

10 Day Re-Entry Devotional

Welcome back! Your trip is over, but that was only the first step. Remember how frightening it was to take that first step of faith? But considering the life change that has taken place, you probably would not have missed it! The second step is to continue on your spiritual journey by continuing to learn about God and His character. Learn about Him as King, as a friend, but most of all as your loving Father. You will need discipline, however, because it will be easy to put your spiritual walk on “cruise control” once you have returned from the mission trip. Do not allow yourself to return back to the same old patterns and routines, but keep being renewed as you read and meditate on God’s Word. Here is a 10 Day Re-Entry Devotional that will be helpful for you in adjusting back to life at home.

How do you say goodbye?

Day 1

Act 17:24-27 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; (25) nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; (26) and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, (27) that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

You maybe asking yourself, “I’ve seen so much need, how can I say goodbye?” We can glorify God as we return home as we reflect and realize the truths of these verses.

Read the above verses and write down your thoughts concerning how these verses helps us being able to say goodbye.

Verse 24 says that we do not determine where the presence of God is going to be. Just because we are at work some where does not mean that the presence of God would not have been there if were not there. God determines where He is going to be at work and where He is going to dwell, after all He is the creator of the world and all things in it.

Verse 25 gives us the confidence we ought to have in serving Him. We do not serve a God that has needs. The success of His mission is not dependent upon our power because He is not served as though He needed anything. We serve a completely almighty and sufficient God. Though we leave the mission field, He is not lacking in the work that He is doing there. He is the one and only one who gives man life and breath and all things.

Verse 26 reveals the sovereign, perfect plan of God. It is not by accident that you were born where you were and others born where they were. It is the perfect design of God that determines our time and geography of existence.

And finally verse 27, God has placed us in each place where we will be able to experience Him most. So glorify God as you return home. Trust that God will continue to do the work that He is doing and trust that God has a perfect and sovereign plan.

Readjusting:

How did you feel about leaving from the mission trip?

What were you glad to leave behind?

What was most difficult to leave behind?

Prayer Points:

Praise God for the work that He is doing across the globe.

Thank Him for allowing you to experience it first hand.

Tell Him that you trust that He will continue His work even in your absence.

Express to him any difficulty you are having in bringing an emotional closure to the mission trip.

“I Shall Remember the Deeds of the Lord”

Day 2

Psa 77:3-20 When I remember God, then I am disturbed; When I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah. (4) You have held my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. (5) I have considered the days of old, The years of long ago. (6) I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders: (7) Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? (8) Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? (9) Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah. (10) Then I said, "It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed." (11) I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. (12) I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. (13) Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? (14) You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples. (15) You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. (16) The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled. (17) The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. (18) The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. (19) Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known. (20) You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

There are moments in your life when you feel like God is evidently working all around you and through you, you may have experienced it recently on your trip. And there are other times when God seems silent, and far off. The latter may be the feelings you experience when you return home after your mission trip. You saw so much need and worked everyday with all your strength in meeting the needs of the lost, but now that you're home, you're back to the same old things, and this is depressing you.

Reflect back on the mission trip, in what ways did you experience God actively at work around you and in you? Do you relate to the words of the Psalmist in verses 3-5? Does the work of God seem to be a thing of the past and not the present? Write in your own words what you are going through.

Read verses 6-9 and answer the questions the Psalmist is asking. In times of stress and depression, the answer of what you *feel* may be very different than the answer of what you *know*. What does the Psalmist decide to do in verses 10-12? What should you do?

In verses 13-15, what does the Psalmist say about the character and conduct of God? How are these truths about God significant to you?

What is the writer remembering in verses 16-20? What is Scripture communicating by expressing God's great power in this way?

Do you think the writer is now encouraged? Why? In verse 19, referring to how God led His people like a flock, what does the phrase "and your footprints may not be known", (or "though your footprints were not seen" NIV) mean to you?

If you are missing the "evident" presence or deeds of God you experienced in the past, how can you, like the Psalmist, encourage yourself in the Lord?

Readjusting:

What was the most important thing you learned about God during your mission trip?

What do you remember most about the people you served there?

Prayer Points:

Thank God that, though His "footprints" are not always seen, He still leads you as His flock.

Confess any personal sin that He revealed to you.

Praise Him for each truth you listed about Him from verses 13-15

Remember the faces of those whom you served, and pray for them.

“Do you wish to get well?”

