



Becoming who YOU were created to BE

3hr Reboot – How to Guide

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Here is a mini-retreat/switch off opportunity for personal reflection. We're all getting used to leading a life that has many demands on our time and energy. All things which matter and add some value. Yet, when the financial year ends, it can come as a bit of a rude shock to realise Advent is closing in, and Christmas and New Year are just around the corner. The tail end of the year is fast approaching and so now is the ideal time to stop, take stock of the year that has been so far. A perfect opportunity to retreat and REBOOT, so we can finish the year Strong. We have put together a few ideas here for a 3-hour retreat from the rest of your life (you can extend it for a longer period of time if you have capacity for it).

Preparation

Duration: Minimum 3 hours. This is a time carved out for you and God, it's a worthwhile investment. 3 hours may be hard for some because it may feel like forever, or it may feel like not enough. Either way, trust that God has something good in store for you and give him those three hours. He can do a lot with a little.

Distractions: During this time, switch your phone off. '*Wait, what did she say?*' I know. How will the world operate if I don't keep my phone on me? Trust me, the world will keep turning for 3hours without you. Now, if for some reason you actually do need to be accessible incase of emergencies, use an app that blocks you out of your phone except for making emergency calls OR receiving calls from people who call multiple times in a short time span, and tell ONLY the people you would expect an emergency call from, to call you a couple of times if they absolutely need you. Otherwise, trust that you will be reached they need, and put that phone away. Apps like Off the Grid are a personal favorite of mine, or simply turning your phone off or on flight mode works as well.

Time: Pick a day that's conducive to a retreat, a day not already occupied by work or study or back-to-back commitments. For most of us, that will likely be a weekend. Then pick a time. If you have a set practice of worship, like the mass, don't make it part of your 3 hours, but instead either start or end your 3hours with it. Plan when your 3 hrs will take place, don't make it when you're usually exhausted like a Friday straight after work.

Environment: Plan where the 3hrs will take place. Create and clear a space free from distractions like assignments, projects, or bills laid out. If you share a space with others, maybe flat mates or with your family, consider letting them know you just need some quiet time for a bit, put up a 'do not disturb' sign if you need to. Plan ahead of time and create a focal point wherever you are. You might have an image, an icon, something to help you refocus your attention. Make sure you take a bible with you. Have a decent meal and keep a bottle of water with you, OR make yourself a cuppa and have some small snacks nearby. Remember, the aim is to minimise distractions and make it conducive to entering deeper prayer and relationship.

Activity: Choose an activity you do alone (not listening to podcasts or reading other materials) that makes you feel closest to God. For some it's meditation, others writing, others taking a walk, craft or artwork. Just be sure it's something you can do alone. The idea is to spend reflective time with God not accomplishing another task. Make sure you have everything you need for the next 3hrs.

Now you're set.

Start of Mini-Retreat

Start your 3 hrs with prayer for 10min. Just be in silence. As things come to mind, accept that they're there, tell Him *'this thought is on my mind Jesus'* and tell him how that thought impacts you in one sentence. Eg. *'I've got Laura on my mind, she's just come out of surgery Jesus, and I'm worried, thinking about how she's recovering'* or *'my assignment is on my mind Jesus, and I'm a little stressed about it'* or *'I'm thinking about the good news I just heard, and I'm really excited for it'*. Whatever the thought, accept that it's there, name how it impacts you and then hand that thought over to Jesus, and try to leave it with Him. If visuals help, visualize placing the thought down into a box and handing the box to him. He will keep it safe.

When you're ready, pull out your bible and read ONE of the following three passages;

Matthew 22:1-14 – Parable of the Marriage Feast

Mark 4:1-9 – Parable of the Sower

Luke 10: 25-37 - The Good Samaritan

Take your time.

Spend some time talking to Jesus about what you've read, what you think it means, and what comes to mind and resonates with you. Use the reflective questions to help you. See if you can find a word or phrase that particularly resonates, inspires, or moves you or that is repeating in your mind. Make a conscious effort to bring this word/phrase to mind repeatedly over the remainder of the 3hrs.

Spend approx. 30min on this section.

For Approx. 1hr, do the activity that brings you closer to God. Allow yourself to continue to converse with Jesus as you're doing this activity, just like you would if you and your friend were doing the task together. Tell Him about what you're doing, and why you do it this way, and how this brings you closer to Him. Ask Him how He would do it, and what He's thinking about, and what He wants you to know and pay attention to what comes up for you. Recall that word/phrase from before, to help you refocus when your thoughts begin to wander away from dialogue with God.

After an hour, wrap up the activity and start slowing back down again.

Spend the next 15min being vulnerable with Jesus and allow yourself to open your heart to him to let him see the places that are fearful, aching and hurting. Petition Him for help and ask Him what He would like you to do about your cross.

