

Fresh Start

Looking for a fresh start? We're just into 2008 as I write this, but you don't have to be at the beginning of a new year to desire a fresh start. Whether in a relationship, in your career, in your ministry, or with life in general, sometimes it's just good to regroup. To gain a new perspective. To get a fresh start.

As I start this new year, here are 3 core questions I'm asking. Even if it's not the new year (as you're reading this), these questions and thoughts may be helpful to get you from where you are to where you want to be.

Here's an idea, use these with your staff or leadership team at your next vision meeting or planning retreat.

Where is God already at work? Sometimes a fresh start means saying no to all the new stuff you haven't yet thought of, and getting back to the one or two things that God has already been speaking into. Are there some core struggles that could be the focus of this year? Is there something you've already started that God's not yet done with? God has already been at work. The question is, "where?" What could you strengthen this year?

Maybe you don't need to make up all new stuff to get a fresh start. Are there some repeated themes in your relationships that need hammering out? Are there some skills you've resisted developing? Maybe these one or two areas God has been working on are the focus of this next season for you. If you're discussing this with your ministry or work team, brainstorm over the one or two areas you want to strengthen this year. Discover where God is already at work and join him.

What new opportunities do you want to step into? I once heard someone say, "I try to open a new window every day." What new window will you open this year? What new opportunity will you step into during this next season? What new part of your character will you focus on this year? What aspect of God will you dive into this year? If you're working through this with your ministry team, consider the one or two new areas of ministry you'd like to start this year or coming season. Is there a need that seems to be surfacing that you could meet? Are there some new strengths and gifts and talents showing up in people that you could build ministries around? Ask God what it is he wants you to start new!

What do you want to stop this year? Yes, the dreaded question! What's killing you? What would you love to have victory over? In months from now, what area of your life would you love to look back on and say, "that was the year God really gave me healing in this, or helped me overcome that?" Is there a relational pattern that keeps getting you into trouble? Is there a habit that's in the way of your growth? What ministry program finally needs to die at your church? Oftentimes, getting a fresh start means uprooting and killing and saying goodbye to something that's in the way! Thankfully, we have hope in Christ.

So, what will you **strengthen**, what will you **start**, and what will you **stop** this year or in the upcoming season? If you can name one thing for each of these areas, chances are you'll be off to a great fresh start.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
the old has gone, the new has come!" - 2 Corinthians 5.17

*May this fresh start lead you deeper into the life of Christ,
more now than ever before.*

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