



God
will
make
all
things
new.

Revelation 21:5

devotional
study guide

RESTORE

REDEEM

REPAIR

REVIVE

REVEAL

REFRESH

REWARD

REFINE

RECONCILE

RECEIVE



BACK2BACK
MINISTRIES

RE

devotional
study guide

NAME :

DATE :

COUNTRY :

TABLE OF CONTENTS

God	Introduction	2
will	Day 1: Restore	4
make	Day 2: Redeem	8
all	Day 3: Repair	11
things	Day 4: Revive	14
new.	Day 5: Reveal	17
Revelation 21:5	Day 6: Refresh	20
	Day 7: Reward	23
	Day 8: Refine	26
	Day 9: Reconcile	29
	Day 10: Receive	31
	Journaling pages	33
	Back2Back Opportunities	40
	5-Point Child Development Plan	44

We encourage you to take the time to finish this book after you return home. Stories and lessons the staff have learned on African soil, Mexican mountains, Haitian shorelines, and Indian streets will fill this book and your heart for what's to come.

Join us this week >

We are excited
to share Back2Back's
theme for
June 2014 - June 2015.

It is the Biblical
principle of God who
makes all things new
(Revelation 21:5).

He remakes, renames, and
rebuilds all that is
broken. The theme is just
two letters: "RE," but
in our days together
we will cover these big
gospel promises.



God
will
make
all
things
new.

Revelation 21:5

INTRO

Introduction

RE

by Beth
Guckenberger,
who loves the
orphan around
the world and
lives like it.

There are two storylines constantly at war. I feel them tug inside of me. One is the gospel storyline. It is full of words like reconciliation, restoration, redemption, rescue, and repair.

The opposition has a storyline of its own. Instead of redemption, it's condemnation. Instead of reconciliation, it's separation. Instead of repair, it's destruction. Those words can sprinkle themselves throughout my day in my relationships, my attitude and my work and when I go there, I lose. I lose hope and momentum. I lose footing. I lose my bearings. I co-labor in the agenda of the one who wants to kill, steal and destroy.

So, acknowledging there is no middle ground, I constantly ask God throughout the day to rethread my life back through the needle of His holy plan.

Write into my life your best stories I tell him.

It's the
gospel
I want
to see
lived out
around,
in, and
through
me.

It's the gospel I want to see lived out around, in, and through me. I want the chance meeting, the perfectly timed phone call, the just-arrived-when-I-needed-it check. I want the a-ha moment, the you-did-it euphoria, the spiritual mountaintop. I want to wrap my life around the gospel storyline, because I believe God has more for us than we could ever ask or imagine.

As I search for Biblical evidence, I find plenty of words in Scripture to describe God's-making-things-new agenda - words like revive, and refine, reveal, receive, reassure and remember. God is not just making things new; He is bringing them back to where it all started... recall, replenish, reunite, release, re-establish, return, and renew. It was once all good. And God's work in our lives is a continual renewal of the original Eden promise of relationship with Him.

This week, as you share your life with us, think about this gospel storyline. Allow it to penetrate your thoughts and dictate your actions.

notes

MATTHEW 11:28-30

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the **unforced rhythms of grace.** I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

As you spend time serving with us this week, may your time be marked by an 'unforced rhythm of grace.' May you experience a life of surrender and trust and choose to reject striving, competing, earning, compelling, manipulating and posing. There is another way.

God will be showing you some of His best stories this week, and He wants to write you into this chapter. Surrender to His sovereignty and grab a front row seat to eternity.

As you spend time serving with us this week, may your time be marked by an 'unforced rhythm of grace.'

Restore

by Hope
Maglich,
who wakes up
each morning
and serves the
children of
Manatíal de Amor
in Monterrey,
Mexico.

notes

A day in the Garden of Eden was paradise on Earth. Everything lived, flourished and bloomed in abundance. God walked and communed with the people He had created. There were no sinful desires, and no one had given into temptation. This original and intended state was perfect, complete and whole without any barrier to a vibrant, intimate, abundant relationship with God.

Sadly, the story continues and things do not stay the same. Sin enters the world through evil temptation and distrust in God's good character. Suddenly, man's original state of perfection is corrupted, as he experiences depravity for the first time.

Restoration is about things being returned to their original state (Merriam-Webster). We made a real mess of things in the garden, and Satan has taken advantage of it, but our Restorer has come to clean, heal, and return us to perfect, original intimacy with Him through Jesus. Restoration is two-fold. It is about God returning to us what the enemy has taken, but it's also about God disciplining us, so we turn from sin and restore ourselves to His original plan. Whether it's stolen goods or disobedient hearts, restoration is all about us coming back to that original state of abundance in God displayed in Eden.

