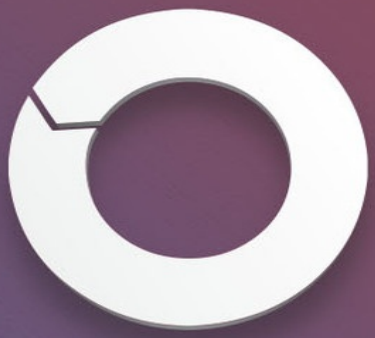
JESUS IS THE RESET



NICK HALL

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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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Jesus Is the Reset

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About the Author

A month ago, my wife, kids, and I were posing for a photographer friend of ours who was snapping shots of us for our Christmas card with our perfect hair, pasted-on smiles, and color-coordinated threads. Even though the picture turned out great, the end product was totally unrealistic. Just one nanosecond before my buddy took that winning pic, Tiffany was fixing my shirt, three-year-old Truett was trying to bolt, and baby Ruby was screaming. In so many ways, *that* should have been our Christmas picture: *Here's the Hall family…deal with it!*

But of course we didn't go that route. We went with the angel-faced kids and great lighting and good sides…you know, the "natural-looking" pose. Have you ever posted one of these "natural" pics? Whether you send Christmas cards or just post pictures on your Instagram feed, somewhere along the way, I'm sure you've been part of a photo that cheers "Joy to the World!" despite the real-world drama surrounding you.

After all, this is what normal humans do. We send out cards or post pictures that manage people's perceptions of us, images that make the recipients believe that everything's cool. *We're one big happy family, can't you tell? Doing great! Loving life! Living the dream! Merry Christmas!*

Everything's Not Awesome

Not long ago, a teenage supermodel from Australia quit social media, stunning her six hundred thousand–plus Instagram followers and causing a publicity stir several continents wide. In a teary interview, she said the reason for closing her account was that the platform was "contrived perfection made to get attention." Soon after her online exit, she deleted thousands of pictures she'd posted—pictures that she said "served no real purpose other than self-promotion." For the posts she allowed to remain, she edited the captions to reveal "the manipulation, mundanity, and insecurity" behind them. She described how many selfies she'd snap before posting the perfect one to her account, determined to get the right angle, the exact look, the enviable shot. Sound familiar?

She was doing this for herself but also for her sponsors, who needed her to push products on the watching public. The dress she was modeling, the makeup she was wearing, the destination she was highlighting—all of it meant big bucks

from the followers who were…following. It was good money, for sure—especially for an eighteen-year-old. But at some point, the game she was playing turned on her, and now she was the one striving to follow some man-made machine of perceived happiness. Living for "likes" is not really living at all.[1]

In essence, she was saying that the pressure to produce moment-by-moment perfection became too much to bear. And if we're honest, we'll admit the same thing: posing for perfection is exhausting. At some point, we can't pretend and play the game any longer. And while our Facebook profile shows how important we are, our last tweet reveals how witty we are, and our Instagram displays how great we look, along with the amazing people and places in our life, the reality is still that we are alone—and often posting while sitting in our pajamas at two in the afternoon, eating cold cereal, and wasting a ridiculous amount of energy trying to figure out how to make ourselves look good to the other people following us. Our posts and pictures may make it look like we're living the life, but collectively we're dying inside. Comparison is killing our generation.

What do people assume about you, based on your posts, pics, and feeds?

I recently read that we are exposed to as many as five thousand advertising messages a day, which is a tenfold increase since forty years ago.[2] If you consider the steady stream of posts and feeds from our "friends," that number of course is much higher. It's not just car manufacturers and clothing designers who are vying for my attention, but every person I follow online. Every waking moment I am inundated with images of flawlessness and excitement and adventure and celebrity and riches and the new pair of Jordans I really want, images that remind me every hour, *hour by painful hour,* that I'm not living the life I wish I could.

And so I play the game. To solve this problem, this ache for something I do not have, I start trying to fix it. I work out, hoping to look a certain way. I go shopping, determined to find the shirt or pair of jeans or shoes that will let me fit in with "them," that will make "them" like me. And for a few days, I might feel good. Sometimes I even feel like I've arrived. But then the next thing comes out or the next post arrives on my social media feed—yet another thing I don't have, another reminder that I don't measure up. I don't have the right stuff. I don't know the right people. I'm not funny or good-looking or smart or lucky…like

they are. I try and try and try and try, and yet *still* I come up short.

What the Exhausted Do

I meet countless people throughout a given year, guys and girls who come to our PULSE events and come up to me afterward to tell me their story. They tell me about how they've been carrying a razor blade with them for years and roll up their sleeves to reveal the scars from their bad days. They tell me about how they've been stoned more days than sober that month and how their parents don't have a clue. They tell me about their binge drinking, overeating, porn, gambling, and apathy toward life in general. I'm always struck by how normal and put together most of these people look, proof that it's often those with the deepest issues who hide it best of all. They tell me about all the ways they've tried to escape their pain, all the self-medicating they've done. And every time I hear these stories, two thoughts cross my mind. First, despite all their efforts, they *still* didn't escape their pain. And second, given the pressure of social media—which demands we look, act, and are a certain way—unless we intentionally choose another path, the day will come when even the best of us will explode. No one was made to handle this kind of pressure alone.

