



# ***REFRESH***

28-DAY PRAYER GUIDE

## Introduction

Whenever we engage ourselves in a major ministry project, we must be able to apply it to spiritual values and means. We must intentionally involve ourselves spiritually before we can respond with clarity to what God is doing.

With the help of our communications team, this booklet and its contents are compiled as a gift and catalyst for your personal spiritual guidance for this season at Central Community Church. May it enrich your life and walk with God as we each endeavor to live in spiritual stewardship of all we've been given.

For this book, we've taken the letters of our campaign title, "Refresh," and created these seven themes: Revival, Excellence, Finances, Resolve, Engagement, Spiritual Formation, and Hospitality. Each of these themes serves as the topic for one devotional per week, with each week focusing on a different aspect of our faith, the church, and the Refresh campaign.

This 28-day devotional and prayer guide can be done individually, with your spouse, or as a family. Start your day with it, or use it as a facilitator for conversation at the dinner table, or make it the last thing on your mind before you go to sleep.

May you be greatly blessed as we, together, join hands and hearts in this new venture.

Joy and peace,

*Lisa Camp & Pastor George Skramstad  
Spiritual Emphasis Directors for Refresh*

# REFRESH *me*

## Times of Refreshing

*Read Acts 3:19-20*

**L**ike so many things, often a refresh begins by going back to the basics, back to the original goal. For us, that means a refresh of each of us. You are the church: you and every believer here. The church is nothing corporately that we are not personally. We are not a joyful church if not filled with joyful believers. We are not a church dedicated to knowing Christ if not filled with people who are dedicated to spiritual habits that strengthen our relationship with Him. We are not a spirit-filled church if not full of believers led day in and day out by the Holy Spirit of God. Yes, we pray that our church is refreshed in every way because He first refreshed you.

Over the next seven days, let's focus on you. Let us help you rewind and remember the first steps of your walk with the Lord. Let the presence of God renew you and renew us so that we may refresh the world with the good news of the God we love.

Begin Day 1 now...



**REFRESH**

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## Humility Leads the Way

*Read James 4:1-10; Romans 8:31*

**Y**ou've often heard the quote, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" No doubt that's true, but the greater, more-revealing question is this: How do you know for sure that God is for you and not against you?

Teacher Francis Frangipane was once asked, "What is the number-one spirit working against the church that's keeping it from being effective?" His thoughtful response was, "The Spirit of God." Thoroughly taken aback, the man asked how that could possibly be true. Francis replied, "The Lord opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Could it be that some sons and daughters of God, some ministry ventures or churches are being opposed by God Himself? Could it be the breakthrough we long for in our own lives or in our church merely waits for a spirit of humility to move us into working with God in tandem rather than in opposition?

Pray through James 4:1-10. Pray "me" or "I" wherever you read "you", and "my" wherever you read "your." May a spirit of humility and repentance begin this REFRESHing of our church body and our church building. If God is for us, who can be against us?



**REFRESH**

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## The Best We Can Offer

*Read 1 Chronicles 21; Proverbs 27:23-24*

**W**e can and should be diligent to know the state of our financial affairs. We are, after all, stewards. But there is a fine line between being diligent and being overly concerned. At what point do we become obsessed about our bank balances or the accumulation of our possessions? David learned that difference in our passage today.

David sinned before the Lord by numbering the people of Israel. He wanted to feel secure in battle because of the size of his army rather than because God was on his side. He put his confidence in what he had instead of in God, and God was not happy about it.

To atone for the sin of over-valuing “stuff” and under-valuing God, David prepared to offer a sacrifice. But when Ornan wanted to donate what David needed to make the sacrifice, David refused. He had learned that God deserved every effort and every expense of a good sacrifice; he would not offer something that cost him nothing.

So, let's ask ourselves two questions:

- 1) Is all my confidence in my stuff or is it in the power of God?
- 2) Am I offering to God whatever is convenient to me or am I giving Him something that will cost me time or money or both?

God deserves our first and our best. Let's not offer anything less.



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## In Light of a Good Eye

*Read Matthew 6:19-34, Psalm 37:21*

In the center of this passage about money, we find a quick lesson in Jewish culture: two verses regarding a good eye and a bad eye. To the Jewish audience Jesus was speaking to, a “good eye” was known to be that of a generous person looking for opportunities to be a blessing. Conversely, someone who looked on others with jealousy or to make a profit from them had an evil eye.

What’s interesting is how Jesus ties our generosity, or lack thereof, to our testimony. Generous people are full of light, and stingy, jealous people are full of darkness. To be light in dark places is to be looking for opportunities to be a blessing. But if we as believers are stingy and jealous, where is the light? And perhaps we have to ask, where is the change God has made in our life? We can’t serve God if we’re still serving money.

