



STARTING OVER WITHOUT SHAME

A Guided Workbook

A Biblical Case for New Beginnings

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!"

Isaiah 43:18-19

Name: _____

Date Started: _____



How to Use This Workbook

This workbook walks through the restart stories of Ruth, Joseph, and Peter — three very different new beginnings — and invites you to find your own story inside theirs. Each section pairs their example with space to reflect on your own season of starting over.

A few suggestions before you begin:

- ☐ Be honest about where shame has attached itself to your restart, even in small ways.
- ☐ Read each biblical story slowly before answering the questions that follow it.
- ☐ Remember this workbook is between you and God — there's no polished version to perform here.
- ☐ Let this be a starting point for prayer, not just reflection.

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning." — Lamentations 3:22-23



Section 1: Naming the Shame

| *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* — **Romans 8:1**

Shame around starting over rarely shows up labeled as shame. It hides in comparison, silence, and an inner story that treats a restart as proof of failure. This section is about naming it honestly before moving forward.

What season of starting over are you in right now, in your own words?

Where has comparison crept into how you see your restart — measuring it against a timeline or a person that isn't actually yours to measure against?

What's the honest version of 'what are you up to these days' that you've been avoiding saying out loud?

Is there a shame-narrative you've attached to this season? Write the sentence it whispers to you.



Section 2: Ruth — Starting Over With Nothing Familiar Left

"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." — **Ruth 1:16**

Ruth left everything familiar — homeland, people, security — to start over in a foreign place, doing humble, unglamorous work simply to survive. Her restart didn't look impressive. It looked like faithfulness, one ordinary day at a time.

What has your restart required you to leave behind — familiar routines, identities, or securities?

Where does your current season feel more like Ruth's field — humble, unglamorous, day-to-day — than like a triumphant leap forward? How do you feel about that?

What would it look like to see today's small, ordinary faithfulness the way Scripture sees Ruth's — not as lesser, but as exactly where redemption begins?



Section 3: Joseph — When the Restart Wasn't Chosen

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." — Genesis 50:20

Joseph's restarts were forced on him by other people's choices — betrayal, slavery, false accusation. Yet Genesis 39:2 notes that even in slavery, the Lord was with him. His pain was real, and it wasn't the end of his story.

Is your restart something you chose, or something that happened to you? Name it honestly.

Where do you see God possibly at work, even quietly, in the middle of circumstances that still feel unjust or painful?

Joseph could reframe his brothers' harm only in hindsight, years later. What would it mean to trust that reframing is possible for your situation too, even if you can't see it yet?



Section 4: Peter — Restarting After Failure

| *"Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you. Jesus said, Feed my sheep."* — **John 21:17**

Peter's restart followed his own failure, not just circumstance — he denied Jesus three times, then wept bitterly. His restoration came through honest confrontation, not avoidance, and it was built directly on top of the failure, not in spite of it.

Is there a failure of your own tangled up in this season of starting over? Name it honestly, without minimizing or exaggerating it.

Peter's restoration came through a direct, honest conversation with Jesus — not by pretending the denial never happened. What would an honest conversation with God about your failure look like?

What might it look like to let your restart be built on top of your failure, the way Peter's was, rather than waiting to feel worthy before moving forward?



Section 5: Drawing Closer to God in the Restart

| *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."* — James 4:8

Ruth's field, Joseph's prison, and Peter's beach were each places with fewer distractions and more room to encounter God clearly. The unstable season isn't a pause in the relationship — it's often where it deepens most.

What would it look like to bring this restart into prayer now, rather than waiting until it's resolved?

What has this season stripped away that you usually lean on instead of God?

Write a short prayer bringing your restart honestly to God — including the parts that still carry shame.



A Closing Word

Ruth gleaned in an unfamiliar field and became part of a royal lineage. Joseph endured years of undeserved setbacks and became the means of his family's survival. Peter wept bitterly over his failure and was restored to lead. None of them skipped the hard part — all of them are remembered for how they walked through it.

| "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" — **Isaiah 43:19**

You don't need to hide your restart, apologize for it, or rush past it to a version of your story that looks more finished. The beginning is not the whole story.