

How on Heavens earth should I begin? Every one of us has gone through tough times. I have taken a time out now and then to catch my breath. "What am I going to do now"? We have all been there. In a moment of indecision, our next move might be the most important one we'll ever make. God only knows the right move or the right answer.

I named this book "Reset" and it fits within most of us. Have you ever said "I need to start over"; "I need to move on" ;or "I wished several times I could turn back time?" I love the old version of Scrooge with Alistair Sims. He appears to be evil, but in his awakening moment he regrets all he is and has ever been. In the final gripping scene Scrooge asks the dark brooding spirit if these are the things that will be, or if (by some miracle) they can be changed? The dark spirit does not answer, but instead takes this fearfully broken man to, a grave before him, his own destiny. Suddenly the once prideful Scrooge wants to reset.

I have experienced bad times in my life. Sure I want to go back, and save me, but we all know that I can't. I suppose if you believe in Buddhism or reincarnation it might be hopeful that you can make a difference a second time. For the rest of us, we have only our memories, and the life ahead of us. Chuck Swindol says "If you got it, get at it." I know he is talking about the Holy Spirit, but it still applies here. We have a life to live so get at it and live it. Why get stuck in regret and the "Woulda shoulda" thing.

We can't go back but we can reset. There is a chance to start over a little older and a little smarter. Part of the going back idea is that we could make things right the first time. Have you pondered the question: "Do I go back as a young person or as who I am now" A little experience comes from the things we screwed up in days gone by. Usually it's the only way to make better decisions (the second time). I'd say the mistakes we make redeem knowledge, but the decisions we have made are mixed with luck, randomness, and fate. A reset brings perspective.

Have you heard the term “We are baked.” What it means is that we are cooking along from birth until now. Along the way experiences are the ingredients we add to our finished product. In most cases we are baked or finished around 30 or 40 yrs. old. We know who we are and what we like in life. So what happens when we love the finished product but life makes us turn into an upside down cake? Everything we believe in and everything we are is gone. Maybe we need to hit the reset button.

Ok, so let's begin with my story. I have heard many other great testimonies, but my story is one I know so well. I was forced to hit the reset button several times, so that might make me an expert in starting over. Trust me it's no fun starting over. It's a little easier running downhill than up. I guess that can't be said of Jack and Jill but “Hey” they were carrying water. When I started over it began with basically nothing. I think about it sometimes and wonder “Could I still start over again?” I'm a little braver and slightly more confident than I was because I've been there before. It gives me good reflective insight into my own past.

I like dreaming of the good old days. So just like in the movies, let's let the lights go dim as I give you the rendition of my early years. I grew up as a normal teenager (right). My mom was hard sometimes, but funny in many ways. Maybe I am just like her more than I know. My dad worked as a carpenter, and I spent much of my childhood on the construction sites. He was my coach in sports, and always expected more from me than I could give. We had a typical family for the most part. My problems began when my mom and dad split up. My brother was a mess at 13 and our family disintegrate before my eyes. What was left was a smoldering pile of dysfunctional family and home life.

My brother and I moved out and our life began. What did I know about life at 18? Yet, I had to pay bills, feed, and take care of us. It was either do or die I suppose. I think life was way

too serious at my age. I wanted to party, play, and have fun all the time. Everything was funny at 18, and to be serious, that was adult stuff. I certainly did not want any part of that, yet life wanted to cook me and bake me, but I wasn't ready to be put in the oven.

To make matters worse, I had lost the girl of my dreams a year before. I thought she was "The one" (We all do). We were high school sweethearts and as in most relationships at that age, it faded away. Over 95% of high school relationships end up in divorce. I guess I could say "Lucky me", but then what's the fun in that. I was a kid and I had dreams. My dreams of having a family and a wife burnt up in flames within a year out of high school. Still, life moves on and I had a brother to rescue.

I had a good job and things were going quite well. We were still young and lived life without much sleep. It's normal to cram as much as you can into your week when you're young. Who needs to slow down? I am amazed at how much we don't care about time in our early years. There is a feeling that we have all the time in the world. Adults always tell us to plan and prepare. They know how to do life by experience. After high school life and experience is in front of not behind us. The crushing defeats in my personal life were brewing in the background, but I was becoming a survivor as life caromed forward.

