

Need a Reset? How to reset your life and make 2018 a better year?

Intro: How many of you remember an Etch-A-Sketch? (Show and talk about how they work) Wouldn't it be nice if we could all start over as easy as an Etch-A Sketch? Life may be a bit more complex than this classic toy, but I do believe we can all have the ability to reset our lives and get on a better path. Like the Etch-A-Sketch though, it does require you to shake things up a bit. If you need a reset this year, I want to share with you 4 foundational ways you can guarantee you have a different year.

- 4 choices that will reset your life.

1. The choice to change

- Reject the myth that your life will just get better

We have to stop living life doing the same things year after year hoping somehow life will get better. If you desire your life to change then you must accept the responsibility for that change.

Prov. 24:3 "A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense." (NLT)

- Wisdom and good sense are observed by our choices not by luck. This is how a house is built...this is how a life is built. We must stop the thinking that says; "I hope life gets better." "Maybe this year will be better?"
- If you continue living your life in the exact same manner, making the exact same choices, you will repeat the same results. We cannot continue doing the same things over and over again expecting different outcomes.
- I realize there are a host of things that happen to us every year that are beyond our control and choices. We can lose our jobs / medical issues - sickness / death in the family / difficult co-workers /
- BUT, becoming fatalistic and resigning yourself the circumstances of this world dictating your life is a hopeless perspective. Hoping for better luck in 2018 is not the way God wants us to reset our lives. So what do we do?

- Our choices are what change our lives

Deut. 30:19-20 "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! ²⁰ You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life..." (NLT)

- The key to our lives come down to the choices we make. 4 times in 2 verses God tells the nation of Israel that their future will be determined by their choices. Their choices have the power to bring life or death, bring blessings or curses.

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- This is still true today. Every choice we make will either send ripple effects of blessing or ripple effects of negative consequences in our lives. Even painful circumstances that happen to us that we have no control over we still have the power how we respond to them. We always have a choice.
- **Illustrate:** 2017 was a hard year for me personally. Last week I took some time to reflect on why I feel the way I do at the end of the year? How do I feel? Completely spent; exhausted, weary. I stood there in my office looking back at my yearly calendar. (EXPLAIN) There were plenty of challenging circumstances throughout the year / painful events / things that took place that were beyond my control...BUT why am I so internally tired? My calendar reflected my choices.
- Instead of hoping for a better year, I will be much more intentional making better choices. Choices that breathe life into me. You can do the same thing!
- Where can you begin to make different choices in 2018? Choices in your marriage / parenting / your schedule / your relationship with Jesus / your serving / your money / your attitude / even small changes will create different outcomes.

2. The choice to risk

There is no real change without risk. Risk is what real change feels like. Risk is what moves you out of that fatalistic mentality that says; “There’s nothing I can do.” Never surrender your power of choice!

- Fear is what keeps you from taking risks
 - Fear is what keeps you a prisoner to your old routines, habits and lifestyle that do not work. We fall in love with the familiar. Even if it doesn’t work, at least it is familiar.
 - If you want to change 2018 you have to break out of your fear. You fear change. You fear making the wrong choice. You fear the unknown. You fear giving up some control. You fear losing the predictability of your life. Fear is keeping you from hitting the reset button.
 - I can’t tell you how many people I have talked to over the years who know their life is not working very well yet they say; I know I need to make some changes but I am afraid to do so.”
 - I know my marriage is not working / I know I’m dying as a parent / I know I hate my job / I know I’m lonely / I know I’m drowning in guilt / I know I’m completely overwhelmed by stress...BUT I’m afraid to change.
 - Fear is what paralyzes our lives from making the necessary, life giving choices that we need to make in order to see real change. How many of you know the areas of your life that are not working and yet year after year you do nothing about it?
 - It is your fear that is robbing you of the life of faith Jesus has called you to live. It is impossible to live by faith while you are controlled by fear.

Heb. 11:6 “And it is impossible to please God without faith.” (NLT)

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- Risk is what a life of faith looks like

Heb. 11:32-34 “How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. ³³ By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.” (NLT)

- When you read the great faith chapter of Heb. 11 we see that faith and risk go together. This chapter is filled with examples of people who lived out their faith by taking the risks that faith requires.
- The changes you need to make this next year requires faith and this faith will require you to risk. Faith inspired risk pleases God. Faith inspired risk unleashes the resources of God into your life. Fear = weakness. Faith and risk=power.
 - It requires risk taking faith to improve your marriage. You will have to risk vulnerability like you’ve never done before.
 - It requires risk taking faith to grow past a personal issues that has been hindering you for years. WHY? Because you more than likely will have to trust someone else to help you navigate it.
 - It requires risk taking faith to change your schedule, time and priorities when others won’t understand. You will risk disappointing some people. You will have to say no to good things.
- There are some changes you need to make in order to have a different year in 2018. These changes though will require you to live by faith and take some risks.