If you woke up early one morning, headed to the gym, and worked out for eight hours straight, your body would be desperate for replenishment—for water, for an In-N-Out burger, for a nap, for relief! You would be exhausted, and the only thing that would help is rest. Did you know that people who are exhausted and do not get sleep will literally go insane? In the same way, if you and I try to keep up the facade of perfection hour by hour, day by day, we're going to emotionally exhaust ourselves. And when we're drained, our decision-making skills drift. When we're weary, our resolve and logic wane, and we do things we might not otherwise do.

I always bring up this point when I talk with parents or loved ones of students who are wrecking their lives. "They're not bad people," I explain. "They're just doing what the world has told them to do. They're trying to find satisfaction in substances and in celebrity, because that's what society has said works."

The problem is that, for the most part, celebrities have it wrong here. In reality, how can we expect any person to offer us the direction we need? You don't have to look far to realize that beyond the cars and beautiful couples are a

lot of normal, broken people—just like us.

What habits help you escape the reality that you're not who you wish you could be?

I've never met a kid who dreamed of being hopeless and depressed. "Someday I want to be addicted to antidepressants," said no kid, ever. We all just want to find our place, to fit in. But when we can't find what we're looking for day after day, week after week, year after year, weariness sets in. And when we're tired, we turn to comfort, to some way to ease or numb the pain. Whatever will distract us from the fact that we're not making it in life is exactly what we turn to—the nonstop working, drinking, drugs, or sleeping around. Whether your vice is seemingly innocent or clearly destructive, tired people turn to things that never will satisfy.

Give Up or Surrender

There is a tendency in us to play things out to their worst. Recreation turns into competitive sports, which turns into trash-talking kids, crazed cheerleader parents, reckless celebrity athletes, and go-for-broke fantasy leagues. Relationships turn physical, boundaries turn into areas of compromise, and innocence turns into depravity. Technology turns into virtual reality, which turns out socially awkward people who can no longer relate to real human beings. And we let life turn into a series of superficial posts and feeds, which turns out an entire generation plagued by the feeling that they're not enough, which leads to the exhaustion we talked about earlier, which leads to depression and outright despair, which leads on far too many occasions to suicide, the very *opposite* of where we began. Life becomes death. Innocence becomes brokenness. Light becomes dark.

When have you been tempted to give up on life? Are you giving up on it now?

Giving up is certainly an easy path to take, and often it looks like simply not doing anything to change. But giving up is not the only path available. While many come to the end of themselves only to quit, at the end there is a new

beginning—a reset—available. Instead of giving up, it is possible to surrender to something greater. This is where Jesus comes in.

While it used to seem like my messed-up life was an unlikely place to meet God, I now know the opposite is true. A friend of mine once told me that whenever it feels like Jesus is a million miles away, he's just a single step in the other direction. If I'm running away from Jesus, all I have to do is stop, turn around, and take one tiny step, and he's there. He's near. He's with me. He's here. His breath is fogging the mirror of my entire life, if only I'll have eyes to see. If you're like me, it is going to be hard to believe that God would want to meet with you, but he does. As the one who breathed our air and walked our dirt and knows our suffering, he says, "The temptation you feel to self-promote? I faced that temptation too. The exhaustion you feel from pushing so hard? I can relate to pushing hard too. The burdens of living this earthly life? Been there. Done that. I know what you're going through, and I'm here to help. Will you let me in? Will you give in to me?"

Where Light Is Brightest

Remember those conversations I mentioned earlier—the ones with guys and girls who tried to escape their pain by pursuing pleasure or pot or self-inflicted pain? The best part of my job is that nine times out of ten, those conversations do not end the way they began, because on the heels of telling me about all the drama, all the agony, all the dead-end paths they've walked, they say something like this: "But here, tonight, something clicked. I see things differently now. The reset you say Jesus is offering me? I'm in. For the first time in my life, I'm in."

The book of Isaiah describes what it was like once Jesus broke onto the scene: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (9:2). It describes Jesus as light, and it's true! This is exactly what those guys and girls experience when they decide not to give up but instead choose to surrender to him. To life. To Jesus. To the hope and help he extends.

What darkness is plaguing you now?

"Wherever your darkness is darkest," I tell them, "that's where Jesus' light is brightest. The darker the room gets, the brighter a flashlight becomes." I tell

you the same thing now. Whatever darkness has you fumbling around, bumping into walls, tripping over yourself because you just cannot see, it is there—right there—that Jesus stands brilliant and radiant and bright.

You don't have to have it all figured out to come to Jesus. Just take one small step toward that mysterious glow, and prepare for *everything* to change.

And if you think about it, there are really only two ways to respond to Jesus: Either you will run away or you will step forward. You're either a yes or a no. You're either in or not.