Then experience came calling me in the form of my old high school girl friend. This began a change. My brother moved back home and I moved in with her. I had heard a saying in those days that affected me. It says "If you give something away and it never comes back it was not meant to be, but if it returns, it was meant to be." I lived by those words. I dreamed and I hoped for a better life in those words. I wanted my mom and dad back but that wasn't going to happen. I wanted my grandpa back but he died and that wasn't going to happen either. Then came back my old high school girlfriend: who says you can't have it back. I am a survivor.

Like I said, we are being cooked as we gain experience. What I believed was based on what I knew. I was now 19, yet what did I know? In hindsight at 49, I was just a little kid so long ago. I should have moved on. I should have reset, but we all hope and dream of getting back what we lost. Many movies have played out my heart's desire. I loved watching people in their magical miracle lives making their dreams come true on the big screen. Dreams do come true don't they? I believed in Hollywood. In a way we all do. Why do we love chick flicks so much? I believe it's what we want in our hearts even if most of the time it never happens. I wanted that magical miracle life too. My high school sweetheart had me with hello again just like in my favorite movies.

To make a long story longer my dreams seemed to come true. I got my princess back. We got married and had two great boys. From day one it was a disaster. A friend told me he was surprised that my marriage lasted 11 years. He was right. There is a book by Brenda Schaeffer called "Is it love or addiction." I wish I had read it when I was 19. Unfortunately I read it after my divorce. I was addicted to an idea or dream. I thought my high school princess was everything I needed to be happy.

My thoughts and convictions were solid: in everything I had become up to that point. I was certain I knew firmly what I believed in. In our early years we learn so much. We take in everything. We also ignore everything. What is true on the surface seems so real when you're young. I didn't think deeper about life, nor had reasons for what I believed. Everything was just true to me. I believed there is no God; that people are nice all the time; and that if a girl comes back it's for life.

In all things, we can be surprised. God came calling for me in a good way through my divorce. Experience came calling too. I found out that not all people are nice. I now know that

not all fairy tales have a happy endings. I lost my princess and I lost my life. At one point I was reduced to a towel. That towel became my best friend. It was also multi-purposed too as I used it to shower and do the dishes. It became my security blanket. It's all I had.

One night, for a moment, I wanted to take my life. All was lost; I was lost. When you have family, friends, and a house, things appear to be wonderful. Take them all away and you're reduced to a towel and the guy in the mirror. It's hard to look at him when he let you down. I know it sounds crazy and neurotic but I look back at those times like an out of body experience. I can see me struggling to survive. I used to be a survivor but not anymore. It looked like I was baked, done, burnt, and finished. It was in that moment that God turned it around. God surprised me.

It would be easy to be disappointed in life. Kids fail us, spouses fail us, and co-workers fail us. I have had the pleasure of failing myself too. I knew nothing about God. My childhood had nothing bad to say about Christianity or religion. The problem was my childhood said nothing at all about it. My mom made me go to church, but neither my mom nor my dad went to church. God was a story I read about at the doctor's office. You know the story book in the waiting room with Jesus and Noah. God was as real as Bambi or Dr. Seuss.

I had a Christian friend who said Jesus could save me. I got to tell ya brother, not even Jesus could do that. Why would he want to do that? My mom and my wife left me. In my mind, I was leaveable and worthless. To make matters worse, these Christian friends acted in very, not so, Christian ways. That had left a negative impression on me about their beliefs. Who wanted to be like them? It looked like I was not saveable and certainly not a survivor, and the Christians were as screwed up as I was.

Obviously I didn't kill myself. A good friend of mine stayed on the phone with me through the night encouraging me to live. This is not a book designed for those who want to end their lives. I just know that at times all seems lost. If you have ever felt that way you're not alone. What do we believe in at those times? Who do you turn to when nothing is left? Religion might seem cold. Family might be cold too. God surprised me because: He is not cold. I didn't know that. This is what God did.

One night another friend of mine gave me a tape by Dr. Laura called "Ten stupid things men do to screw up our lives." Yup, that was me in a nut shell. However, number 5 caught my attention more than any other "Men you need a spiritual side." Then she said "Come on now, you know you do." I knew one thing for sure, I needed something because what I had been doing till now was not working. I was thinking of killing myself. The fight had almost been kicked out of me. From 18 till 33, I experienced two family breakups, and to my dismay had to start over twice. Where are the instructions for that? I wasn't just baked at 33, I was fried. Then Christianity reset me.

