

Fresh Start: Get a Fresh Spirit for 2021



I love January because it represents fresh starts. All possibilities are open. Usually at this early point in the year, I haven't made too many glaring mistakes or committed a hoard of selfish sins yet. Of course, as a Christ-follower, I can confess sin and receive fresh power of the Holy Spirit any time of the year. But there's just something special about January. I've got a wide-open fresh canvas of a year ahead of me.

So for this month, I want to focus on the theme of a fresh start.

Today we will look at one aspect of this, seeking a fresh spirit. Exactly how can we welcome a fresh breath of the Holy Spirit in our lives? I'd like to suggest a few ideas:

1. First of all, pray each morning for the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence. Then listen and watch for His leading and guidance in your life throughout the day. How might He do this?

- Conviction. He may prod your conscience that something you're about to say or do may not be the wisest choice.
- God appointments. As you're out and about, you may find yourself with unexpected opportunities to offer an encouraging word or prayer for a friend or even complete stranger. You may make a business connection that you didn't see coming.

When we pray up in the morning, we give God free reign to operate in our lives in exciting ways.



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- Equipping. When you pray and commit your needs to the Lord, the Holy Spirit equips you for the difficult tasks at work, home, school, or church that you need to accomplish.

2. Another way to get a fresh spirit is to pick a characteristic or habit that you want to cultivate and choose a scripture that matches that need. For example, perhaps you are feeling jealous of a friend's recent success in an area that you have been striving for yourself. You don't like this feeling that has overtaken you, so you choose to memorize

Proverbs 14:30 "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." (That's direct, isn't it?!) As you commit this verse to memory, repeat it often, especially when those envious pangs hit your heart.

To take it a step further, you could also write this verse in your journal and meditate on it, asking the Spirit to show you how you can personally apply it in your life. Write down any special instructions you receive. Maybe God directs you to write a note to your friend, congratulating her on her success. As you follow through and actually do these things, you'll begin to experience victory in this area. Stick with the verse until you feel you have worked your way through this challenge and are experiencing the freedom you desire.

3. A third way to get a fresh spirit is to choose a book to read that addresses an area where you would like to see spiritual growth. It could have something to do with the topic you have picked for your memory verse, or it could be entirely different. For example, over the last two years I have been in the "dream-birthing" process in my life. I am slowly working through a book by Beth Booram called *Starting Something New: Spiritual Direction for Your God-Given Dream* (this is an [affiliate link](#)). I purchased a journal just for this book, being sure to capture all the insights God is giving me.

So, choose a book for the first part of this new year and commit yourself to growth. Don't feel you have to rush. Take as much time as you need to thoroughly digest the book and extract from it all the goodness and ideas you can. Make sure you find concrete ways to apply what you're learning by giving yourself actions steps and setting goals that have dates attached to them.

Instead of setting a goal that is vague like "I want to open an online store," make it specific and actionable: "By March 1, I will open an Etsy store featuring my knitwear designs." Then take the goal and break it into all the smaller steps

you'll need to do to get there, like choosing the designs you'll feature, knitting the designs, researching how to photograph your items for the store, reading through the online tutorials, and so on.

4. Cultivate a spiritual discipline. Spiritual disciplines have been around just about as long as the church has, but I'm not sure that we pay enough attention to them. Let's make 2021 the year we change that. Choose a discipline and learn about it and how to include it in your life. Maybe you feel like you could use some silence and solitude. Perhaps you feel convicted to add fasting to your spiritual repertoire. Maybe you want to learn how to deeply examen your life. It could be that you want to understand more about prayer or explore how to do sacred reading. The spiritual disciplines add a depth of richness and intimacy to your walk with the Lord and are well worth the time you invest in them.

What about you?

What other ideas do you have for acquiring a fresh spirit for 2017? I'd love to hear what you think. Just leave a comment below and ...

Pray on through 2017!

Jane