Why We Run

I've known plenty of people who take in the message of Christianity and in response say, "Do I want what they have? No, thanks." They see all of the junk and come away thinking it's a hoax or a crutch or just a bunch of judgmental people that they want nothing to do with. They see fake people with lame clothes, cheesy talks, and bad music. They see mean people who look down on everyone else, hurting others in the name of their "biblical truth." Why wouldn't a person follow Jesus? Why *would* you?

Maybe Jesus is fine for other people, but for them? Sleeping in on Sundays sounds pretty good.

When have you been turned off by an interaction with a Christian that felt nothing like love?

I've known plenty of people with these exact thoughts; I've even had these thoughts myself. And truthfully we aren't looking to pick a fight with Christians as much as just wanting to avoid being harassed and labeled among the religious bullies. When I meet others who have been wounded, I try my best to simply listen—something most haven't seen or experienced from a person of faith.

Objects of Worship

We all have things that become the main thing in life. In faith, we call these things objects of worship. What do you worship? We all worship something.

We'll either worship the high that comes from hooking up, getting stoned, shopping, watching porn, playing video games, escaping into a movie plot, or pouring all of our energy into a relationship with another person, or else we'll worship something, *Someone,* who actually satisfies.

What are you putting your hope in? Will it last, or are you set up to be let down?

Of the options to run from Jesus or toward him, only one choice offers lasting hope. The world's highs are fleeting fixes at best. The movie credits roll. The buzz fades. The relationship ends. And then you're back to life as it was before the fix—hurting and alone.

I know this is true because I've lived it. Most likely you have lived it too. You have fallen into a pattern of worshiping something that can't deliver on its promises, and as a result you've been left feeling hopeless, desperate, and isolated. What I tell my friends who think Jesus isn't for them is the same thing I want to say to you now: whenever you come to the end of your fleeting fixes and realize that they can't satisfy, there will be Jesus, standing ready to take you in. The one thing that can and will fulfill you, satisfy you, and consistently leave you blown away is not drugs or sex or money or whatever images flicker on your screen. It's Jesus. It's intimacy with Jesus, the compassionate and loving risk-taker who gave his life for you and defeated your brokenness when he rose from the grave. He alone is worthy of worship.

WHAT'S TRUE OF THOSE WHO COME

One of my favorite things in life is connecting people who have similar passions, interests, or desires. "Do you know John? You guys would really hit it off…" I guess I've been introducing people since I was in preschool, so when I experienced Jesus, it only made sense that this was the best introduction of all, and that I would spend the rest of my life inviting others to know him. Since my teenage years, I've literally introduced millions of people from all walks of life to the One who I believe can absolutely transform any life. Whether in arenas in front of thousands or in coffee shops one on one, after people hear about Jesus' invitation of grace and acceptance, thousands have decided not to run but to surrender.

What's fascinating and completely different about introducing Jesus versus introducing people in normal relationships is that there is virtually no barrier preventing you to come to Jesus. While relationship success depends on a million Match.com characteristics, I've found the only thing necessary for those coming to Jesus is simply that they come. That's it. "Come and find life!" Athletes and addicts, rich and poor, smart and uneducated, healthy and sick, religious and atheist—all are welcome. Whoever you are, wherever you've been, and whatever preconceived ideas about Christianity you do or don't have, you are invited to come and join others running to Jesus.

When we come to Jesus, we are welcomed into a family of other broken people finding wholeness in him. It's an amazing and strange thing, because we don't get to pick the family members. In this way, the very best part of Christianity is also the very worst part: *anyone and everyone is invited to come.* People like us can be forgiven and welcomed in…hip, hip, hooray! People like "them" can be forgiven and welcomed in too…*huh?!*

It's a challenging dynamic for those of us who have been taught how to reject people and be selective in our acceptance of others since a very early age. "Wait, you mean *she* is invited?" Yup. "And *him*?" Yes, he is too. "Even people who look or act like *that*?" Absolutely.

Wow. This amazing grace is going to take some getting used to.

Think about it. Where else can you gather the weird and cool, the judgmental and grace-filled, the virgin and the addict all together and call them family? It's like nothing else on earth because it is a glimpse of heaven at its core. Everyone is welcomed in Jesus' family. It might be hard to believe, but God's family is supposed to be the most accepting community on earth.

What ideas about Jesus would you have to let go of to surrender?

Jesus loves you and welcomes you to come. When we come to Jesus, we come face to face with our own brokenness and pain, and also with Jesus, who champions this totally different approach to life. And in that moment of recognition—*I was on the outside but have been graciously welcomed in*—perhaps for the first time in our lives we let go of our need to declare an in-crowd and an out-crowd. Our arms open up to everyone. We embrace the people we marginalized before, because we know how good it feels to be loved. We

stop drawing lines of division and instead say, “If you’re hurting, then this group is for you. We’re all recovering, messed-up people. Come on in. You’ll feel right at home.” Like the neon sign at the pizza place where my family and I always go that says “Walk-ins welcome,” we invite anyone and everyone to partake.

What do you make of Jesus’ “walk-ins welcome!” approach to building his kingdom? What does this inclusive invitation mean for you?

“Come to me,” Jesus says. “You don’t have to carry that burden alone anymore. I am what you are looking for.”

