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MONDAY MANNA
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PLANNING TO START THE NEW YEAR WELL

By Robert J. Tamasy

Six days from now, people in many parts of the world will begin celebrating the start of a new year. “Out with the old, and in with the new.” Even though hysteria diminished over the coronavirus – commonly known as COVID-19 – the year that soon will pass had many reasons for causing us stress and anxiety. So, once again when 2023 arrives, many of us will look back on the past year and shout an enthusiastic, “Good riddance!”

Which brings us to the new year. What will make it better for us than the last? Certain things are beyond our control – like pandemics, economic turmoil, wars, storms, and other natural disasters. But there are many things we can control, or at least positively affect our careers and lives in general. The decisions and choices we make during the coming year will go far in shaping how things turn out.

These last few days of the calendar year often are times for evaluation and introspection. “What went well?” “What could I/we have done better – or not at all?” “Did I make significant strides professionally? How about my private life – am I a better person today than I was when the year started?”

You can probably add similar questions to the list. There is nothing wrong with that if we do not look back for too long. Because the past is fading out of reach; what we do have is the present, along with our hopes, intentions, and dreams for the future. We should start looking ahead, formulating plans, goals, and objectives for the next 12 months.

We might focus on career advancement, building our business, growing market share, increasing profits, or developing new product lines. The list seems endless. But what about our growth and development as individuals, especially if we are followers of Jesus Christ? That requires thoughtful planning as well. Let me suggest some wisdom we can glean from the Bible about that:

Grow in relationship with God. When asked about the greatest of all commandments, Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). Can you say you are doing that right now? Would you consider it a worthy goal?

Grow in relationship with others. Right after declaring the greatest commandment, Jesus said, “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these” (Mark 12:31). Again, how well are you doing this? What might you do to improve in this area?

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Make Christ the foundation of all you do. It is common even for people who profess faith in Jesus to “compartmentalize” Him, to let Him into certain areas but not others. True faith makes Him Lord of every area of our lives. “For in [Jesus Christ] we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Seek to better understand and apply the Word of God. I did. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC’s Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today’s Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd’s Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you assess the year that soon will be past? What were some of your greatest memories, successes – and failures or disappointments?
2. Looking ahead to the new year, what are some important goals you have established for yourself, both personally and professionally? How do you plan to pursue those?
3. Do you think that our relationship with God, our faith and trust in Him, should have a significant role in the plans and goals we establish for the coming year? Why or why not?
4. Why would having a better understanding of the Scriptures and how to apply them in our everyday lives affect our goals and plans, as well as how we go about striving to achieve those? What steps might you take to grow in learning how to comprehend and use what the Bible teaches in practical ways?

NOTE:

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

Psalm 37:3-7, 119:9-11; Proverbs 3:5-6; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:3-4; Colossians 1:10

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