Day 3

Joh 5:5-6 A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. (6) When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"

As God opened your eyes to His global purpose and plan and allowed you to experience being a part of it, you, whether you noticed it or not, have been changed. You will never be the same again. And as God changed you, you might have noticed things about your former way of talking, the way you spent your money, the way you thought, and the way you lived. And you're afraid now that you've returned home you will revert back to your old ways, after all, you've been living this way all your life.

Jesus will always meet you where you're at, but because He loves you, He will never leave you where you're at. Read John 5:1-9 about how a man, having been ill for thirty-eight years, received healing from Jesus.

After thirty-eight years of being ill, do you think the man thought he would ever become well? Why? How do you feel about your former life style, do you think you can be healed of it?

Who notices whom in this event? And what is the question of Jesus? How is that question significant to you?

Readjusting:

What encouraged you most about your mission trip?

Is returning home a difficult transition for you? If so, in what way(s)?

What new values are you bringing home with you?

Prayer Points:

Thank God that He is constantly working to make you holy and like Jesus.
Ask God for Him to heal you of your sickness, your former ways that you wish leave behind.
Pray that He will allow you to quickly transition back, but not revert back to your old ways.

“A Broken and a Contrite Heart”

Day 4

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

No doubt, that as you experienced those who are poor in the eyes of the world, as you saw pain and sadness in their eyes you were broken of spirit and contrite of heart. On behalf of those that were lost, you offered your broken spirit and contrite heart to God asking Him to work in their hearts and bring them to salvation. And the promise of God when you approach Him this way is that He will not despise you.

But what about the needy of our home? Not just the homeless and the abused, but what about the doctors, lawyers, and the stock brokers that all need salvation? Are you broken in spirit and contrite in heart as you observe their lives without Christ? Why?

It is when we experience tremendous need that our heart becomes broken, and our heart contrite. We ought, whether one is rich or poor in the eyes of the world realize that in the eyes of our heavenly Father, all without Christ has a tremendous need. The Psalmist here, however, is talking about a brokenness concerning self. How and why should we be broken before God?

Meditate on Psalm 34:18 and 147:3 and identify the areas of your life where you have not been broken.

Readjusting:

Now that you're home, do you feel broken? How is it similar or different to the brokenness you experienced on the mission trip?

Do you sense that you are involved in spiritual warfare as you readjust? Why?

Prayer Points:

Pray that God would enable you to see the lost as He see them.
Ask that God would allow you to experience a tremendous need for Him everyday.
Thank Him that in your brokenness He promises not to despise you.

“The Word of God is living and active”

Day 5

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Do you know your thoughts and the intentions of your heart? More important than that, do you know whether your everyday thoughts and intentions are Godly? How do we determine if our thoughts and intentions are of God or of ourselves? Hebrews 4:12 says that God's Word judges it.

What is the implication of God's Word being living and active?

The verse describes God's Word as being sharper than any two-edged sword, for what purpose is it sharp?

The verse also says that God's Word pierces into the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow. It makes a connection between soul and spirit with joints and marrow of a bone. What are the characteristics of joints and the characteristics of marrow?

The message is that the joint of the bone is the hard and thick outer parts of the bone, while the marrow is the inner, soft, living part of the bone. The Word of God pierces beyond our hard and callous soul, and into our soft, living spirit. If we desire spiritual growth, we must over and over be nourished within our spirit by God's piercing Word.

Are you being pierced everyday by the Word of God? If not, why?

Readjusting:

How did you experience God's Word to be living and active on your mission trip?

Why was it so important to read God's Word on the mission trip, is it still important? Why?

Prayer Points:

Pray that God would give you a deep hunger for His Word daily.
Ask that His Word would pierce you deep, and though it may first be painful, thank Him that it is for your good, and for His glory.

“Powerful and Effective Prayer”

Day 6

James 5:16b The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective

As you return home, you will be faced with many new concerns, values and insights. You must make conscious choices on how you will handle these present challenges. The best option is remembering to pray and trust God with them. In your circumstances, that may be a difficult choice. Many returnees choose detachment. They pull away from their church or others; some choose resentment and bitterness, and break their fellowship with God. These are classic symptoms of reentry stress.

Many believers admit that their greatest spiritual weakness is in the area of prayer. Even with the promise of prayer’s “effectiveness,” we may remain weak and disobedient to God regarding prayer. Read James 5:17-18. Who does James use as his example of a righteous man that prays? According to this passage, what is true of a righteous man? In what way is this an encouragement to you?