Jesus is calling us to live with eternity in view, and to make sure what we value isn’t corruptible or of this world. He’s asking us to have good eyes that look for opportunities to put our treasure in heaven and live as children of light. Let the light of your changed life shine in generosity.

We have the opportunity to have a good eye or bad eye every day. Will you use these opportunities to lay up your treasure in Heaven? Will you be a testimony of how God has changed your heart and your priorities?



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## Consecrations That Keep Us Going

*Read Joshua 3*

**W**alking with God requires resolve. In Joshua's account of Israel possessing the Promised Land, the word "consecrate" is used three times: when entering the Promised Land, when defeated at Ai, and when setting up cities of refuge. Each consecration shows us the resolve we need to be fully-devoted Christ-followers in this messy world.

As Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, Joshua told them to "consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (from Joshua 3:5). Consecration in this moment reminds us to stay committed to God in our successes. Success is a greater test than defeat, and it requires humility and dependence on God in those moments.

As Israel began to conquer the land, they experienced a devastating defeat at Ai because of one man's sin (see Joshua 7:13). For us, we're reminded there will be times of sin or failure (both our own and of others) that call us to resolve again to live as children of God. We consecrate anew, get back up, and walk with God.

The third consecration was in "appointing" cities of refuge (see Joshua 20:7). We, too, must provide safe spaces for those who blow it. People make honest mistakes. Consecrate yourselves to provide a place of grace for them, and don't let their actions keep you from walking with God.

Take a moment to consecrate yourself again to walk with the Lord daily. How will your resolve to walk with God help you in this Refresh?



# REFRESH

## NOTES OF INSPIRATION

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## Let's Have Lunch – No Food Required

*Read John 4:1-38*

Intentionality has power and brings refreshing to our souls. In our passage, a weary Messiah engaged a woman drawing water in conversation. He didn't have to. He could have given in to social norms and let her draw water and leave without saying a word. But Jesus recognized an opportunity here. He recognized an appointment. This was no coincidence. Their conversation that day led to not only her belief in Jesus, but many other townspeople believed as well.

Do we have the faith to believe that our random encounters are appointments that God set up? Do we see people as needing a Savior and engage them in conversation? We don't drift toward intentional relationships nor toward evangelism. It's deliberate. And while opportunities might be unexpected, the Father has prepared them for us.

Talking to people about eternity might not sound refreshing, but verses 13-38 tell us by the time the disciples returned with lunch, Jesus wasn't hungry anymore. Puzzled, they questioned how He managed to eat already. They never imagined that "doing the will of God," as Jesus had done, would be more satisfying than physical food.

When were you last deeply satisfied by doing the will of God? When has physical need taken a back seat to spiritual fulfillment? Maybe now is a good time to consider fasting from a physical need to know how God is leading you to participate in the will of God by engaging people with intention.



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## God's Not Henry Ford (and You're Not a Model T)

*Read Genesis 1*

**W**hen it comes to spiritual formation, there are few—if any—effective cookie-cutter approaches. “Crafting” followers of God is not a series of steps. God does not output His children on an assembly line. Rather, He is relational. He is our Father.

God reveals His process for spiritual formation in Genesis 1: the Spirit of God hovered over an unformed world. This same word for hovering is found in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe an eagle hovering over a nest of young before teaching them to fly.

Picture it: the presence of our Father over us, leading us and forming us to the image of His Son, Jesus. Just like He did in creation, He hovers near and speaks to us through His Word. Here abides the only real formula for spiritual formation: experiencing the presence of God and listening to His voice.

God is not Henry Ford, and you're not an Model T. God is your Father. If you were mass-produced on an assembly line like a Model T, where would be the glory of the uniqueness God created in you and is writing in your story? And if maturing in Christ were an assembly line, where would be the relationship with our Father to apprentice us with His presence and His voice?

Do you recognize the presence of God in your life as a constant? He is near. He wants to speak to you in His Word to make you more like Jesus. Acknowledge His presence and ask Him to make you more like Jesus through this Refresh.



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## God Likes a Full House

*Read Luke 14:12-24*

**O**n the night Jesus was betrayed, He observed Passover. But did you ever wonder where the Rabbi with “nowhere to lay His head” could observe this important evening? The disciples wondered too, and He answered them, “Go into Jerusalem, see a certain guy, and tell him we’re on our way.”

Imagine 13 extra, last-minute dinner guests! Who, during their own elaborate preparations, adds a dozen seats to the table the same day? Jewish people do. In fact, at the beginning of the Passover seder, they recite this open invitation: “Let all who are hard-pressed come and eat. Let all who are in need come and share the Passover sacrifice.”

In Luke 14, Jesus tells the parable of the great banquet. A man prepared a great feast, but many couldn’t attend. Finally, the host sent his servants out to whomever they could find to compel them to come to the party. He wanted his house full.

