

## Things to Remember On New Year's Day

Each year major news outlets put out pictorial sections recalling people and events that made news during the previous year. Many also include articles predicting what they expect to see in the years ahead. In the past, a few of these have been amazingly accurate. Others couldn't have been more wrong.

For example, in 1967, experts predicted that by the turn of the century technology would have taken over so much of the work we do that the average American work week would be only 22 hours, and that we would work only 27 weeks a year. One of our biggest problems would be in deciding what to do with all our leisure time...

That certainly missed the mark! Most of us are overly busy! We're always in a hurry: walk fast, talk fast, eat fast and say, "Excuse me. I've got to run."

We've come to 2021. I wonder how we'll do this year. Will we be as busy? Will we make any better use of our time? In 365 days, when the year is over, will we be looking back with joy or regret? Will we look at the future with anticipation or with dread?

**Ephesians 5:15-17** See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

**Some important lessons to consider:**

**First of all, be very careful how you live because your time on earth is limited.**

**Psalm 39:4** <sup>4</sup> "LORD, make me to know my end, And what *is* the measure of my days, *That* I may know how frail I *am*."

**Psalm 90:10-12** <sup>10</sup> The days of our lives *are* seventy years; And if by reason of strength *they are* eighty years, Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. <sup>11</sup> Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath. <sup>12</sup> So teach *us* to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

70 or 80 years sounds like a long time to the young... but not to the senior population! It is all rather relative. Example: for teenagers in love, talking together in the car an hour or two seems like a blink of an eye; for Mom and Dad worrying about what's going on in that car, it seems like an eternity.

The Psalmist tells us to number our days so that we will develop a heart of wisdom. So if we average life to be 75 years and you are 60 now, you have about 5,479 days left... But you don't have a guarantee of even one! The Bible tells us not to count on tomorrow because it may not come. All we have is right now.

So, our time on this earth is valuable because it is very limited. Secondly, Paul tells us that we must make "the most of every opportunity." and he gives a reason, "because the days are evil."

**Colossians 4:5** <sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.

Satan is a robber and a thief. One of the things he tries to rob is our time because it is so precious. Just think of the time wasted in sinning: in bars; in gambling casinos; or in shallow affairs. Think of the time wasted in gossiping or spreading rumors. Think about all the time wasted worrying about and attempting to dodge the consequences of our sins.

But it is not just sin that makes demands on our time. Sometimes even good things can make demands. Jesus went to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and started to teach. Mary was sitting at His feet soaking in every word. Meanwhile, Martha was busy preparing dinner. She complained and...

**Luke 10:41-42** <sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

She was so preoccupied with what she was doing she didn't realize that God was in her living room. That's the same mistake you and I easily make. We get so caught up in the here and now that we fail to deal with eternal things. (Tyranny of the Urgent)

**1. We're overloaded with commitments:** to go here and there; to take part in this activity and that social function...

**2. We're overloaded with possessions:** our closets are full; our garages are overflowing. We've gone into debt to pay for all of these things that we "simply must have." Then we're so afraid that someone will steal them.

**3. We have an overload in the area of work:** get up early, fight traffic, and tolerate miserable working conditions because we have to pay for all those possessions...

**4. There is also an information overload...** we can't possibly absorb it all.

There are so many demands on our time - so many good things that need to be done. But there are just so many hours in this year. We want to make the most of every opportunity, so what are we to do? Paul tells us, "...do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

What do you think God's will is for you in this New Year? Do you think He wants your mind so saturated with worries and anxieties that you can't think spiritual thoughts? Do you think He wants your calendar so crowded that you don't have time for the important things? What do you think God's will is for you this year?

Let me make a couple of suggestions:

**1. First, establish your priorities.** I'm assuming you believe God should be a part of your life. However, you have to decide just what part He holds in your life. So ask yourself, "Who or what is most important in my life?"

