



Wednesdays @ 11am via Facebook Live

RESET, REFRESH, AND REFUEL!
Fall MBS Series

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 13TH & 20TH

All are invited to join us!

*Ministry of
Biblical Studies*

● LIVE



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

MINISTRY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES Handout

Wednesday, September 6th, 2023

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Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church Fall Ministry of Biblical Study Classes

**September 6th RESET,
September 13th REFRESH,
September 20th REFUEL!**

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

A Prayer for the Ephesians

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Introduction

One thing we know is that when we are running on empty, physically, emotionally and spiritually, all of us need to refuel. That's the actual prayer the apostle Paul shares in our Scripture today, "That you would be filled with the fullness of life and the power that comes from God."

The literal translation is "being filled". It's not a one-time filling. It's a constant refueling. Why? Because we have a constant need. There are always things in our life which are draining us, challenging us and wearing us down. And when you get to that point, you have a choice of what you're going to do.

First, identify your priorities.

You've got to sit down and look within to really identify what's most important to you. Our problem is that we've come to believe that everything is important. So we don't choose some things, we've chosen everything.

Most of us haven't taken the time to consider what's really important in life. As a result, we elevate things that aren't really that important and we devalue things that are really important and we wear ourselves out in the process.

The key to finding time with God is making God a priority in your life and that's not just adding Him into your life. So spend some time with God and ask Him to reveal His priorities to you.

Select no more than seven priorities which are important to you.

Once you have done that, set goals of what you would like to accomplish under each priority and how you will do that. That's your action plans. Living by your priorities is all about intentional action.

Set out your actions steps for each priority and then put them in your calendar. If you don't schedule these first then you will never get around to them.

Second, you've got give some things up.

You just can't keep adding things into your life. You've got to ask yourself, "What am I going to give up?"

That's the question you should ask before you consider something new. The problem is we don't know what we should give up because we've never considered what's really important to us in our lives.

Third, once you've made your relationship to God a priority, you've got to stop.

We've become so accustomed to always going that sometimes it's a real challenge to just stop doing. We've got to learn to stop the continuous push of our lives each day.

You can't refuel on the run, despite what Exxon says with their "On the Run" convenience stores." As much as we'd like to have our cars just drive past the gas station and they'd fill up, it doesn't work that way. And you can't refuel spiritually on the run.

Busy people struggle with refueling because you just can't do it on the run. That's why you've got to define your priorities and then give some things up. When you've done those two things you've not only given yourself permission to say no but also to stop the constant push of your life.

That way you can stop your body, your mind and your life from this hectic pace. This may take some practice for some of you. At some point in your day you've got to slow down, stop your busyness which then will allow you to take step 4.

Fourth. You've got to be quiet.

To be refueled, quiet or silence is the equivalent of food and water for the body or gas for the car. Silence is replenishing and life giving.

Scientific research says quiet can lower your blood pressure, slow the heart rate, aid digestion and reduce insomnia.

Finding times for moments of silence also can make us less-stressed, nicer people. But it's not so much about the noise around us as it is about the quiet inside us.

In a world where noise is ever present silence can actually be deafening. Some of us can't handle silence because we've been conditioned to need noise.

Think about it. You wake up to alarm noise. You turn on the TV. You get in your car and you turn on more noise. You go to work and you've got noise. You come home and there's noise. We've been conditioned to noise because we're always surrounded by it.

It's in the quiet and the silence where God speaks.

Tim Murphy of the Manresa Retreat House states that "It's where we encounter God. God speaks to us in the silence of our hearts. There is a strong counter-culture to silence in a world where we are constantly bombarded with noise."

God isn't going to compete with the noise of the TV or radio. But he will speak in the silence when he has our full attention.

That's the lesson of Elijah's experience in 1 Kings 19, when Elijah who had been battling other prophets and their pagan God found his emotional, physical and spiritual tank running on empty.

So he ran off and hid from God's work and started praying, "God, You were there in that battle against the pagan prophets but where are You now? I just can't hear You any more." And God says, "'Go out and stand before Me on the mountain.' As Elijah stood there a mighty windstorm hit the mountain.

It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper."

1 Kings 19:11 That gentle whisper was God.

Other translations that I like call it "a still small voice"; a quiet whisper in your life. I wonder in my own life and yours, how many times have we have missed the voice of God because we surrounded ourselves with so much noise.

The challenge is stop and be quiet.

That's where prayer comes in. Prayer is a two way street.

It's not just us talking to God, it's God talking to us and putting impressions on our heart and thoughts into our minds that you can't hear when there's noise.

So part of a commitment to quiet is to spend 10-15 minutes a day without thoughts or worries or to do lists running through your head and instead just listening in the quiet for God to speak to you. One website describing the elements of a Benedictine life said, "Before we can listen, before we can truly hear the word of God addressed to our hearts, the spirit and practice of silence is essential.....Only one who has learned how to be silent, who has learned how to go beyond the noise from inside and outside himself will be able to hear the cry of others as well as the call of God."

Fifth, make a connection.

If there's any generation in the history of humanity that understands connection it's our generation.

We're always connected. Some of you have been texting and answering emails during this bible study. That's how connected you are. With all the stuff that we've got – blackberries and instant messaging and mobile phones and email.

We're always connected.

What we're not so good at is making a connection with God.

To do that, you have to pause the outer connection so you make an inner connection. This connection can happen in many different ways. 7

But when you make a connection, it begs three questions.

First is When.

- When am I going to provide the time to connect with God.
- When am I going to stop?
- When am I going to be quiet?

There are no rules for the When. But if there is one guideline it's this: do it in the time when you're most vibrant, productive and awake.

For some of you it's going to be before work.

For others after work.

For others, during work at lunch break?

And still for others late at night.

There is no right time except when you're at your best, so you can be most attentive to God.

The second question is Where?

Where is it going to be?

For me the only requirement for the Where is I've got to have a place that's quiet, away from distractions and is comfortable.

Third is What?

What are you going to do?

In the electronic world that we live in we use tools to connect with other people: phones, PDA's, pagers.

Basically the What is, What tools do you use to connect?

There are a lot of different tools that you can use but not every tool is for everybody. You're going to have to find out what works best for you.

We're all wired differently and that means we'll use different means to connects with God.

The only real way to discover yours is by trial and error. Use a tool for a month and see if it's letting connect with God and hear his voice for your life.

Stop, be quiet, make a connection. Can you see yourself doing that? Does it seem possible? Is it practical?

Do you see yourself being filled up?

Can you imagine with me a minute if your soul was totally refueled and even topped off?

How might your life be different, your pace be different, your priorities be different.

You wouldn't be running on empty. As Paul said to the church, "I want you to be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God." Can you see that for yourself?

