

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

January 07, 2018

Reboot

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In 1961 a meteorologist named Edward Lorenz designed a computer program to simulate and forecast weather patterns. One day Lorenz was in a hurry to make a meeting so instead of entering .506127 he rounded down to the nearest thousandth .506. Lorenz figured that one one-thousandth of one percent would be inconsequential. When he returned to the lab later in the day and rebooted his computer he discovered a radical difference in weather conditions. Now in 1963, he published a paper outlining the fact that very small changes in initial conditions can produce very large effects in eventual outcomes. A fellow meteorologist noted that if Lorenz theory was correct that "one flap of a sea gull's wings would be enough to alter the course of the weather forever". Over the years that metaphor evolved butterflies are more beautiful than seagulls and so in 1972 at a gathering of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Edward Lorenz delivered a talk titled 'Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wing in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas'. Well his theory grew wings, pun intended and became known as the butterfly effect, simply put, small changes in input can produce big differences in output, it's true in science and it's true in life. You're one decision away from a totally different life; one risk, one change, one idea now it might be a difficult decision, it might be a crazy idea, it might be a quantum risk but one change is small as one one-thousand of one percent extrapolated across time and space, extrapolated by God's grace can change the trajectory of eternity. And that's what this series is about you don't have to make a hundred changes, in fact good luck with that. What you do need to do is be a hundred percent committed to one one-thousand percent change and if you are its game on, it's the mundanity of excellence that we talked about last week.

Well happy new year, welcome to National Community Church. This weekend we begin a new series titled Reboot. Now traces its animalical origins all the way back to a little phrase coined 1852 by John Carter pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. To reboot is to get back up after getting knocked down; you could say it's fighting one more round. Now in the 1970's that word took on new meaning with the advent of personal computers; to reboot is to shut your computer down for the purpose of restarting the operating system, to reboot is to restart and that's what we're going to talk about over the next several weeks.

Now, if you have a Bible you can turn to Psalm 51 and that's where we're going to end up but I believe that spirituality is practicality. Jesus said wisdom is proved right by her children, in other words, the proof is in the pudding. And so I thought it might be interesting for me to share just a few ways that I reboot. Here's an example and this seems like a silly place to start but here we go one of the ways that I reboot is with a nap. Luke 8:23 says the disciples were sailing across the Sea of Galilee and it says that Jesus settled down for a nap. That's one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Did you know that a study done by NASA found that astronauts who took a twenty-six-minute nap increased productivity by thirty-four percent?

You've heard me say this before if I was running for political office one of my planks would be a national nap time. I think we would be happier, we would be healthier; I think we would be

nicer. I know that not everybody can pull off a nap during their lunch hour this might be a weekend thing but when I'm in a writing season I get up very early in the morning and I'll tell you why because ninety percent of my creativity happens before noon. And, at some point circadian rhythm dips and I lose focus and you do not want to read a book that I wrote in the afternoon but what I discovered is that if I take a nap and sometimes it's five or ten minutes that's all I need that nap reboots my brain. And so I think one trick to life and it's true whether it's rebooting your brain, rebooting your body, rebooting your spirit you've got to find ways to restart the operating system. Now it could be twenty pushups, it could be a stretching routine, could be a walk around the block but I found that if a nap doesn't work exercise usually does. Isn't it intriguing that the way you gain energy is by expending energy and exercising?

Let me talk a little bit about rebooting the body. One of my heroes is Teddy Roosevelt in part because he suffered from severe asthma like I did for forty years. Of course, he didn't have an inhaler and so his dad would hold him in his arms and walk around their Manhattan home in the wee hours of the morning when Teddy couldn't breathe or he'd take him out for a carriage ride through the streets in New York City. And at some point when Teddy got old enough as dad said Teddy you have the mind but you don't have the body and without the body, your mind can only take you so far he said you're going to have to remake your body. And so they built a gym in the second floor of their Manhattan home and Teddy Roosevelt began to remake his body day after day with tremendous discipline and became quite the physical specimen in fact, I just happened to see a friend who is part of this church is a secret service agent you probably could be grateful that he didn't work for Teddy Roosevelt because Roosevelt drove secret service agents crazy with his point to point hikes, he would go skinny dipping into the Potomac River just saying and set up a boxing ring in the white house. Went blind in his left eye just didn't bother to tell anybody until years later but it was Roosevelt remaking his body, rebooting his body.

