

SMALL GROUPS

LIFE IS BETTER TOGETHER

“3 Ways to Launch Well in 2021”

ICEBREAKER |

What's your best memory from high school?

INTRODUCTION |

Some things are easy to forget. Other things we want to hold onto. When we are too in love with the past, though, we miss out on so much today. God wants you to move forward in confidence and victory! He has so much planned for you in this coming year. So how do we forget about what's behind us and move on to what's for us?

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We all have reasons to like the “good ole’ days.” But the problem is, when we’re too in love with the past, we won’t be able to live in the now. Take a look at how God told Isaiah it was time to move on:

“But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NLT)

Don’t let your longing for the old things keep you from the new thing God is wanting to do. Believe that what He has in front of you is better than what’s behind.

We may have things in our past that are great, but we also have challenges we’d like to forget. Tough times have always produced the greatest leaders in our history. In fact, if not for each crisis, we may have never heard of them. Because they would have never had the opportunity to reach their potential.

What moment in your past that was a crisis at the time created something great in your present because you had the opportunity to rise to the occasion?

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Let’s look at three ways we can take the opportunity to reach our potential as we launch into 2021. The first thing to remember is: **Pray and Fast.**

Take a look at how the Lord taught us to pray:

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:5-6 (NLT)

Notice that Jesus gives us some very specific orders. It’s not about showing off or doing it for others. It’s about doing it in private so that the Lord will know and answer. And when we put these things in the right order – whether it’s prayer or fasting – that’s when we are rewarded.

Praying isn’t about being seen as spiritual, it’s about having an encounter with the Spirit of God. Fasting isn’t about losing weight, it’s about gaining a hunger for the things of God.

What has been your biggest challenge when it comes to fasting in the past? How have you overcome that? Share with the group to help each other as you enter a season of increased prayer and fasting.

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Next, we need to have **Faith**.

Faith is not just a belief or thought. It’s an action we take. That’s why so often we call it a step of faith. Take a look how one leader in the Bible took that same step:

*Then Peter **stepped forward** with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd...*

Acts 2:14 (NLT)

This is the same Peter who took a step out of the boat and walked on water. He's the same one who followed the steps of Jesus up the Mountain of Transfiguration. But he's also the same one who often put his foot in his mouth and even denied knowing Jesus.

We've all had mistakes in our past, but our future is only defined by taking steps of faith. One step after the other, without stopping. And we follow carefully in the path of Jesus.

Have you ever taken a step of faith that God rewarded? Share with the rest of the group. (Example, sharing your story with an unbeliever or praying for someone's healing outside of church)

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Lastly, we can launch into 2021 when we have a **Pioneering Spirit**.

To get what you've never had will often require you to do something you've never done. Many in the Bible knew this to be true. One individual, Paul, did this over and over again as a church planter. In fact, read this quick story about how pioneering he was:

That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"

Acts 16:9 (NLT)

Up until that time, no one in Europe had ever been told about Jesus. And Paul was going around Asia but had no plans to go any further. It took God sparking a moment of pioneering spirit to make him see just how far God wanted him to go!

What is something big and new you feel like God wants you to do in 2021? How can the rest of us help you see that happen?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Are you ready for 2021? God is! And He wants to see you launch into the new year in an amazing way. As you...

- **Pray and Fast,**
- **Increase your Faith,**
- **Take on a Pioneering Spirit,**

God CAN DO IT!

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1: *So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.*

Matthew 6:34 (NLT)

Day 2: *Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

Day 3: *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Day 4: *Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.*

1 Timothy 4:12 (NLT)

Day 5: *I run toward the goal, so I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done.*

Philippians 3:14 (CEV)