JOHN 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

1 PETER 5:8-10

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast"

When I was 18, I had the opportunity to intern at the Back2Back Monterrey, Mexico site for a few months. The week I arrived on campus, Isaac arrived. He was just 9 months old and weighed only a few pounds. His head was flattened from laying in a crib, neglected by his mother from the time he was born because he had darker skin than that of her other children. He was under-nourished, under-cared for, and under-loved. In 9 small months of life, Satan had already taken advantage of him; stolen health, family, and love from this helpless child. It was unlikely Isaac would ever walk because of the neglect he had experienced. It was likely he would have learning difficulties and sensory disorders, among other disabilities. However, we have a God who restores what the enemy steals. God had a plan for Isaac much bigger than the plan his birth mother had for him. Before Isaac turned two, God placed him in a loving adoptive family, who were friends of mine, and He restored his ability to walk. Isaac is now a smart, active, funny 11-year old, and in many ways, he is the healthiest person to come from his biological family line. Isaac had no capacity to restore his future, but God in His mercy, has made him strong, firm, and steadfast.

God had a plan for
Isaac much bigger
than the plan his
birth mother had
for him.

notes

ISAIAH 61:1-4

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the
prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn, and
provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendor.
They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations."

notes

In Psalm 51, David cries out to the Lord for forgiveness after sinning with Bathsheba. Prior to this Psalm, God revealed to David his sin and brought about discipline. In this prayer, David's heart responds to the Lord's discipline; he repents and cries out for God's restoration and realigning in his life.

"Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to
sustain me."

6

reflect › restore

- 1 In what area in your life has the enemy taken advantage and tried to steal and destroy?

- 2 Spend a few minutes believing God's promises in Psalm 61 to restore you and others. Ask for His restorative power to come into the area of life you mentioned above.

- 3 Similar to re-setting a broken bone, what areas in your life does God need to realign, remove, or restore?

- 4 What attitudes, beliefs, or other things need to be removed from your heart in order for Christ to be at the center again?

restore

Redeem

by Chris Cox,
who loves
introducing teens
to Christ in any
country he travels.

GALATIANS 4:4-7

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."

Jesus doesn't buy us back based on what *we think we are worth*; He pays the price for what *we are worth* to God. This is redemption.

There were six Hope Education Program students crammed on the couch. Twenty Back2Back staff and One21volunteers lined the walls of the apartment around the students, longing to hear what these students had to say. Our hearts were full as we reflected on the weekend retreat in the mountains of Monterrey, Mexico. It was a dream come true for many of us. We had invited the Hope students to share their personal stories for the first time with over 120 of their peers. Witnessing the transparency with which each student shared their story impacted everyone who was there. In this upper room, as our post-retreat debrief began, I didn't believe I could witness any more transformation than what I had already heard and seen that weekend. As the students began to speak, though, I realized that God's redeeming story held an even deeper layer. The student's began to share...

notes

"BEFORE this retreat, I didn't have any dreams for my life.

NOW I have a dream to be a pastor."

"BEFORE I didn't believe I should ever have children.

NOW I believe I can be a great mom."

"BEFORE I didn't believe God wanted me to ever get married.

NOW I believe God has a husband for me."

"BEFORE I didn't think I should be a husband or a father.

NOW I believe I could be a great husband and a great dad."

In essence, the students were saying, "Before, I was letting Jesus pay for what I thought I was worth. Now, I am letting Him redeem the most valuable parts of my heart." The children were re-teaching me the lesson of redemption. Many times, I mistakenly believe lies that bind my redemption to the value I have given myself.

Before the retreat, the students had believed God was big enough to save them from the painful journeys of their past, but they believed their redemption came at the cost of their future. In order to be free, they must give up the dream of relationship, marriage, and family. They had concluded God's salvation meant sacrificing the types of relationships that had resulted in their abandonment. Somewhere in that weekend experience, though, God had breathed new life into their story. He was showing them, through the power of their testimonies, the influence of their presence in the lives of younger children, and in the value the staff was speaking into them, they weren't slaves to abandonment. They were redeemed. Jesus paid a price based on their tremendous worth, an intrinsic value each of us holds as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is redemption. In the words of author Timothy Keller,

Before, I was letting Jesus pay for what I thought I was worth. Now, I am letting Him redeem the most valuable parts of my heart.

"In Jesus, God substitutes himself for us and, on our behalf, pays the debt, defeats the evil powers, bears the curse and divine wrath, secures for us salvation by grace, not by our works, and even becomes for us an exemplar."

Jesus paid it all.

reflect › redeem

1 When you witness people being undervalued or believing lies about their identity, how does it affect you? How do you respond?