Radical hospitality like this is more than hoping for good attendance. Like the Passover host, it prepares for more, budgets for more. It adjusts schedules to serve more people. It requires room to be made for those who aren’t here yet. Then it actively works to fill the house.

We are blessed at Central to feast on the richness of God’s presence every week. The Refresh is ultimately for those who aren’t here yet... For those we need to bring. How does your commitment to Refresh demonstrate your own radical hospitality for God’s house?



# REFRESH *the work*

## Sixpence None the Richer

*Read Romans 11:36*

In his classic work, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote of a child who asked his father for a sixpence so that they could purchase a gift for their father. The father gave the child that small amount of money and afterward received the child's gift with joy. Was the father richer for having received the gift? No, when in essence he'd paid for it himself. Was he blessed by it? Yes, because the heart of the child was to love their father.

As we seek the Lord for this Refresh, we too will find that our offering to the Father makes Him nor His church any richer, "for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (from Romans 11:36 ESV). It simply brings our Father in Heaven glory and a heart-felt expression of love from His children. This is true of our time, money, and our service as we'll discover this week. In our study, we ask that God receives back the gifts He gave us as He refreshes the work of the church.

Begin Day 8 now...



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## Seeing Leads to Worship Ending in Revival

By Pastor Phil Stacey

Worship Pastor

*Read Isaiah 6:1-7*

A.W. Tozer in his book, *Worship: The Reason We Were Created*, asserts, “The proud and lofty man or woman cannot worship God any more acceptably than can the proud devil himself. There must be humility in the heart of the person who would worship God in spirit and in truth.” Worship begins with humility and requires selfless surrender to the One who is worthy.

As John E. Burkhart writes, “Worship is response, and the God to be responded to in worship is the God whose grace deserves gratitude.” We must be a people who recognize that God is worthy of our worship and songs of adoration.

We sing not to entertain nor to gratify our own desires, but because our songs can be catchy or nostalgic, we believe that worship is a meal prepared for ourselves. Corporate worship, however, is not to placate a congregation nor to motivate. It’s a communal offering to our God in gratitude for Who He is and the glorious things He’s done. This is a meal prepared solely for Him.

A.W. Tozer further suggests revival and worship are intimately connected. “A revival generally results in a sudden bestowment of a spirit of worship... It is something God bestows on people hungering and thirsting for Him.” Worship shifts the posture of our hearts! In worship, we are awakened and become aware of His presence. When we experience the joy and wonder of His presence, we understand with clarity our purpose. This brings about revival.



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## Unmatched Care for One Another

By Pastor John Carney  
Congregational Care Pastor

Read Acts 4:33-34

This Scripture has always been fascinating to me. Luke is writing a firsthand description of the early church soon after the day of Pentecost. It is a glimpse into the powerful work of the Holy Spirit on those who had surrendered their life to Jesus Christ. The grace of God was taking mere individuals and transforming them into a spiritual *koinonia* (“community” or “fellowship”) that would carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the world.

My brothers and sisters, please take notice that God’s care for His church and their care for one another was a testimony of His life-giving presence that the world had absolutely no substitute or comparison. Could this happen again in today’s church? I believe it is possible. Maybe not in the same way, but in the same spirit.

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” This quote by Teddy Roosevelt, and taught by John Maxwell, is very relevant in the life of a church that is seeking a Refresh. Let’s be challenged in two specific areas of our spiritual walk: first, in prayer for God’s grace to be “so powerfully at work” (from Acts 4:33 NIV) in us, and second, to be imitators of Christ, who, “when He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them...” (from Matthew 9:36).

O, Lord, we ask you to use us to be your hands and your feet for your glory. Amen.

What would it look like for God to Refresh the grace at work within you?



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## Grounded in Identity & Citizenship in the Kingdom

By Pastor George Skramstad

Writing about the ministry of missions & relief

*Read Joshua 24:15*

In each of our lives, there are moments of revelation when we are being called to a higher standard of response to accomplish a virtue or action that draws us closer to God. This call to higher living involves an internal honesty in being realistic about who we are and allowing ourselves to be accountable to God and others in that new knowledge. I like Dr. James Bryan Smith's statement as to who and where we are: "I am a child of God one in whom Christ dwells, and I am living in the unshakeable kingdom of God." When someone is capable of this kind of scrutiny, they are said to be transparent and seeking to live a holy life.

We have decisions to make every day. The prayer is that we make them as people exemplifying the heart of God as seen through His Son, Jesus Christ. This may affect where we serve Him at home or on the other side of planet. It may affect our stewardship financially. It may call us into another ministry. It may be in disaster relief or in a war-torn country. It is much easier to live with ourselves when Christ is part of the process.

Is Christ allowed to speak into your relationships? Into how and where you live to serve Him? Into your financial support of God's kingdom? Ask God to Refresh your sense of identity in Him and renew your commitment to the Kingdom.



