

## NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

January 21, 2018

Back to Basics - Reboot

Joshua Symonette

Well, if you have a Bible will you meet me in Psalm 25 we will read the first five verses? This is week 3 of our Reboot Series. Before we get into this week I want to just acknowledge a few people, first of all, want to give a big shout out to all those who listen to us or watch us via podcast wherever you are thank you so much for doing that; secondly there are many of you who send encouraging e-mails and cards and even tag us on social media, on behalf of our teaching team just want to thank you guys so much for doing that. Also this year I've decided to get back to a little bit of a tradition that I've been used to growing up in church I'm going to pray for us right after I read the text and then I'll pray for us at the end just the kind of book in our time together if that's all right so I want to try that out this year so why don't you guys do me a favor, stand and we're going to read Psalm 25 verses 1 through 5. If you don't have a Bible we won't leave you hanging you have the words on the screen for you to follow along with us, I'll be reading from the New King James version. "To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You, I wait all the day. I want to tag this text this weekend with a theme or subject Back to Basics, Back to Basics. Let's pray. God, we thank you so much just for who You are. God, we pause right now and ask that You will speak to us, remove all distractions remove anything that would take away our focus and God I decrease right now and ask that You will speak through me and God prepare our hearts to receive what You have for us this weekend. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen. You may take your seats.

Before we dissect this Psalm by a man named David who was the second king of ancient Israel I would like to introduce you to a man named Zersenay Tadese. Zersenay is arguably the most famous name in the East African country of Eritrea. He is a marathoner who won the only medal in the Olympics for Eritrea in 2004, as a matter of fact, no one had ever run in the Olympics before 2004 when Zersenay did it. He has a personal best in the marathon of two hours, ten minutes and forty-one seconds now I don't know if you know anything about running but that is fast. But Zersenay is actually known for the fastest ever, two of the fastest ever times in the half marathon. In the documentary Breaking2 there are a group of scientists who got together and wanted to see if it was possible to actually run the marathon in less than two hours since it has never been done. And it actually seemed crazy to pick Zersenay to be a part of the three people that were participators, three runners that will participate in this experiment because shaving off ten minutes of your time when it comes to running a marathon I mean that is a monumental task. But when you look at Zersenay's capacity you can understand why he was chosen. When he runs his body barely makes any lactate or waste and he barely breathes hard. So the researchers were asking; well if this is the case why hasn't Zersenay been able to translate this into faster marathon

times? As a matter of fact, Zersenay up until that point had not finished three of the five marathons that he had run but after carefully examining his physiology, his training methods and his past history there emerged a clear hypothesis as to why he had not been able to maximize his potential or his capacity. It was simple, it was fundamental, it was basic, it was a matter of hydration. What they found out is that Zersenay in the marathon that he had run had not taken one drop of water. So the follow-up question was how can someone push their body for that long and that hard without water and I'm sure Zersenay's muscles and internal organs if they could have responded to the researchers they would say that's what we've been trying to say. Now, you have to watch Breaking2 to see how this whole thing ends up and I can ensure you it'll be worth your 55-minute investment even if you're not into running which I am not. But this little two-minute snapshot into Zersenay's quest doesn't really bring to life a new revelation for us because I think most of us are smart enough to know that our body needs hydration, that our body needs water. Now we may not know the science of how much we need or when as we run but it illuminates two things or highlights two things for us. Number one everything comes back to basics and fundamentals no matter what you're doing. And number two commitment to the basics is key to maximizing your capacity and your potential. Show me a breakdown in fundamentals or the basics and I will show you compromised performance.

Now maybe the biggest barrier to this point that Zersenay had come up against to run his absolute fastest was just something basic and I wonder as we are no doubt in the season right now of examining and brainstorming our game plan for 2018 or for some of us who already did that I'm sure you're implementing strategies for a better year than last year. I just want to know did that examination include an examination of the basics? Specifically, I'm talking about our spiritual basics or our spiritual disciplines. Pastor Mark asked us a question in week one and I'm here to confront you again about this question. What daily disciplines do you need to put in place to get where you need to go? As we look at Psalm 25 the author King David is I'm sure like Zersenay if not greater in terms of recognition. He was the most famous name in his land and beyond because David was known as an exceptional musician, he was also an exceptional and feared warrior and the stories of his rise to start them I guess you can say or notoriety from a runt shepherd boy would rival any underdog tale. But yet his explosiveness and his indiscretions would I would think rival any nighttime drama like Scandal. And the tales of his conquests and his victories probably had little kids in Israel pretending to be him like I would pretend to be the Super Friends back in the day, Batman, Superman or the Flash. But these are not really the things as I studied David's life that fascinate me about him despite his success, despite his wealth, his influence his notoriety, his skills, all of these things David had an unyielding commitment to spiritual disciplines. And the reason that David maintains this commitment is because he knew that no matter what he did, no matter what he accomplished, no matter how great his name was he would rise and fall based on his discipline of seeking God. That was his baseline, that was his starting point and it was the thing he kept coming back to over and over again.