Getting to Jesus

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is found in Mark 2:1–12 and deals with a group of guys who were so convinced that Jesus was the answer to every question in life that they lowered their sick buddy through the roof of a building where Jesus was teaching, just to get their friend to him. Did you catch that? They lowered him through a roof! As Scripture tells it, their friend was so weak and sick that his four friends wondered if he was dying before their eyes. Freaking out, they remembered that Jesus was in town and was teaching at some guy’s house. They each grabbed a corner of the cot he was lying on and made a beeline for where Jesus was.

When they arrived at the house, they realized that the place was packed with people wanting to hear what Jesus had to say. While they could have given up, instead they carried their buddy up a ladder to the roof of the home, cut a hole through the thatch, and lowered him right in front of Jesus. I love to imagine the four of them digging through that roof and the dust falling around Jesus like a smoke machine at some epic rock concert. (The Bible can actually be pretty exciting if you take the time to read it.) As Jesus saw this dude lowered from above, he was filled with love and told him to get up and walk. This was quite a party trick, given the guy was mere breaths away from death. To everyone’s amazement, the man did as Jesus asked. He sat up. Then he stood up. He tossed aside his mat and walked. He was healed in an instant! What had been

broken in him was now fixed; what had been dead was now coming to life.

What gets me about this story isn't just the friends' faithfulness to get their buddy some help, or even the kindness of Jesus in extending hope and healing to a guy who was desperate for help. It's the posture of the hopeless, helpless man himself, the one on the mat being lowered through the roof. Instead of pushing back against his friends' proposed solution, he let himself be carried to Jesus. He knew that nothing else was going to solve the massive problems in his life, and so rather than running, he decided to come.

It's the same posture I'm wishing for you, that instead of fixating on all the imperfect pictures of Christianity that are out there, you will fix your eyes on Jesus, and that instead of running, you'll choose to come.

Three-Sixty Reset

When you come to Jesus—really come, with nothing held back, with eyes fixed on him, with hope set on the life he says is possible—life starts to get pretty cool.

You begin to look at your mistakes through a different lens. (*I really* am *forgiven. The stupid decisions I made really* can *be redeemed.*) You see your future differently than you ever have before. (*So* this *is what it's like not to feel hopeless and helpless about where I'm going and who I'm becoming.*) And you get the fact that God really does have solutions to the problems that plague you today. (*Why doesn't she like me? How am I going to pass physics? Will I ever catch a break in life?*) With Jesus in the mix, your perspective of your past, future, and present realities change. With Jesus, *everything* changes for the better.

Reset My Past

There's a reason Psalm 23 is so often quoted at funerals, especially the verses that talk about God being near to us whenever we walk through the "valley of the shadow of death." Death can be the literal end of life, or else it might be death of a different sort—the death of a relationship, of a dream, or of a source of income. That feeling of death also relates to our spiritual lives when we run from and rebel against God, but as it says in that psalm, he was there, *right there,* all along. Famous preacher of old Charles Spurgeon once wrote that the reason

it's referred to as the *shadow* of the valley of death is because somewhere, somehow, light was still shining, and that light is Jesus. Whatever death we have known along the way, our shepherd, the Lord, can and will redeem.

What part of your past needs to be redeemed?

This is why it's called amazing grace! We were lost and blind at some point, but now we are found and can see. The pain we've experienced has a purpose, and that purpose was to bring us to Jesus.

In my early twenties, I was putting my hope in relationships—and in one relationship in particular. And when that connection went dead, I fell to the depth of despair. I was hopeless, helpless, discouraged, and depressed. I even remember eyeing oncoming traffic as if it might be my solution. *Maybe if I wind up in the ER, fighting for my life, she will realize she loves me…*

It was a hard time in my life.

Only later—much, much later—could I see that during those long days and sleepless nights while I longed for the girl who had rejected me and moved on, God had removed something that had possession of my heart so that my heart could be fully his. He wanted my affection *exclusively.* And as long as I was obsessing over her, that wasn't happening.

There are many ways I learned and grew through that hard season. Simultaneous to that breakup, God had set things in motion for me to start my ministry, PULSE. All the passion, energy, creativity, and enthusiasm I'd been pouring into my relationship with my girlfriend I could now pour into PULSE, and in hindsight I can say that the organization never would have gotten off the ground without those massive injections of time and heart.

God says, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:19). *Streams in the wasteland*—that's exactly what he carved out for me. And what he will do for you as you surrender your mistakes to him. Those challenges and obstacles and trials by scorching fire? They were all meant to get your attention, to draw you to Jesus. And while all we can see in the midst of the struggle is brokenness and hopelessness and pain, there is a loving God behind it all, the One who has allowed it all into our lives, whispering, "Come to me. Trust me to rescue you. Let me love you as an intimate friend."

