

RESET

RESET REFLECTION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The Reset Reflection Tool leads you through a series of questions designed to get you thinking about your relationship with Jesus. Every relationship we have is never just stationary. We are always growing closer or drifting apart. The same thing applies to our relationship with God and, just like any relationship, there are key practices, learning points or emotional reengagement that can help us get back on track. The most important part of this tool is the questions themselves. The crucial thing is identifying, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the areas where you feel you need to grow.

Where do you feel like you need a new beginning? What do you need to put in place to experience a true life Reset? This questionnaire is an invitation to deliberate reflection on areas where you feel you might need practical and biblical help to reset your relationship with Jesus.

ABOUT THE AREAS OF GROWTH

Our goal with this reflection is to highlight an area(s) where you can grow in your relationship with Jesus and give you resources and support specific to that area. Each area has three key elements that help you grow or come as a result of growth in that area:

Habit – a practice

Head – an area of knowledge

Heart – an emotional posture

These are not comprehensive but give you a starting point on the things you can start doing, learning or emotionally processing to help you grow in that area.

INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

When you complete your reflection you will get a document with something like the following:

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While we break things into sections and give totals on them, the totals are not the important part. Some incredible Christians with a deep relationship with Jesus might score themselves really low and some people who hardly know Him might score themselves really high. Jesus also gives us different passions, strengths and gifts so you might get a low number for one area but decide there is another area you would like to grow in instead.

OVERVIEW OF THE AREAS OF GROWTH

SPIRIT TRANSFORMATION

Allowing the Spirit of Jesus to Transform You into His Likeness

Habit – Regular time with the Spirit in the presence of God.

Head – Sensitivity to and awareness of the Spirit.

Heart – An inward, emotional transformation leading to outward change in behaviour.

Our current culture tells us so many conflicting things about our identity. People talk about ‘finding themselves’ in long journeys overseas, they say, “I’m perfect just the way I am – even with my flaws”, or “don’t change for anyone, be true to who you are”. Amongst the things flying around in our culture there are some truths, some half-truths and some downright dangerous lies. Something we need to remember is that most of our culture does not assume we hold our identity in Christ, as people made in the image of God, so even the things they say that sound great need to be seriously altered before we can bring them into a Christian worldview.

As Christians we believe are made in the image of Christ and so we hold infinite value, we are extraordinarily precious but it is also an incredibly high calling – to represent Christ and bring His presence into this world. The truth is that we cannot do this on our own and, in fact, we mess it up all the time. This doesn’t mean we lose any of our value as people made in the image of God but this is why we need the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Fruit of the Spirit, the signs that the Spirit is working in us, are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These things are easily faked on the outside. It’s easy to present an external image of being a “perfect Christian”, but these things are meaningless if they are not the result of the Spirit’s work in our lives. Without the Spirit these things are actually motivated out of pride and selfishness. They ultimately come from a desire for people to think more highly of us or a desire to think more highly of ourselves. But when the Spirit is working in our lives we see these fruit because we think so highly of Him and we want other people to think more highly of Him too. We don’t want to be doing these things without God because we want all the glory to go to God, we want people to see Him work through us.

If you have genuinely, whole-heartedly, given your life to Christ, you have already received the Holy Spirit in your life but this doesn’t mean everything will be perfect from now on. Every action you take requires a decision to act according to the leading of the Spirit or your own will. Choosing to always do things God’s way and trusting in His strength and power means making hard decisions and sacrifices. We can easily slide back into doing things our way, even if it’s as a ‘good person’.

This is why it is so important to regularly spend time connecting with God through the Holy Spirit. Spending time with God involves making space for Him to strengthen us, guide us and transform our spirit. When we do this, over time, our spirit starts to be united with His Spirit. Along this journey, some people experience a deep awareness of just how broken they really are, I know that I did. This might sound hopeless, but it’s really the opposite. This awareness means realising the potential that we have when we live in the Spirit, realising how much we can grow and how truly incredible we can be when we claim our identity in Christ. This brokenness does not mean we are loved or valued any less, God loves us and values us just the same because he doesn’t see the brokenness but the potential that he created us for.