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## The Main Thing: Follow Christ

By Dr. Bob Ingram

Discipleship Pastor

*Read Matthew 4:19, 28:18-20*

It's simple; don't overcomplicate it! We westerners do that all the time. You need a class, a training, a diploma, a professional. The simple command of Jesus is, "Come, follow Me." So stop your feverish search for greater knowledge, greater insight, deeper digging. While all of this is what I spend my time developing, creating and promoting here at Central, if we are missing how Jesus went about being with people, loving them without limits, and staying free enough to love our neighbor, then we might be adversaries instead of advocates of the simple mission.

You know, "Go and make disciples." Invest yourself in helping more people follow Him. No, I am not pushing for keeping our faith light and surfacy. I am encouraging you to keep the main thing the main thing. You may have the family devotional time down to a science. Your kids are memorizing the Word! You have your routine down too: 30 minutes or two hours a day. You are well plugged into your church stuff. You never miss. You are convinced that God must be happy with you now.

Stop! Look! Listen! "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (from Matthew 4:19).

Does your idea of Christianity need to be Refreshed by the simplicity of "Come, follow Me"? How can the resolve to simply follow Christ allow you to let go of some of the ways we've overcomplicated our faith? How is Christ leading you in this Refresh?



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## The Value of Generations Together

By Pastor Jordan Rousselle  
High School Pastor

*Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Proverbs 13:22, Judges 2:6-10*

You may have heard the saying, “If you win the kids, you win the city.” We know the importance of our kids, and yet we see in our day a unique separation between those of older generations and those of younger generations. In the days of the Judges, just as it is today, they faced a unique challenge. The wisdom of the older generations had passed away, and because they had not shared the goodness and might of God with the younger generation, the people of God walked into a time when those who knew God were scarce. God was not finished with His work then, and He is surely not finished with us now!

God desires for us to engage one another, no matter what generation we are part of. If indeed we are obedient to Him in the way we love, His promise is that His provision, protection, and presence will be with us. Our God is so good that He wants to bless us and those who come after. This means that the inheritance we leave to our children, and those of the generations that follow, is simply the knowledge of who God is, and what mighty works He has done in our lives!

How would inter-generational engagement bless our church and community? Pray about who God may want you to pour into and pray for so that you, too, can pass down the inheritance of knowing Christ to the next generation.



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## Practical Love for the Hurting

By Pastor Cheri Clark  
Singles & Support Groups Pastor

*Read 2 Corinthians 1:3b-4*

Jesus wept. Lazarus had been dead three days, and Jesus arrived at his tomb where Mary, Martha, and other friends and family were grieving his death. Jesus knew what He had come to do: to turn their grief into joy by resurrecting their dead brother's body back to life. However, God's Word recorded what He did instead of rushing to perform the miracle.

In John 11:35 we read, "Jesus wept." Verse 33 in The Passion translation describes further, "When Jesus looked at Mary and saw her weeping at His feet, and all her friends who were with her grieving, He shuddered with emotion and was deeply moved with tenderness and compassion."

This life will bring struggles and pain, challenges and loss. God places us in a family of believers to support one another through those times. When words are inadequate, there are always hugs to let our brothers and sisters know they are not alone. As we walk together, we discover that God never wastes our pain, but instead uses these times for deep spiritual growth as we realize what is truly valuable in life and travel arm-in-arm with our brothers and sisters in Christ through the dark valleys to the sunny mountaintops.

Ask God to Refresh your heart for hurting people. How does He want to use you to love the broken in our church? In our community?



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## Ministry of Clean Feet

By Cori Broddle  
Director of Community

*Read John 13:1-17*

In John 13, Jesus humbly stooped down to wash the feet of His disciples during the Last Supper. The Son of God set an example of what humility, love, care, and hospitality truly is. This was a powerful message to the disciples then and to future generations that followed.

The act of foot washing serves as a reminder for us to approach others with kindness, love, and respect. As we follow Jesus's footsteps and willingly offer ourselves in service to others, we demonstrate our devotion to Him and fulfill His commandment to love one another.

Foot washing is linked to hospitality. Hospitality, in its purest form, goes beyond merely welcoming guests into our homes and church; it reflects an attitude of generosity, warmth, and selflessness. To genuinely serve others and create an atmosphere of love and acceptance, we must be willing to go the extra mile and humbly support those in need. Foot washing is a powerful metaphor for humility, reminding us of the significance of putting others before ourselves. May we always remember the transformative power of foot washing and hospitality as we follow in the steps of Jesus.

As we look to those around us, both during the week and as we worship on Sunday mornings, how can we live out Christ's example of hospitality?