To those who say yes to that invitation and begin softening toward Jesus, what was a chaotic, jumbled mess of awful meaninglessness starts to take on clear, defined edges. *There is purpose here. There is clarity here. There is order here. There is peace.*

There is relief. There is celebration. There is laughter. There is joy. Why? Because while you're looking back on the broken seasons of your life, the ones you would never in a million years want to repeat, you can see that it took some rocky, uncertain waters for you to seek out an anchor, that you may have never seen the bright light of Jesus if you hadn't known the stark blackness of some very lonely nights. In a weird way, you're thankful for the hard times, the brokenness, the loneliness, and the despair, because that path is the one that took you to God. C. S. Lewis wrote that pain is God's megaphone—a sentiment you begin to understand.

What might God be saying to you through the painful circumstances you've faced?

We exhale death, and we breathe in life. We exhale the embarrassment, confusion, and guilt over the stuff we did, the decisions we made, the countless ways we behaved like a fool, and we simply say, "God, thank you for being a greater Savior than I am a sinner." Our past can be redeemed.

Reset My Future

One of the most amazing shifts I see in people who finally decide to taste and see that God is good is that their fear and pessimism regarding the future is replaced by certainty and hope. They may not know the future, but they now know the One who holds it. They may not know exactly where they're going, but they now know the One who holds the compass. Once we allow God to take the driver's seat of our life, a settledness emerges in us that just wasn't there before.

Is your attitude toward the future characterized by fear or hope?

Think about it: if LeBron James were captain of your high school basketball team, your concerns about winning the game would be pretty minimal, right? If Steven Spielberg were directing the film you were in, you'd be more confident it would be a box-office hit. If Jimmie Johnson were driving you to school instead of your mom, you'd worry a little less about being late. With God in the lead of life, we can be sure we'll get where we're supposed to be when we're supposed to be there, and that we'll know victory once we arrive. I like to remind my friends that while God isn't always on our schedule, he's always on time. We can trust him.

Resetting My Present

After that relationship that I mentioned before fell apart, there were still plenty of agonizing days between the day she left and the day I could see that God was actually working things out for my good behind the scenes of her farewell. Things didn't get better overnight, but slowly, surely, I walked from despair to hope. Every conversation I had with God, every text I sent to a trusted friend, every earnest prayer for peace, every hour spent with my Bible open, all served to move me one inch closer to full surrender to Jesus. I didn't have language for it at the time, but what I was experiencing was a reset—a rearrangement of my plans and priorities and pursuits that would be centered on Jesus instead of on myself.

Years later, this idea of a reset formed the backbone of my talks at PULSE events. "Jesus is offering you a reset!" I explained, night after night, in cities all over the globe. "He will reset your relationships. He will reset your addictions. He will reset your hope. He will reset *whatever* it is that is keeping you from living life that is truly life." Every time I talked about Jesus offering a reset, *lives were reset;* in fact, more than half a million people have experienced new life through this simple invitation.

What one thing in your life would you ask Jesus to reset if you were confident he really could solve the problems you face?

The Big Eight

At our events, we have set out trash bins for people to drop off items or notes about issues they wanted to surrender to Jesus. When the bins overflowed, we began having people text in reset prayers of surrender that noted the parts of their lives in need of his help. After reviewing all of the responses netted across the span of those few years, we saw clear themes emerge. Of all the broken and chaotic aspects of life that needed to be reset, eight categories kept bubbling to the surface of our audience's attention. And while I believe that Jesus can help whatever area of your life is most in need, I would venture to guess one of these eight areas relates to you.

1. "Jesus, Reset My Faith"

Who or what are you putting your trust in? To finally put your faith in something beyond yourself—your talent, your creativity, your wit—is a radical decision. The hard truth is that everyone will eventually let us down—including even ourselves. But Jesus never, ever will. He really is King. He really is good. He really is trustworthy. And when we come to him with the innocence of a child doing a Superman (not the dance but the leap off the bed), convinced his parents will catch him, we discover these attributes firsthand. Jesus will catch you every time.

It's natural to doubt when we are putting our faith in ourselves. Experiencing a reset of faith replaces our self-confidence (which is shaky at best) with a God confidence that is unshakeable. If you have been wondering if God is speaking to you, if he is somehow *after* you, then let me satisfy your curiosity here and now: the answer is yes. He is. That feeling, that stirring deep inside of you that wonders if this following-Jesus thing could be for you? It's God. It's the Lord saying, "This is for you. This is exactly for you. There is hope. There is potential. There is a new beginning with your name on it. And all you have to do to receive it is come. Believe. Trust me to lead you from where you've been to where you were made to go."

Allow God to reset your faith, to bring you to a childlike faith that he can do anything in and through your life. Then buckle up, because things are about to get good.

2. "Jesus, Reset My Plans"

I believe a big reason I was rejected by my girlfriend back in college is that I was willing to give up God's plans for my life to pursue her. When all of this

happened, I had been doing my best to follow Jesus for years. I was trying to read my Bible and pray. I had even felt called into ministry, and I had been going down that path. But when I was losing this girl, I decided that I loved her so much that I would sacrifice *anything* to be with her—including that call from God.

The path God had set before me included giving my life to tell people about Jesus, and I was willing to ditch that plan. She and I were sitting in my car, and I was looking at her, desperately trying to win her back, saying, "I'll give it up. I'll do anything so we can be together…"

Over those days and weeks, I did everything I could to get the girl. There were poems. There were love songs. There were flowers—lots and lots of flowers. I called. I wrote letters. I texted. I did everything I could think of to do. And yet…nothing.