Now that doesn't happen by default happens by design the way you reboot are you ready is reestablishing the right routines this is not complicated it's about restarting those operating systems by re-establishing the right routines. So in 2018 well 2017 ran a marathon; 2018 I got a Bike a Century with Josiah and so I'll put in thousands of miles on a stationary bike and I'll hit the gym like I normally do. But I felt like I needed to do something to kind of reboot my body just a little bit and so here's what I'm going to do. And you know this is a great thing about being the guy up here preaching because when I say stuff then I actually feel like I have to do it and so when I announced last year I'm going to run a marathon there were a few moments where I was thinking about maybe I shouldn't but I told you I would and so I did. So here's one of the ways that I'm rebooting my body I decided 2018 that I'm going to do pushups and planks every day so I started January first, twenty-three pushups cause that was Michael Jordan's number and that's about all I could do. And then planks of course to work on the core a little bit but here's what I'm doing I'm setting stretch goals. I want to add a push up a day and see how many can do by the end of the year. Now, I don't think it's going to be 365 but I bet it's going to be more than 23. and then the planks, what I'm doing is I add time to the plank because I want to see how long I can plank by the end of the year, so stay tuned.

Now, why am I even talking about this? I'll tell you why because your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 6:19 the Bible has an incredibly high view of the body and I remember trying to explain to my son Parker in when he was real little about this idea that Parker, your

body is a temple the Holy Spirit. So, I tried to explain that concept and I'll never forget what came out of my son's mouth, he said, so my skin is like marble? It takes a second to figure that one out but pretty cool right in a sense if your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit your skin is the outside marble you've got to take care of the temple the way you do that is diet and exercise. And now here's the good news physical disciplines and spiritual disciplines in my experience are not unrelated developing spiritual disciplines helps me develop physical disciplines and vice versa.

So here's the question, what daily disciplines do you need to put into place to get where you need to go by the end of the year? What do you need to reboot in 2018? Now here's the key, whatever it is that you need to do it better be specific, generic reboots do not work. I want to lose weight, I want to read more, I want to complain less, good for you it's not going to work because there's no way to tell whether or not you were really successful. You've got to define the win, you've got to make it measurable, I want to lose ten pounds in two months, okay now we're talking, I want to read a book a month I bet you will why because now it's measurable, now it's specific. I think that's an expression of faith, faith is being sure of what we hope for in certain of what we do not see.

Let me share one more way that I reboot my brain Oliver Wendell Holmes said a mind stretched by a new idea never returns to its original shape and so I reboot my brain with books. Now part of it is that's the way I'm wired, my strengthsfinder learner is right at the top and so I love to learn, but more specifically I love reading disciplines that I know very little about and part of this is because I believe that all truth is God's truth and part of it is that when I learn new things it makes my synapses fire in different ways that I begin to connect things and it cultivates creativity. So one of my favorite books this last year was titled *The Hidden Life of Trees*. Anybody read that one? In 2009 a tree researcher named Dr. Martin Gossner sprayed the oldest tree in the Bavarian Forest National Park with a chemical, an insecticide pyrethrum. All of the organisms that were living on the bark of that tree died, fell to the earth and Dr. Gossner collected them and he counted, are you ready for this, 2041 different kinds of insects belonging to 257 different species. That blew my mind! Trees are these incredibly complex ecosystems. I did not major in dendrology in college and before reading that book a tree was a tree, was a tree but guess what I can't walk through the woods the same way anymore. Why, because that book rebooted my brain.

Listen 15 years ago I read a titled *Mozart's Brain and the Fighter Pilot*. The author Richard Restak said something so simple yet so profound he said learn more, see more. Learn more, see more he said the richer my knowledge of flora and fauna of the woods the more I'll be able to see. Our perceptions take on richness and depth as a result of all the things that we learn what the eye sees is determined what the brain has learned. Listen the more you know the more you know how much you don't know but the more you know the more you appreciate. Now let me switch gears a little bit I think the key to spiritual growth is routine we call them spiritual disciplines but once a routine becomes routine you have to change the routine, it's the law of requisite variety, you have to reboot. If you go to the gym exercise the same way every time you know that eventually your body will adapt and those exercises will lose effectiveness and so what you need to do is you need to change the sequence you need to change the exercise, how, by confusing your muscles and I think the same thing is true spiritually.

Now you've heard me say this before I'm going to say it again, Jesus did not do an orientation with his disciples, He did a disorientation. They were confused most of the time and that was by intent. That's how we learn, that's how we grow. How many times did Jesus say you have heard that it was said but I tell you. What was He doing? He was rebooting their Old Testament brains. It was no longer an eye for an eye, it was love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, it was the first shall be last and the greatest among you is a servant of all. This was mind-blowing. He was rebooting their brains.

Since we're on the subject, every year I tried to choose a new translation of the Bible now here's why I do it in part because my most prized possession is a Bible that belonged to my grandfather and I love seeing the verses that he underlined and the notes he wrote in the margin is so my goal is to mark up enough Bibles that I can give them to my kids and grand-kids and maybe even have a few more left over. But the other reason I do it is this when I read the same version over and over and over again I can fill in the blank and so what happens is I go on autopilot and so what I need to do is change the translation. So two years ago it was the King James, last year it was the NIV, this year I'm going to do the New Living Translation why, because the little change in language it's the law of requisite variety. Again it makes my synapses fire differently and it makes me engage the Word of God with a little bit more intentionality.