# REFRESH *this house*

## To Love the House of the Lord

*Read Psalm 84:2-4*

Within all of Scripture, except for God Himself, no one loved the House of the Lord more than David. He spent a lifetime writing about, singing about, and even planning for the Temple of the Lord. Though he would never be the one to build the Lord's house, clearly his heart was turned fully toward it with affection and longing. In this passage, we find that David even envied the birds who made their nest there. How fortunate they were to never leave, but dwell there every day!

Ultimately, Israel's love for the House of God slowly drifted from the fervor of David to a state of utter disregard for 16 years after they returned from exile in Babylon. Wherever we find ourselves on this scale of love for the House of God, over the next week of reading we can each level up our affection for, and dedication to, the place where God's glory dwells.

Begin Day 15 now...



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## Whose House is Nicer?

*Read Haggai 1:1-7*

The DIY market in the U.S. is worth \$290 billion a year. We love keeping our homes on-trend. To our credit, it is good stewardship to not let our investments or possessions be in disrepair. The people of Israel in the book of Haggai, however, had allowed their DIYing to get out-of-hand, and they found themselves out of favor with God.

When Israel returned from captivity, they had to rebuild everything. Before building their homes, they laid a foundation for the Temple and built an altar—the bare minimum to stay in fellowship with God. They planned to get around to building a Temple for the Lord, but for 16 years they never did. The Temple was in ruins while they lived in luxurious, paneled houses. In essence, God had become second place to the DIY trends of their day.

Israel could have argued they were due a few nice things after losing so much in exile. They could have reasoned that at least they were faithful in the routine activities and sacrifices of the temple, assuming while God may not have been pleased, surely, He was pacified.

God is neither pleased nor pacified with anything in our lives of greater value than Himself. Have we taken a posture of planning to eventually attend to the things of God? Are the details or desires of our lives edging God out? Ask Him to reveal to you any areas where you've put Him in second place to something less satisfying.



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## Solomon's Means

*Read Haggai 1:7-8*

Solomon's Temple was a thing of beauty and splendor that was built with the best of the best: dense and strong cedars from Lebanon and imported gold. Thousands of people, highly-skilled craftsmen, their servants, plus all their living expenses made the building of the Temple an extravagant endeavor.

This temple in Haggai is not that.

Solomon's Temple was built with Solomon's means. Haggai's temple would be built by the means of less-well-to-do Israelites. It would be far less grand. Look at God's instructions: "go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house." That was it—the rest He would provide Himself.

God knew this generation of Israelites was in no way as well-off as Solomon. Fortunately for them (and for us), God's requirements are individualized. He doesn't expect a Solomon-sized gift from anyone but Solomon. What He's really asking for is a place of priority in our lives, and in that He takes pleasure and is glorified.

If God is leading you to give a Solomon-sized gift because you have a Solomon's means, do it! He's worthy of it all. But if you're not a Solomon, your gift is no less glorious. It's your heart He wants, and your priority. That's what honors and pleases Him.

The same is true of this Refresh. Give your own excellent offering, not someone else's, but make sure your first gift is that of a heart dedicated to the things of God.



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## How's That Working for You?

*Read Haggai 1:5-11; Proverbs 3:9-10*

The underlying scriptural Principle of the First is highlighted in this passage. Established before the Law was ever given to Moses, the Principle of the First is woven throughout Scripture. Simply stated, giving God the first of anything allows Him to bless the rest. It's true of your money, your time, etc.

God's issue with Israel was exactly that—He was not first in their lives. His house had laid in ruins for 16 years. Even the worst DIY'er could have accomplished something in that time, but it was never a priority. The Principle of the First was at work, but on its flipside. God wasn't first, so their finances were a mess.

God challenged Israel to consider their ways by asking, "How's that working for you?" Truthfully, it wasn't working well. Because God wasn't first in their homes or finances, their income was meager. They were dissatisfied and uncomfortable and running through money with no control. This made them afraid to step out in faith and finish building the House of the Lord. Their poverty mindset had convinced them they couldn't afford to give.

Life is fruitless and frustrating when God is anything less than number one. In that regard, who can afford NOT to give? If you've never honored God with the first of your income, now is a great time to start. If you already do, perhaps God wants to bless you more by giving to Refresh.

Ask God how He wants you to respond.



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## Courage to Do It

*Read Haggai 2:4-5*

Consider the gracious leading of our Father when seeking His face for direction. The people of Israel were convinced they couldn't restore the Lord's house. They had adopted a poverty mindset while in captivity that convinced them they could never afford to give or to finish the House of God. Then the kindness of the Father reassured them they could do anything He was requiring of them. He would not ask something of anyone that He in turn would not enable them to do.

Look at His encouragement: three times He repeats "be strong." Bear up under this. You can do it! It's like a father on the sidelines of a sporting event cheering on his child. You've got this!

God continues by reminding them He's with them. They're not taking on this task alone or left to their own devices. Just like God had been with them in the exodus from Egypt, He would again remain with them, in the center of it all. He'd be in the details, the planning, the funding, the labor... The entire project. Finally, He adds the best exclamation point of all: His always-comforting "fear not".