SPIRIT TRANSFORMATION RESOURCES

BOOKS

Ruthless Elimination of Hurry - John Mark Comer
A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God - Larry Osborne
How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit - A.W. Tozer
The Screwtape Letters - C.S. Lewis
Knowing God - J.I. Packer
Altar Ego: Becoming Who God Says You Are - Craig Groeschel

ONLINE RESOURCES

RightNow Media - <http://rightnowmedia.org/>

RightNow Media is basically the Netflix for Christian Video Bible Studies, it is full of videos and studies on Books of the Bible. It has so many helpful videos that will help you identify ways you can be growing in the Spirit. Our church has a subscription that is licensed for anyone who joins through our website. To get your FREE invitation, visit <https://www.gcc.org.nz/rightnow-media>

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything - Fred Sanders
The Cost of Discipleship - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Sin, Pride and Self-Acceptance - Terry D. Cooper
Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed - Marc Cortez

BIBLICAL GROUNDING

Living from an Overflow of God's Word on Your Heart

Habit – Regular time reading the Bible and learning about it.

Head – Growing knowledge of God through both the content and the context of Scripture.

Heart – A deeper passion for knowing God, his ways and your own identity deeper each day.

The Bible is more than just a book, it contains history, poetry, theology, prophecy, wisdom and, most importantly, the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Bible is our authoritative source for learning about God and what he has done throughout history but God also uses scripture as one of the ways that he speaks to us today.

We are really good at getting into bad habits without noticing and sometimes God gives us a good wakeup call as we read the Bible and we realise we require some Spirit transformation. Sometimes God uses a passage to tell us something specific, or point us to someone we can help or give us something we can do to make the world a better place. If we are not spending regular time in the Bible we can find it just too easy to shut God out and ignore what he's saying to us but it's pretty hard to ignore Him when it's right there in front of you, written on the page.

Reading the Bible is more than just turning to a random page and seeing what God wants to say to you today. God often uses it this way, but the book in your hands was written in another time, in another language, from another culture who had a completely different understanding of the world to our 21st century, Western culture. This is why sometimes reading the Bible can feel so challenging and we can feel like we're not getting anything out of it. But when you take the time to explore the world of the Bible, learn its history, learn about the people that wrote it and what was happening at the time, the Bible starts to come alive. You start to see the patterns and connections between the books and between the Old and New Testaments.

Spending time in the Bible, with the Spirit, discovering the Truth about God is what helps us mature as Christians. Don't get me wrong, you could know everything about the Bible and everything about God and it would mean absolutely nothing if you didn't know him personally and weren't putting it into action. But just as equally, poor biblical interpretation has been used to justify atrocities even as far as slavery and genocide. You've probably heard the Bible used in ways that you don't agree with and if you haven't taken the time to do the research and learn about the context you can't be sure that you're more justified in your belief than they are.

God also uses the Bible to challenge and convict us. You might have been reading the Bible before and stumbled across something you feel like you completely disagree with, I know that I sure have. Sometimes as we dig deeper into the text and its context we discover that it doesn't actually say what we thought it did, but sometimes the further we go the more we realise there's no escaping it; God wants to change something.

So, does your time with God reading the Bible transform the way you behave and inspire you as a disciple of Christ? How well do you know the Bible? Do you just stick to the New Testament, too scared or unsure of the Old Testament? I encourage you to take the time to get to know the Bible better, not just its reading its contents but knowing its context. By doing so, you will come to know God better as you spend time with him reading it and recognise his voice in all areas of your life. Ask the hard questions and you will find that your time in the Bible will be so much more rewarding. You can start by looking at some of the following resources.