2 Who are the two or three people you value the most?

3 Why does God put so much value on human life?

4 Have you undervalued your worth to God? How?

5 Finish this sentence: Before, I didn't believe...

Now, I believe...

redeem

DAY 3 REPAIR

Repair

by Anna
Valdez,
who falls
asleep each
night caring
for pre-teen
girls in
Monterrey,
Mexico.

Dany is beautiful, popular, and a leader in Back2Back's Hope Program, but she had higher walls around her heart than I had ever seen.

One morning, I found her sitting on the bathroom floor in her mismatched pajamas laughing, claiming she had fallen. I thought nothing of it. Later that day, I found her outside on the ground by an old tree trying to laugh and hold back tears struggling to get up. Dany's weakness quickly escalated and that night, she was hospitalized. The doctors would later reveal a rare disease was attacking her nervous system. I now found myself facing sleepless nights, changing bedpans, as Dany lay paralyzed—only able to move the left side of her face.

Dany is beautiful,
popular, and
a leader in
Back2Back's Hope
Education Program,
but she had
higher walls
around her heart
than I had ever
seen.

The sharp "beep...beep...beep" of the heart monitor was a constant reminder something was wrong. We waited and waited for the nurse to give her something for the pain. Tears trickled down her cheeks. The pain in her voice was unbearable, as she begged me to move her from side to side. An empty feeling settled in the pit of my stomach. I felt helpless, wanting to take away her pain but able to do very little except comfort her. I had to believe in the Jesus who healed the sick and claimed, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). *But was this too big for Him?* I wondered.

During the three weeks of her hospital stay, we enlisted Dany's mother to help care for her. Dany hadn't spent much time with her mother in the ten years she lived in the children's home. Some nights were tough, as she released her anger by yelling that her mom didn't know how to care for her and that she didn't want her mother there. Although her broken body was obvious, I began to see her broken heart also needed repair.

God used
that
awful pain
to repair her
heart.

The children prayed. Her child sponsors in the U.S. prayed. Many people prayed for her. In those dark nights, Dany, too, would whisper prayers.

And a sweet song began to crescendo.

Because her need was so great, she began to allow her mom to help. Little by little, past neglect was slowly repaired by present care. God used that awful pain to begin repairing her heart. In five months, she went from the bed, to wheelchair, to walker, to cane, to climbing stairs.

She could walk again! I wanted to shout, dance, and sing. Friends and family wanted video and pictures of this miracle, but many didn't notice that her heart was also being repaired. God is gently healing her heart and gave her the courage to forgive her past. What great hope we have! Jesus doesn't throw away the broken. He is in the business of repair.



A glimpse of the miraculous through God's repair of body and heart...

LUKE 8:48

Jesus said, "Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed!"

notes

reflect › repair

- 1 How have you seen prayer play a role in the repair of someone's heart or your own heart?
- 2 What area of your life might you need to surrender to God for repair?
- 3 If there is anything holding you back from releasing that to God, please list below.
- 4 Take a few minutes to pray for the strength and courage to allow God to repair the broken places of your life.

repair

revive

by Matt
Cooper,
who after
eleven years
in Mexico, now
directs the
Mexican sites
from the office
in Cincinnati.

Have you ever spiritually felt exhausted and parched like an athlete does at the end of a race, longing for a drink to quench his thirst? If we're honest, we all find ourselves passing through spiritual valleys of death and dryness – maybe more often than we want to admit. We have great news: God is in the business of making all things new. He longs to revive us by infusing new life into the parts of our life that are spiritually dead. I'm certain we all have testimonies of what personal revival has looked like in our own lives. But beyond the stories of how God has revived our lives, there are also times God invites us to be a part of the revival story of those around us.

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

Have you ever
spiritually
felt exhausted
and parched
like an
athlete does
at the end
of a race,
longing for
a drink to
quench his
thirst?

The prophet Ezekiel was once invited by God to be the catalyst in a revival story of the people of Israel. In Ezekiel 37:1-14, we read about an encounter where the Spirit of God “took hold of him and carried him away”. Perhaps Ezekiel literally crossed a time-space continuum, or maybe it was a simply a vision, but either way God allowed Ezekiel to go somewhere and see something beyond the bounds of his ordinary days. God took Ezekiel to see a valley filled with human bones. Personally, I’m convinced that a quick 30-second glimpse from the top of this valley would have been plenty. Sounds gruesome to say the least. But God actually “led” Ezekiel around among the scattered bones for an up-close view of the entire bone-covered valley. Now we have surpassed PG-13! Death everywhere. Getting the picture? Then

God springs a question, “So...can these bones become people again?” Poor Ezekiel, whom I’m imagining thought it to be a trick question answered, “Well, God...only you really know the answer to that one.” But God responded,

"Speak to these dry bones, tell them to listen to my words, and that I am going to put breath into them, put flesh and muscle on them, cover them with skin, and give them life!"