If you study the life of David and you study the Psalms that he has written you will see and hear this relentless pursuit of God this passion for Him no matter what the circumstance was. So over the next few moments I want to examine this basic blueprint that I believe David lays out for us. Now I want to do this not because I want to give you some practical methodology for success that's not the reason why I want to do it. I don't want to try to help you accomplish your goals and your resolutions this year although I hope you do that but my hope is to help establish for

some and reinforce for others the right baseline to your spiritual growth to which everything is connected to.

Psalm 25, are you ready? Alright, just a couple of you are, that's all right. Let's go! Just as a quick backdrop historically we don't really know the specifics behind Psalm 25 we don't really know exactly what's happening in his life. Unlike Psalm 51 that Pastor Mark talked about in week one when we know that David you know he had an affair and he had his homeboy you know killed and all that like we knew that specifically but we don't know what's actually happening here. But I think it is clear as you read the Psalm in its entirety that David is concerned about opposition he is talking about enemies, he doesn't want to be put to shame, he's talking about protection, refuge and clearly, there is some external opposition that he is trying to overcome. In Psalm 51, in week one the opposition was actually David. David had gotten himself in that situation and so he was the opposition and sometimes in our lives we are the opposition it's us it's the decisions that we made is the things that we have done to put ourselves in the situation. Other times like in this particular Psalm here or this situation it's external, it's others or maybe there are systems or there are situations that are opposing us. But whatever it is or whichever it is we look to some strategy to employ to get us over, around or through. And I think David displays for us very simply what the strategy is in just two verses versus four and five of the text that we just read. And he asks three things that I want to highlight and I promise I'm gonna get out of your way.

David says show me your ways, teach me your path, lead me in your truth. These requests tell us that David is not a man of self-sufficiency. Now let's keep in mind who is making this request this is this is one of the greatest men of his time, he has means, he has people at his disposal, he don't have Google but he had plenty of people he can ask. He got stuff that he could get done on his behalf if he needs questions answered he can get them answered. But even though he has these means and he has these resources at his disposal David says God show me. It tells us that he has a total dependence on God. So first he says show me your ways, this word 'ways' this Hebrew word here is mentioned over 700 times in the Old Testament alone, I think it's kind of important. Over 700 times this particular Hebrew word 'ways' and it literally means in Hebrew 'a road'. So literally show me the road. David mentions this word four times in this Psalm alone, so clearly he's asking for direction.

Now I have to pause right here and put a quarter in the meter because you know it's really interesting when I thought about who David was, where he is in his life and him asking God to show him the road. It is fascinating to me because I'm not even on David's level and I know that that oftentimes this is not how I pray and this is... I know how many of us... we don't pray this way because what we are in the habit of doing is giving God direction not asking Him for it, right. We say God this is the woman, this is the man, this is the job, this is the house, this is the time right now God. Will you bless it? We give direction to God and here is David this powerful man is saying God show me the road. Now as I examine this I think the reason why we pray the way that we pray and we don't we give God direction instead of asking him for directions because I think now, now we is smart, I know but I think we are smart, we think we're smarter than we really are.

There two cognitive science researchers Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach they call this the Knowledge Illusion now that's the title of their book and this book captures their research based on this thesis; our concept of what we know is inflated. And they argue that most of us don't even know how everyday things work, like the toilet but we think we do. Now listen nothing illuminates this more for me than raising kids. All of the parents had a collective Amen either out-loud or internally. But now before we go to hard on the kids let's zoom out a bit because as I witnessed the tantrum of my son who doesn't understand that Puppy Dog Pals doesn't come on all day every day, neither do we want to watch that all day every day. The more and more I see this and I experience this in different ways I'm reminded that I'm the same way because I want my way and because I think that I know best. So now it's becoming a consistent reboot moment and reminder to me as a father of how God handles or deals with me because I have the same issues. And if the truth be told I'm not really interested sometimes in asking for direction I just want him to bless the way I already picked, I already picked that so just bless that.

Isaiah 55:8 & 9 God is saying through Isaiah, He said my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways. As a matter of fact, as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways. It's the same Hebrew word, same Hebrew word that's in Psalm 25 and this is David saying God show me the road and this is God saying to Isaiah I know the road I know you think you might know but I know. David is modeling for us a basic discipline and it's this, how about before you go just ask for directions? It's a basic discipline so the question is what road have you started down that you hadn't asked for directions, you just picked a way and say God is the way I'm going to hope You coming with me. Is it a relationship, a job, a school, a business? I promise you a few those I have done and it didn't work out well for me but the good thing is God knows our tendencies and that's why His mercies are new every single morning. So let this be the time that we reboot ourselves and begin the habit of saying God show me the way.

