

# A Fresh Start with My Future

Lesson 04 of the series, "Fresh Start"

## I. Many of us need a fresh start with our future.

### a. Some of us have given up hope.

"Don't call me Naomi," she responded. "Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me." Ruth 1:20 (NLT)

"Peace has been stripped away, and I have forgotten what prosperity is... 'Everything I had hoped for from the LORD is lost!' The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss." Lamentations 3:17-20 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must put our hope in God NOT our circumstances.

"Then the women of the town said to Naomi, 'Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!' ...they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David."

Ruth 4:14-17 (NLT)

"Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning."

Lamentations 3:21-23 (NLT)

"And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us... And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."

Romans 8:23, 26 (NLT)

### b. Some of us are afraid of the future.

"Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!" ...Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us... Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land... the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!" Numbers 14:3-10 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We don't have to be afraid of the future because God is with us.

"And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love." Romans 8:38 (NLT)

"If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" Romans 8:31 (NLT)

### c. Some of us don't realize that the decisions we make today determine our future.

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

"You will not enter and occupy the land I swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. You said your children would be carried off as plunder. Well, I will bring them safely into the land, and they will enjoy what you have despised." Numbers 14:30-31 (NLT)

*Life Application:* If we turn from our sins God will give us a fresh start.

"That is why the LORD says, 'Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead.'" Return

to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unending love. He is eager to relent and not punish.” Joel 2:12-13 (NLT)

## II. In order to have a fresh start with our future we need to make some important choices.

- a. We must choose to live with the end in mind.

“As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years....So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:10-12 (NASB)

- b. We must choose to say “No!”.

“I replied by sending this message to them: ‘I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?’ Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply.” Nehemiah 6:3-4 (NLT)

- c. We must choose our friends/advisors wisely.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” Psalm 1:1-6 (NIV)

- d. We must choose to surrender our lives to God everyday.

“I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

John Schmidt • 01-24-16 • [john@centeringlives.com](mailto:john@centeringlives.com)

### Connect Group Questions.

To prepare for this week’s meeting, take some time to focus on the following questions and write out a few brief answers. Be prepared to share them with your group.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching on “A Fresh Start with My Future” was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. What plans are you most excited about for 2016 (i.e. going back to school, vacation, weddings)? What things concern you the most about 2016 (i.e. elections, papers due, health issues)? Now read James 4:13-16 & Proverbs 16:3. What does it look like when we commit our plans to the Lord?
3. Read Lamentations 3:17-20 & Jeremiah 29:11. Discuss the following lyrics from the classic hymn “Great is thy Faithfulness.”

*“Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father. There is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not. As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be. Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Have you ever been through a tough time when you felt like giving up hope? What happened? How did you get through it? What role does our relationship with God play in overcoming sorrow and grief?

4. Read Numbers 13:26-14:10. Why did the Israelites whom God rescued from slavery refuse to enter the promised land when they arrived at the border? Am I doing anything in my life that requires faith? If not, why not? What is my greatest fear about trusting God with my life?
5. Read Psalm 90:10-12. Then answer the following questions:
  - What dreams have I put on hold? Why?
  - What activities in my life are time-wasters?
  - When will I be ready to tackle a God-sized challenge?
  - What “good” activities do I need to give up to make time for “the best” things I can be doing with my life?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

“When you were born, you were crying, and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so that when you die, you will be smiling and everyone around you will be crying.” Anonymous

“Security is a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.” Helen Keller

“People who know their lives will soon be over tend to feel a desperate urge to change. But a desperation to change is not enough. In order to sustain the changes, we have to be connected to a power source beyond ourselves... We have to move from willpower to the real power that comes from a connection to our creator.” ~ Kerry Shook

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is today.” Chinese proverb

**Resources:**

**The Principle of the Path: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be.** by: Andy Stanley, Thomas Nelson / 2010

**The Best Yes: Making Wise Decisions in the Midst of Endless Demands.** by Lysa TerKeurst, Thomas Nelson / 2014