Don't be afraid to step out in faith to trust and believe God will enable you to do all that He's asking of you. He's cheering you on.

When considering your commitment to Refresh, identify your fears. Bring them before the Lord and allow Him to encourage you. Be strong, and fear not.



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## Love Without Agenda

*Read Haggai 2:6-9; Ezra 4:1-5*

The way we care for the House of Lord and how we fund its restoration is part of our testimony. A watching world makes assumptions about how great our God is if we assume He cannot provide what's necessary for the restoration of His own house. Further, they may question the depth of our experience with God by how we prioritize Him. His impact on our lives inspires devotion, and His greatness and sovereignty are the source of all we need. This is the underlying testimony of restoring the House of God.

The story of restoration from Haggai can also be found in Ezra in the portion you've read today. The enemies of the exiled had offered to help in restoring the Temple, to which the people of Israel said a flat, "No, thanks." This was, in fact, for their God, not that of their enemies. Surely, He would provide for and enable such a great work. He promised to shake the heavens, earth and nations and fill the house with glory.

The call to those who are not yet in relationship with Jesus is not, "come and give." Instead, we simply compel them to come and see what God has done in us, and to come and receive the same hope and life we've found in Him.

How would your participation in the Refresh testify to what God is doing in your life and how faithful He really is?



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## There's Joy in the House of the Lord

*Read Haggai 2:15-19; Ezra 6:22*

You can do hard things. In fact, you can do anything God asks of you. The question is, What is He asking of you? Through the book of Haggai, we've seen poverty-minded, former exiles with bad priorities obey God to take on restoration of the Temple. They couldn't afford it. They were fought against and shut down by their enemies. And the Temple they built was not as glorious as Solomon's Temple.

But God...

God enabled them to do what He asked of them. After lying in ruins for 16 years, the Temple was finished within months. God had provided resources, given them courage, and sat Himself in the middle of them to be with them every step of the way. All they did was seek God for what their part should be, believe Him, and obey. The result? Their faith was made stronger, and they were filled with joy.

God changed them! He promised to fill the house with peace and to bless them for making Him their priority again. Then the joy of the Lord filled them and His house. No longer beaten-down, former exiles, they were servants of the Most High God who had seen Him do miraculous things through them.

Does your life lack the joy of seeing God use you in His Kingdom? When was the last time you obeyed God to do something beyond your capabilities? What do you believe God wants to do in your relationship with Him through Refresh?



# REFRESH

## NOTES OF INSPIRATION

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## It's All About People

Read Ezra 6:19-22

If you read this passage too fast, you might miss the beauty of the Temple restoration. Skim it, and you will be tempted to think this is all about buildings, assets, or money. It's not.

The people completed the Temple and were celebrating Passover. The priests and Levites were cleansed, and the Passover lamb had been slain and offered as a sacrifice. Here, we realize the value of the work wasn't just in pleasing God with a beautiful dwelling place. The glory was in people believing in God. The Passover "was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, *and also* by everyone who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the people of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel" (emphasis added).

It's all about changed lives. There are people in your life and in our community looking for something to believe in. Looking desperately for hope and peace and joy. And when they see it in us, they'll believe it.

The Refresh has a monetary commitment to it, but can you put a price tag on the souls of people? People will move from death to life because of the Refresh, but they need to see something to believe in. They need to see God do something amazing through ordinary people.

Picture someone you know who does not live in connection with Jesus. What would you sacrifice to see them next to you on a Sunday loving the God you serve?



# REFRESH *the world*

## Isn't That Refreshing?

*Read Proverbs 11:25*

This final week is written to stimulate our thinking about our mission to the world. In short, what are we doing as a church outside of our property lines for the community, the nation, and our world as ambassadors for Christ? Unless we understand our identity in Christ as well as our identity in the world we live in, we may well underestimate the value and purpose of Christ's call on our lives.

These brief meditations take us inside our lives to evaluate our spiritual barometers as to our care for others outside the normal boundaries of home and church. What impact can we have on those of other extractions, cultures, heritages, means, and belief systems not only in America, but anywhere in the world? May we be given vistas of mission beyond our wildest imaginations for the glory of God.

Begin Day 22 now...



**REFRESH**

NOTES OF INSPIRATION

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## Revival & Peace in Tandem

*Read Colossians 3:12-17*

Educators will tell you how much they appreciate students who make it a point to solve disagreements, who direct themselves to activities that bring people together, and shy away from power plays. These students understand that control was not having the most muscle but having integrity and character; and they avoid self-serving decisions. The charter by which they live is based upon peace. Jesus lived out this premise His entire life: He was the Prince of Peace.