So number one David says show me your ways. Number two he says teach me your paths. You know this interesting this Hebrew word for path is actually very similar to way but it's related to our way of living so if you put the two together David is really saying God show me the road and teach me the way to live. Now maybe on the surface, as I mentioned this is you know, kind of crazy for David to ask because of who David is and already talked about that but let's be honest like none of us really like to be told how to live. I mean we, you know, I mean it's the reason why I couldn't wait to go to college, you know, so I can get out and go do my thing, you know. I remember getting into this argument with my mom and you know, shortly before I was about to go to school and she says, 'I know you can't wait to go to school and I just want you to know I can't wait for you to go'. I said, "well good we on the same page."

The reason this is critical for us to understand is because we live in this, this is my thing world, you know it's all about us, we're going to do our thing, this is my thing culture. And here's the thing the more we're exposed to that the more that we believe is all about us and if we're not constantly seeking God for the way that we live here's what happens we start adopting things from the culture that's socially acceptable but not God's best for us. Now this what we do we curse those who curse us because they deserve it. Oh, I ain't getting no Amen's right there. We only bless the people who bless us cause that's who we like, we shame the people who don't agree with us or who don't vote like us. I know it's going to be real quiet right there. And then if we are Christian we do it all in Jesus name. Oh, oh there we go, alright, I know I'm talking right.

The reason for this is because these decisions and this path is in the best interest of our comfort. The same Hebrew word path is the same Hebrew word in Proverbs 3:6 that my mother taught me, it says 'in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path or He would direct your way of living.

Back in November we had our mission series and we feature Casa Chirilagua and for those you don't know about Chirilagua it's a neighborhood in Arlandria, an area of Alexandria and they have some programs there where they are supporting these families. And the executive director of Casa Chirilagua, Dawnielle Miller, came and shared with us and I was so fascinated by what she said. She told us about how her and two her friends got to Casa Chirilagua and they lived there, that is their community. And this three white women who are in this all you know is Latino community and she said we literally began to pray every Monday that God would show us where to go and where to be and it eventually He nudged us and told us that it was it was Casa, it was Chirilagua and that was the neighborhood that we were supposed to move to. Listen to what she said with the goal of listening to the stories and the wisdom of our Latino neighbors, now given the climate of our world as a whole another message that I can't preach right now. But it was fascinating to me that they moved into this community, now the program that they started didn't start till like two or three years later so they literally were just living in the community. But it's fascinating to me because that is not the starting point for us. You know we asking where was the property value, what the schools look like, what's the crime, you know what's the commute, the shops, is it the cool, is it trendy, does it fit me, is it cute, you know what's the neighborhood score? I'm not saying any of those things are bad but that's the starting point we get that stuff lined up then we say ok God this is the plan bless it. Please! It was a reboot moment for me because I realized in that moment that I need to be only where God has planted me. Only where he has planted me.

Where have you planted yourself that you didn't get clarity on first because you were more concerned about your comfort than where God was calling you to. What path do you have in mind right now that you came into this year saying this is the path that's on my mind, that's what I'm exploring that you're not praying about and you're not holding with an open hand to say, God, if this isn't it remove it. This is what David is modeling for us when he's saying God show me your ways teach me your path because both of these things are associated with the will of God which is the safest place for us to be.

The third thing that David says, he says after show me your ways, teach me your path he says lead me in your truth. This word truth the Hebrew word literally means stability. Now the suggestion by David here is that he knows God is the source of truth and only that is his stability. And then he adds this little phrase at the end he says and teach me. The Hebrew word for teach literally means, are y'all ready for this, to discipline. Now how many of us are praying that prayer? Lord, please discipline me. No, that ain't what we praying, because that's not the form of blessing we really like, you know. But I love a couple of scriptures related to this one says who the Lord loves He disciplines. That's Hebrews 12:6. Proverbs 12:1 'whoever hates correction is stupid.' That's in the Bible, it's in the Bible. Listen the key insight into why David was not only successful but considered to be a man after God's own heart it was because he had this willingness to let God discipline him and he sought it and he appreciated it, he had a capacity for it.

