According to business writer Stephen Covey, one of the habits of a highly effective person is self-renewal.

"Without this discipline, the body becomes weak, the mind mechanical, the emotions raw, and the spirit insensitive."

1 Samuel 7 highlights four principles for getting back on track.

I. No Ark, No Satisfaction

“It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned” (v. 2)
Three Versions of Psalm 23

_The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want._ (Christian)

_I’m my own shepherd; I acknowledge no other Lord._ (Modern)

_I’m on my own. I experience a continual sense of need._ (Postmodern)

The principle is the same for Christians as for non-Christians: My ability to experience true satisfaction is dependent on Christ’s centrality in my life.

“His glory is the sun around which the whole of life must revolve if there is to be the light and life of God in our experience.”

—Sinclair Ferguson

II. No Repentance; No Forward Momentum

“On that day they fasted and there they confessed . . . And Samuel was leader of Israel” (6b)

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be _made new_ in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

—Ephesians 4:22-24

“Repentance means turning from as much as you know of your sin to give as much as you know of yourself to as much as you know of your God”

—J. I. Packer
Exhibit a: “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.” – Ephesians 4:25

Exhibit b: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.” – Ephesians 4:28

“The problem of the Christian life comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.” – C. S. Lewis

“Illustrated: “The Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and . . . they were routed” (v. 10)

“Illustrated: “Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines . . . and there was peace . . . and he built an altar there to the Lord” (v. 13)

Can we still believe that God answers prayer?

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” – Galatians 5:22-23

“III. No Leadership

“IV. No Prophetic Word; No Lasting Work

“Can we still believe that God answers prayer?”
Samuel = God’s Word applied to life = “peace” and “an enduring altar”

CONCLUSION

How do we get back on track when we’re tied up in knots?

We’re traveling in the right direction when
• Jesus is at the center of my life
• I admit it when I do stupid things . . . and get over it
• I go to him in believing prayer
• I order my life according to his Word