And so can I challenge you at the beginning of the year at the beginning of a series called Reboot to one, perhaps a choose a new translation of the Bible and then what I want you to do is I want you to download an app called You Version and then I want you to go on that app and I want you to look at the little tab that says plans, and then under plans I want you to pick one. And it could be the entire Bible if you're pretty bold if you think you can get through the whole thing and I think you can or maybe New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs pick a plan and then work the plan. Here's what's going to happen if you work the plan day in and day out that one decision that daily discipline is going to be a butterfly effect in 2018.

All right I think I told you to turn to Psalm 51, I bet you're there. Here we go we'll look at verse one and just the moment here's the back-story David has just made one of the biggest mistakes of his life he has an affair, the woman named Bathsheba, then he makes a second mistake to try to cover up the first mistake and he has Bathsheba's husband killed. Here's the part of the story though Bathsheba's husband is not a stranger to David. In 2 Samuel 23, there's a list of Davids mighty men, 37. I wrote a book on it called Chase the Lion. And the very last name listed is Bathsheba's husband, it's Uriah the Hittite. What I'm saying is, David, betrayed one of his best friends David betrayed one of his closest confidants. Now, fortunately, there was a prophet who was bold enough and loving enough to rebuke the king of Israel, and a king who is wise enough to repent. And so, David is racked with guilt and then they lose their child, David and Bathsheba lose that child and so he's writhing with grief and so you've got guilt you've got grief. And when you've got guilt and you've got grief this is a pretty good prayer to pray. Have mercy on me, oh God. I don't even know if we're going to get past verse one but let's see.

If you're taking notes I want you to jot this down here's the definition; mercy is not getting what you deserve, God made him who had no sin to become sin for us your sin debt was paid in full at Calvary's cross. Do you remember Jesus said it is finished? It was an accounting term that referred to the last payment of a debt your sin debt was paid in full. Mercy is sin forgiven, sin

forgotten, it is the finished work of Christ, it's a clean slate, it's a fresh start, mercy is not getting what we deserve. One of my favorite promises is Lamentation 3:23, "His mercies are new every morning." Let me back up the truck just a little bit because Jeremiah, before he declares this promise points his finger at God. I want you to hear what he has to say; God is turned His hand against me, God has broken my bones, God has buried me in a dark place, God has walled me in, God is shut out my prayers, God is drawn as bow and made me a target for His arrows. Listen there is a God in heaven who can handle your honest thoughts and your honest feelings and He wants nothing less than that. It's ok to not be ok. Jeremiah is not ok, he points the finger at God and then here is his self-assessment. He says peace has been stripped away, everything I had hoped for is lost, my suffering is bitter beyond words and I will never forget this awful time. I don't think you can appreciate His mercies are new every morning if you don't understand everything that leads up it is darkest before dawn, you cannot have a comeback without a setback.

There are moments of life where it seems like God is a day late and a dollar short but what I've learned is it that's the moment when God shows up with His grace and His mercy. And I love what Jeremiah declares after pointing the finger at God and after assessing his situation. Here's what he declares; yet I will dare to hope when I remember this, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases His mercies never come to an end. Imagine an old European an old European city with narrow streets and cobbled stones. I think of Edinburgh, Scotland since I've been there, imagine that street lined with little storefronts and there's one store with an old weathered sign hanging outside and it says mercy shop and you notice in the window a sign that says open on both sides. You walk up to the door and there's no lock because it's never closed. As you walk in you notice that there's no cash register because mercy is free. The owner says what do you want and your answer is mercy and he smiles and he takes your measurements and he goes in back and he reappears almost as quickly as he disappeared. He said I have good news because mercy is never out of stock and you try it on and it fits like a glove and you get up and you get ready to leave and as you go to the door the owner says with a smile thanks for coming and then with a wink I'll see you tomorrow. His mercies are new every morning. The English word 'new' is the Hebrew word 'hadas' it doesn't just mean again and again as amazing as that would be. It means new as in different, it means new as in never experienced before. Today's mercy is different than yesterday's mercy or the day before or the day before or the day before that.