BIBLICAL GROUNDING RESOURCES

BOOKS

Field Guide to the Bible - Bible Society

How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth - Gordon Fee

The Bible Jesus Read - Philip Yancey

Jesus Storybook Bible - Sally Lloyd - Jones

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Bible Project - <https://www.youtube.com/user/jointhebibleproject>

The Bible Project is a YouTube channel that has heaps of videos that explain all about the books of the Bible. They give overviews and in depth studies of some books of the Bible, introductions to certain Biblical themes and ideas and also a helpful overview of the Bible as a whole.

YouVersion Bible App - <https://www.bible.com/app>

If you don't have a Bible, or even if you do, the Bible app is an extraordinarily helpful tool to have on your phone. It has a huge range of different translations so you can also compare translations whenever you read the bible to help you get a better understanding of its meaning. It's also completely free!

One Year Reading Plan - <https://www.bibleinoneyear.org/>

The Bible in One Year is a plan that helps you to read the whole Bible. Each day you'll read a bit of the Old Testament, a bit of the New Testament, a Psalm or Proverb. Along with the Bible reading, there is a commentary (available to read or listen to) by Nicky & Pippa Gumbel that explains the readings.

Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) - <https://www.bsfindernational.org/>

BSF is an incredible organisation where men and women come together in groups to study the Bible. Every group studies the same book of the Bible according to the same schedule and analyse it in small passages each week with a large group talk and small group discussions. We have a men's group that meets at Greenlane Christian Centre on Mondays.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Guide to Bible Commentaries - <https://www.bestcommentaries.com/>

Most free online commentaries are really out of date because they have to be out of copyright. But Bible commentaries are expensive so you don't want to buy a bad one. This website helps you find commentaries that come recommended by theologians, bible scholars and pastors alike.

Interlinear Bible - <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/>

This webpage gives you any passage of the bible and breaks it down word by word so you can see the original Hebrew or Greek alongside the English translation for that word. This is really helpful for seeing how a translator has chosen to translate a passage into English.

RHYTHMS OF ADORATION

Living in Adoration and Dialogue with Jesus in the Rhythms of Life

Habit – Regular time resting in God’s presence and celebrating who He is and what He is doing.

Head – Knowing and recognising the work of God in your life.

Heart – A renewed excitement for life by thriving off time with God.

You may be thinking that ‘adoration’ is a bit of a gooey, cheesy kind of word to use to describe a relationship with God, but this is a surprisingly accurate way of describe the relationship that God desires with us. In the New Testament the church is described as the ‘bride’ of Christ, he adores us in the same way a man adores his wife-to-be on his wedding day. The expected response then is for us to adore him in the way a woman adores her husband-to-be on her wedding day. This is the time we live in, the great wedding day, living in expectancy of the great wedding banquet (or in our cultural terms the reception) at the end of time.

This is how we should understand our times of prayer and worship, those precious moments when we get to be with our incredible God. Have you ever had a friend who got into a relationship and then you just never saw them again because all they wanted to do was to spend time with their significant other? Have you ever been that person and know what it feels like to just want to spend all your time with someone? This is what happens when we realise the potential of close, deep, replenishing time with God. We discover that it’s actually all we want to do.

But, just like any relationship, life can get in the way. We fill our lives with so many things: the long hours at work, all the extra-curricular activities that your kids have to do, or a packed study schedule and it’s so easy to just pass the time in front of a screen or reading a book. So many of us miss out on the truly, life-giving experience that is spending time connecting with our heavenly Father. We miss out on the guidance that he offers us, we miss out on the comfort and love, we miss out on handing over all of our stresses and anxieties to him, we miss out on being inspired to see life in a fresh way, we miss out on so much when we push him to the side. We need to allow God to set his pace and his schedule for our lives rather than rushing along at our own pace and fitting God into our schedule.

