

# ***Do You Want a NEW BEGINNING?***

## **PART 2**



**If you** read Part 1 on “*Do You Want A New Beginning*”, you know that Jesus Christ is the Author of *new beginnings*. His love and mercy through the work of the Cross allows us to have new beginnings every moment of every day.

I want to share 4 points on just how we get to the place where we can have a continuous flow of new

beginnings in our life.

Before I get to my points, let me take a short side trip to share with you some personal situations and circumstances that could have stopped my husband, Rick and I from receiving a new beginning and even starting *New Beginnings Christian Fellowship & Ministries*.

We believe that by the hand of God, we moved to Leicester, North Carolina in May of 2004 to specifically start New Beginnings Christian Fellowship.

Oh, it was going to be such an adventure! God had told us to “plant” ourselves where He was placing us, so we purchased 10 acres of land and started construction on a new home. While under construction, we were living in a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper. Oh, I forgot—we were living in a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper with our youngest college-aged son. You might say it was just a little cramped!

It wasn’t two months into the project when things started getting tough—real tough! Severe financial problems developed in the middle of the project. Possibly, we hadn’t quite counted the cost! We thought there would be plenty of money for construction from the sale of our previous home in Georgia, with some left over. However, all of a sudden we were out of money, the house being only half way finished with us living in a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper. Rick is self-employed. In addition to the shortage of funds to build the house, he lost a viable client that he had had for years—taking with it over half of our income. Hope and dreams started seemingly falling apart. We were questioning our move. We were questioning our call. Then, as if things couldn’t get any worse, Rick’s health began to decline for no apparent reason. He began to lose weight rapidly and developed a general overall weakness in his body. The doctor’s discovered a tumor 6-8 inches in diameter, covering his right kidney—it was cancer. What does one think at this moment? As if there hadn’t already been enough attack, now the devil is trying to take my husband and the pastor of a new church before it even starts.

But, even in the midst of the storm I could not bring myself to believe anything other than, “God must take care of us.” A peace filled my heart. I didn’t know exactly *how* He was going to take care of

us, I just knew He would. It was one day at a time. Yes, there were many hours and even days of fear and discouragement, but then, Praise God, His mercy, loving-kindness and compassion would come flooding in.

Looking back, I know we made it through what seemed like impossible situations and circumstances because of our great God. Rick is healed—minus one kidney, but he is well and strong. So, as the joke goes, “His kidney went to Heaven ahead of him!” Our house was built, we moved in and it felt *so good*. The 5<sup>th</sup> wheel camper is parked beside the barn where it belongs! Rick did have the audacity that following summer to suggest we go camping. The look on my face gave him my instantaneous answer! However, we have been camping as of late (something we love to do). Our college-age son graduated and married and we got a new daughter. In addition, a couple of years after that, they gave us a new granddaughter! We now have four absolutely perfect and beautiful grandchildren (now I’m sounding like the typical grandmother, which I hope I am!).

However, trouble did not end there. We did indeed start the church and it started off with a bang—just like our move to Leicester. But attacks came from every direction. Curses, betrayals, religious fanatics (who didn’t believe in women ministers) and more came out of the wood work—or from somewhere else!). We even had a couple of demonic manifestations or outbursts. What fun! The blessings were that the LORD always provided us with the people we needed—both as a part of the church and as friends.

We are today going forward in the mission and ministry God has called us to. How? We have to take up a new beginning *every day*. And, this is many times, work and even a fight.

I said all of that so you will understand that we too have been through horrific things in our lives. My past life story also carries great tremendous events. But, how do we progress in life without being distracted, consumed, or overcome by past and present situations and circumstances or even by sin that keeps influencing us and weighing us down? By receiving a new beginnings.

Jesus said, “*My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life,*” (John 10:10 NLT). Are you ready and willing to begin to live in the full, rich and satisfying life Christ offers you?