In the KJV, James 5:16b reads, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* The word “fervent” means “in earnest.” Read Acts 12:1-17. Who was praying earnestly and what were they praying for? Which verses show that though earnest prayer was offered, those who prayed did not really think God would answer their prayers and give them the desire of their hearts?

God answered their prayer because their request was consistent with His will. Did they know that they were praying in His will? How does this example of prayer encourage you to be earnestly praying for your requests?

Righteous Christians are those who have confessed and agreed with God about any personal sin revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. These believers are cleansed from all unrighteousness. Read 1 John 1:9. Describe what each of the following scriptures show about how God acts or feels toward those who are righteous:

Proverbs 15:8-9

Proverbs 15:26

Proverbs 15:29

Psalms 34:15

Psalm 34:17

1 Peter 3:12

Does it encourage you to know that your prayer is powerful, effective, and heard by Almighty God? Take time to think deeply. What concerns will you bring to Him in prayer?

Readjusting:

In what way has your attitude toward prayer changed since returning home?

What changes are occurring now that you are home?

In what way do you think prayer helps you cope with “readjustments” here at home?

Prayer Points:

Express your thanksgiving to God for hearing the prayers of the righteous. Confess by agreeing with God about any personal sin that the Holy Spirit has revealed to you. Praise Him that your prayers are effective and powerful. Share with confidence the concerns that you listed above. End your prayer with praise for His actions and feelings toward you as one who is righteous.

“Cast your burdens”

Day 7

Psa 55:22 Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

When a career or short-term missionary returns home, it is not unusual to be bombarded with old cares and new burdens. Psalm 55:22 is an action-packed verse. The word “cast” means to throw or hurl your cares or burdens on the Lord with a deliberate mental and spiritual decision. The Lord, as our strength, lovingly desires to step in and carry each burden for us. He responds with action and keeps the believer going; He helps us not to slip or drift off course.

What is your greatest care or burden right now?

Are you carrying the burden on your own? How can you “cast” in on the Lord? How can carrying this burden on your cause you the slip and disobey God?

Read the following scriptures and write down the ways in which they are an encouragement to you.

1 Peter 5:7

Psalm 37:23-24

Think about the following phrases: *He will sustain you...*, *He will never let the righteous fall...*, *He cares for you...*, *...for the LORD upholds him with His hand.* “Hand” in this scripture speaks of God’s power and strength. Consider person of God who made these statements. Read the following scriptures and write, in your own words, what you learn about God:

Psalm 147:5

2 Chronicles 16:9a

Matthew 19:26

Romans 4:21

How can you apply what you have learned about God, through these scriptures, to dealing with the greatest care or burden that you have?

Readjusting:

Did you return from your mission trip experience with a grateful heart?

List the things for which you are grateful.

While on the mission trip, was there a difficult experience that you now consider with thanksgiving?

Prayer Points:

Share your deepest concerns with the Lord, Praise Him for His great love, power, and strength that He is willing and able to use on your behalf. Confess to Him any sin that has resulted from carrying the weight of your own cares. Thank Him for the burden, and cast it on Him.

“Do not judge”

Day 8

Mat 7:1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

Your mission trip experiences may be the most influential event that has ever taken place in your life. As you return home, you desire to communicate this to others in a meaningful way. Perhaps you even feel a deep spiritual commitment to inform and challenge others to change and get involved. Sometimes, however, you sense only superficial interest from others. There can be a great temptation to find fault and to criticize those who lack understanding. On your return, you may face other people's apathy, indifference, and lack of commitment.

Read Matthew 7:1-5. In these verses, Jesus uses word pictures to help us understand certain principles concerning the correct attitude believers should have when tempted to have a critical heart attitude. Write the meaning of the word picture contained in verses 3-5.

Take time to think carefully. Are you willing to be judged by the same standard by which you judge others? Why or why not?

Perhaps Nathanael displayed a critical, judgmental heart attitude in John 1:43-46. Read this text and see whom he may have misjudged. How did Philip respond to Nathanael's criticism? In what ways can Philip's reply instruct you when you feel negative about someone? Describe practical steps that you could take to have better understanding.

Read Romans 2:1-2. In your own words, describe what God's Word says is true of those who are critical of others. How is God's judgment different from how we usually judge others?

Read Romans 15:5-7 and list phrases that encourage you to have a godly heart attitude. What are we commanded to do in verse 7? List the reasons given for this command and the result of obeying it.