Can I take a minute to talk about life and death? You see in that moment I was faced with a choice: live or die. This is why I chose to live and I can prove it because you're reading my book. One night I was house sitting for a friend and I was alone. Life was too heavy. Ya, it was dark, and ya the bills were mounting moment by moment. It seemed a plausible solution to end it all except one nagging thing, God kept putting people in-front of me everywhere I turned. They kept saying life can be fun. We can laugh at our misfortunes. Sorry but I wasn't laughing. This is where Christianity stepped in. Remember I said another friend told me Jesus saves. I get it now.

The neat thing about Christianity is the eternal life part. Jesus not only saves but gives us eternal life to be saved and that's a long time. Let's suppose for a minute that eternal life is real.

If that is true then we could take death out of the equation. God presents us with a choice: either live or die. For Christians, they only believe they can live. Death is not in their cards. Sure they physically die but their belief in Jesus gives them the ability to live forever in spirit and a new body (I'll go further later).

To believe in God and Jesus is to believe in life. Atheists seem to embrace death. They say that we are all worm food. What a great outlook. We live, drink, and die. Wow that is so positive. They might say it is about being a realist. Ok fine, but is it hopeful? One night years ago I was faced with that choice. If I'm worm food and life has gone to hell then why live? I tried and failed. Maybe I could say those around me failed; life had failed. Then God asked me a question. What if maybe "Failing" could be fun? Maybe bad times could turn into good times. What if eternal life gave us plenty of time to see that happen?

Let's look at this in an example. I will call this the swing effect. You will find out I have a lot of effects (see other books I wrote). We all love to swing at the park. Ok, well at least you tried it once. You get on the first time and fall off backwards. That means you learned to hold on tighter. Then you get bold and see other kids swinging higher. You try that and get real cocky at it: then you fall off again. That hurt but you hold on even tighter this time because you really want to swing. Higher and higher you go shouting "Man can I swing now."

Then (in the corner of your eye) you see this really bold child stand on the swing, and he really moving while standing up. Wow that looks cool and nuts. Then he jumps off and lands straight up on his feet. That was so perfect, I got to try that. So you, in your exuberant youth (don't try this older) feel your free as a bird. Keep the bird thought. On you get, standing up. After a few pumps, you're swinging back and forth higher and higher. This is so awesome. At one point you forget, in your euphoria, how high you are going and you jump off just like the

other kids. As you fly off you realize you're not a bird and come down on your head and not your feet. I guess Forest Gump was right "Stupid is what stupid does."

The point to the "Swing Effect" is that we try and try until we fail. There is something special about finally getting it right. That is what I really call euphoria. I sat at the edge of the Grand Canyon several years ago with 2000 feet below me. There was no railing or rope just a ledge and fate. The cool part is that 50 other people were doing the same thing. Sure there were one or two just hanging back but not most of us. We wanted to experience the place between life and death. It's why many of us try until we succeed or until we fail. How close will you get before you get burned. We all do it. I know because at the Grand Canyon I witnessed it day after day.

The swing effect reminds us that we get on this scary thing called life and try and stand up. Life is scary but we have to try. Yes we will fall off but there is always a better way to stay on. To hold on tighter first we have to fall off. Sure we see others doing life better than us, but we are not them. They might take risks like standing up on a swing, but that might not be us. What we can learn from them is to know our limits and challenge our boundaries. Life is meant to be lived not just experienced. Sitting on a swing is no fun, but swinging is. It's all about how "Will" we swing? How "Will" we live?

The choice to live means you need to live well. For some that is on the ledge of the Grand Canyon or up on a swing. There are others that are tentative and stand a little further back. I know people who would never swing or go and experience the Grand Canyon. They stay home saying life just sucks or is too hard. Unfortunately, some of those people choose to die. A girl on the news recently had terminal cancer. She chose to end her life her way before the cancer got

the victory. I suppose it was clever of her to cheat death of its victory. However, I hate to tell her that she died anyways, death still won. Did she live to the end well?

Every one of us doesn't know when our time will come. Cancer girl wanted to beat the grim reaper. I think she feared the reaper and the song by Blue Oyster Cult says don't do that. Why didn't she embrace what life threw at her. Why focus on the end? If you believed in eternal life then life's trials can't beat you. This life before you is only part one so to speak. She could have encouraged others, loved more, and helped more. This girl could have done anything but end the time given her. On her terms: no she let death win. She let "Were only worm food" win.

I know that one day I will die in this body but I chose to believe there is more. Further to that I choose to live each day to the max: it's all we have. For some, it's six years and others sixty. What you do with it matters. That's what God did for me. The "Surprise" was that God cared and he wanted me to care. I believe that eternal life means we have time to matter. Maybe, just maybe my life was not as worthless and unlivable as I had believed.

