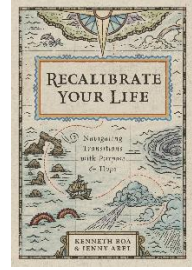


TOOL 2

Online Supplement to

Recalibrate Your Life: Navigating Transitions with Purpose and Hope



Guide to a Personal Recalibration Retreat

Recalibration is an approach to processing where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed in our lives. It's a process that we do well to embrace both at moments of transition and on a regular basis.

This guide is a possible outline for a personal, annual recalibration retreat.¹ We encourage you to read the introduction first and then adapt the guide as needed to your own purposes.

INTRODUCTION: WHY DO A RECALIBRATION RETREAT?

The goal of a recalibration retreat is to return your focus from the temporal to the eternal and, ultimately, to help you enjoy increasing joy, peace, and fruitfulness due to a growing intimacy with Jesus. Without taking such an intentional timeout to your regular routine, it is easy to get swept away in the current of life. When we do take these timeouts, they can spur significant personal reflection and growth, making an impact on us and on others whom our lives touch.

Today, Americans (as well as many people around the world) have unprecedented options and opportunities. On average, we live longer, possess greater resources, and have cultivated a more diverse array of skills than ever before. Yet, most of us fail to fully approach our hard-earned skills, the knowledge and wisdom God has given us, our tangible wealth, and our time with an intentional, stewardship mindset.

To live as God's stewards and ambassadors in the world, we need to regularly revisit questions that tend to be overlooked amidst the sometimes-frenetic activity of our day-to-day lives—questions such as: *Who am I? Where am I going? What is my purpose? How should I manage and invest my resources accordingly? What is my legacy?*

No matter where we are in our earthly sojourn, as long as we have life and breath, it is not too late to make midcourse adjustments in our direction—whether large (even 180 degrees) or small. Even seemingly tiny, imperceptible changes today will multiply to great effect down the road.

There are two basic types of recalibration:

- **Kairos recalibration** occurs at moments of transition or when a major event occurs in our lives (either expected or unexpected).

¹ This tool is a longer version of tool 2 in Kenneth Boa and Jenny Abel, *Recalibrate Your Life: Navigating Transitions with Purpose and Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023).

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- **Chronos recalibration** occurs at regular intervals, such as annually, quarterly, or monthly, and helps us approach life with intentionality and purpose rather than simply letting life happen to us.²

This guide was developed with an annual recalibration retreat in mind, but it can easily be adapted for *kairos* recalibration or other intervals (other than yearly). Feel free to take from it what is helpful to you and your life situation!

PREPARE

- Plan a one-day or half-day retreat, placing it on your calendar like any other appointment, as far in advance as possible. Do this annually (e.g., on a particular day each year or around your birthday).
- Choose a setting away from noise and distractions, preferably one surrounded by nature, where the only noises you hear are the wind, birds, and insects.
- Leave electronics at home. If you must bring them, turn them off and do not check them except for an emergency.
- Take a journal (or notebook), a writing utensil, and a Bible. Also, print this guide and any resources that you plan to use along with it.

RETREAT: A SUGGESTED OUTLINE

We recommend you spend from half an hour to two hours on each of the steps below.

Step 1: Backward Look

Goal: Remember and reflect on the story God is writing into your life. Realize that He can use every single part of it—every event, job, relationship, and even the hardships, setbacks, and mistakes—for a redemptive purpose.

- A. Review.** Using one of the methods below, review your life in increments, listing for each:
- Key people
 - Key activities and achievements
 - Key challenges/hardships
 - Key insights/lessons

Method 1: Whole-life review in 5-year increments (e.g., birth–5, 5–10, etc.)

² Boa and Abel, *Recalibrate Your Life*, 18.

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Method 2: Whole-life review in decades (childhood, teen years, 20s, 30s, etc.)

Method 3 (good for mature leaders/pastors): Divide your life into these stages: Sovereign Foundations, Inner-Life Growth, Ministry/Leadership Maturing, Life Maturing, and Convergence³

Method 4: One-year review (focusing only on key events, relationships, and changes over the past year); this is good for subsequent annual recalibration retreats, as there is no need to repeat the entire exercise all over again

B. Synthesize. Next, read over the notes you made on your life (or one-year) review. Jot down patterns/common themes (taking care to stay focused on the past without jumping to the present and future):

- **Key people:** Who has had the greatest influence in your life? The longest influence? How exactly have these individuals influenced you?
- **Key activities and achievements:** What types of activities have given you the greatest enjoyment and fulfillment? Which do you excel in?
- **Key challenges or hardships:** Are there any repeated struggles or obstacles in your life? How have you handled them so far?
- **Key insights/lessons:** Which of these lessons has (have) been most important? Are there any lessons you keep relearning or having reinforced?

C. Summarize. How would you summarize the trajectory your life has taken up until this point? Write down your summary in your notebook in a few sentences or less.

Step 2: Upward Look

Goal: Spend time connecting with God through prayer and His Word. Take this time to focus on being (in His presence) rather than doing.

There are many ways to spend this time. While it is good to have a plan for this hour, it can be either more or less structured to fit your personal style. Following are two suggestions for ways to spend this time.

³ Method 3 is based on stages outlined by J. Robert Clinton in his book *The Making of a Leader*. Inner-Life Growth refers to the “emerging leader” stage (informal or formal training); Ministry/Leadership Maturing refers to the time when a ministry vocation or leadership role becomes the primary focus; Life Maturing is a time of “major fruitfulness” when “giftedness emerges along with priorities”; Convergence (which not all leaders reach) occurs when we assume a role that represents a good blend (overlap) of our experience and skills (developed over time) and our natural temperament and giftings. You may be anywhere along the continuum of these categories regardless of your age.