Colossians 3:13-15 gives us more insight into the proper heart attitude we should have toward others. In the KJV, the first word is “forbearing.” In the NIV, the word “bear” is used. These words refer to a sense of carrying or supporting one another in the area of spiritual need. Read this text and list the five commands to believers.

Readjusting:

What did you criticize during your cross-cultural experience?

Now that you are home, of what do you find yourself critical? Why?

What is the difference between a discerning heart and a critical heart?

How do you cultivate the sensitivity to have a discerning heart?

Prayer Points:

If you recognize that you have a critical attitude toward another person or life situation, agree with God by confessing that attitude as sin. Thank God for His loving-kindness and forgiveness. Praise God for His understanding of the special situations and events in your life. Thank Him that He always loves to listen to you. Ask God to work in your life so the five commands in Colossians 3:13-15 will continue to mature in your life.

“All the families of the earth will be blessed”

Day 9

Gen 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Nearly every book of the Bible reflects God's desire for all nations to believe in Him. A "covenant" is an agreement between two parties. In His covenant with Abraham, God promised that all the "families" or ethnic peoples of the earth would be blessed by the Redeemer. Read Genesis 12:2-3.

What part of this covenant has been fulfilled? The phrase "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" has not yet been fulfilled.

Read Galatians 3:6-9, 14. In what way is this unconditional covenant a blessing to us?

Have all the nations or peoples heard the gospel so that they may enter into the blessing that God has promised those who come by faith? What is still needed?

Romans 10:13-15 reveals to us what is needed to see the blessings of this covenant extend to all the nations and families on the earth. List four needs from verses 14-15:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Name two types of people mentioned in verses 14 and 15 that can be instrumental in the salvation of these lost souls.

Romans 10:17 tells us how "faith" comes. What must be heard for an unbeliever to become a believer?

Read John 4:35-38. You have the opportunity to "lift up your eyes and look." What do you observe? What does "white already to harvest" mean in verse 37?

In your own words, write of the wonderful truths revealed about reapers and sowers in verses 36-38.

What steps of obedience will you take to see all families of the earth be blessed with the hearing of the gospel of Christ?

Readjusting:

How has your mission trip experience affected your desire to be involved in missions either as a Goer or Sender?

Are any of your life goals changing?

The Bible often speaks of the value of listening to be a "multitude of counselors." Who are you looking to for counsel if you are considering new options for your life?

Prayer Points:

Thank the Lord for His covenant and the opportunity it offers all families of the nations. Express your thanks that those who go, and those who send, are important members of a team to get the gospel to all nations. Praise God for allowing you to have His Word in your language so that you could hear and believe. Praise Him that in the task of sharing the gospel with unbelievers, both those who sow the Word, and those who reap, rejoice together. Share with God your own thoughts concerning this study.

“Increase our faith!”

Day 10

Luk 17:5-10 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (6) And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you. (7) "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? (8) "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? (9) "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? (10) "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

Without faith it is impossible to do good. The Apostles know this and therefore ask Jesus to increase their faith. How does Jesus help them?

What does Jesus put the focus on, the quantity of faith or the power of God? What is the significance of that?

Why does Jesus compare the apostles to slaves?

What is the significance of the master never thanking the slaves in verse 9? What does that say about the nature of the master and the nature of a slave?

What is the significance of the slave's statement in verse 10?

Examine yourself to see if you require a thanks from God in your serving him. Do you consider yourself a slave of God?

Readjusting:

How are you trusting God to meet your emotional and spiritual needs as you readjust?

List three things that you are willing to surrender to the Lord as you readjust:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Note three ways that you can express your gratefulness to the Lord during your readjustment period:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prayer Points:

Thank God that His ability to work through you is not dependent upon how much faith you have. Confess to Him that you are His slave, never being able to serve Him so much that He will ever owe you a thanks. Confess your indebtedness to Him and your need for His grace.

Gathering your final thoughts

Find a quiet place and spend a minimum of 1 to 2 hours of undisturbed time reflecting on your cross-cultural experience. Leave familiar surroundings if you need to.

Write as much as you can about the Lord, lessons you've learned, and ways you have changed.

Document your desire and an action plan to preserve your new and different outlook, and perspectives on life.

Sign and date your journal page when you have completed this assignment.

Share your current thoughts and feelings with someone you trust, preferably someone with overseas experience.