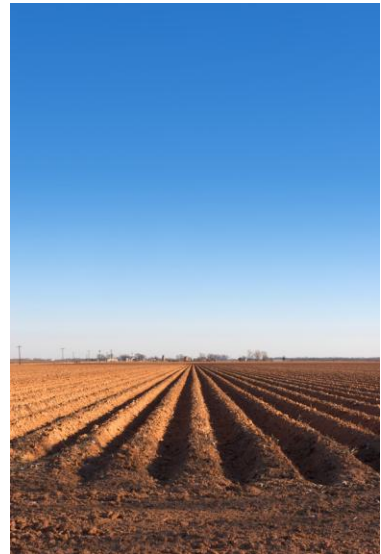
The following are 4 points from our farmer friends that help Rick and I on a daily basis and I know will help you start and live in a place of new beginnings:

## 1. Prepare your ground by plowing.

If you have noticed, ground is often hard where it has not been plowed. If you were to try sow new seed in hard ground it would virtually lay on top, eventually withering and dying. Our hearts are compared to *ground* in the Bible. Our hearts hardened or become hard ground because of sin, situations, circumstances, hurts (past and present), bad decisions and choices, and the like. When that happens, it's time to put our hands to the plow and loosen up the soil of our hearts.

The definition for *plow* is to turn up; to tear up, cut into the soil in order to plant. We at times need to turn up, tear up, cut into the hard ground of our heart or life in order to make place for or receive new and good seed—in order to have a new beginning.

What are some of the things we need to plow up? Sometimes, sin. Do you know that we can get used to sin in our lives, so much so that we don't take action against it? How can that be? One can get used to living a certain way and it becomes "normal" or typical to them because it's such a part of them—but it's not normal to God. For instance, the sin of anger. Anger in and of itself is not necessarily a sin—it's what we do with it. The Bible says, *"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,"* (Eph. 4:26). So, we can get angry and not actually sin. However, Proverbs says this, *"An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins,"* (29:22). Someone may have a short fuse and when the fuse is lit (over anything) they explode. Or, someone can remain calm as long as things are going their way, if it changes, they react in anger. This becomes their normal or typical reaction—and it becomes a normal way of life to them. But, God calls it sin. I had this sin much of my life until I started plowing and when I started plowing I found the root to that sin. I had to agree to turn up, tear up and cut into the ground of my heart. Otherwise, the good seed of patience and peace could not take root. Another example in area of becoming familiar with sin: I knew a minister once who every time he came into the church office where I worked, would make some sort of sexual remark or advance [towards me or other women in the office] and then laugh and joke about it. My pastor was often within seeing and hearing distance, but when he did not offer protection (this pastor was one of his pastor friends), I decided to protect myself and counter the man. When I did, this pastor basically informed me that it was just part of his personality to be humorous in this way and that anyone who found it offensive or improper should lighten up. He was used to himself and his personality had taken on the sin as part of its own. I don't know if he ever repented of it because he saw it as part of his personality. But, it was sin. Unforgiveness can be another sin that we become familiar with and live with—as part of a "normal life." But, God calls it sin.



Holy Spirit is the One who makes us aware when we sin—He is One who keeps us spiritually sensitive to God’s Word and ways. He is the Convictor or the Convincer. However, we have a choice to listen to Him or not—to obey Him or not. If we keep tuning Him out, He will eventually allow us to have what we think we want to have or be who we think we want to be. Until eventually we reap what we sow. Galatians 6:7-9 is very plain: *“Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.”*<sup>8</sup> *Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.*<sup>9</sup> *So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”*

If good things are not “coming up” in your life—if you are not experiencing “new life” then it’s probably time to plow up some hard ground.

We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), that’s why we have Christ Jesus in the first place—to bring us into God’s glory. So, put your hands to the plow and plow up unforgiveness bitterness, hate, anger, rage, sexual immorality or whatever it is that is making the ground of your heart hard. Let go of devastating situations or circumstances that are influencing you in the wrong ways and are out of your control anyway. Plow up yesterday. Plow up and let go of the negative, hurtful, discouraging and even abusive events that happened yesterday. Plow them up! Get rid of the junk in your trunk.