Gathering as a community is another vital Rhythm of Adoration The beautiful thing about the church, is that this is what we get to experience together as a community on a Sunday. Attending church is so much more than just coming to hear a sermon. Receiving the word of God through the sermon is an important part of it, but we are also coming together to give all our praise, to lavish all of our adoration, onto Him as well. We do this as one community of people who are united by the fact that we declare the glory and wonder of the one who redeemed us.

This why it is so important to make plans to regularly and consistently spend time on our own, in the presence of God, with no distractions, not just listing of all of our demands, but just being with Him. The more you do this the more you learn to appreciate it and actually rely on these times with God. It forces you to slow down, it gives you a new perspective and you start to see all the incredible things that God is doing in your life. For helpful resources in developing these rhythms or to learn more about them check out the resources on the next page. However, if you’re wanting to grow in this area the place you really need to look is your calendar.

RHYTHMS OF ADORATION RESOURCES

BOOKS

Prayer - Timothy Keller

Ruthless Elimination of Hurry - John Mark Comer

Celebration of Discipline - Richard J. Foster

Re-Branding Worship - Wayne Huirua

ONLINE RESOURCES

WorshipU - <http://worshipu.com/>

Musical worship isn't the only kind of worship but it's a big part of the way we give praise to God, especially when we gather together. The above website will help you learn from Hillsong, Bethel, Elevation Worship and others - with topics what it means to worship, the power of praise, having a lifestyle of worship, etc. This does require a paid subscription but they do sometimes offer free trials.

Bible Project Sabbath Series - <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/series/7th-day-rest-sabbath/>

Based on the schedule that most of us have, Sabbath is something that a lot of don't understand or feel is necessary for Christians to consider. This Podcast series by the Bible Project on Sabbath will help you re-evaluate your understanding of the relevance of Sabbath in for Christians in the 21st Century.

Hebrew Words of Praise - <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/8-hebrew-words-for-praise-every-christian-needs-to-know.html>

This article explains all the words that are translated praise in the Old Testament. In English, there is one word - Praise - but in this big word we can lose all the wonder detail and variations in the way that we can praise God. This will help you if you feel limited to a certain way of praising God.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Delighting in the Trinity - Michael Reeves

Prayer: Our Deepest Longing - Ronald Rolheiser

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivating God's Love and Truth in Your Connections with Others

Habit – Regular time connecting and resolving conflict with your friends, family and church community.

Head – Growing knowledge of the people in your life, their passions, challenges and personality.

Heart – A deeper and more resilient love for those you are connected with.

For a lot of us the enforced lockdown due to Covid-19 would have brought to light at least one of the two following universal truths. The first is that humans are wired for relationship, they bring meaning and colour into a world that would otherwise be pointless and mundane. The second is that conflict will result, no matter how 'nice' we are, when we are brought into extended proximity with people.

This is not to say that we always want to be with people (if you're introverted you may have found lockdown a breath of fresh air) but our relationships with people are what motivate us. Whether it's our friends, family, significant other or a lecturer, teacher or colleague. We are not isolated individuals floating around in the world. Everything we do affects the people around us. We are interlinked with the people we come in contact with. In all of this, what we desire most is to be known and loved in those interactions with people. The source of this love and understanding is our relationship with God, but when we feel unloved or misunderstood by people it still hurts, and it hurts more when it comes from the people that we love and understand, or think we understand.

The reality is that how we want people to love us often doesn't match up to how they want or are able to love us. Even the people who love us most will get it wrong, they won't love us in the way that we need to be loved. To make things worse, we fail to love them in the way that they need to be loved as well. When we start to notice this we can drift apart and both parties can become defensive, put up walls or turn to manipulative ways to feel loved. But if we are able to diagnose this early and do something about it, if we are able to learn about how we can love each other better, then there is always hope for any relationship. If both parties are willing to learn to love each other better and rely on God's love rather than the love of each other, then there is always a way through. Love is a skill.

The other side of relationships is being known and understood. This is just as important because if people love us but don't understand us, the love feels shallow and meaningless. The love of a stranger is no real love at all. This is why relationships are also one of the key elements in personal growth. We need people around us who are able to gently identify our flaws and our blind spots and people who we can go to and share openly about our struggles.