To live as part of God's kingdom demands we promote and live in peace with all people regardless of ethnicity, background, decisions, and differences. This enlarges our influence, and it is a witness of the work that God has done in our hearts and lives. Peace is also a by-product of a devout and holy life that works to eliminate prejudice, preference, and fractures in relationships.

The church that lives in peace and unity with its members automatically becomes a church known for its character and care of not only itself, but of those outside its walls far and wide. People will be drawn into this kind of fellowship. The Bible says: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15 NIV).

Do you live in peace and unity with yourself and others? Your neighbors, family, and fellow workers? How does peace enable you to refresh others?



# REFRESH

## NOTES OF INSPIRATION

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## Created for Good Works

*Read James 2:8-17*

Every person has been given a purpose, a task, a trajectory of responsible activity which we are called to do as well as given freedom of choice as to whether we will participate. As we grow in our spiritual intimacy with God, we find a heightened awareness of what He desires for us to become and do as individuals, as families, and as members of humanity.

Some are called into politics, some into service organizations, some into healthcare, some into full-time missionary service overseas, some into education, and some into local projects. The list goes on and on.

Our eyes see things we have never seen before when we view them from God's perspective. People are no longer objects for us to manipulate. Resources are no longer taken for granted. Boundaries are embraced as needed commodities in a world of permissiveness and mediocrity. Character is built on timeless qualities that Jesus represented, even His death on a cross. Love stretched long on a cross for the world now becomes you and me reaching out to others.

What good thing are you doing away from the church with others? What is it that God is calling you to do in your work, community, or the world? In what way unique to you can you refresh the world around you?



**REFRESH**

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## Pouring Ourselves Out in Sacrifice to God

*Read Philippians 2:1-11*

Emptiness and fullness seem complete opposites, but they are not. In the spiritual life, we find the fulfillment of our deepest desires by becoming empty for God.

We must empty the cups of our lives completely to be able to receive the fullness of life from God. Jesus lived this on the cross—the moment of complete emptiness and complete fullness. When He had given all away to His Abba, He cried out “It is finished” (from John 19:30). He who had emptied and humbled Himself was raised up and given the name above all other names (see Philippians 2:9).

After lifting our lives as signs of hope for others, we drink them. Drinking our cups means fully appropriating and internalizing what each of us has acknowledged as our life, with all its unique sorrows and joys.

*“We drink them as we listen in silence to the truth of our lives, as we speak in trust with friends about ways we want to grow, and as we act in deeds of service. Drinking our cups is following freely and courageously God’s call and staying faithfully on the path that is ours... When we have emptied them to the bottom, God will fill them with “water” for eternal life.” – Henri J. Nouwen*

Recall a time when you poured yourself out in service to God. How did it fulfill you? How could pouring yourself out financially for the Refresh lead to fulfillment in Christ?



**REFRESH**

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## Growing Things Change, Changing Things Challenge Us

*Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-17*

*“We are like blocks of stone out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of His chisel, which hurt so much, are what makes us perfect.” – C.S. Lewis*

Growing up, do you remember when your bones would ache, and your parents said these were just growing pains? Do you remember when a friend moved away, and you felt abandoned? Do you remember an accident, tragedy, or illness that you wished were just a dream? These are human experiences. In them, we embrace life and use every circumstance as an opportunity to learn, grow, and participate in the work of God in our lives. Or we begin to live as self-made men and women relying on our own understanding and blame everything on God or someone else.

“For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:6-7; 16 NIV).

Do you know what God has called you to be on this earth? And how are you doing in bringing others with you on this journey? If you were to commit to the Refresh, how would that shine the light of Christ to others around you?



# REFRESH

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## Who Is My Neighbor?

*Read Matthew 5:43-48*

Who is my neighbor? The root of neighbor is translated “neighbor,” or the person near us. A person coming nigh to us is one who is approaching us. That person could very well be my neighbor as defined in this manner. However, it could be a fellow classmate, a member of the family, a person at church, or someone you’ve never seen before. Or it could be someone the Holy Spirit is speaking to you to encourage or to strike up a conversation.

As Jesus taught us to love our neighbors, we find it has a much broader definition. My neighbor may be the person coming toward me on the street, the person in the restaurant sitting in the next booth, the person behind the counter, or my child’s teacher. It may be someone in the waiting room of the doctor’s office, or someone God brings to mind that I’ve met during this past week. Whoever it is, God’s call is to love that person with the love of God that surpasses our own abilities. That is God’s love in a broken world!

Are you reaching out beyond your comfort zone to others? Has God given you boldness or a burden for reaching those outside your circle of friends for Christ? What is God calling you to do?



# REFRESH

## NOTES OF INSPIRATION

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## God Designed You with a Purpose

*Read Ephesians 2:1-10*

God knows us; He made us; He poured the breath of life into us. God made us in His likeness so we might be a part of His kingdom forever. He gave us the ability to create, think, reason, enjoy, laugh, cry, and to be His people. He has told us over and over how much He loves us, especially by sending His only Son to earth to die for us!

