

CCCHOW TO MAKE A FRESH START PART 2

Preparing for the New Year 2009

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NCV)

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Last week we start a series called, "How to make a fresh start in 2007. Last week I said the fact really is, you're going to fail quite often in 2007. Last week I said, "It's not a matter of if you will fail – the question is when will you fail... you will fail and you will fail many, times." Why, because nobody's perfect. We all make mistakes. We are all going to have setbacks. We are all going to have problems. We're going to make mistakes. We're going to have defeats and losses in the

year coming 2009.

As we begin this New Year – 2009 – I want us to look at "How Do You Make A Fresh Start?" What is God's way of you making a fresh start in 2009? In other words... regardless of what happened in '08 in your life, how do I get a fresh start for 2009?

The Bible says that God is very interested in your future. Read with me Isaiah 43:18 "*The Lord says, 'forget about what has happened before. Do not think about the past. Instead, look at the new things I'm going to do.'*" (Repeat)

Circle "forget about". Forget about what's happened before. God says don't think about the past. It's over. The book's closed on it. Not only will He give you a fresh new start but He will be there to help you to

make a fresh start.

See friends, God is far more interested in your future than He is in your past. He says, “Forget about your past. Forget about the former things. Don't think about it, don't let your past hold you down. Look at the new things I'm going to do.” That's where God wants your focus, “**what new things is He going to do.**”

How Do You Make A Fresh Start?

The first things we need to do is:

S – Stop making excuses.

We talked about this last week at some length. If you want to start over, if you want a start fresh, you have to stop making excuses for your failures.” You've got to stop blaming other people; you've got to stop using rationalizations for your failures. Why you can't; why

you didn't, why you couldn't and why you failed.

You've got to stop seeing yourself as the victim of your circumstances and face them head on.../

In this life, in this world we live - other people can hurt you, other people can harm you, other people can scar you. But nobody can ruin your life except **you**. You have to face your circumstances head –on. Nobody can ruin your life without **your** permission. You have the choice in life that you can choose how you're going to respond to those hurts. You have that choice.

None of us here today know what's going to happen in the coming '2009. You don't know whose going to, hurt you, scar you or harm you in 2009. But this I do know it is going to happen to each of us in 2009. We can't stop it from happening.../ It's life; You

can't stop it.../ But you can choose how you choose to respond to it when it happens.

The Bible also says that the starting point is to just be honest and accept responsibility for your part in the problem. If someone or something has harmed me the choice I make after that is my responsibility. I have the choice of how I will respond to it and allow it to effect me.

That's why things harm children in much worse ways because they haven't developed the ability to process these hurtful, harmful things that happen to them in their life.

But we are adults here... and we do know better and we need to admit that.../ if you want to be free.

Proverbs 28:13 *"A man who refuses to admit his*

mistakes can never be successful. But if he confess and forsakes them he gets another chance." I love that "gets another chance." You get a fresh start. God says the starting point to starting over is to be honest and face up to the problems, that most of the problems in my life, most of the failures in my life, are my fault. Let's move on:

The "T" in START that we talked about last week stands for - **Take stock**

I need to take stock of my life. That means I need to evaluate all my experiences, all of my relationships. If you want to make a fresh start in 2009, you need to set down and do an evaluation of your life. Write it out write it down... God wants you to learn from them and

capitalize on them. Galatians 3:4 *"You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope not..."*

As you take stock of your life in starting over, you need to ASK yourself three questions. What have I learned? What are my assets? Who can help me?

Today we are going to look at the **A** in START we looked at it some last week just to give you some idea of what the A stands for. The A in START stands for:

Act in faith

This is the third step in getting a fresh start. Act in faith. You have to launch out into new territory in 2009. The Bible says that the key to **changing** anything is faith. If you want to change your circumstance, it takes faith. If you want to change your personality, it

takes faith. If you want to change your wife or husband or child, it takes faith. If you want to change anything in your life, you have to have faith.

Jesus tells us this in Matthew 9. *"According to your faith it will be done to you."* That is a very simple statement but it's very powerful. *"According to your faith it will be done to you."* That means we tend to get out of life what we expect. *"According to your faith it will be done to you."*

I asked this question of those who were here last week. What are you expecting in 2009? See, If you think it's going to be another tough year, another depressing year, another rigorous, hard year and you have no plans for change. Guess what your year is going to be? A real bummer!

We tend to get out of life what we expect because *"According to your faith it will be done to you."* God's Word tells us.../ The Christian who says, "I can!" and the Christian who says, "I can't!" they are both right. Because according to God's Word.../ You will get out of life what you expect from it – *"According to your faith it will be done to you."* So what you and I need to start doing -- expecting more. Start expecting more of yourself, start expecting more from God, start expecting more out of life. That's the principle of faith.

Along with acting in faith and expecting more from yourself and expecting more from God means you've got to stop having your pity parties. You've got to stop feeling sorry for yourself. You've got to put away the thinking "Poor me! I'm such a victim. Life is so

unfair to me." WHY? (PAUSE) because life is unfair! Just except that, life is unfair... Whoever said it was going to be fair? God never said that this life here on earth would be fair. The world we live in is full with sin, imperfect people and because it is full of sin, life is unfair. But that doesn't have to stop you.../ that doesn't have to control you.../ you have to go on with life anyway. You have to stop having a pity party. You have to stop rehearsing the past. You have to stop regretting the past, regretting yesterday, regretting last week or last month and you stop regretting and get on with the present and make plans for the future with God plan and direction. The more time you spend thinking, "I wish that hadn't happened! I wish I could change that. If only I could go back, if I only could reverse the clock and

redo history," and you're always rehearsing and regretting the past. Listen friends if you do that... your not only going to make yourself miserable in the right now today, the present, you're setting yourself up for more of the same, year after year after year. If you want to set yourself up for more failures... then just keep focusing on the past failures, you will reap year after year after year of failures. Whatever you focus on you tend to reproduce in your life.

