

**A 'DO-OVER' – OR A NEWSTART?**  
**By Robert J. Tamasy**

For each of us, the end of another year can mean different things. Some businesses base their fiscal years on the annual calendar, so for them it is a time for assessing the year just concluded as well as planning and forecasting for the year about to start.

Many of us will look back over the year and recall our triumphs and defeats, our joys and discouragements. Some will reflect happily, thinking of many positive things they experienced over the past 12 months. Others will take an attitude of "good riddance," glad to say farewell to a year littered with disappointments and unfulfilled hopes and dreams.

There are those who will view the past year with regrets, longing for a "do over," an opportunity to redo poorly advised things they did or unfortunate words they spoke. And others will regard the end of one year and the birth of another as an opportunity for a new start, a chance to create new goals and pursue new resolutions.

As you prepare to start a new calendar, counting off the final days of this year, what are your thoughts? Pleased with the past year and looking ahead at the new year with great anticipation? Relieved the past year is at its end, hopeful the new year will be better? Expecting to build on foundations you established over the year past, expecting to see bigger and better things over the year to come?

Regardless of which perspective you are holding, the Bible offers some helpful guidelines as we (ready or not), make the transition from one year to the next:

**Build on the past for a better future.** Strange as it seems, we often learn best through struggle and failure. It can be easier to identify what went wrong, so moving forward we resolve not to repeat the same mistakes. *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything"* (James 1:2-4).

**Do not dwell on the past.** We can learn from the past, but dwelling on it can result in emotional paralysis. Wrongs in the past cannot be undone, as the apostle Paul knew so well. So he determined to keep looking forward, focused on the mission God had given him. *"Brothers, 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 3:13-14).

**Prepare carefully before proceeding.** We can devise plans and set goals, but are they the right ones? The Scriptures urge us to turn to God for wisdom on how to proceed – and when. *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5).

**Proceed in faith.** Often we pray, asking God for wisdom and direction, then immediately begin to question whether the way He seems to be leading us is the way we should go. Faith is not just a matter of asking; it is being willing to accept and act on whatever He reveals. *"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does"* (James 1:6).

*Robert J. Tamasy is vice president of communications for Leaders Legacy, Inc., a non-profit based in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.*

**CBMC INTERNATIONAL:** Jim Firnstahl, President  
2850 N. Swan Road, Suite 160 ▪ Tucson, Arizona 85712 ▪ U.S.A.  
TEL.: 520-334-1114 ▪ E-MAIL: [mmanna@cbmcint.org](mailto:mmanna@cbmcint.org)  
Web site: [www.cbmcint.org](http://www.cbmcint.org) Please direct any requests or change of  
address to: [jmarple@cbmcint.org](mailto:jmarple@cbmcint.org)

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

1. As you look ahead to the end of the current year and the start of a new one, what are your immediate thoughts, concerns and hopes?
2. Do you see the coming year as a "do over," a fresh start, or as a new source of worry and anxiety? Explain your answer.

3. Have you ever found yourself dwelling on the past in an unhealthy, counterproductive way? Or have you known someone else that has? What has been the outcome of such a fixation?
4. How do you see God's role in your life – and your work – in the coming year? Do you see Him having any significant role in it at all? Why or why not?

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions from the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:  
Psalm 37:4-5; Proverbs 16:3-4, 16:9, 19:21, 20:24, 21:30, 27:1;  
Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 3:7-11