

# SMALL GROUPS

***LIFE IS BETTER TOGETHER***

## “Releasing the Negative”

### ICEBREAKER |

What was your personal “Best of 2020?” The best book you read, movie you saw, TV show you watched? The best memory you have or the best experience you had? Share something great about last year with the group!

### INTRODUCTION |

How can we begin this new year and experience God’s best in 2021? While we don’t have a reset button for life, there are some things that God wants us to reset on a regular basis. Just like a computer needs to be powered off sometimes to be reset and run smoothly, there are some things that God wants us to do to reset our hearts, our minds and our souls, so that we can release the negative and experience His best for our lives in this new year.

## READ |

This year can be the best year of your life. No lie! It's amazing that every twelve months we get a reset of the calendar and a do-over. But God actually gives us a do-over every day.

*And the One sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"  
Revelation 21:5 (NLT)*

*Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning.  
Lamentations 3:23 (NLT)*

We would all like a do-over on so many things, but sadly there is no time machine to go back and correct our pasts. What we can do is live forward knowing that God has a reset each day for us.

**If there was a big reset button for your life this last year, what would you push it for? Sure, we would all like to cancel out the pandemic. But what is a personal moment you wish you could relive to make life better?**

## READ |

Pastor Dave gave us three ways to reset this year to make the most of life. The first one is: Reset by Remembering God's Goodness.

*I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember Your miracles of long ago.*

*Psalm 77:11 (NIV)*

Whenever you feel like you've been given the short end in life, just take out a piece of paper, divide it down the middle, and then write "God's Goodness" at the top of one column, "My Problems" at the top of the other. Then, start listing all the things that are going right in your life under the first column. Chances are, you'll forget all about the second column by the time you're done.

You see, remembering God's goodness is important because our natural inclination is to focus on our problems instead of remembering what He's done in our past, is doing in our present, and has planned for our future. Instead of focusing on what's right, we focus on what's wrong.

Remembering God's goodness resets our minds. It shifts our focus and allows us to see clearly.

**What is one good thing that happened this year that you forgot to thank God for? It may take you a moment to remember, so give yourself some time. Let the group know so that they can praise God with you!**

## **READ |**

The next way we can reset our year is by Releasing the Negative. There are so many ways that negative emotions, thoughts, and even behaviors can invade our lives. Most of the time we don't even notice them! We have to be on the alert when they pop up and take them out.

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

*Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)*

When you're struggling in a relationship with someone at home or work, do you ever struggle with these negative thoughts and behaviors? It's easy to let little things become big problems over time. Even the stuff we thought was dead and gone can rise from the grave. We end up rehearsing the bad things that people do to us and it can drive us back to the negative. Instead, let's release them in forgiveness.

**Here's an easy prayer that will help you the next time you need to release the negative:**

**“Holy Spirit, by Your power, I refuse to keep rehearsing and nursing what they did wrong. Though I don't feel like it, I choose to forgive them as You forgiven me. I release forgiveness so I can release this anger, this bitterness and this hurt.”**

## **READ |**

Finally, let's reset by Re-Engaging in Spiritual Activities. How do you reset in different areas of your life? Let's say you want to reset your schedule, your occupation, or maybe even your emotions. You might grab a self-help book that focuses us on ourselves.

That's fine, but when we take that same approach to our spiritual life it can actually be counterproductive. When we focus more on ourselves than on God or others, we may end up slipping back into bad selfish habits.

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.*

*Romans 12:1 (NLT)*

**What are some ways you can focus more on God and others and less on yourself this year? (Examples, Give more of your time to volunteering, Write thank you notes to those close to you, Spend your break time reading the Bible)**

## **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

This year can be the best year yet! And it all starts now. Reset your life by:

- Remembering God's Goodness
- Releasing the Negative
- Re-Engaging in Spiritual Activities

As you begin to build healthy habits this week that will guide you this year, make sure to focus on these three vital areas.

## SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

**Day 1:** *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

*Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)*

**Day 2:** *Our LORD, I will remember the things you have done, Your miracles of long ago.*

*Psalm 77:11 (CEV)*

**Day 3:** *Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.*

*Philippians 4:8 (MSG)*

**Day 4:** *We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.*

*2 Corinthians 10:5 (NLT)*

**Day 5:** *Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

*Ephesians 4:32 (NLT)*