Unfortunately, we often do not believe what He has told us. We consider ourselves unworthy, without hope, and far from any intimate relationship with the God who formed us in our mother's wombs. We may even see ourselves as scientific experiments that just happen to be in progress during this twenty-first century. Most leading thinkers of our planet today disregard God in the quotient of values, purpose, and design.

We are often incapable of grasping this kind of forethought and care. We think of ourselves less valuable and capable than God thinks of us. But "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (from Ephesians 2:10 NIV). Since God is Who He is, and has made us who we are, we should consider what God has called us to be: *His creative masterpieces*.

What is your identity in Christ? If people knew you, would they know you as a Christ-follower or as a silent participant in life? How does the Refresh allow you to life in your purpose?



**REFRESH**

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## Share Without Expectation

*Read Ephesians 4:25-32*

Pastor George recounts an important story from his childhood: His parents were always concerned about those who did not have enough food and clothing. He remembers taking two boxes of hand-me-down clothing to a family who had four children that were younger. A couple of weeks after the delivery, Pastor George's family stopped by for a short visit only to recognize that much of the clothing was not being used by the children, rather by the dogs as bedding. "We were mortified," he said, "because those had been our clothes which were still in good condition."

Nothing was ever said to them, and it was the best way. It taught to Pastor George and his siblings that service and giving must never be based on the expectation of return or how it will be received, but rather on obedience to God and His great generosity to us. "It is important that I serve, that I give, and that I participate in making a difference in this world regardless of how it is accepted or used," he said. As part of God's kingdom, we give of time, talents, and monies.

The Bible says that we ought to "work honestly with [our] own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy" (from Ephesians 4:28 NRSVA).

Whose life are you pouring yourself into for the purpose of glorifying God through that relationship? Do you give or share without expectation or demands? What can you give to Refresh that may enrich someone's life or the ministry of Central?

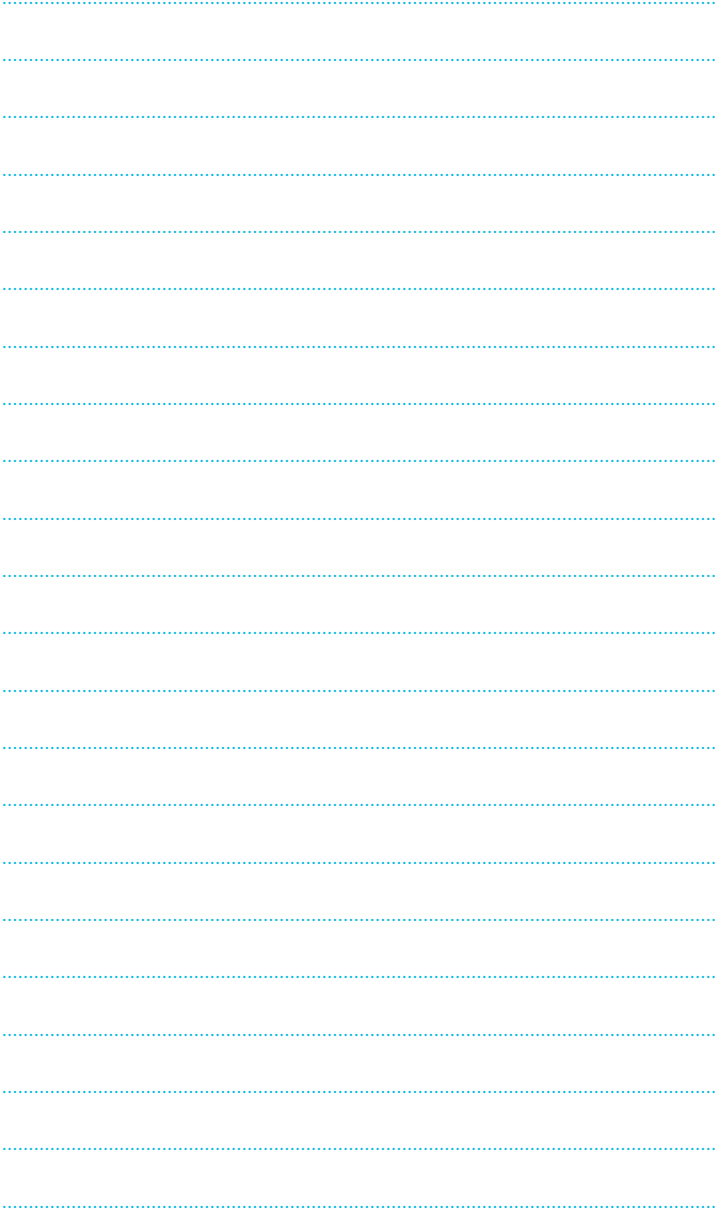


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