Can you imagine? The first words out of my mouth would have been, "Me? But you're the one with the power to do miracles, right? Who am I? Isn't this a bit extreme? How can life possibly come to this place of death?"

Ezekiel, however, responds obediently, and in complete faith. He spoke just as he was told, and as he did, "a rattling noise began all across the valley". Imagine the stillness and desolation of that valley...and then the hope that erupted within him as those bones began to stir. Just the thought of it gives me goose bumps! Ezekiel watched in wonder as bones made skeletons, muscles formed, and skin covered the muscles. Then, God further instructed Ezekiel to ask the winds to come and breathe into the dead bodies, so that they could live again. Once again, Ezekiel did just as God commanded. Breath came into the bodies, they came to

life, and they stood up on their feet! Ultimately, God told Ezekiel He would fill the people with His Spirit. What an amazing picture of what it means for God to revive!

God wants to remind us He makes all things new. He breathes His very spirit into us. He is still a God who revives dry bones!

God chose Ezekiel to deliver a very clear message to the people of Israel. That message is still true for us today. Regardless of our present spiritual state, God's great love compels Him to pursue us. He desires to remind us He makes all things new. God revives life where there once was death. He breathes His very Spirit into us. He is still a God who revives dry bones!

reflect › revive

- 1 How can you relate to Ezekiel this week, as God has "taken hold of you and carried you away" to show you something different?
- 2 What has God shown you in the valley? What has He led you through?
- 3 Just as God asked Ezekiel to do something that looked crazy, what do you sense God might be asking you to do? Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment. Ask Him to prompt you to speak words of life, and call forth the breath of God, and ultimately revival, over those experiencing a spiritual dryness.
- 4 Can you remember a time when you had "dry bones" spiritually? What did it look like for God to revive you, and breathe into you again?
- 5 In what ways is God reviving you?

revive

Reveal

by Erick
Mowery,

who left
Michigan to
pursue God's
storyline for
him as the
director in
Cancun.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10

"These are the things God has revealed
to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches
all things, even the deep things of God."

We have the awesome privilege and responsibility of sharing God's love with many children, widows and families. Sometimes that love comes in the form of food, shelter, education, medical care and therapy, but regardless of the conduit, the love is always rooted in what we know about God's heart for the fatherless and the widow. We know God longs to reveal Himself to those we serve. He is relentlessly pursuing them.

We know
God longs
to reveal
Himself to
those we
serve.

Jorge is one of Amelia's three children. He was eight when we met his family about three years ago. At that time, Amelia was struggling to feed and house Jorge, along with his two older sisters. Amelia's abusive husband had recently died in a fight, and she was now alone to take care of her family. We asked Amelia to work for us, cleaning and cooking for teams who come down to serve at our site. As we got to know Amelia, Jorge and his two sisters, it wasn't hard to see that God had a plan for this family, and we had the privilege of front-row seats to witness God at work.

About a year and a half after she began working for us, one of our staff introduced Amelia to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. God had prepared her heart to hear this truth, and she made the commitment to give her life to Christ. Not long after, we began to see, not only a change in Amelia's life, but even more so in Jorge's life. He now had a mother who was not just feeding him physical food, but was also feeding him spiritual truth about Christ.

notes

Today, Jorge is one of the happiest and most outgoing children we work with. He has also improved dramatically in school, both behaviorally and academically. Even more, with this transformation, Jorge now has dreams - he wants to be an architect when he grows up.

God uses many different means to reveal truth to us, but because of His grace and mercy, sometimes He waits to reveal things to us, for our own good. As I look back over the last three years of Jorge's life, I can see how God has patiently and graciously walked with Jorge, even when he didn't know it. As Christ-followers, we know God relentlessly pursues us, wanting to love and care for us, revealing Himself to us.

PSALM 139 : 16 - 17

Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were
written in your book before one of
them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts,
God! How vast is the sum of them!

WHEN YOU RETURN HOME :

We encourage you to take the time to finish this book after you return home. Stories and lessons the staff have learned on African soil, Mexican mountains, Haitian shorelines, and Indian streets will fill this book and your heart for what's to come.

reflect › reveal

- 1 what are ways God "reveals Himself"?

- 2 what is one way God has revealed Himself to you?

- 3 who is one person you have spent time with this week you long for God to reveal Himself to? Why did you choose this person?

