

# A Year of Renewal

## Isaiah 40:31

January 5, 2019

Pastor Daniel Fusco

Renew Series

### Reflect

Outline: Recap

### Realize

Points to Ponder

### Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

## REFLECT

A new year. A new decade. A new...you? Every time January 1 rolls around, most of us plan to reinvent ourselves, to reimagine our lives. This year, instead of trying to start from scratch, what if we capitalized on who we already are? God made us all with different and beautiful personalities, and he offers us the chance to live into our uniquenesses in a way that is satisfying, life-giving and full of joy. So if 2020 finds you dissatisfied or stuck where you are, join us for our new Sunday message series as we embark on the journey, not just into a new year or a "brand new self," but to renew ourselves.

## [LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

## REALIZE

### 1. Be with Jesus.

- **Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 22:37-39**
- **Leader Notes**
  - Isaiah 40:31 follows the same sort of pattern as Matthew 22:37-39: upward, inward, outward. Our lives of faith are structured in three directions: upward, as we relate to God; inward, as we relate to ourselves; and outward, as we relate to the world.
  - In 2020, a Year of Renewal, we are looking to Isaiah 40:31 for how to be renewed by the Lord in the midst of circumstances, even while we're waiting on the Lord. If we want the Lord to renew us, we have to seek that in the midst of what's going on around us, because sometimes our circumstances take longer to change than we would like them to. If we're waiting on different circumstances to feel renewed, we may be waiting a long time. On the other hand, God wants to renew us right here and now, no matter what else is going on.
  - The key to experiencing renewal in Jesus is to be with Jesus, to spend time with him. As a church family, there are two ways we want to focus this year on being with Jesus.
  - First, we want to focus on being with Jesus by encountering him in stillness, regular quiet times free of distraction. Second, we want to encounter Jesus by stewarding the spiritual gifts he entrusts to us.
- **What are your spiritual gifts? How are you practicing stewardship over the gifts entrusted to you by the Spirit? And how are you stewarding your relationship with Jesus through the practice of stillness?**

### 2. Be the Church.

- **Isaiah 40:31**

- **Leader Notes**

- As we spend time with Jesus, we begin to live into the reality of who we already are as individuals and as a community, the church. Being part of the church is who we are because God adopts us into his family, but we want to focus on two ways to live into that reality this year.
- First, we want to see everyone in our church family in a group, and we want to see everyone in our church in ministry. Together, we want to reflect on what it would look like to be an active participant in a group and within ministry in the church. Sometimes we hold ourselves back from getting involved in ministry because we feel like we don't have enough time. The reality is, God has something for each of us to do, that he's uniquely gifted us for, and he wants us to involve ourselves in the family he's given to us. So we may need to seek the Lord as to how to re-prioritize our time to make space for the ministry he's called us to.
- **Describe your current involvement in ministry within the local church. What is one way the Lord is prompting your heart to go deeper within that ministry? Are there any ways in which God is leading you to re-prioritize your time?**

### 3. Be on Mission.

- **Isaiah 40:31**

- **Leader Notes**

- As we spend time with Jesus and his church, the Lord begins to bear fruit in our lives, part of which is that we naturally begin to go on mission. As a church family, we also have two specific ways we want to focus on being on mission.
- This year, we want to focus on being on mission by helping vulnerable children and reaching the unreached, especially in the 1040 window, the least reached part of the world.
- **In 2020, how can you on your own or in your group help the vulnerable and reach the unreached? Describe a practical plan for getting started.**

### Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?