

THINGS TO COME: 2 Steps to Mental and Spiritual Victory in 2025

As we embark on 2025, many of us are busy writing goals, casting visions and thinking of things we'd like to achieve throughout the year. The beginning of the year often is a time filled with hope and anticipation, as we set our sights on the year ahead.

For my husband and I, the beginning of the year is a time we pray, and cast visions for our personal and professional goals. Proverbs 29:18 says: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Ever since we started dating, it's been our tradition to create a list of goals for the new year. However, as we ponder and craft our vision, we try to keep Proverbs 16:9 at the forefront of our hearts and minds: "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." This verse reminds us that while we can plan and dream, God ultimately determines the course of our lives.

With that in mind, I want to share two key steps to position yourself for victory in 2025, both mentally and spiritually. These strategies will save you a ton of frustration by helping you align your plans with God's purposes and preparing for whatever the new year brings.

Step 1: Adopt a Posture of Humility

Humility is foundational to spiritual victory. It's important to clarify: humility is *not* the same as insecurity. Insecurity focuses on our own inadequacies, while humility focuses on God's sufficiency.

It acknowledges that every good gift in our lives comes from God (James 1:7). A humble heart says, "God, You don't owe me anything, yet I'm grateful for everything You've given me." In a world where anxiety disorder is leading the charts of mental health issues, a posture of humility takes our eyes off of our own insufficiency, and directs our eyes toward God's sovereignty over every detail of our lives, recognizing His ability to lead us through every season of life.

Practically speaking, humility begins with spending time with God, a habit that needs to be fostered and nurtured over time. To practice it, choose a consistent time each day; whether it's first thing in the morning or before bed, and dedicate that time to prayer, reading Scripture, and/or journaling. As you grow in your relationship with God, you'll also grow in awe of His goodness and faithfulness. This daily practice fosters gratitude and trust, which are good for your emotional well-being along with your spiritual well-being, as they are essential components of humility. By walking in the posture of humility, we can appropriate and truly grasp the meaning of Psalm 16:8: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken."

Step 2: Make Jesus Your Ultimate Goal

At the risk of sounding "churchy," I've found it to be of utmost importance both spiritually and emotionally to make sure your goals center around Jesus, not you, your spouse and your children. As followers of Christ, our primary commitment is to seek God's will for our lives rather than chasing our own desires (Matt 6:33). I know it's easier said than done, as we are constantly fighting against our indwelling fleshly nature along with the current of the world around us. This is why cultivating humility (Step 1) is so critical.

There's nothing wrong with wanting a promotion or making goals that reach higher. The difference is, when Jesus is at the center of it, He acts as a guardrail that will keep you from

stepping outside of His will and misplacing your priorities.

How does He do that? Through the Holy Spirit. As you spend time in God's presence, the Holy Spirit works within you to refine your goals, dreams and ambitions. You may find that the things you once pursued with urgency lose their appeal, while new, God-given passions take their place. This process happens step by step, day by day.

Moving Forward into 2025

As you step into 2025, let humility and a Christ-centered focus guide you. As you remind yourself that in your weakness, He is strong, you make the conscious decision to exchange anxiety-filled thoughts with peace-fueled ones. As you make decisions about goals whether big or small, make sure to include God in the process.

My friend, victory, both mentally and spiritually, doesn't come from having a problem-free year or achieving every goal you set out to achieve. It comes from knowing that you have a God who holds every detail of your life in His loving hand. A God who promises: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you," (Ps. 32:8).

Your responsibility? Seek after Him and ask.

Kenza Haddock, LPCS, BCPC, is a licensed professional counselor supervisor and an accredited clinical trauma specialist. A former Muslim, she has spoken at conferences and churches regarding the intersection of Christianity and mental health counseling. Haddock and her husband own Oceanic Counseling Group LLC, an outpatient mental health agency headquartered in South Carolina. She also was a cofounder of the #healSC campaign, which raised awareness about mental health issues. Her new book, *The Three Enemies of Your Mental Health*, is available now at .