- 4 what is one truth about how God reveals Himself that you can claim today?

reveal

Refresh

by Jenn
Holden,
who exercises
her gifts of
mercy and
compassion with
the children
and caregivers
of Casa Hogar
Del Norte in
Monterrey,
Mexico.

Smiles, sweet rain in a dry place, laughter, genuine friendship. These things are refreshing to me. And oh so often, as my exhaustion melts away with a smile, I am reminded that Jesus' desire is for us to be refreshed by Him, by His presence, by His impeccably timed gifts in the little things.

READ PSALM 68:7-10

When you, God, went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,
the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.

You gave abundant showers, O God;
you refreshed your weary inheritance.

Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, God, you provided for
the poor.

This is a beautiful song, written by David to praise the God who refreshes and revives, who sends songs of joy to the prisoner, families to the lonely and rain to desert soil.

Psalm 68 is an ode to the One who freed the Israelites from 430 years of slavery in Egypt.

Not long after this incredible rescue, the Israelites are worn down by the desert. They had walked through the middle of a sea on completely dry land, witnessed the supernatural defeat of their enemies, and been guided by the presence of the Almighty. Yet, the desert has a way of making us forget the rescue that was fulfilled and the redemption that is promised.

READ EXODUS 16:1-3

“Really? God miraculously brought you this far and you are complaining? You really think He is going to leave you here?”

Their answer is, YES. God rescued the Israelites from slavery, but a month and a half into the journey, they are *exhausted, starving, parched, weary and not confident* that He will save them *this time*.

Oh, how easy it is for me to judge their desert, but I sure do not want anyone to judge mine. "I know that Jesus rescues and redeems, reconciles and revives, but you have no idea how absolutely *spent* I am. Life has worn me out this time. You don't know what I am facing in this desert, how my family is suffering, how shriveled up my heart feels and how long it has been since I have seen a rain cloud," I tell myself.

And just in that moment...

READ EXODUS 16:4-18

Refreshing. You may be hungry and tired, and you wake up with a layer of honey-flavored wafers on the ground around you. *Sweet rain in a dry place.* You are seen. Your groans were heard. Your needs are met. You are valued and loved. God is still rescuing you, even in the dry and weary land, when you have nothing left to give. Receive His free gift. Rest in His daily provision and be refreshed by His goodness.

Several months ago, I set foot in a dry place full of weary, rescued women who needed a taste of heavenly manna. These women are children's home caregivers, and they have the hardest job in the world. Although they were radically called by God to serve the orphan child, the desert had emptied them. This year, the God of Psalm 68 sent rain to a weary land at Casa Hogar del Norte, a children's home we serve in Monterrey, Mexico – He refreshed hearts with *sweet laughter and genuine friendship* through a Mexican traditional ceremony called a "quinceañera." In preparation for this elegant 15th birthday party of the oldest girl living in the children's home, we went shopping with the caregivers, buying beautiful dresses, sharing a food court meal and laughing all the way. When the day finally came for the long-awaited quinceañera, their smiles and laughter lit up the party- the growth and beauty of relational investment.

Psalm 68 is my song, praising the One who still sends manna, refreshing not only the orphan and the Israelites, but all other desert-wanderers, including you and me.

notes



Finding refreshment, caregivers and children celebrate a quinceañera sharing laughter and friendship.

reflect › refresh

- 1 When you are weary, what sources do you turn to for refreshment? (golf, reading, music, etc.)

- 2 The character of God refreshes us. Look at Psalm 68:4-10. Write the words that describe the character of God. Let His character breathe into your life.

- 3 What has been or is your desert?

- 4 How can you be a part of bringing divine refreshment to those around you?

refresh

Reward

by Dana
Metzger,

who speaks
truths over
orphan children
living in
Mazatalan,
Mexico.

MATTHEW 10:42

"And if anyone gives even a cup
of cold water to one of these
little ones who is my disciple,
truly I tell you, that person will
certainly not lose their reward."

notes

This week, you might give a cup of cold water by pushing a child on a swing, giving a piggy-back ride or somehow finding the energy to play soccer after hours of pouring concrete. You may wash thirty sets of dinner dishes, while stepping outside your comfort zone to serve people in another culture and language. For me, it might mean teaching a teenage girl how to read a recipe, or planning a birthday party for a child whose mama is unavailable to do so. It sometimes looks like pulling the dusty shoes off of an exhausted 5-year-old boy and tucking him into his bunk.

My pastor describes the Kingdom of God as His people bringing "up there, down here." When this happens, we get to experience what early celtic Christians called "thin places." These are times and places on earth where our separation from heaven feels less, and we experience God's presence in tangible ways. They are places where the heavy curtain of sin in this world is pulled back, and we catch a glimpse of

My pastor
describes
the Kingdom
of God as
His people
bringing "up
there, down
here."

