

Reflecting on the Year Behind Us

It is the last day of the year. Today we are reflecting on the year behind us.

Introduction

A new year is about to dawn. This is a good time to take a moment and reflect on the year we have just completed and then look forward to what is to come in the new year. Today we will focus on reflecting on the year behind us.

We have encouraged you many times at the end of each day to look back on the day and think about the moments you were encouraged, were able to help someone, or the lessons you learned that day. Always keeping in mind how the Lord was with you throughout the day.

This is also a good practice at the end of the year; to look back on the previous year.

We read part of Moses' prayer to God during the forty years of wandering around the desert in Psalms 90:12.

Psalms 90:12

(12) Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Moses rightly understood that we need to look back and learn from our experiences and gain wisdom for future success in the Lord.

It is in light of this that we want to discuss reflecting on the year behind us. We are breaking this down into the same three things we encourage you to do each day: reflecting on God's faithfulness, learning from trials and tribulations, and repentance and gratitude. Let's start by reflecting on God's faithfulness in this past year.

Reflecting on God's Faithfulness

As we look at the tapestry of time, we see the hand of God woven into every moment of the past year. He carefully selects each thread and weaves it into our life expertly so we can fulfill the plan and purpose we were created for. We can look back over the previous year and see instances of His faithfulness despite the trials and tribulations we faced.

We read in Psalms 145:8-9

Psalms 145:8-9

(8) The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. (9) The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

Look back over the year. Think about the successes you had and celebrated. Remember the trials and difficulties you had. The Lord was with you through it all. He was celebrating your successes with you, cheering you on. He was also right there in every trial and tribulation; every failure and disgrace.

There is a famous poem about footprints in the sand. It is a conversation between a person and Jesus. The person is looking back over time and seeing two sets of footprints in the sand, but at times there



appears to be only one set. These were the times of difficulty. The person asks Jesus, “Why is there only one set of footprints during those times of difficulty?” Jesus responds, “That is when I was carrying you.”

The poem is not scripture, but it illustrates a point that Jesus is with us always. He is there celebrating with us during our triumphs and helping us during our failures.

Psalms 33:4 says:

Psalms 33:4

(4) For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

God is faithful at all times. He is ever-present in your life. Look back over the last year and reflect on his faithfulness in your life.

Learning from Trials and Victories

We used to teach a new believer’s class titled *Beginning the Journey*. It was an eight-week discipleship class to teach the basics of this new Christian life people were embarking on. Life is a journey filled with both trials and victories.

As we reflect on this past year, let’s think about the lessons we’ve learned during the low points and the high points.

We read in Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28

(28) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Look back over this past year. Each difficulty you faced and every obstacle you had to overcome was an opportunity to learn and grow. It was a time to lean on the Lord’s faithfulness, protection, and provision more than anything else.

Whether you faced financial setbacks, succumbed to temptation, or let the world cloud your judgment and perspective, Jesus was with you every step of the way. The Holy Spirit was trying to guide you and equip you for every one of those. What did you learn in those situations? Did your faith grow? What are the lessons you learned?

Remembering these things and looking back on them from time to time is very important. It helps us count on the Lord’s faithfulness and keeps us ready to learn more from him as we face each new challenge in life.

We also had victories this past year. Look back on those successes. The successes we celebrate in life are a result of the lessons we learn during trials and tribulations. What are the successes you had this past year? How did the Lord set you up for success in those moments? These victories and successes are a testimony of God’s grace in your life.



Reflecting on the year behind us and thinking about the trials and victories is important so we can reinforce the lessons we have learned and be a testimony to others who will face the same difficulties and will celebrate similar successes.

You are a witness of the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of the Lord as you share and live out the lessons you learned during difficult times and successful times.

Repentance and Gratitude

None of us are perfect. We all make mistakes and take our focus off of the Lord from time to time. We make poor decisions or our trust in the Lord falters. As we reflect on the year behind us, let us humbly come before the Lord in repentance.

Psalm 139:23-24 says:

Psalms 139:23-24

(23) Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. (24) See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

A repentant heart is what the Lord seeks in all of us. We must humbly approach the throne of grace allowing the Lord to correct us, teach us, and use us. There are things we must repent of daily. 2

Corinthians 7:10 says:

2 Corinthians 7:10

(7) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Looking back, repent for the mistakes you made and the sins you fell prey to. The Lord is faithful and will forgive you when you approach him humbly asking for forgiveness.

We also must praise the Lord for the blessings we have received this past year. No matter how bleak the year may have looked, there were blessings, and we read in James 1:17:

James 1:17

(17) Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God is steady. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We have been adopted into his family and became co-heirs with Christ when we said yes to Jesus' call. Every good thing, every gift and blessing, have all come from God above and he is to be praised for that. Again, these are great moments of testimony of God's faithfulness, provision, protection, and blessing.

Conclusion

As you reflect on the year behind you, thank the Lord for his faithfulness, grace, and mercy. Learn from your experiences, grow in wisdom, and continually draw closer to the Lord.

Next time we will continue this topic and talk about looking forward to the year ahead. You don't want to miss it.

