

December 25, 2017

By *Robert J. Tamasy*

## A TOAST TO THE NEW YEAR – AND THE OLD ONE

Congratulations! In less than a week, you will have made it through another calendar year. Are you ready for 2018 to begin? What are your thoughts about the year that is about to conclude? Was it one of your better years, perhaps even the very best year you have ever experienced? Or was it a year you would rather forget, and are feeling glad it is about over?

Realistically, the move from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1 is simply the passing of another 24 hours. Yet for many of us it means much more than that. For some, there is hope the positive momentum of the past year will continue and build into the new calendar year. For others, it represents a time for a fresh start, new beginnings, maybe even a “do-over.” In any case, watching the last numeral in the calendar year increase by one typically offers renewed hope, along with expectations for good things in the future.

For many, this transition means both a time for reassessing what transpired over the past 365 days and a time for anticipating what opportunities, challenges and surprises might lie ahead over the next 365. I ask questions like: What went well? What could I have done better? How can I learn from the past for better results in the future?

Sadly, in many cases moving from one year to the next demands a lot more than flipping the page on a calendar. It sometimes involves feelings of regret, even remorse. Some would agree with author William Faulkner, who said, “The past is never dead. It's not even past.” So, as we are hoping for good things to come,

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how do we deal with deeds or circumstances we wish we could undo, or at least remove from our memories? The Bible offers some helpful principles to consider:

Refuse to let the past be in control. Realizing we have not yet “arrived,” that we still have dreams to pursue and goals to achieve, we cannot move forward by continuing to concentrate on the past. The apostle Paul wrote, “[Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus](#)” (Philippians 3:12-14).

Recognize the future does not need to duplicate the past. We can gain valuable lessons from the past, including our failures, but then we must avoid getting “stuck” by giving them undue focus. “[Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?](#)” (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Remember God has power to transform. “New and improved” is a popular promise for many products. Sometimes that is what we desire for ourselves, not just a minor touch-up or small adjustments, but being able to dispense with the old self and become a totally new, remarkably transformed “me.” For followers of Jesus Christ, this is the promise God offers: “[Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come](#)” (2 Corinthians 5:17). “[...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life](#)” (Romans 6:4).

© 2017. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's website is [www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com](http://www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com), and his biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).

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## Reflection/Discussion Question

1. What are the memories you will carry forward from the past year? What were your happiest, or most rewarding, moments? Which would you like to forget, or do over?
2. Looking to the new year, what expectations and hopes do you have?
3. How easy is it for you to follow the example of the apostle Paul, who wrote of “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead”?
4. In the Bible, God promises to make things new, to transform His people into “new creations.” What, if anything, does that mean to you – especially in an everyday, practical sense?

## NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

*Isaiah 65:17; Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:3; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20*

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