

Looking for God in the New Year

Entering into God's Presence

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I. Introductory Remarks.

In this message today I would like to share with you some thoughts about how you can enter the coming new year with an profound sense of God's presence. This will give you the faith to face all of the many challenges that shall come your way in this coming year.

The Christian life is a life of faith, meaning we must have the ability to see and perceive those things that are in the Heart of God that He desires to release into our lives. When we are walking in an acute sense of His presence we are able to face problems, undertake tasks, meet emergencies and to dedicate ourselves to the opportunities that come our way with a greater degree of fervency and zeal.

Hebrews 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

God desires to be with us in all that we do. He is there for us no matter what it may be. Whether you are facing problems that seem insurmountable, undertaking various tasks, meeting emergencies or taking advantage of opportunities that come your way, God wants you to know He is with you in all that you do.

Isaiah 42:16 (NIV) *I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.*

Isaiah 46:4 (NIV) *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

With this in mind I would like to share with you some directions you need to be looking in to sense God's awesome hand at work in your life.

II. Directions to Look for God.

1. Look Back.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are*

noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.

Take the time to look back over the past year and identify those times in which you had evidence of faith in overcoming doubt, sin, unbelief or anything else. Identify those times you saw yourself go from despair to courage in the midst of suffering or situations that seemed insurmountable. As you look back and see how the Hand of God was at work in your deliverance, take the time to give Him thanks for all that He did.

Psalm 105:1 *Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!*

Psalm 140:13 *Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence.*

As you take the time to meditate on these things and give God thanks for His many blessings in your life, you will experience a fresh sense of His presence preparing you for what's yet ahead in this coming new year.

2. Look Inward.

Psalm 51:6-8 *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. {7} Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. {8} Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.*

Take stock of yourself - look at your relationship with God and with others and your stewardship over all that God has given to you. Hold each area of your life alongside God's standards and pray to grow in faithfulness and holiness.

Psalm 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; {24} And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 26:2-3 *Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart. {3} For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth.*

As you take the time to look inward you will be blessed and encouraged when you see the many areas where you did well and you will sense great hope when you sense God's help, encouragement and leading in overcoming those areas that you failed in. Be honest with God and yourself and you shall experience a great

refreshing from Him that will give you the enthusiasm you need to change.

Acts 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..."*

2 Cor 7:10-11 *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. {11} For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

3. Look To Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, {2} looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Since Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith, this means He is also at work right now with our lives. As long as we keep looking to Him we will find the sufficiency to move forward in the many areas we are daily being challenged in.

In the midst of temptations, problems, difficulties, sorrows, various tasks and opportunities that will surely come your way during this coming year, stay focused on Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of your faith. He is there to hope you through any circumstance you may encounter.

Psalms 28:7 *The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.*

As you endeavor to stay focused on Jesus, you will encounter His presence, which will give you that extra added dimension to your faith that will encourage you to boldly move forward in every area of your life.

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." {6} So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

Remember He is your sufficiency and you can do all things through Christ, who strengthens you daily.

4. Look To The World.

Look at the world through the eyes of Jesus and serve them with love and compassion. Getting involved in the Lord's harvest of souls keeps you in the presence of God.

John 4:35 *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"*

Matthew 9:36-38 *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. {37} Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. {38} "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

5. Look Forward.

Philippians 1:6 *...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

Because God will be with us, we can look to each new day with keen anticipation. Faith calls us to move into this new year – to face problems, undertake tasks, meet emergencies, and dedicate ourselves to the opportunities the year will present. We can go forth with confidence knowing that God is at work in us we are His children who will be led by Him in our journey from day to day.

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.*

III. Concluding Remarks.

You can enter this new year with a sense of God's presence if you look to Him in each of these directions. He is there to help you through every trial, temptation and task no matter what it is. He is all-sufficient for you for the coming year. So let each of us resolve to "run with patience the race that is set before us," looking to Jesus to find the way. He's there to meet you each and every step of the way.