Having our flaws exposed can be pretty rough and often doesn't feel very loving. In marriage relationships when you face a crisis, often both of you are struggling. Honesty in this situation can be insensitive or harmful. This is why it's important to have a community of people around you, beyond your spouse or boy/girlfriend or solitary best friend who you are able to be open and vulnerable with. When we do life together we all benefit from it, it's not easy and there will be conflict along the way but it's worth it.

If you are struggling in your relationships or you just want to improve in them, we have plenty of resources to get you going. If you don't have those people in your life who you can be open with, we have a bunch of small groups where people are working on building these relationships who would love to create somewhere for you to belong. A healthy small group can lead to life-long and life-giving relationships that will improve your relationship with God and your daily life. Check out the groups and more resources on relationships on the next page.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS RESOURCES

BOOKS

The 5 Love Languages – Gary Chapman
Keeping Your Love On – Danny Silk
The Meaning of Marriage – Timothy Keller

ONLINE RESOURCES

Small Groups - <https://www.gcc.org.nz/small-groups>

Small Groups are the building blocks of the church community. This is where you will form life-long friendships that will encourage you and equip you to grow in your relationship for Jesus and make a difference for his people. If you're not already part of a small group, we strongly recommend you join one. Find out more at our website through the link above.

Pre-Marriage Preparation - <https://www.gcc.org.nz/marriage>

At Greenlane Christian Centre we want to equip you and set a strong foundation for marriage. Even if you're not quite at the engagement stage and you're just wanting to see if you're ready, we would love to help you navigate the terrain of your relationship. Find out more at our website through the link above.

Marriage Course – Coming Soon

We are also in the process of setting up a marriage course to help strengthen new, time-honoured, struggling or thriving marriages. Watch this space!

Mentoring - <https://www.gcc.org.nz/mentoring>

Discipleship is more than just following Jesus; it's about raising new disciples and learning from the experience of other disciples. If you would like to be connected with someone who will help you grow in your relationship with Jesus, but also in your workplace, studies or relationships, we have a mentoring programme that will connect you with someone who fits the bill. If you would like to offer your experience to someone we are also always looking for new mentors as well. Find out more at our website through the link above.

Learn Your Love Languages - <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/>

Loving well is all about knowing how you feel loved and how you like to give love and also knowing how the other person feels loved and likes to love. The website above will help you put words to the way you love and understand how other people might feel love in a different way to you.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed – Marc Cortez
The Anointed Church: Toward a Third Article Ecclesiology – Gregory Liston

LIGHT IN THE DARK

Demonstrating to Everyone the Loving Relationship Jesus Seeks with Them

Habit – Being an ambassador for Christ in the world in word and action.

Head – Growing knowledge in the reasons and evidence for believing Christ is Lord.

Heart – Greater confidence and passion in growing the Kingdom of God.

“You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:14, 16

It's no secret that a key command from Jesus to his disciples is to make more disciples. There are many people who love God deeply, but really struggle to evangelise. It's understandable in our culture of “keep your opinion to yourself” when it comes to faith. We don't want to cause more damage by somehow doing it wrong or giving a bad impression. It's easy to think we're doing enough by just being a ‘good person’ and leaving evangelism for those who are spiritually gifted in that area. But Jesus doesn't say some of us are the light of the world, he doesn't distinguish between anyone, he is describing how we all should live as his disciples.

Jesus doesn't tell us to go shouting your beliefs around for everyone to hear, in fact his emphasis is not on what you say but on who you are and what you do “so that they may see your good works...”. Being the light of the world is about making a difference in the world. In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes himself as the light of the world, he was the very presence of God who came to redeem and renew this broken world. So sharing the gospel is not just about what you say, it's about who you are and what you do. It's about standing up against injustice, caring for the downtrodden and being a positive influence in your work place, in your family and in your community.