There are also other things that you may need to plow up, such as, generational curses; superstitions, occult activity and other encounters with darkness; negative and spiritually unhealthy relationships (with friends and family); bad habits; a negative attitude; and the like. Plow them up and get the ground of your heart ready. Let go of whatever it is that is stopping you from planting good seed and give them to the Author of new beginnings, Jesus Christ.

How do we do this—how do we plow? *Plowing represents repentance.* Repentance actually means *“to turn.”* To turn to what or to who? God. Remember, plowing turns up, tears up and cuts up hard ground until it is loosened and facing upward. In the act of repentance—we recognize our own sin, we admit it, we ask the LORD to forgive us of that sin and we repent—we turn away from the sin or the old way of doing and turn ourselves towards God—facing Him—facing His direction—facing upward. Through repentance, we are participating with God to give us a new beginning. Through repentance, God can and will take the sin away (and the effects of it) and begin to help us prepare the ground for good seed and a new beginning.

You might be saying, “I don’t have any of those things and I still don’t seem to go forward.” If that’s the case, then there may be something hidden in your heart that needs to be plowed up. The enemy—satan—only has the right to what we give him the right to. Whatever it is that holds you back from living a full life in Christ—God doesn’t want you to have it. I suggest that you get some alone time with

God, do some fasting, and ask Him to show you what needs to be plowed up in your life so that you can go forward in a new beginning.

Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us, *“Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard you old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion; <sup>23</sup> and be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude]. <sup>24</sup> And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God’s image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness,”* (AMP).

Our *former nature* or old *unrenewed self* is talking about the “us” that was developed (cultivated, grown, ripened) from our past sin, our old nature, our actions, our thinking before we came to Christ and the old environment that influenced us,. All these, sin, situations and circumstances (past and present), bad decisions, etc., all affect our spiritual development. They not only affect, but tend to rule our nature, our actions, our thinking before we come to Christ and they don’t want to let go after we come to Christ. The old self liked us just the way we were! The Word tells us to strip ourselves, put off, discard *all* the things of our former or old nature. If we do not, they will corrupt us through lusts and desires that spring from delusion.

Let’s look at Ephesians 4:22 a little closer. It says: *“. . . which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion. . .”* When we first read this we might initially think about the sin of lust and desire—and of course, that is what the passage is referring to. However, what is lust and desire? One can lust after more than sex. For instance, one can lust after money or power.

But the truth is, lust is anything that *controls* our desires (good or bad). Lust is a sinful longing; the inward sin which leads to the falling away from God (Romans 1:21). Lust is at the centre of all moral forces and impulses and of spiritual activity. Past “junk” in our life can become just as much a lust controlling our desires as sex or money. If someone finds themselves not wanting to let go of the past, then it’s a pretty good sign its become a lust in their life. There are many, many hurt people today who are suffering with all kinds of mental and emotional problems and are even in great sin because they are unwilling to let go of the past. The only thing that stands in their way of complete healing is forgiveness. But, they are not willing to forgive because deep inside, they want revenge. They think that if they forgive, they will not get the revenge they think they want. Revenge then becomes lust—a desire.

God wants us to have a *fresh mental and spiritual attitude in order to have, contain and keep a new life*. We can’t if our mind if filled with sin, devastations of the past, bad decisions and the like.

*“. . . Be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude]. And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God’s image, [Godlike] in true righteousness and holiness.”* (Ephesians 4:23-24 AMP).

A fresh mental and spiritual attitude is a new beginning. So start plowing up the hard ground through the magnificent and freeing act of repentance.

**2. Plant new seed.** After plowing, it's time to plant new seed. What is new seed? The



Word of God—the Bible. God's Word always contains new and fresh seed to be planted in our lives, but in order for that new and fresh Word to be planted in us successfully, it has to be planted in plowed up—ready to receive—ground.