Re-open the bible and read ONE of the following four

psalms;

Psalm 3 - *Trust in God under Adversity*

Psalm 13 - *Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies*

Psalm 23 - *The Divine shepherd*

Psalm 42 - *Longing for God and His Help in Distress*

Spend approx. 5min reflecting on what it means to you, and what you're hearing Him say to you. Know that Jesus knows and understands exactly where you are at, and he wants to meet you there. No judgement, no quick fix attitude. But instead, fully attentive and attuned to your ach, and united to you, his heart aches with you. Allow yourself to accept that reality.

Read the following TWO passages;

John 5:1-9

Take a moment to acknowledge the weight of the crosses you carry in life, and the impact they have on you. Some of our challenge have made us weak, others paralyzed with fear. When we place ourselves where the Paralytic was and his desperate need to go into the water that's stirred up, we recognize just how desperate we are to be healed of these wounds, and have these burdens lifted. Jesus comes to us, not to carry us into some water which is what we thought we desperately needed, to be taken into a place where we have misplaced our faith, but rather to welcome us into his heart. Where we belong. Where his healing touch will bring us the ultimate change and transformation we're looking for. He takes our burdens upon himself, and united to him offers himself for us so that we might be made whole, new and perfect.

Mark 14:32-42

Take a couple of moments and when you're ready, thank Him for rising through the fear and pain to take up the cross which includes all of our burdens. Thank him for being there to help you carry your crosses too for he knows the cross intimately. Talk to Him about what it's like trying to pick up your cross in life and what difference it makes when we're conscious and aware of how much we need His help AND we allow him to help. See which (if any) of your burdens you're ready to place at the foot of the cross at Calvary and do so. For that which you're not ready to yet, ask him to help prepare you to be ready to detach from them.

Spend 15min naming all the things He has done for you, that you can be grateful for. All the people he has put on your path, or opportunities he has gifted that bring goodness into your life.

Read ONE of the following three psalms;

Psalm 27 *Triumphant song of Confidence*

Psalm 84 *The Joy of Worship in the Temple*

Psalm 111 *Praise for God's Wonderful Works*

Spend approx. 5min reflecting on what this means to you, and what you're hearing Him say to you. Allow yourself to accept that He is a Joyful and Loving God, who longs for you to experience Him, and experience his joy, and delight in you, the very love that he has for you.

Talk to him honestly about where you are at in your relationship with him, about your level of trust and surrender, and where you would like to be someday. Ask Him to help you get there.

Finally, bring to mind the word/phrase from the beginning of the retreat. Tell Him what you will be taking away from these 3 hrs, what your resolution will be.

Finish by making an act of sincere thanks for the last 3hrs. Maybe that's a prayer of thanks, maybe its writing a letter or a journal entry, touching an icon, visiting a church or kissing a crucifix. So long as it's genuine to you.

End of Mini-retreat

When you're ready, because at times it can feel daunting to return into the world, try not to jump straight back into busy and distractions, and looking at your phone. Allow yourself to ease back into your day. If there is a quieter, tranquil and peaceful approach to something today, take that option. Try to remember him throughout the rest of the week and the resolution you've gained. As you continue to stay open to Him, watch him use glimmers of those 3hrs over the coming weeks, and thank him for it.

Message us and let us know how you went.

Know that we have, and we will, continue to be praying for you.

- Virtue Ministry Team

Reflective Questions for Scripture Passage

Matthew 22:1-14

What is going on in this passage?

What does it mean?

What resonates with me?

If this is the passage of a marriage feast, then who is the King? The Son/bridegroom? And the Bride?

What might the wedding garment represent?

How would someone make sure they wore an appropriate wedding garment?

Where do I see myself in this passage?

If I were to enter that feast at the end of this reboot, would I be wearing an appropriate wedding garment? If not, what changes might I need to make to remain at the feast?



Reflective Questions for Scripture Passage

Mark 4:1-9

What is going on in this passage?

What does it mean?

What element resonates with me?

What might the different kinds and amounts of soil represent?

Where do you I see myself in this passage?

Re-read the last line (Mark 4:9); what might He be asking of me, personally in life?

If the seed represented the gift of Faith, how can I ensure it takes root in good soil?

How can I further nurture and grow in faith?



Reflective Questions for Scripture Passage

Luke 10: 25-37

What is going on in this passage?

What does it mean?

What element resonates with me?

Re-read Luke 10:27, how would I rate myself against this standard the Lord has set for us?
Where could I improve?

Who would Jesus say is my neighbour?

Who are the people in my life I pass by daily? Who goes unnoticed? OR who are the people I deliberately look away from? And what fear/insecurity do I have around that?

Where do I see myself in this passage?

Re-read the last line (Luke 10:37), What might He be asking me to consider and act on?