A good place to start is by asking God to show you an injustice in the world that you are passionate about, something that breaks your heart or something that you get excited about. Then find other Christians who He has also given this passion to and work with them to bring the light of God into that situation.

We shouldn't ignore the second part either, which says that people will “see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” You see, just doing things isn't the whole gospel. People won't be able to give glory to their Father in heaven if they don't know you are doing everything by His Holy Spirit. For them to get to that point requires talking with them, sharing your story and your faith with them. We should always do this respectfully. It is unwise to engage on this level with people who do not want to hear it or are hostile to Christianity but we should always be looking for those people who are ready to hear it and who are asking the right questions.

It can be pretty daunting sharing your faith and one of the things that stops a lot of people is fear of getting it wrong or saying the wrong thing. We can always trust that the Holy Spirit will give us the words we need, but we also don't need to try and do all the work ourselves. This is why we offer the Alpha Course, an ideal environment for people with questions about life and faith. We have hosts and helpers who are well practiced in talking about these questions. Alpha has a huge emphasis on being a hospitable, welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds and beliefs. If you know someone who is searching or seeking God or meaning, talk to them about Alpha, invite them along. Offering to do it with them is a great way to ensure they already have someone they trust there.

Seeing the gospel and the love of Jesus transform someone's life has an extraordinary impact on your own faith. When we are only focussing on our own relationship with Jesus it can become hard to see the huge difference that it makes, but when we see other people transformed by the Spirit of God there is no denying His power of transformation. For other resources on how you can gain confidence in being a light in the dark we have a bunch over on the next page.

LIGHT IN THE DARK RESOURCES

BOOKS

The Case for Faith - Lee Strobel
Thriving in Babylon - Larry Osborne
The Reason for God - Timothy Keller
Organic Outreach for Ordinary People - Kevin G. Harney
Huiā Come Home - Jay Ruka

ONLINE RESOURCES

Invite Someone to Alpha - <https://www.gcc.org.nz/alpha>

The Alpha Course is primarily geared towards people who are on a faith search. It systematically goes through some of the big questions of life and God from a Christian perspective. The biggest value in Alpha however, is building community. It is all about creating an environment where honest and open discussion can take place so it is safe for people of all backgrounds and beliefs. It's often a lot easier to invite someone to Alpha than it is to invite them to a Sunday service. Who could you invite to Alpha? Learn more about Alpha at GCC through the link above.

Cru Guide to Sharing the Gospel - <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/share-the-gospel.html>

Cru is an organisation dedicated to spreading the gospel they have heaps of helpful guides and resources to help you figure out how to share your testimony and be confident talking about your faith with others.

Join a Renew Group - <https://www.gcc.org.nz/renew>

At Greenlane Christian Centre a huge part of our mission is renewing people and places. We have groups that are dedicated to connecting with our community, outside of the church and helping to fight in justice. If you are interested in connecting with the community or helping the disadvantaged, you can find out more on our website through the link above.

Evangelism Explosion - <https://evangelismexplosion.org/>

Evangelism Explosion is a ministry that trains people how to share their faith in Christ and how to bring people from unbelief to belief. It utilizes a variety of components including prayer, actual on-the-job training where the experienced lead the inexperienced, and the principle of spiritual multiplication.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission - D.J. Bosch

HUMBLE SERVICE

Working Hard to see God Continually Renew your Community

Habit – Using your gifts to uplift others in your work, with your family and in your community.

Head – Always learning to improve how you use your gifting in your work and service.

Heart – A passion to see lives transformed through the time and effort that you give.

Many Christians feel a separation between church life, work life and home life, sometimes they can feel like three entirely different worlds. But this is not how we are called to live as Christians. People who work for the church are not living out some 'higher calling'. God has gifted and called all believers according to their purpose. Church is not what takes place within a building, church is a community of believers that are active and doing the work of the Lord in their work places and their homes. On the other hand, there is definitely more than one kind of work that God is calling us into, there is work to be done for our church community, work to be done for the people of our city and country and there is work to be done for our families.