3. The choice to grow

There is no way to reset 2018 without a commitment to personal growth.

- Personal stagnation leads to a stagnant life

- When we stagnate as an individual, we all fall into the proverbial “rut”. You know what they say about ruts? They are simply coffins with the ends cut out. Living our lives in a rut is simply a slow painful way to die.
- How do you know if you’re in a rut?
 - Life is defined by monotony
 - Life is experienced with little or no joy
 - Your life has no fire or passion for anything. Things that once were fun to you aren’t even fun to you anymore.
 - You go through the motions everyday with your mind in neutral...almost robotic
 - You have no real hope regarding your future.
 - You feel trapped in your lifestyle / your job / your relationships / you have resigned yourself to it.

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- Your life is like a black and white movie instead of living in HD
- If I just described your life please know this is not the way God designed us to live.

This is not His heart for you. This is not the purpose or plan He has for your life.

Jer. 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” (NLT)

John 10:10 “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” (NLT)

This does not sound like a rut to me. Maybe we’re missing something? How do I get out of this rut?

- Develop a plan for personal growth

Are you intentional with growing as a person? It does not happen automatic when we are adults. Stagnation is what happens automatically. If we are not intentional with growth it does not happen.

- Do you have a plan for spiritual growth?

Do you have a reading plan? Do you have prayer habits? Are you serving somewhere? Are you giving? Are you allowing Jesus to use you to bring others to Him? If you are doing all this and you’re still in the rut it is because you are not increasing in these areas. You’ve settled. You’ve stagnated spiritually because in your mind you are doing enough. Stop settling...Start growing!

- Do you have a plan for relational growth?

Are you growing in your marriage? Are reading any new books on marriage or relationships? Have you taken a class / watched a video? What new relational information are you exposing yourself to? If the answer is nothing you are in a relational rut.

- Let me recommend a book for you to read to help many of you begin moving outside of this rut. “The Power of the Other” – Dr. Henry Cloud

- Do you have a plan for professional growth?

Are you growing as an employee / manager / a boss? Are you making yourself better at work? If you’re not then you are going through the motions. You’re in a work rut. Quit lying to yourself that it doesn’t matter if you grow or not. It matters to you!

- We have a saying here at Foothills as it relates to all employees. “You grow or you go.” I personally do not want an employee who is not committed to growth. The Kingdom is too important. It requires our best.
- You all should hold yourself to the same standard. Choose to grow...become better...increase knowledge, skills, get better relationally in the work setting.

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- Attend the Global Leadership Summit next year in August / Read books that help you grow – The Ideal Team Player – Patrick Lencioni
- Do you have a plan for experiential growth?
What is this? Do you have any plan where you are having new experiences? New experiences are very good for us. If all you ever do is repeat the same experiences over and over again you reinforce the rut. If you are unwilling to place yourself in new environments in order to have new experiences you hinder your own growth.
 - What are several new experiences you can plan for this next year? Travel / take a class / serve in a new ministry / attend a home group / go on a mission trip to Guatemala / Do something new!

Whatever you decide, please decide to grow in 2018.

4. The choice to connect

God designed us with a profound need to connect relationally with one another. Without the right kind of relationships, we can sabotage any reset we want to make in 2018. In I Cor. 12, the Apostle Paul uses the imagery of the human body to illustrate this.

I Cor. 12:18-21 “But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ¹⁹How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. ²¹The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” (NLT) We need each other!

- Reject what keeps you from connecting with others
 - Unbelief: I do not believe I truly need others in my life. I can be complete without them. This is a lie by the way. It’s time some of you reject this. This mentality contradicts everything the bible teaches about relationships.
 - Fear: You’ve been hurt by others therefore, you will never open up your life to others again. You’re going to play it safe.
 - Pride: Weak people need others to make them complete but I am complete all by myself. I just don’t need people.
- If you are not connecting with others in a meaningful way, it is because one or more of these issues exist in you.
- Make choices that allow connection to happen
 - Place yourself in relational environments: If you’re never in environments where relationships can happen, we decrease the odds to an impossibility. (Church / classes / life groups / men and women’s events / serving opportunities
 - Choose to be relationally vulnerable. What this means is you allow people inside. You choose to share the real you with others. You become unguarded. The people who will have the greatest influence on your life are the ones who you believe understand you. If no one understands you, you will experience loneliness. If you never let people in, you live in a self-imposed exile.

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- Pray for the right people: Ask that God brings the right people into your life. Since these relational connections are His will for you, don't you think this is a prayer He wants to answer? Pray for you to be able to discern this. Pray against your fear or unbelief.

If you make these 4 choices, I guarantee 2018 will be different. Stop hoping for a better year. Choose it and reset your life. Change – Risk – Grow – Connect. Where is Jesus calling you to make some changes and reset your life in 2018?

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