So if my life was worth something then I had work to do. Some people give up and kill themselves. Others just live within their bubble and cower from life's constant blows. I chose to fight back. Life is extremely hard but extremely fun. Did it ever occur to you that trouble is far and few between the fun times? Sure we only go to Disneyland once in a while or fly on a plane every now and then, but that is anticipation and hope. Do we look forward to disaster?

Eeyore from Winnie the Poo is a pessimist. Here is a dialog between Poo Bear and our pessimistic Donkey Eeyore. **"Good morning, Pooh Bear," said Eeyore gloomily. "If it is a good morning," he said. "Which I doubt," said he. "Why, what's the matter" "Nothing, Pooh Bear, nothing." We can't all, and some of us don't. That's all there is to it." "Can't all what?" said Pooh, rubbing his nose "Gaiety song-and-dance" "Here we go round the**

mulberry bush." Doom and gloom can win our day if we let it. Death loves that but God does not. He wants us to live. That's why eternal life means so much more than you think.

This brings me back to the word "Reset." I had a choice to live or die I guess. Christianity was begging me to live, but how? In religious circles we hear about how people change. "Oh you have changed once you became a believer." "Wow, you seem different." One person gave away all their possessions. Another girl gave up her former ways and joined a convent to be a nun. I man leaves his family to go on a spiritual pilgrimage. A wife is transformed and her husband leaves her because he just can't stand her now. I have seen and heard them all. Religion changes you. Maybe change and a reset could work together for your good?

I read about a white middle class boy who in his late teen years became a Muslim. I know there are good and bad Muslims. I know there are good and bad Christians (well get into that later). Recently there seems to be more bad Muslims than good, but the media feeds that. This young man has denounced all his former life. Religion has changed him. The problem is that he wants to destroy and kill all who oppose his new way of life. The good boy has turned into the bad boy. Experience changes you, I get it. Should that experience be used to change others? Should that experience change you from a good person into a bad one?

This boy's real problem isn't with the infidels or his former life. No, he is the same guy changed by an experience. If a car kills our friend, do we go out and kill all drivers? No but we do warn drivers of the danger in driving? This boy, deep within his own heart, is not what he wanted to be. Something has gone wrong. In my childhood something went wrong. That little boy had hopes and dreams that were distorted and crushed as life went along. That does not give me the right to kill what affected me.

One more effect in this chapter (I told you I like effects) I call this one the VCR effect. Young people reading this are scrambling to look up VCR on the internet. It was a recording and viewing device that played video tape of a movie or something we filmed (before your time). If that still boggles you as it does me, then go to a museum. Anyways, this is what I mean by the VCR effect. We put a cassette tape into the machine and it plays. I still own a VCR and a few old movies for it. These days I like HD TV and Blu-Ray movies on disc. It is much better, but I still have my VCR, why? Well some movies are not on Blu-Ray, and some home movies I have are still on my cassettes. I think the VCR still has great value.

The VCR machine is interesting and I can remember when it was brand new. Just because it is replaced with new technology does not mean we throw it out. Like I said, it still has value. Why do I have to throw it away? The other side is the reset button. From time to time I had to press rewind. With a DVD we just press reset. My Autistic daughter killed a few movies by constantly replaying a scene over and over. She stretched the tape and killed my VCR. It drives her nuts she can't do that with DVD.

She likes to also press reset on video games to start over. I was in the middle of a heated battle in a game once when the machine reset. I have to tell you I almost lost my mind. It's like dying when you're right at the end of a game. The funny part of this story is that my smiling dog was sitting on the reset button. I'm still scarred by that event to this day, and yes the dog survived. A reset is good but it does have its challenges when it's unexpected. This VCR effect shows us that everything can hold value, and a reset can be good if done properly.

There is a time and place to start over. The most important lesson I have learned is that yes we change, but we are still who God baked us to be. Religion adds to us and in some ways changes us. Religion takes who we were and makes us better models. I know many of you have

had very bad religious experiences. Some people in religion have given religion a bad name. I will address that in a bit, but for this chapter I wanted you to see that you are who you are. You have value before you change. You have value if all seems lost. Luke 12:7 says **“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”**

That is Jesus saying God the Father values us more than other parts of creation. We have tremendous value. To change is to grow in experience and understanding in life. Our VCR is part of us just as the DVD is. I like the physical CD but I still put the song on an iPod. To change is to do the same life differently. I threw away all my past life when I became a Christian. I think there are good reasons to do that; however, I did not need to get rid of it all. That is hind sight. I needed to reset. Maybe that boy who is now Muslim needs to reset before he reacts. I needed to reset my life instead of ending it.