While some may believe there's no connection between my abandoning God's plan for my life and losing the girl of my dreams, they would be wrong. The more I tried to give up on what God was asking me to do, the more God closed the door on that relationship. She and I had to be pulled apart for me to trust completely in Jesus. It wasn't easy, but looking back I know it was for my good.

While it may not be obvious at the time, God really does have plans for our lives, and those plans really are for our good. He has dreams for us that eclipse our own dreams for ourselves. But we'll never see those dreams turn into reality if we're unwilling to surrender to him. And so we come. We come to him with tenderized hearts. We come with an attitude of *You see what I can't see, God, and so I trust you to guide me where I need to go.*

We come, even if that path leads us away from what is comfortable, away from what feels familiar, away from all that we can control, away from what we insist we need, away from the one we love. "As the heavens are higher than the earth," God once said through the prophet Isaiah, "so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (55:9). Allowing him to reset our plans is saying, "You'd better be right about that, God!"

The good news is he's always right. Invite Jesus to reset your plans, and decide to never look back.

3. "Jesus, Reset My Self-Image"

My friend Lecrae wrote a book that deals with a theme I first saw him post on

Twitter: “If you live by people’s acceptance, you’ll die by their rejection.” *This* is what is at the heart of a self-image reset, which helps us shift from defining our worth according to the fleeting opinions of others to defining it according to the never-wavering love of God.

Jesus loves you, and your self-image can be reset from placing your confidence in what you do to instead placing your confidence in what he has done. When you live life from the place of victory instead of from the place of striving, you become the best version of you there ever was.

No longer do you have to strive for love. In Jesus, you’re already loved.

No longer do you have to strive for acceptance. In Jesus, you’re embraced.

No longer do you have to strive for recognition. In Jesus, you’re seen.

No longer do you have to *strive* for likes. In Jesus, you’re *in.*

When we quit striving, our self-image soars. Our confidence is now found in heaven. Self-confidence replaces self-harm—any of a million ways we neglect rather than nurture ourselves—when that confidence is found in Jesus. “Take on my sufficiency,” he says to us, “my love, my grace, my acceptance,” knowing that only then can we live free.

4. “Jesus, Reset My Relationships”

To the kid who blamed his bad grades on his friends, the Bible agrees. “Walk with the wise and become wise,” Proverbs 13:20 says, “for a companion of fools suffers harm.” And if you’re anything like me, then you can vouch for both sides of this with firsthand proof. Even today, the relationships I’m involved with are either leading toward life or toward death. They are either promoting a sense of hopefulness and holiness and health, or they are dragging me toward chaos, confusion, and pain. There’s really no middle ground here; day by day, friends and family members are helping us become the best or the worst possible versions of ourselves. Jesus offers us a reset perspective of relationships.

Just yesterday, a friend was telling me about her niece who is struggling with issues of drug addiction and self-harm. Her niece confessed that she and her best friend had made a pact: if one of them decided to commit suicide, they both would. They had a code word they were going to text, one to the other, if and when things ever got to that point, and from there, destruction of two lives would ensue. That’s not the way friendships are supposed to work. Friends don’t encourage you to join in death; real friends bring you to life.

When I heard of that death pact, I remembered the time in college when I made a pact of a different kind with my buddy Paul. He and I both wanted to follow Jesus, and yet we both knew the struggles we'd had in the past. We were far from perfect, but we committed together that instead of pursuing death as a team, we'd pursue life. The contract in-cluded our commitment to daily practice of spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Scripture reading and to get together and to ask each other tough questions and hold each other accountable. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know," and Paul and I decided we would simply take God at his word. We would call to him and then trust that he would give us insights about life we otherwise would never gain.

Do you have a friend you can call to God with? Do you have friends who are committed to pursuing the light with you instead of hiding in the dark? Do you have people who care about your heart, your soul, the real stuff of you, and who are committed to drawing out your potential instead of pushing you toward destruction and pain? Seek out and invest in those friendships.

There are so many broken and hurtful relationships we can get caught up in, and the Bible has clear instructions about what to do when we find ourselves bound to something that is taking life from us instead of pouring life in: *flee*. Flee from sin. Flee from impurity. Flee from darkness. And so, in that vein, I invite you to do just that. If there is a relationship in your life that is keeping you from lightness and freedom and joy, then run like the wind in the other direction. Get out of it, and do it now. Trust God that once you are steady in your stance with Jesus, there may be opportunity to re-engage with that person to help them find stability themselves. But until that point, do what the airlines all suggest: secure your own oxygen mask before helping anyone else.

To walk closely with a handful of people who are just as passionate about loving Jesus as you are is to know community as God intends it to be. This reset is available right now, if you're willing. He will direct you toward divinely appointed friends.