When you turn up at work, regardless of what industry you're in and regardless of the position that you are in, God has placed you there to be making a difference for him and his people. Every job involves serving or providing for other people. These are holy tasks that God has shared with us. God provides for and serves everyone but, for the most part, he chooses to do this through us. This completely changes our perspective on the work that we do and also the kind of occupation that we want.

If you are not feeling fulfilled or passionate about your job or if you feel stressed all the time, one of the many possible reasons is that it's not the kind of job that God made you for. Another possible reason is that you have got the idea that your job is all about you and what you are able to do instead of about God and what God is able to do. It is so important for us to be serving in the areas where the Spirit of God has gifted us. The Holy Spirit doesn't work through everybody the same way, just like we were all born with natural abilities, the Spirit gives us all spiritual abilities. These don't have to be obviously miraculous like healing, they could be a spiritual enhancement of a natural ability such as a deeper empathy for people or stronger leadership.

As Christians we are called to serve in more areas than our workplace. Our career is our service that society is able to pay us back for but there are ways to serve and use our natural and spiritual gifts where people can't pay us back. Feeding the hungry, teaching new immigrants English, spreading the gospel and fighting injustice are just some of the ways that our church gives out to the community without expecting payment. God calls us to serve in these environments as well. That doesn't mean forcing yourself to do things you don't want to do, it is more about a God-given passion to see lives changed and willingly giving your time to make it happen. This is something that God gives and cultivates in our lives.

God also desires that we also all serve our church community. There is so much that takes place within our church walls. Someone prepares communion, another leads us in worship, and someone, crucially, makes the coffee. We also have a younger generation rising up who people are encouraging and guiding. There is so much space for you to be serving your community in a way that God is calling you into and shaping you for. Everyone has a way they can contribute, so what is yours?

When we serve others there is something incredible that takes place, it changes not only their lives but also our hearts. I really encourage you to think about your lifestyle, do you see evidence of humble service in your attitude towards work, with your family, friends and church community? We have some resources to help you on the next page.

HUMBLE SERVICE RESOURCES

BOOKS

The Purpose Driven Life – Rick Warren

Garden City – John Mark Comer

Every Good Endeavour – Timothy Keller

Chazown: Discover and Pursue God's Purpose in Your Life – Craig Groeschel

Insect and the Buffalo – Andrew Shamy

ONLINE RESOURCES

Identify your Spiritual Gifts - <https://spiritualgiftstest.com/>

Spiritual Gifts are not a natural ability but a supernatural ability. Whether that's healing or leadership all Spiritual Gifts are not just where you are talented but an area where the Spirit tends to move through you. This is something that the Spirit does in every Christian and yet a lot of Christians struggle to identify where the Spirit might be moving in them. This test might help you identify your Spiritual Gifting. If you would like to just read some of the different gifts, this link is also helpful - <https://spiritualgiftstest.com/spiritual-gifts/>

Meyers Briggs Personality Test - <https://www.mbtionline.com/>

God doesn't just gift Spiritually but also with the way you are naturally wired. What makes you tick? The Meyers Briggs test, will help you become more self-aware and not only help you find where you can serve but also help you serve better. The above link costs, but free alternatives can be just as helpful.

Clifton Strengths (a.k.a Strengths Finders) - <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/>

Clifton Strengths is particularly helpful for finding out your strengths in the work place. As a Christian these will likely tie in with your Spiritual Gifts. Clifton Strengths helps you by focussing on where you are already strong. We often try and improve by working on our weaknesses but sometimes it's more effective to play to our strengths.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Vocation and the Politics of Work: Popular Theology in a Consumer Culture – Jeffrey Scholes

JOYFUL GENEROSITY

Enthusiastically Sharing God's Provision to Change Lives

Habit – Having a plan for managing your resources and setting some aside to share with others as God leads

Head – Learning ways to be wise with your resources so you don't feel limited in your generosity

Heart – Feeling secure in God's abundant provision and excited to see it extend beyond yourself

Generosity is something that is so widely appreciated in others, but so seldom worked on in ourselves. It is so easy to identify stinginess or greed in others but feel justified in our own treatment of money. The truth is there is no excuse for not being generous and most of us are actually able to be more generous. Anyone who has seen the generosity that is present even amongst poverty will know that. There are people with so much less than us, who give so much more. Generosity is not so much about how much you give but the heart behind it.