Reset means to start over from scratch. In sport, the coach, at times goes back to basics. He changes the pace and focus but the sport remains. He resets the team. Ok I lied, let's do one more effect. I'll call it the “Sport effect.” The NHL Edmonton Oilers hockey team reset the team because it wasn't working. They tossed out all the old parts and replaced them with young new parts. 8 years later they are still a disaster. The Calgary Flames went a different route. They kept their old parts and refused to add anything new. Do you see the words added and new? Some things need to remain, but equal to that some new things need to be added. You can't have it one way or the other. You need both. The common ground is the mindfully purposeful desire to reset.

The Calgary Flames resisted the Reset for several years and it cost them years of floundering. They just continued on robotically relying on old parts. Conversely, the Detroit Redwings continue to reset all the time adding and deleting new players each year. They have

made the playoffs 23 years in a row. It's still the same Redwing hockey with changing parts. A reset should be embraced from time to time. Adding to your person does not degrade you but improve you. It's like baking a cake is good but adding icing is better. The "Sports effect" is simply this "Don't reset to change but reset to add and adjust."

This book has many sides to it. My real goal is to help you see that resetting your belief is what you need. God cares and God matters. Our religious experiences are like life experiences. Some are good and some are bad, but we don't kill ourselves over them. We equally don't throw out God just because some of his so called followers suck. God, church, and religion are good: it is people that are sometimes not nice. I always say God could do great things but people get in the way.

God reset me in his way. I still love who I was in many ways. I do love the new parts of me as well. Yes I cut off some bad parts of me (figuratively). Read John 15:2-6 **"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit." You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."**

Sometimes reading the Bible can seem confusing. What's with all these tricky words: pruning, vines, and branches? Just say it Jesus. I know it's easy just to pass over much of God's word because it's hard to read in parts. What Jesus is saying is that he is the vine just like we have roses at home. At times we cut off bad (or dead) parts and the plant grows new shoots. Jesus wants us to believe he is the trunk or vine of a growing plant. We are his shoots or branches. It's telling us that the tree or rose bush remains but bad parts go and good parts grow. We reset or prune our lives to grow back new good parts and let the bad parts die off.

I love God today way more than I did in my old life, but I still appreciate some parts of the old me. I love Nintendo, Hockey, and Led Zeppelin. I don't like AC/DC anymore, swearing, and porn, but I used to very much. I now, in my life, love the Bible, worship music, and praying. I dislike hypocritical Christians and bad religion. I am now a Taylor Swiftie (at 49?). I am different yet I am the same.

To "Reset" is to take a long look at who I was. I reflect, prune, and grow. A "Reset" is to adjust the TV screen. In games, we can brighten or darken the view. How do you view your old life? Is it time for a change? I say that if you don't believe in God then maybe it's time to fix that. God is not as bad as you think. You can still be who you are in most things and have God in your life.

If you do not believe in God, or just don't want church or religion, I get where you are coming from. I have met way too many mean spirited religious people. With that said, God is not as bad as you think. Those mean people took what God meant for good and made it bad.

I want to address the God (Spiritual) side of things. I equally want to address your human side too. We live on earth with people. Some are good and some are bad. We also live with the person in the mirror: "You." A well-loved and well cared for "You" is important. How you develop yourself has either gone well or not so much. Either way "You" remain. A "Reset" just might be good for your human mind and spiritual soul.

No matter your situation maybe a good reset is all you need. I hope to help you in the following chapters to see that God matters. A reset matters. Jesus tells the story of a man who sweeps his house clean of demons. He cleans the house so well that nothing remains. The demons come back and look in the window seeing the room cleaner than before. So they invite

their demon friends to come live with them in the same house they left because there is now more room. Jesus says the man now has a larger problem than he had before.

The point is a good one. Getting rid of everything is not smart. You can't rid yourself of the past. It is part of what makes you who you are. On the other hand you have to add something better to keep the demons from returning. A void heart is not a good heart. Something will always want to be in your heart. Your heart was designed to be filled. The question is with what? A reset might be the answer. A reset can give you perspective on what was and what could be. I firmly believe that is what God wants for you: so let's reset.