5. "Jesus, Reset My Purity"

The most common category of reset that people I talk with are seeking is the one that pertains to their purity. While it is true that God promises to repay the years the locusts have eaten, I'm not going to lie to you: there are consequences to sexual sin that are tough to endure. The Bible refers to sexual sin as sin against

your own body (1 Corinthians 6:18), and if you're among those who fall into this category, then you probably understand exactly how this feels.

If you long for a reset of your purity, let me cut right to the chase and tell you what Jesus has to say to you today. Just as he looked upon the sin-scarred woman at the well in John 4 with acceptance, compassion, tenderness, and love, he looks at you right now and says, "Child, come close. I know you, and I love you. I know where you've been, and who you've been with…and still I call you mine. You are precious to me. You are valuable to me. You are one I'll never forsake. I have fulfillment for you that you can't fabricate or find *anywhere* else. Start fresh today. Quit sleeping around. Quit hooking up with people who can't hold your heart over the long haul. Quit looking at that junk online. Quit sinning and come home to me."

In Jesus, the dirty are clean. In Jesus, the sinful are redeemed. In Jesus, the weak are made strong. In Jesus, all things are made new.

6. "Jesus, Reset My Habits"

Being reset begins with one heartfelt decision, but that doesn't mean it's easy following through. The good news is that you don't have to battle alone. While the damaging relationships, drugs, sex, gambling, partying—a whole host of dark voices of habits—keep whispering, "Come back! Come back!" through Jesus you can find freedom. He wants to reset us to habits that will give life.

We all feel that pull back to what we know will not satisfy (maybe you're feeling it even now), but God meets us in the struggle. Hebrews 12:1–2 says Jesus is the one who authors and perfects our faith. So while none of us can guarantee 100 percent success in practicing good habits, we *can* guarantee that Jesus is able to put our feet back on righteousness's path.

When you get tripped up and head back to the habits that helped you escape from your problems before you knew Jesus, simply stop, fix your eyes on him, and ask him for help. Ask him for this reset as often as you need it until you start cultivating a few healthy habits for a change.

7. "Jesus, Reset My Affections"

If it's possible to say this without losing all respect from the dudes out there, I'm one of those sensitive guys who actually enjoys a good chick flick. That being said, when I lost my dream girl, I was like the hopeless guy in *The Notebook.*

But the happy ending to my romance is that girl who gave me the cold shoulder is now my wife. When we allow God to reset our affections, he gives us something better than we could ever imagine.

Once I was willing to let go of Tiffany and turn my affections to Jesus, he was faithful to fulfill the longing I felt in a way that happened to include Tiff. Whatever God calls you to give up, he will always give you something even better.

If you struggle to let go of the relationship or habit or addiction or the longing to please others or the [fill in the blank], know this: *I get it.* I do. And yet here is another thing I get: if we choose to love anything even a little bit more than we love Jesus, we drive a wedge between us and God that can never be removed until we let go of that other thing.

Letting Jesus reset your affections opens the door to a total flood of divine blessing, courtesy of the One who owns the whole universe.

8. "Jesus, Reset My Generation"

One of my favorite responses to the question, "What do you need Jesus to reset today?" is when guys and girls say, "My generation." What they're saying is that they want to take the light they have found to even the darkest places on earth, even at their own personal sacrifice, even at great personal risk. They are committed to seeing their friends and loved ones find the purpose and meaning they've found. And they hold nothing back in pursuit of that vision—their entire network, freshly redeemed. The reset life transforms not just us but also everyone we know. And it transforms us not just for today but for all of eternity.

When my buddies and I were in college, around the time we started PULSE, we would meet every week to pray that God would move in and through our lives and lead us to those who needed his love. One week, a girl in the group lifted her head and said, "I think God is calling me to work at the Northern."

Collectively, our jaws hit the floor. "What?!" The Northern was a strip club in town. God was calling her *there*?

"You can't be a *stripper*!" a few of us exclaimed, to which she said, "No. *No!* Don't be an idiot. I feel like I am supposed to apply to be a *cook* there."

As a group, we wondered what God was up to. We invited others to pray with us and even asked our pastor to speak into the situation. We would finish

our prayer meetings and head to the block where the Northern was located to prayer walk for our friend, for the people working there, and for those going there each night. Over those weeks, the whole group of us began to believe that God really was in this plan and that she really should apply to work as a cook at a strip club in Fargo, North Dakota. (Try running *that* plan by your folks.)

Well, within a few weeks, she got the job and the adventure began. As we continued to pray, she struck up friendships with some of the dancers. During work hours, she began to invest in their lives, and once her shift was over, those unlikely friends would relocate to area coffee shops to keep the conversation going. Eventually, some of those women began attending our weekly young-adult service at church. Can you imagine? God was answering our prayers. Nobody judged them, because God had given us his heart for them and he loved them. God offers love and hope to every person, no matter their background. And before we knew it, those young women were responding to Jesus. They were asking for a reset for their lives.

Your Life, Reset

An old friend of mine used to say, "Give your life to Jesus. Give him all your sins. If you don't like it, you can have all your sin back!" All joking aside, there really is nothing to lose and everything to gain by surrendering your life to him, which is why I encourage you to do it now.