As Believers, we must look at God's Word as fresh communication and knowledge meant for us personally. God speaking to me! His Word to me!

This is one reason I don't believe in reading God's Word like a common book from cover to back. If you are a new or young Christian or you need break-through in your life, you need the seed of Jesus Christ in your life, which is found in the New Testament Gospels—in the middle of the Bible! And then, you need His instructions for living a godly and powerful life, which is found in the Epistles or Letters of the New Testament.

Planting good seed in good ground causes the seed to sprout and become a plant. In our life, the same happens. Planting the seed of God's Word in our plowed and ready to receive ground causes in us a *transformation*—the Word of God sprouts in us and causes spiritual maturity that manifests new life—our life begins to take on a transformation into the beautiful creation God created and intended. Romans 12:2 calls it a transformation by the renewing of our mind. It says, *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect,"* (NLT). The seed of God's Word changes the way we think—from the old sinful ways to the way God thinks, which then allows us to know His will for our lives. So, when we plant the Word of God, we are letting God transform us.

God's Word is perfect, reliable, dependable, fail-safe, surefire, flawless seed. It *will* produce a good, bountiful crop in and through us when we are ready to receive it in our hearts.



**3. Fertilize.** Fertilizer is plant food. It's firstly food supplied to the seed in the ground so



that the seed sprouts into a healthy plant. And then, it's food to the plant so it grows and produces. Fertilizer is power-food that causes the plant to become stronger and healthier, producing a greater crop.

*Prayer is fertilizer*—spiritual power food that feeds the Word of God planted in you. Prayer is communion, communication, connection with Almighty God. When we are praying or communicating with God, He is satisfying our hungry spirit and soul in relationship with Him and increasing our faith.

Prayers prayed in faith will lift us to the throne room of God. In other words, through faith, we will know that we have met with God—that He has heard us when you pray.

Prayer helps the Word grow and become stronger in you. As we pray according to the Word, the Word increases in us and things begin to change. Our life begins to change. We begin to grow healthier spiritually, which will flow over into our mind and then to every other area of our life. And we will produce a great crop of the Word in our life. This is called spiritual growth. The stronger we become spiritually, the stronger we will be in the natural and in natural things. In other words, as we become stronger in the LORD, sinful and natural things will not occupy so much of our life and time. We become overcomers in every and all circumstances of life. We begin to receive from God all the *He and we* desire (see Psalm 20:4 and Psalm 37:4).

**4. Water.** One of the symbols of the Holy Spirit in Scriptures is water—*Living Water*.

Jesus compared the Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's life as being like "*Rivers of living water.*" John 7:37-39 tells us, "*On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, 'Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me! <sup>38</sup> Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'*"<sup>39</sup> (When he said "living water," He was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him. . . ." (NLT).

The one who is *filled* with the Holy Spirit has this "living water" flowing from his innermost being.

Just as water is essential for the growth and existence of plant life or any life, for that matter, so too is the Holy Spirit to the Believers spiritual life. The Holy Spirit's living water nourishes, washes, purifies and refreshes wherever it goes. His water keeps life—the life of Jesus Christ alive in us. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.



The apostle Peter in talking to the Acts church said, *“Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,”* (Acts 2:38).

Every Believer needs to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and have a relationship with Him, letting Him lead, guide, and direct us in the will and ways of God in every situation and circumstance of our life.

As we let the Holy Spirit direct us, our lives will take on new meaning—God’s meaning. Our lives will take on God’s plan for us. Our lives will take on a new beginning.

I encourage you right this moment to implement a new beginning in your life by: Plowing planting new and fresh seed, fertilizing and watering.

Sr. Leader Rick and I love you and pray that God will draw you to Him through our precious LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ, and that He will richly bless you in all ways as you accept the life of fullness He came to give us all and a new beginning!

Debra Jack, Co-Sr. Leader of NBCF—New Beginnings Christian Fellowship