I'm hoping your answer will be, "My relationship with God through Jesus Christ is most important to me." If so, then put that at the top of your priorities and say:

"This will affect my decisions, my scheduling, my relationship with others, and my whole outlook on life. Therefore, when Sunday rolls around, neither rain nor shine nor football kickoffs will interfere with my being in church because He comes first in my life. I will worship the Lord and nothing will interfere with that."

**2. You also need to schedule some definite time each day to pray and to read His Word.** Pray for yourself, your family and for people around you. Pray for the church, and for our missionaries. Sometimes they are so alone and so far away. You'll never know how much your prayers will mean to them.

**3. You must also spend time with your family.** Every husband ought to have a special time with his wife to get away and have nothing else to do. No beepers, no telephones, and no interruptions so you can just be together.

Spend time with your children, too. They grow up fast. Precious moments don't last. Don't let them get away. Make sure your family is very high on your priority list.

**4. Most of you have to work.** Christians ought to be good workers. When someone hires a Christian, they ought to know they're getting someone who will give them an honest day's work. We have a responsibility to honor Jesus even in the marketplace.

First of all, establish your priorities; then, learn how to live in today. Two barriers to this are regrets for things we did in the past and anxiety about what will happen to us in the future. Too many are living either in the past or in the future and can't enjoy the present.

**Matthew 6:25** <sup>25</sup> "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

**Matthew 6:32-34** <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Another year has come and gone. A new year stretches before us. Help us Lord, to redeem the time.

### **What to Remember On New Year's Day.**

**Exodus 12:2** <sup>2</sup> "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

At the time of the Exodus, the people of God were about to experience a New Year's Day like no other, so significant that it would begin their new calendar. Every time a new year would come, they would be reminded of what had happened when God delivered them from bondage.

### **We can compare this to our Christian experience:**

#### **1. We need to remember who we are:**

We are God's redeemed people - delivered from bondage. Theirs was physical slavery; ours was spiritual enslavement to Satan. God came down and delivered us... did not leave us in suffering and despair. Moses was sent to Israel as their Deliverer; God sent Christ to deliver us from darkness so that we could walk in His marvelous light.

They had no power to deliver themselves; neither do we. God had to send a savior to lead us out of bondage into the marvelous liberty of the children of God.

Each family was told to take a lamb without blemish and slaughter it. They were to take the blood of the lamb and sprinkle it upon the two side posts and upper door post where they would eat it. It was to be roasted with fire. They were to eat it with their loins girded, with shoes on their feet and a staff in their hand...in haste... leaving Egypt behind!

#### **2. God wants us to remember what he has done for us:**

He promised that when He saw the blood, He would **PASS OVER** them and deliver them from death. By the blood of Jesus, we are redeemed. Apart from that blood we would perish with the rest of the world when judgment falls.

Our redemption is in the blood of Christ. The perfect Lamb of God gave Himself for us that we might be saved. Nothing but the blood can cleanse us and rescue us from the wrath of Almighty God against sin and unbelief.

Remembering was to be a perpetual ordinance for them. That New Year's Eve was a night like no other! There would not be one house where there was not dead among the unredeemed... yet not one death in any house covered by the blood!

**3. The Lord wanted them to share what he had done for them with their children.** They were to engrave it into their lives. God was their God and they were His redeemed people set free to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

**4. God wanted them to live a new life in a new land.**

After that awe-filled night they would go out, with God's Presence, from the land of darkness and death toward a new land flowing with milk and honey. Only doubt and disobedience would delay their entrance.

God wants us to live a full life this year... and receive His promises. We can ask forgiveness for mistakes of the past and walk with Him, trusting in going where He leads.

**PRAYER:**

During the New Year may you have enough happiness to keep you sweet...

...enough trials to keep you strong... and enough hope to keep you happy...

...enough success to keep you eager and enough failure to keep you humble...

...enough friends to give you comfort...

...enough wealth to meet your needs and to help others...

...enough enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow...

...and enough determination to make each day better than the day before...

What do you think God's will is for you this year?