If you're weary from the running, come to Jesus. Ask for a reset, and he will give it. Your new beginning can start today. You can pray right now: "Jesus, I'm exhausted from trying to find satisfaction on my own, and I'm ready to give your way a try. Forgive me for running, for rebelling, for refusing to believe that you are real, that grace is for me, and that I need to radically change. I believe you died on the cross for me and rose from the grave. Please come into my life. Lead me toward new relationships, new habits, new affections, new involvements—anything and everything that will help me live healthy and whole. I surrender myself to you right now. In your name I pray, Amen."

If you choose to pray this prayer, I hope you'll let me know. Text "RESET" to 73738, and in addition to sending you some helpful links to get you going on your spiritual journey, I'm going to celebrate your fresh start. Let's let Jesus reset our lives, and then let's share this reset with the world.

Notes

1. Elle Hunt, “Essena O’Neill quits Instagram claiming social media ‘is not real life,’ ” *The Guardian*, November 3, 2015, www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/03/instagram-star-essena-oneill-quits-2d-life-to-reveal-true-story-behind-images.
2. Caitlin Johnson, “Cutting Through Advertising Clutter,” *CBS News Sunday Morning*, September 17, 2006, www.cbsnews.com/news/cutting-through-advertising-clutter.

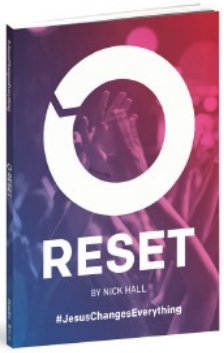
About the Author

From North Dakota to the National Mall in Washington, DC, Nick Hall's journey proves that nothing is impossible with God. Nick started the ministry PULSE after writing a 2006 college English paper in Fargo, North Dakota, that went viral and launched one of the largest student outreach efforts in American history. As a result, Nick has shared the reset Jesus offers with millions of students around the world, more than half a million of whom have publicly responded to the gospel. He is the leader behind the Reset Movement, which put on the Together 2016 gathering on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Nick, his wife, Tiffany, and their two children make their home in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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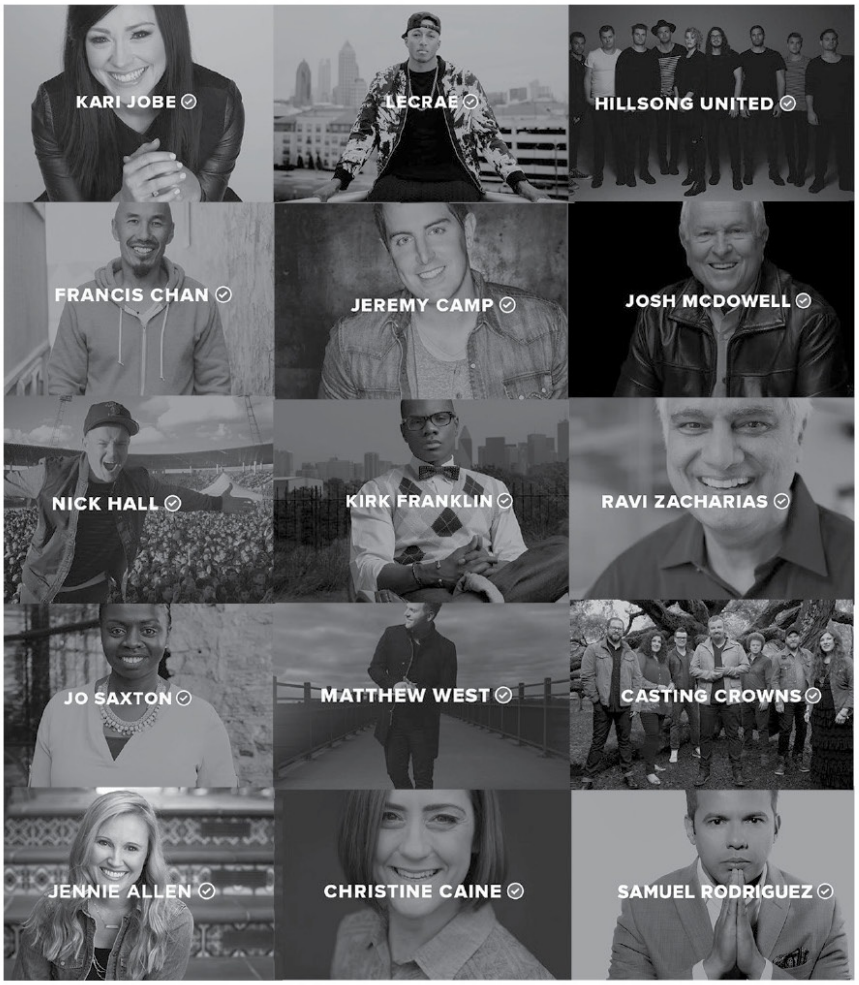
Learn more at Outreach.com/Reset

JULY 16, 2016 is the day our generation will meet on the National Mall in Washington, DC to come together around Jesus in unified prayer, worship, and call for catalytic change. At this event, Together 2016, we will ask Jesus to reset our lives, our nation, and our generation. We will meet and declare...

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