Many of us aspire to an ideal of generosity, thinking "I would be more generous if I had more". But the reality is that the more we earn the more we spend, or the things that we save money for get more and more expensive. We find that as our income goes up we suddenly also have more expenses. We move to a nicer neighbourhood, or we start saving for a nicer car or upgrade our phone. None of these things are bad and so we don't question our generosity. It's not like being generous means giving all of these things up. Of course we are allowed to maintain our lifestyle and to own nice things within reason but when we don't give thought to the timing of these things or how much we are spending on them we can find we have nothing left to give away. We will find it so much harder to be generous if we aren't conscientious with our money.

If we really want to be generous then we need to plan to be generous. To be able to plan to be generous we have plan and track our spending and saving. How much you budget for spending, saving and giving and how detailed you get in your planning is up to you, but if you don't make any plan for your spending, you will severely limit your ability to be generous. On the other hand, once you start planning for it, generosity becomes so much easier! You stop seeing that money as your money that you need and you start to see it as money that is already set aside for someone else. Planning also doesn't mean you stop leaning on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it actually means preparing to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the future.

Just to be clear, we are not just talking about tithing and giving to charity. Both those things are important but generosity is so much more. It means shouting someone lunch, giving someone a surprise gift or offering to lend your tools or appliances to someone when you know they need it. Often it's in these small things that we can make such a difference in the lives of others. The reality is, what we value is shown by where we spend our money. We can say we value God, friends and family before other things, but what does our spending really say we value?

Finally, as counterintuitive as it sounds, generosity is something that truly will bring greater joy into your life. The more generous we become the more freedom we have from the stresses and worries that come with trying to have enough. When we are intent on living within our means and giving generously out of God's abundant provision we are not only released from financial burden but we also have the incredible joy of seeing lives changed from what we have given. It is truly better to give than to receive. If you would like some help improving in this area you can look over the resources on the next page.

JOYFUL GENEROSITY RESOURCES

BOOKS

The Treasure Principle - Randy Alcorn

Beyond Greed - Brian Rosner

Counterfeit Gods - Timothy Keller

One Thousand Gifts: Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are - Ann Voskamp

ONLINE RESOURCES

CAP Money Course - <https://www.capnz.org/get-help/cap-money-course>

If you don't already have a plan for your money and want help setting one up register for our CAP money course. GCC offers courses on budgeting, handling money and have a job club to help you get a job. These courses will really help you to faithfully steward your money and get out of financial difficulty.

Joy Dares - <https://annvoskamp.com/joy-dares/>

Generosity starts with being grateful for what we already have. Ann Voskamp has set down a gratitude challenge for people to help them grow in gratefulness. Each month it has a list of different kinds of gifts that you can look out for. As you start doing this you'll find your perspective on how blessed you are might really start to change.

'Live Sorted' Budgeting Tool - <https://sorted.org.nz/tool/budgeting-tool#/welcome>

If you're looking for a quick and easy way to set up a budget, head to this website. It helps you by giving you examples of all the places you might be spending money, both short and long term. It also helps you calculate costs between monthly, weekly, yearly payments etc.



MY RESET PLAN

Why?

I want to grow in my relationship with Jesus because...

Where?

The area of growth where I believe the Holy Spirit wants to work on me is...

Who?

The people or group who will walk with me, encourage me and challenge me are...

How?

The resources I will use to help me grow are...