Let me put it this way just as the seasonal flu vaccine changes from year to year because of a different strain God's mercy changes from day to day because of a different strain of sin. Do me favor, pull out your Smartphone, Android, iPhone you probably have a computer, a calculator app on your phone. I want you to pull it out, now I want you to take your age and I want you to multiply it by 365 not everybody has their phone maybe you're doing this in your head you must be good at math, all right. Take your age multiply it by 365. Now I want you to hold on to that number if you can and if possible I want you to count the number of days from your last birthday until today. My birthday's November 5th so it's been 63 days and so I add that to the number of years times 365. That's how many different strains of mercy God has given you. To just say thank you God for your mercy in a very generic fashion is to underestimate the potency of God's mercy which is new and different every single day. If your 25 that's 9,125 strains of mercy, if you're 50 it's 18,200, if you're 65 23,725 strains the older you get the more grateful you should

be. If you want to reboot spiritually this is where it starts, it starts with Jeremiah's promise and it starts with David's prayer; have mercy on me oh God.

Now here's the amazing thing mercy is only half the equation, mercy is not getting what we deserve but there is this thing called grace and it's the opposite side of the coin. Grace is getting what we don't deserve. In other words, it's the righteousness of Christ credited to our account, and we'll come back to that in just a moment. David says create in me a clean heart oh God, renew a right spirit within me, verse 10. Verse 11, cast me not away from the presence and take not that Holy Spirit from me. Verse 12, restore unto me the joy of your salvation. David is saying God reboot my heart, reboot my mind, restore unto me the joy of your salvation. Come on, be honest with me scale of one to ten what is your level of joy this weekend? Because that is a critical gauge of how we understand God's mercy. Let me tell you how I think you can go from three to five or seven to eight or maybe nine to ten. Joy is not getting what we want joy is appreciating what we have. It's about focus. We have a saying around here, don't let what's wrong with you keep you from worshiping what's right about God. I love what David's doing here, he's refocusing on the mercy of God refocusing on the love of God, the goodness of God, the grace of God that's how we reboot spiritually by reminding ourselves of who God is.

I wish I had more time to talk about it but let me say this if you want to reboot joy in your life start keeping a gratitude journal; I've done it for years. Now last year little below average 215 gratitudes could have done better than that. The reason why a number them is two-fold saying a song and Sunday School, count your blessings name them one by one, it stuck with me and then read a wonderful book by Ann Voskamp, A Thousand Gifts. I think numbering our gratitude is a great way of rebooting our attitude and rebooting our focus.

Let me close of this, reboot isn't just a computing term, narratology is the study of narrative structure. In that context a reboot is restarting a storyline but here's the key it's discarding all previous continuity. Stick with me, the Bible calls Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Listen there's got to come a moment in your life where you allow God to begin writing His story through you and what that means is this; His mercy enters the equation and guess what now the past is in the past and now we can begin to move into the future with faith and there's a God who wants to reboot your story. Now He often does it by renaming people right He calls Abram, Abraham and says you'll be the father of many nations; He calls Simon, Peter and says on this rock I will build my church; He calls Saul a terrorist, Paul who's going to write half a New Testament and go on three missionary journeys that's going to spread the good news of the Gospel across continents. And so God rewrites their story He reboots and He wants to do the same thing in each one of our lives.

This weekend our family is going to see Amazing Grace at the Museum of the Bible, it's a story of John Newton. John Newton was a slave trader; John Newton wondered if God could ever forgive the enormity of his sin, he called himself the old African blasphemer. Then one day he discovered the grace of God and the grace of God rebooted his story, in fact, he wrote a little song, Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, t'was blind but now I see. T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear, and Grace, my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed. A century before there was another John, John Bunyan he wrote Pilgrim's Progress might be the second bestselling

book behind the Bible but it's his autobiography that I find interesting. John Bunyan titled it *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. In that book John Bunyan divides his life into three stages all of them symbolized by a pair of scales in the first stage, not unlike John Newton, he wondered if God could ever forgive his sin. The scales of justice tipped toward fear and toward despair. Then one day he discovered 2 Corinthians 12:9 my grace is sufficient and he said that's the day that the scales went even and it changed his life. But there was a third stage what Bunyan discovered is that he had missed the last two words. That verse is not four words my grace is sufficient as great as that would be no, it's six words my grace is sufficient for you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you and it's different for each one of us and it's different every single day. John Bunyan said every word was a mighty word to me **my grace is sufficient for you**. Four words aren't enough Hebrews 4:16 says approach the throne of grace with confidence. I thought I was going to make it through this message I have been praying for you this week because you need God's mercy and you need God's grace as much as I do. I pray that those last two words would grip your heart today, the mercy shop is open, there is grace with your name on it, my grace is sufficient for you.

Let's pray. Some of you are here today you've never experienced God's grace, getting what you don't deserve you never experienced God's mercy not getting what you do deserve and I want you to experience that kind of mercy that kind of grace and the good news is it's free and it's available to you but you have to believe it to receive it. Maybe today you need to walk into that mercy shop and simply asked for it, God have mercy on me. Amen.