Now you might say well what does humility have to do with truth well listen to what David says as we read down in the Psalm verse 9 of Psalm 25. He said he guides the humble and what is right and teaches them his way. I can't speak for you but I must speak for me, the lack of humility in my life has created more instability than I can recall. And one of the most common reasons is because sometimes I just don't ask questions or I don't inquire because I think I know, that's called arrogance, pride, self-righteousness and sooner or later that stuff slaps you, and kick you and you know it puts you in positions that you don't want to be in. David goes on to say in Psalm 25:14, which is actually my verse of the year, he talks about basically he says when we enter into this relationship in this pursuit of God the secrets or the council of God it will be revealed to us when we show reverence to God, that's related to humility. So the stability that we're seeking in our lives has to do with humility and when we humble ourselves God will reveal it to us. So the basic point here is we can have more stability in our lives number one if we realize we don't know, its call humility. Number two, we ask more questions we seek understanding. Many of us you know, we think we're living the truth but really were living a life of preference and what's comfortable it might not be true but it feels right or this is what I want I think but has been tested, it isn't tried, isn't it isn't true, it's about what we feel comfortable in and it's not stable. And here's the thing, even if we do know a little bit of the truth there's still more to be learned. Jesus said in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit, He said listen after me the Holy Spirit is available to you, to lead you and to guide you into all truth. And here's the thing it takes humility to be led so if you're going to get that truth you gotta have humility in order to experience it.

Let me see if I can land his plane in the next few minutes. In the off season leading up to training camp in the NFL which is an experience that I have been fortunate enough to have. You know we would literally go back to basics every single year like this is what the reboot would look like we would do the drills and we would lift we would run, you know, we would do all these little things you know, just the non-sexy stuff you know. Same stuff I was doing when I was seven and eight years old when I first started playing it was a way to reinforce and to keep the fundamentals sharp, it was just the commitment to the mundane. Now I asked some of my military brothers about basic training because I was thinking you know along the same lines as it relates to you know my football experience and here's what they said is the purpose of basic training. They said basic training is a common baseline for skills that all soldiers are expected to have but also it is meant to de-emphasize the importance of the individual and emphasize the importance of the team. So, in other words, you got some basic stuff you gotta get right you have to work on and number two it ain't all about you. That's the whole purpose of it, and what's cool is God in His awesomeness has called us into collaboration with Him. That is how we maximize us, who we are and what is given to us we don't have the ability to do that on our own so that has to be a de-emphasizing of us and a re-emphasizing of Him.

Part of the reason why God sent Jesus was because we needed a reboot, we needed an example of literally the way, the path and the truth that David is talking about. And then Jesus literally says it he says I am the way the truth and the life, John 14:6. And then he goes on further in the next chapter of John 15:5 he said if you remain in me, I am you and you will bear much fruit apart from me you can do nothing. He repeats the word 'remain' 11 times in the short span of 11 sentences and it's the same thing that's repeated throughout the New Testament by Jesus and in the Epistles. Listen here's the thing the spiritual disciplines are not about performance but perseverance, it's the long game it's the commitment to the unsexy stuff that you not going post

on Instagram. When is hard, when it's frustrating like that that's not the stuff that they were posting about but here's the thing God never promises to reward us based on how eloquently we pray, the size of our offering or the amount of the Biblical text that we can quote. That's not how He rewards us. I love what He says He said just seek me, just make me the priority, I'll take care of all the other stuff. And then one of my favorite promises He says He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That's just basic, diligently seek me not always get it right because we not, but that's not what he's rewarding he's rewarding our diligence. David knew that there was no shame in trusting God he had experienced it and I think the reason we draw up our own game plan is because we don't know God's character, but David said the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful. So you don't need an elaborate game plan for your life this year or any year what we need is a commitment to the basics. Show me the way, teach me the path, lead me in your truth it's the only way to maximize your capacity and your potential.

So listen maybe you're here this weekend and this is what you want to do but you're not a Christ follower, listen it won't happen if you don't develop a relationship with Jesus, it just won't happen. I'm not saying you won't have some success but you will never maximize who you were created to be so you got to establish that relationship. So if that's you this weekend we want to give you the opportunity to do that this weekend or maybe you're in the other category where you kind of got all these elaborate plans you got all these things that you want to do but you are forgetting about the basics you haven't you have re-established those things you haven't committed those or maybe those things have gotten old and you need to reinvigorate them and you need to do them maybe in a different way to have some sort of revival. Whatever category you're in you got to make a choice one way or the other because if you continue to try to do it in your own strength it's just not going to happen, it will not happen. So my prayer for you this year is not that you are wildly successful in all of the plans that you come up with because they might not be great plans but I hope you're wildly successful in the spiritual disciplines of seeking God.

Let's pray. God, we thank you so much for who you are thank you for how you have poured your Spirit out upon us. Thank you for how you presented this opportunity to help us get back to the basics, to remind us that it's just a simplicity of seeking you, the diligence of seeking you that's what you will reward. If we're here this weekend and we haven't had the opportunity to engage in relationship with you accept you, God, I pray that you would speak to us and God help us to open up our hearts to you. And God if we are Christ followers we need a reboot and we need to establish these spiritual disciplines or re-established them or do them in a different way God show us the way, show us the path and lead us in your truth. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen