healing process.

What does renewal look like:

1. **ELEMENT 1: PERSONAL RENEWAL.** You begin to reevaluate your personal life. You begin to reconsider your personal values, what matters to you most. Your values determine the way you think. And your purposes determine the way you act. You begin to reevaluate your core activities, what you are engaged in. Remember, just because you are moving doesn’t mean you are progressing. Never confuse movement with progress. Ask instead: Do these activities align with my values? If not, you need to cut away all the stuff that doesn’t need to be there. You want outcome, not output. Outcome happens naturally, output happens intentionally.

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2. **ELEMENT 2: RELATIONAL RENEWAL.** Relationships are the foundation of life. All change comes by way of relationship. When we are in renewal, we begin to reevaluate the relationships in our life that impacts us most. Relationally, people occupy different spaces in our life, and you have a responsibility to manage the people in the spaces of your life. You determine what space they occupy based on (1) their level of maturity (access with vulnerability and transparency) and (2) their purpose (specific time and season for a purpose). The three R'S of assessing the occupied spaces of relationship are: RETRAIN, REPOSITION and RETIRE. Reevaluating begins with gratitude for the people in your life who add to your life, instead of taking away from your life.
3. **ELEMENT 3: PURPOSE RENEWAL.** This is where you begin to reexamine your calling, your occupation, your mission, your passion, etc. You begin to ask again: "Why am I here?" You refine your purpose, and refamiliarize yourself with what God has purposed for your life for this season, and ultimately, for your future.
4. **ELEMENT 4: STRUCTURAL RENEWAL.** This is reevaluating how your life is structured. These are the patterns of your life: your time, your habits, your actions or activities. Do they serve you well?
5. **ELEMENT 5: CULTURAL RENEWAL.** God renews the individual to ultimately affect the culture. Culture is totality of the character of society. We have a responsibility to discern the times.

Key Scriptures:

- **[Jeremiah 3:15 NKJV]** 15 "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.
- **[Isaiah 43:18-21 ESV]** 18 "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. 19 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. 20 The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, 21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does "renewal" mean to you?
2. What do you expect God to call your attention to in your life that needs to change?
3. Where do you feel you need refreshing?

Life Application:

This week as you study the key scriptures, consider what Pastor Bernard said, "You want outcome, not output. Outcome happens naturally, output happens **intentionally**." In each of the five elements of renewal, where do you need where do you need to intentionally change your output? Where do you need to begin to intentionally renew your life? In each area, identify one element in your life (Personal, Relational, Purpose, Structural and Cultural) where you need to see renewal? And ask God to help you come up with a plan for the future, and the steps to walk out the refreshing that is purposed for you in this season.