So we give
out cups of
cold water,
and use our
lives trying
to bring "up
there, down
here". Later,
those who
love God
will receive
a heavenly
reward.

notes

Heaven. Jesus' ministry was the perfect definition of bringing Heaven to earth.

Serving and loving one another does reward us with great joy and satisfaction here on earth, but in the background is a profound sadness that things have been broken. The world is not how it should be. And there in that shadow of heartbreak, we find God. It's a thin place. We feel Him there, seeing us. Healing us. Promising to hold us, and bringing hope that someday we'll be made new. He told Abraham in Genesis 15...

GENESIS 15:1

"Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,

your very great reward."

So we give out cups of cold water, and use our lives trying to bring "up there, down here". Later, those who love God will receive a heavenly reward. We'll be free from the sin and pain that happens in between the thin places. We long to experience what is described in Revelation 21:4, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." God's presence and love is, and will be, our reward.

REVELATION 21:4

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

DAY 8 REFINED

Refine

by Leah
Smart,
who shares
her life and
calling with
husband Tracy
in Jos, Nigeria.

I am a problem finder and a problem solver. I know from years of working and playing I have a talent for identifying problems. I was trained to solve problems so things run smoothly and the problems don't happen again.

As children of God, when we find problems in our lives and in our character, God calls on us to repent and change. In His deep love for us, He leads us, strengthens us and ultimately refines us, so we might persevere as a result of the challenges in our life.

I sometimes forget that refinement is a continual process. I expect smooth sailing from that point on and falsely believe the problem won't happen again. I forget what it means when Scripture tells us God is Holy. In 1 Peter 1:15,16, Christians are called to be holy in all we do. We are called to be holy as God is holy. But in this life, and in the world as it is now, God's perfection is unattainable.

Our Father wants to refine us so we can become more like Him in holiness. As we grow in holiness, we will have a greater capacity to reflect God's image to those around us.

JOHN 15:2

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

To refine can mean to bring something to a pure state, to free it from impurities. It can also mean to improve or to perfect something. God refines us because He loves us. Our ultimate call as believers is to bring glory to God. God refines us to deepen our capacity to experience Him and share His glory with a hurting world. God refines us until the day we join him in heaven, where He finally completes the refining process.

The process of refining often includes suffering, discomfort and sacrifice. Ultimately, it moves us closer to God, as we begin to embrace a fruitful life that brings glory to God.

notes

notes

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

God has a refining program tailor made for me. He knows my heart, so he knows what I need and what will bless me and glorify Him at the same time. I am always amazed God is so interested in my life - that he has an ongoing, long-term plan, which culminates in a place for me in God's new heaven and new earth.

PROVERBS 17:3

"The crucible for silver and the
furnace for gold, but the Lord tests
the heart."

PSALM 37:3-4

"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."

In the book of Revelation, God announces He is making everything new! It's not something He only does at the end of time, but it is already happening in the present age - in our troubled world today, in your life, and in mine.



At Destiny Children's Home, Leah and the girls find themselves on the pathway to holiness through everyday refinement.

reflect › refine

- 1 What are the benefits of being "refined" by God?
- 2 What are the ways God refines us?
- 3 How could the refinement process in our lives bring glory to God?
- 4 List the aspects of your life that could benefit from being refined. Circle the one that you long for God to refine the most.
- 5 If being refined were easy, we would all be holy. It is hard and often times, frightening. What fears surface when you consider inviting God to refine you?

refine

Reconcile

by Jenna
Schroeder,
who after years
of loving the
Haitian orphan,
now serves
them from the
Cincinnati
office.

Reconcile. I've been thinking about how we use this word. It is a weighty but hopeful word. Reconciliation requires hard work. It requires us to look at something that perhaps has been easily ignored, put on the back burner, or not addressed because it is too painful. Initiating reconciliation takes tremendous courage. The first step can seem overwhelming, so sometimes we stop reconciliation before it begins. The word reconcile can be used when thinking of our relationships, but it is also used when we are caught between two tensions. How do we reconcile our faith with what we see in the world?

relational
reconciliation

Reconciliation within relationships requires vulnerability. Vulnerability requires humility and often challenges us in the most crippling, but also most subtle areas of sin – Pride. To walk toward reconciliation requires an end goal of restored relationship, rather than being right or upholding the perception of perfection. What does that look like for you today? Ask God to show you what is in your heart and what steps need to be taken to embrace vulnerability and walk towards reconciliation.