You're going to go through this next year one of two ways.../ either by design or by default. But either way you're going to go through life by one of those two ways.../ either by design or by default. You're either going to have a plan in which you say, "This is what I'm going to do" and you stay focused on that plan all year

no matter what happens in your life .../ or you're going to let other people and other circumstances and problems plan your life and run your life. And let me ask you... is that what you want to do?

Most people spend most of their life just drifting through life.../ Why, because they don't have a plan. But God Word says, you should make plans, and make those plans counting on God to direct you.

God doesn't want you to drift. God wants you to live your life by design, not by default. See I say this all time, your not here by accident, God has created you and has a wonderful purpose for you life.

Have you ever noticed or have you ever realized that when you set goals you're actually doing a faith activity? Goals are statements of faith. A goal is simply

a dream with a deadline put on it. It's saying, "I believe God wants me to do such and such by a certain point in time." And when you say that and when you act upon that.../ that's a statement of faith.

You need to set some goals for your life in 2009. You need to set.../ Personal goals, family goals, spiritual goals, tithing goals, financial goals.

If you've never set a goal you will never reach where you want to be or where God wants you to be.

I want you to know something right up front: You're not going to reach all your goals that you set.../ but that's not the point. The point isn't reaching them all. The point is reaching for them with God, it's the trying.../

Why don't people like to set goals? The number

one reason people don't set goals is because of the fear of failure. Fear of failure! See, if you set a goal and announce it to your wife/husband or church and everybody else and you don't reach it, then you'll think, I'll look like a fool and I'll feel dumb if I don't reach it. But friends, failure is not failing to reach your goal. Failure is fear of setting a goal. You fail when you don't try.../ Failure is the fear of trying.

And on top of that the fear of failure is far worse than the failure itself I have found. When you fail you just recognize I failed, then get yourself up, dust yourself off and start out again and set another goal.

But having the fear of failure, paralysis you, it cripples you, it keeps you miserable the whole time. You stay in bondage.../

Fear of failure locks you in a self-imposed prison of “What if’s...?” What if this happens or what if that doesn’t happen and what if that doesn’t happen then what.../ What will people think.../

If you’re that person I just described I have good news for you. You can get rid of fear of failure? The answer to that question, “How do I get rid of that fear of failure is, “Faith.” That's why the third step in starting over is **Act in faith.**

Faith is not having the absence of fear in your life. Faith is moving ahead in spite of the fear in your life.

(REPEAT)

Faith is doing the thing you fear the most. Faith is doing the thing you fear the most even when you're scared to death and you're trembling while you do it, you

still move ahead in spite of your feelings. You move ahead in spite of what people even say.../ Note: when you make a move ahead in spite of everything else remember your moves need to line up with God’s Word, the Bible.../ That's faith. It's going ahead and doing the thing you fear the most.

Moses knew all about this: He led the children of Israel out of Egypt and bondage of 400 years. They came out of bondage, and they came up to the Red Sea. There were mountains on either side of them, the Red Sea in front of them, Pharaoh’s army in hot pursuit behind them. The only way they could be saved is to get through that Red Sea. Then God said, "I'll just open it up and you guys walk on through it." How would you like to have been the first person to had walked through

the Red Sea? You get out about a mile or two and wonder if the walls were going to hold up because it's a long way back to shore.

We are all going to have Red Sea problems in our life in '09. Maybe when it comes.../ possible your first thought will be You're going to say, "Let's go over the Red Sea. Or let's go around the Red Sea or Let's go under it." But God says to His children, "No, were going thru it.../ let's go through it together.

God says to us, "I'm going to take you through the problem. I'm not going to remove that problem.../ I'm going to take you through it." I need you to Act in faith and keep walking. He's there if you have put your faith in Him whether you feel it or think it or whatever. He's going to take you through it. Act in faith and He'll take

you through the Red Sea and on to the promise land.

Let me ask you this question? Where do you need to act in faith today? Where do you need to act in faith this year? Where do you need to take steps of faith to start over?

One thing I can assure.../ There's one thing that will keep you from acting in faith in 2009. It's worrying about what other people think. When you start worrying about what other people think, the Bible says that is a trap. Proverbs 29:5 "*The fear of man is a snare.*" It's a trap. When you worry about what other people think, you're not going to do what God wants you to do. You're going to do the convenient thing what everybody else is doing.

You need to step out in faith. Proverbs 29:25

"Being afraid of people can get you into trouble." Don't make that mistake in '08.

How do you make a fresh start

Stop making excuses, start taking stock and act in faith the changes need to be made. Trust in God in all of these three. Next week we are going to look at the R. and T. of How to make a fresh life. I hope your enjoying this series as much as I am bring it to you.

Let us Prayer:

Pray this prayer: "Dear God, only You can fully know the hurt in my heart. You've seen me stumble. You've watched me fall. You've watched me fail. You know the areas of my life that I'm ashamed of. You know where I've hurt others even when I didn't know I was doing it. Father, You also know how I've been hurt

by other people. Today, as I begin the New Year I ask You to give me a fresh start. First I accept responsibility for my part of the problems in my life. I'm going to stop making excuses. Forgive me for not listening to You. Forgive me for thinking that I knew better. Help me to take stock of the good that You've brought into my life. Help me to learn from my experiences. Today I want to act in faith. In this simple prayer, I open up my life to You. I ask You, Jesus Christ, to be my savior. I ask You to forgive me and to guide me from here on out. Help me to focus on You and Your word. I want to trust You to give me the power to start over and to do the right thing from here on. Come into my life and be in charge. In Your name, I pray. Amen."