



## 2025 New Year's Edition



Good morning on this first day of 2025!

The ending of one year and the beginning of the next provides an opportunity to reflect on the events of the past year and seek God's vision for the New Year.

**Looking back. For many of us 2024 was a challenging year.**

Many of us lost friends or family members to death. We miss them and grieve their passing. For those who knew Jesus we rejoice in the certainty that we shall see them again soon!

But for those who did not know Jesus, their death is especially painful for us – their eternal condition apart from God means our relationships with them have permanently ended.

In the face of death, we are reminded to thank God for the precious life he continues to give us -- for the lives of our friends and family – and for the life to come.

For some of us this was a year of sickness -- personally or for family or friends. We have prayed many times in faith for Jesus' healing touch. We have seen many healed, others who have improved, and some who remain in the battle for their healing.

Again, we are reminded to be grateful for the Holy Spirit who breathes life into our mortal bodies every moment of every day -- until our purpose in this life is fulfilled and we transition to the next.

For many of us this has been a challenging year financially. Maybe for all of us! As we enjoy life in the Holy Spirit -- and as we serve God with gladness -- we still grapple with the practical needs of life: meeting the rent, feeding the family, paying school fees, buying petrol, and everything else required to keep us functional at a human level.

And then there are ministry expenses above and beyond the personal!

There seems to be no end to this financial struggle. We can become weary in well-doing when funds are inadequate. We might wonder, "Where is God? Where is his provision?" Or, we can allow difficult financial circumstances to drive us ever deeper into communion with Jesus who is our provider.

And let me quickly add Luke 6:38 to this discussion. Whatever is happening financially, we never stop giving. As the Spirit prompts us and as we are able, we live generous lives (this includes financial giving but far more than money) expecting God's provision in return. We tithe and we give and God provides for us individually and collectively. That is how God's economy works.

This year we saw people come to salvation in Christ Jesus. Maybe you were born again this year, or maybe a family member, or a friend, or someone in your community of faith. Maybe you led someone to Jesus. Maybe you trained someone to lead others to Jesus. Maybe you spoke in a meeting where someone was saved.

Rejoice that God's offer of forgiveness and new life in Christ Jesus is still in effect! Be grateful that his Holy Spirit is still in the business of transforming 'dead-in-their-sin people' into New Creations in Christ. And be sure to value greatly that God has given you the authority to give away the gift of Eternal Life to anyone who wants it.

Think back over 2024. What did you see the Holy Spirit do this year?

In your life. In your family. In your church. In your community. Again, I encourage you to recall and remind each other of the “Jesus Sightings” you had this year. I’m sure there were many. Celebrate each as a precious gift from the Lord.

**This is also a good time to look forward to 2025.**

To begin with a very sobering fact- each of us will die on some day, unless Jesus returns before that day.

Whichever occurs, the days each of us have to serve God are limited. And our days to serve can be further reduced by aging, sickness, or disability – sometimes long before physical death.

So for the moment, every day available to serve is precious. We want to make the most of “The Day” (as the Book of Hebrews defines it) -- and we want to **Finish Strong** in life and service.

As the New Year begins, seek God in prayer. Ask him what you need to know to prepare for the New Year. Ask him to make it clear what he wants you to do – and not do in 2025...

Regarding your present activities: should each be continued? Modified? Terminated?

Regarding your personal growth and development: do I need to clean up something in my life not pleasing to God which limits or corrupts my service to God? Is there education I need to complete? Do I need to manage my time differently? Do I need to do something now which I have been putting off?

Regarding your practical matters: living arrangements? Finances? Health matters?

Regarding your Relationships: establishing and maintaining righteous relationships? Forgiveness issues? Resolving conflict? Loving more and better? Any relationships needing improvement, modification, or an ending?

Do you need to become more competent and active in the ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:18-19)? leading others to new birth; healing the sick; healing emotional pain; deliverance from demonic oppression; moving everyone from Old Covenant Law & Ritual, to New Covenant Love and the Spirit-filled Life.

Ask God to show you what you need to know about 2025. Write it down. Take action. Share what God is showing you and listen to what God is showing people whose discernment you trust. All the pieces should fit together to form a more complete picture for everyone.

**Sample Prayer:**

**Father, thank you for giving us life in 2024. Thank you for opportunities you gave us this year to know you – love you – worship you – obey you – serve you – represent you – and enjoy you.**

**Give us revelation, understanding, and wisdom for the New Year. Help us to use each precious day you give us to serve you and do the ministry of Jesus -- so that you might be glorified in the eyes of others and your will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Provide for all our needs – personal, family, and ministry.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others. And protect us from temptation and the Evil One.**

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Blessings, *and* Happy New Year to you!

*Douglas*

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