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Time in God's Word

Meditation on one of these Scriptures: Psalm 90; Psalm 102; Psalm 145; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18; or Hebrews 13:8. You could also choose a verse or several verses from the **Scripture Guide for Transitions** to meditate on.⁴

Time in Prayer

Seek a balance of both talking to and listening to God. Also, seek a balance in the types of prayers—using the following structure if it is helpful; you can personalize any of the Scriptures provided and pray them back to God.⁵

- *Give Thanks.* Allow the previous step (Backward Look) to flow into a time of gratitude for all that God has done and continues to do in your life. Thank Him even for the adversities. Give Him thanks that He is unchanging amidst our changing lives. (1 Chronicles 16:34; 29:10–13; Psalm 89:1–2; 145; Revelation 11:17)
- *Worship and Adoration.* Spend time praising God for who He is. (Psalm 71:5–8, 14–24; 104:33–34; Isaiah 46:4; Lamentations 3:21–23; Daniel 2:20–22; Revelation 15:3–4)
- *Confession.* Ask forgiveness of your sins; then thank God for His promised forgiveness. (Confess: Psalm 51:1–4; 19:12–13; 1 John 1:9. Thank Him: Isaiah 1:18; 43:25; Psalm 103:1–4, 8–14)
- *Renewal.* Ask God to renew your mind and spirit. Seek His help and discernment as you face the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. (Psalm 51:10–12; Matthew 11:28–30; John 4:13–14; Romans 5:1–2; Ephesians 4:22–24)
- *Supplication.* Make requests for yourself (petition) and others (intercession). Prayer is best when it is specific, but here are some general categories to focus your requests:

Petition for growth in Christ, growth in wisdom, spiritual insight, your relationships with others, your faithfulness as a steward, your family and ministry, and any other personal concerns.

Intercede for churches and ministries, your family, fellow believers, nonbelievers you know (and evangelistic opportunities), the governing authorities (at all levels), missions and missionaries, and world affairs/current events.

⁴ See pp. 231–233 of Boa and Abel, *Recalibrate Your Life*; also available at recalibrateyourlife.org.

⁵ This structure is based on Ken Boa's *Handbook to Prayer*. Purchase this book in three formats at www.handbooktoprayer.com.

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- *Affirmation.* Acknowledge God’s will (which is “good and acceptable and perfect,” Romans 12:2 tells us), and ask Him for the grace to submit to it. (Psalm 91; Matthew 6:19–21; John 10:27–28; John 11:25–26; Romans 8:38–39; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18; 5:9–10)
- *Closing Prayer.* Wrap up, and ask God to give you an open heart, discerning mind, and sensitivity to His Spirit during the rest of your retreat. (Psalm 23:6; 90:10–12; 121; Romans 16:25–27; Hebrews 13:20–21; Jude 24–25)

Step 3: Inward Look

Goal: *Prayerfully conduct an honest self-assessment or seek steps toward personal growth. Three options for how you might spend this time follow.*

Option A: Remember Who You Are

Are you living in light of your true identity and security in Christ? Review the “Who Does God Say I Am?” statements in **tool 1** and pick several that have the most meaning to you right now. Record them in your notebook and pray they become true of how you see yourself. What is one way you can keep these truths in front of you when you reenter daily life?

Option B: 7 Keys to Living and Finishing Well

These seven keys are listed in brief below and in greater depth in *Recalibrate Your Life* (p. 229). Review each key one by one, honestly assessing yourself in each area. Are you living in such a way that you will finish well whenever your time on this planet is up? All of us can stand to grow and improve. Jot down in your notebook any personal reflections on areas of strength and weakness, including at least one key that you will focus on applying in the coming months.

The 7 Keys to Living and Finishing Well

1. Intimacy with Christ
2. Fidelity in the spiritual disciplines
3. A biblical perspective on the circumstances of life
4. A spirit of teachability, responsiveness, humility, and obedience
5. A clear sense of purpose and calling
6. Healthy relationships with resourceful people
7. Ongoing ministry investment in the lives of others

Option C: Work Through Another Tool

Work through another recalibration tool either online at recalibrateyourlife.org or from the book.

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Step 4: Forward Look

Goal: *Look to the future and determine needed adjustments—allowing your destination to define your journey.*

- A. List action items.** Go through your notes from step 3 (Inward Look) and make sure you have written down any action items or next steps. (Don't skip this! When we don't write things down, we tend to forget them or take them less seriously.)
- B. Envision.** Realizing we should always remain responsive to God's loving overtures in our lives—even those we didn't expect—we can still look toward the future and plan wisely, holding a loose grip on our plans and submitting everything we are and have to Him. With that attitude in mind, take some time to consider:

How do you want your life to be different in . . .

- . . . 1 year?
- . . . 5 years?

How will you get there? (What adjustments do you need to make in order to achieve that vision?) For example:

- What character traits do you need to work on?
- What values do you need to embrace more? (See **tool 5** for ideas.)
- What activities do you need to start (or stop) doing, or do differently?
- How should you implement each of these changes?
- What barriers might you encounter that you can plan for?
- Do you have a reliable accountability partner? When will you plan to discuss this retreat with that person?

KAIROS RECALIBRATION

Major events and transitions call for special times of recalibration. We call this *kairos* recalibration. You can adapt the outline above for a *kairos* recalibration retreat, taking the same basic four steps (Backward, Upward, Inward, and Forward Looks) but with a focus on the event or transition at hand. See p. 21 of *Recalibrate Your Life* for more tips.⁶

⁶ See p. 21 of Boa and Abel, *Recalibrate Your Life*.