reconciliation with a
hurting world

How do we deal with the inner tension we feel after witnessing extreme poverty or children in need, which often contrasts our lives in the U.S.? If God's heart breaks for the orphans in this world, and we are made in His image, our hearts would break too. You may live between these two tensions this week, and when you return home, it may not leave you. What is your role in caring for the orphans in the world? Never underestimate your role and impact. God desires to use you to bring hope to a hurting world. Today, as you reflect on when you worked on a project or played with a child, do not be afraid to ask, "God, how can I be used by you today to meet a need where I am at?" Our actions, whether small or big, today or months from now, have power to take us one step closer to being agents of reconciliation to the world around us.

notes

reflect › reconcile

- 1 Why is vulnerability a key to reconciliation?
- 2 How does pride influence your life?
- 3 The most important reconciliation that we can have is with God. How do we reconcile our lives with God?
- 4 Your life at home and what you have experienced this week may be significantly different. How do you reconcile the life you live everyday and the life you have experienced this week?
- 5 Remember these two questions and ask them of yourself throughout the day:
"How is God reconciling the orphan child?"

"How can I be used today to meet a need?"

reconcile

DAY 1 O R E C E I V E

Receive

by Tallie
Betscher,
who learns
the names of
children around
the "world" as
she coordinates
the Child
Sponsorship
program from
Cincinnati.

God wants us to receive from Him. Have you ever considered that? The idea of it is alarming. If it's true, it changes everything.

The question we must ask isn't *whether* God wants to give to us, but rather, *what* does God want to give to us? There are two opposite lies we might be tempted to believe when asking this question. The first is since God loves us, He will give us anything we ask for, as long as we ask with faith. The second is God withholds because He either doesn't care, or is testing us to make sure we respond correctly. Both are lies. Both limit God. At different times in my life, I have believed both.

In reality, Jesus promises us that God gives good gifts (Luke 11:13). The trouble is, when I think of good gifts, I usually think in the context of today, while God thinks in the context of eternity. C.S. Lewis once wrote...

notes

"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

- C.S. Lewis

The good news is God's promise is better than what I think I want from Him. Jesus tells us,

LUKE 11:13

"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"

While I might be busy asking God to give me a shiny new car, a job that garners respect, or a relationship that will make me feel valuable, God is offering Himself to me. The God who created everything promises to make His home in my heart.

God wants to give me so much more than the things I tend to ask Him for. I need a bigger vision for what He is doing in my life. I should be asking for more of Him, not more of the things He can give me. Because in Him, I have all I need. That's an incredible promise!

ROMANS 8:14 - 16

"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

Back2Back serves the orphan child because we can relate to the need for rescue and adoption. David Platt once said, *"We care for orphans not because we are the rescuers. We care for orphans because we are the rescued."* We know what it's like to be orphans, striving to find a place in the world. We were all orphans before God adopted us into His family. And when we truly understand what that means, we will take what we have received and share it with the world.

PSALM 68:5

"A father to the fatherless..."

reflect › receive

- 1 List the things you have asked God to give you:
- 2 List the things/people you can't live without
- 3 Where does Jesus rank on that list?
- 4 What is the difference between receiving from God and receiving God?
- 5 What are some special gifts you have received from God?

receive

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



BACK2BACK MINISTRIES

We're grateful for your investment in the lives of the children you met and the impact that you made on their lives! Thank you for coming alongside us by providing care for today and hope for tomorrow to orphans in need. We hope that your experience serving with us was meaningful. As you return home, we invite you to stay connected with us!



pray

Come alongside us through this essential component to the ongoing work.

www.back2back.org/pray



give

Choose to invest in the ministry through staff support or gift to the Hope Education Program.

www.back2back.org/give



sponsor

Help an orphaned child rewrite his or her future through child sponsorship.

www.back2back.org/sponsor



go

Join us on a mission trip and engage in a week of service with orphaned children.

www.back2back.org/go

On the following pages are opportunities to continue to be an advocate for the orphans you met this week. >>>



INVEST IN A STUDENT'S FUTURE

Back2Back addresses the underlying issue of poverty by providing orphan children with the academic tools they need to succeed. Through the **Hope Education Program**, we offer students an opportunity to continue their education. Students are mentored, provided with an education, and equipped to achieve their career goals. By contributing to Back2Back's Hope Education Program, you can invest in the future of a student.

Invest in a student's future at www.back2back.org/give or contact Karen at kholliday@back2back.org or 513.754.0300 ext. 1707



SUPPORT THE STAFF

All of the staff members at both the U.S. office and international sites raise their full salary through the support of individuals and churches. Consider standing alongside of this team through a monthly or annual contribution.

Support the staff at www.back2back.org/give or contact Karen at kholliday@back2back.org or 513.754.0300 ext. 1707

3 WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD



NOURISH EVERY DAY

Provide for every day practical needs of orphaned children living in Haiti, India, Nigeria and Mexico.

