



# 10 Ways to Recover from a Missions Trip (Part 1)

Returning home after a missions trip isn't always an easy transition. You've experienced a new culture, bonded with unique people, and maybe even shared the gospel in another language. You've been pushed out of your comfort, and your relationship with God has never been better. But as you drop your luggage on the floor and jump into bed, it hits you: you're home.

What do you do next? Here are ten tips to help you recover from your missions trip.

## 1| **Get Some Rest**

You've probably just spent a few weeks in another time zone with late nights, early mornings, and an action packed schedule. Besides sleep deprivation, I'm sure you can also add exhaustion, overwhelming emotions, and slight crankiness to the mix. Now is the time to readjust to your normal sleeping pattern. There's nothing wrong with getting some rest and unwinding when you return home. Unpack your bags, stay hydrated, and catch up on some sleep, because it won't get any easier than this.

## 2| **Deal with Your Emotions**

Now that you've taken some time to rest, you can accurately sort through your emotions. While sleep may have driven away jet-lag and crankiness from the plane

ride, you're probably still a bit of a mess. No matter the length, mission's trips can have tremendous life-changing effects. You've just done some extreme bonding with a group of people, gone from an action-packed schedule to a normal routine, and you may feel bittersweet about being home. It's completely normal to feel some post-mission trip sadness. Whether you miss the host country, the ministry, or your new friends, strive to focus on the positive memories rather than the disappointment you felt in leaving. As always, thank God for the opportunity you had, and seek His Word through any emotions you might be feeling.

### 3| Don't Judge Others

You might not notice just how much you've changed until you spend time with other people. When I returned from my first missions trip, I immediately became annoyed with my own family and friends. They seemed to complain about everything from food to Wi-Fi. For every complaint they had, I could only think of a story about the devastating circumstances I saw in Africa. Even my church seemed stagnant compared to the ministry I was involved with while I was away. Keep in mind that while you may have changed, seen things that broke your heart, and woke up to the problems in your own life, doesn't mean anything has changed at home. While you were away, your family and friends were carrying on with their routine.

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Try not to judge your loved ones, but instead, try to maintain the changes from your own experiences to be an example to them. It's crucial to avoid a "holier than thou" attitude that will sever relationships. It isn't your job to change the hearts of your family and friends—that's up to God. Don't let the negativity and materialism of the culture around you influence your attitude. Remember what Paul urges us in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

### 4| Pray

Sounds easy, right? For a while after a missions trip, you'll pray with conviction for the missionaries and the people you met by name. After you've been home for a while, the urgency of those prayers will start to lighten. Eventually, the names of the people you witnessed to and children you taught will fade to faces. And if you aren't intentional, the country, missionaries, and people will completely slip from your prayers altogether. Take the effort to remind yourself of the importance of those prayers.

God is still working, even when your mission's trip is over.

During my first trip to South Africa, I met a little girl named Kedibonne at an afterschool club. I had a special connection with this little girl, and when it was time to leave at the end of the trip, I could only hug her and remember her in prayer, almost certain I'd never see her again. For nearly three years whenever I thought of South Africa, I prayed for Kedibonne. When I was able to return to South Africa three years later, our team returned to that same afterschool club. I remembered Kedibonne, wondering if she would still be there. To my surprise, we were reunited. It was a tremendous reminder that ministry still happens, even after we leave. Anything could have happened to this little girl living in an unsafe community in the three years that I was away. By God's grace, she was still there hearing the gospel and learning Bible stories week after week. It convicted me to pray faithfully for the missionaries. Keep in mind that God is still working, even when your mission's trip is over. Whether you were in Cambodia or Colorado, strive to keep them in faithful prayer.

5| Share (but not too much)

It's a given that you'll have a million stories to tell about your trip. From the ministry opportunities, inside jokes, fun stories of your adventures, or amazing revelations about what God did in your life, you could write a book. While these experiences are incredible, you may notice that many people won't be very interested. Sure, they might pay attention at first, but sooner or later, they'll zone out of the conversation. Bring it up enough, and they'll become annoyed because your trip will seem to be the only thing you talk about. While it's good to share about this amazing experience, it's best to do so in moderation. When it comes down to it, your family, friends, and church members weren't there, and they didn't experience what you did. Although reminiscing over every detail might make you happy, it will only annoy your listener. Don't let their lack of enthusiasm discourage you. Instead, share a short blurb about the trip, focusing on what God did. This is always a difficult part of recovering from your mission's trip, but don't let any discouragement stand in your way. Try using an outlet like journaling or blogging to discuss the trip, or find a close friend with a good listening ear.

## **10 Ways to Recover from a Missions Trip (Part 2)**

Read Part 1 of this series [here](#).

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relationship with God has never been better. But as you drop your luggage on the floor and jump into bed, it hits you: you're home.

What do you do next? Here are the final five tips to help you recover well.

#### 6| Keep in Contact

While you might live in different ends of the country or different corners of the world, your team members will be going through the same transition. Your new friends are in the same boat, facing similar emotional and spiritual struggles. The relationships formed during your trip can thrive even if you're miles apart. Technology is a wonderful thing, so use it well! Keep in contact with your friends and stay updated with the missionaries by signing up for their newsletters or communicating through email. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Keeping in contact and encouraging one another will help you recover even faster from your missions trip.

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#### 7| Confront Your Problems

Whether you were away for two weeks or two months, your problems will be waiting for you when you get back. The harsh reality is that the broken relationships, secret sin, and hardships that were pushed out of your mind for the duration of your trip are now back in your life. By using your newfound spiritual momentum, you can tackle these challenges head-on. It's essential to use these convictions to continue growing closer to God. Sometimes it takes an experience like a missions trip to wake us up to the problems in our life. My second trip to South Africa opened my eyes to my materialism and my stagnant relationship with God. Was it easy making changes and confronting the root of the problems in my life? No way! But it was worth it, and I think you'll feel the same way.

#### 8| Keep the Fire Going

One of the hardest parts of returning home from a missions trip is keeping the fire going. You've probably made some life-changing decisions and returned home with new convictions. It's easy to fall back into the way life was before you left. Keep the momentum going by staying out of your comfort zone and remaining in God's word. Implement changes in your life and act on your new convictions to keep pushing forward in your walk with God. Remember the words of Paul when he encourages us in Romans 12:11-12 saying, "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." It's up to you whether your missions trip is a mountain-top experience or the beginning of a life-changing journey.

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#### 9| Find a Mentor

We've already established that you'll have a lot to think about on your road to recovery. Finding a listening ear who will keep you accountable will be extremely helpful! Proverbs 15:22 tells us that "Without counsel, plans fail, but with many advisers, they succeed." Look for someone who will provide godly counsel and accountability as you strive to keep the fire going after your missions trip has ended. An impartial listener who will help you transition back home, pray for you, and encourage you can make recovering from your trip even easier.

#### 10| Search for More Opportunities

Even if you just got home, there's a good chance you already want to go back. Returning home at the end of a trip often leaves us with a passion to keep serving. Sometimes, missions trips can even change what we thought our future plans would be. As you recover, pray for more opportunities to serve. In the meantime, be a missionary to those around you. While you may not be able to interact with those orphans in India or the sick in Uganda anymore, you can take advantage of where you are planted now by witnessing to your coworkers and praying for your unsaved friends. While you wait, use what God has taught you to be a missionary to those around you.