\$25 A MONTH



RESTORE EVERY CHILD

Connect with a child personally and help meet spiritual, physical, educational, emotional and social needs.

\$100 A MONTH



TRANSFORM EVERY HOME

Invest in transformational change for a child's orphanage or community to make a lasting impact.

\$250 A MONTH

Learn how you can make a difference in the life of a child through sponsorship today.
www.back2back.org/sponsor



BACK2BACK
MINISTRIES

MINISTRY SITES

Back2Back meets the spiritual, physical, educational, emotional, and social needs of children in orphanages and impoverished communities through partnerships with individuals, families, civic groups, schools, organizations, churches, and companies. We hope to bring sustainable change to orphans through education, discipleship, and community development.



MONTERREY, MEXICO

We serve children's homes and impoverished communities. We also provide educational opportunities and scholarships to children through the Hope Education Program.

CANCUN, MEXICO

We serve several children's homes and support widows and their children in the community, as a form of preventative care.

MAZATLAN, MEXICO

We serve several children's homes, one of which is a home for children with special needs and another which provides care for at-risk girls.

HYDERABAD, INDIA

We currently serve children's hostels and a slum-area ministry in and around Hyderabad, India.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

We serve orphans in children's homes and those in need within the community.

JOS, NIGERIA

We meet the needs of orphans in children's homes and a village near Jos, Nigeria.



Since 1997, Back2Back has realized the importance of investing on a deeper level in the lives of children. Simply providing for a child's physical needs isn't enough. By providing holistic care, rather than merely meeting immediate external needs, we can truly help children to experience complete restoration. With that in mind, the Back2Back 5-Point Child Development Plan was created, an approach to orphan care ministry that addresses five crucial areas of child development.



spiritual

Alondra is just one of 163 million orphaned children in our world. But unlike many other orphans, Alondra will wake up tomorrow knowing that she is cared for by her heavenly Father. Through opportunities for spiritual growth, such as discipleship and Bible study, we empower children like Alondra to not only discover their tremendous significance as an individual, but to also realize their unique purpose in the grand story that God is writing.



physical

The dining hall is noisy with voices as Alondra files in with her dormmates. Back2Back understands the importance of nutrition for children and ensures that the children at Casa Hogar Douglas receive healthy meals. Back2Back partners with children's homes to improve the quality of care for children like Alondra, meeting needs such as medical and dental care, nutritious meals, warm clothing, clean water and safe shelter, ensuring each child has an opportunity to thrive.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



educational

Through an emphasis on education, Back2Back invests in the future of children like Alondra, so that they might break free from the cycle of poverty. When children have access to education, they are significantly more likely to become self-sustaining individuals who give back to their community. To see this goal realized, we provide each child with the tools they need to succeed, tutoring children who are struggling and even offering college scholarships to teens who participate in Back2Back's Hope Education Program.



emotional

Alondra has two sisters who live in her children's home, but no concept of a nuclear family. Many orphans who grow up in children's homes suffer from psychological issues as a result of past abuse and neglect. By living alongside the children, we gain their trust and begin a dialogue of recovery. By offering opportunities for them to seek healing through counseling, we seek to empower the children to work through issues, such as anxiety, depression and attachment disorders. Our goal is that each child would be restored to emotional wholeness.



social

The schoolyard is alive with voices as Alondra plays with her best friends, Deynari and Estefi, who are also her roommates. They clap their hands together while chanting a rhyme. Back2Back addresses the need for positive social interaction. We encourage each child to pursue personal growth by offering training in vital life skills, such as conflict resolution, stewardship, work ethic, independent living skills and interpersonal communication. By mentoring children in these areas, we empower them to flourish relationally.



BACK2BACK

MINISTRIES

Back2Back Ministries is an international Christian non-profit organization that is dedicated to being a voice for orphans. We exist to love and care for orphans and impoverished children, by meeting their spiritual, physical, educational, emotional and social needs that they may overcome their life circumstances and break free from the cycle of generational poverty.

CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

childsponsorship@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1705

HOPE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Karen Holliday at kholliday@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1707

STAFF SUPPORT

Karen Holliday at kholliday@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1707

MISSION TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

missiontrip@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1701

INTERNSHIPS

Chris Ramos at cramos@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1709

DONATIONS

Karen Holliday at kholliday@back2back.org
513-754-0300 ext. 1707

BACK2BACK E-NEWSLETTER

Email info@back2back.org to begin receiving regular ministry updates and prayer requests.

STAY CONNECTED

Find news and updates at: www.back2back.org



For more information, contact
the U.S office at (513) 754-0300
Back2Back Ministries, P.O. Box 70, Mason, Oh 45040