

7 Ways for 2023 to be Your Best Year Yet

Read Time: 5 Minutes 47 Seconds

I believe the beginning of a new year is the perfect time to start fresh and set our expectations for the good ahead. The problem is too many things take our focus away from God and create a pathway for worry and fear.

We see the situation the world is in, our own circumstances and a seemingly uncertain future, and we lose sight of truth. God already has wonderful things planned for you this year, and He wants you to believe it!

So, as we begin 2023, this is my encouragement for you—a few facts to arm you and biblical truths to hope in!

First, realize the enemy wants to keep us stuck in the past. However, God wants to help us focus on what He is doing and will do in the future. He wants to see you grow and flourish.

You don't have to buy into all the fear that is out there! Even when the world and other people are afraid, we don't have to be. God wants you to stay positive in the midst of negativity and move forward in faith.

This is a time for the church to shine and grow stronger. The church is needed now more than ever. And remember, the church isn't a building, it's the people. We are the church. So, it's up to each one of us to come together, make the church stronger and shine everywhere we are.

God has good ahead for you. Regardless of what happened last year or even last week, He has new beginnings and divine opportunities planned for you.

Out with the Old, In with the New

I love Isaiah 43:19. God says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert," (AMPC).

God is a God of change, and He is always doing a new thing and working behind the scenes in our lives to bring about new opportunities. Regardless of the past or even what you're dealing with right now, God constantly sees the potential for something new. He is on your side and, if need be, He can even "make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

An important part of embracing new opportunities is letting go of the past and moving forward in faith. Sometimes, we can become so focused on what's happened before—past mistakes, disappointments or what someone else has done to us—that we fail to focus on the good things God wants to do for us now and in the future.

In Philippians 3:13, the apostle Paul says, "...One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead," (AMP). I think many people don't experience what God has for them today because they are still focused on yesterday.

For instance, even though I'm blessed and have many things to be grateful for, I'm sure I could begin to dwell on some things from this past year that didn't go as planned. It wouldn't take long for me to start feeling down or discouraged, and it could begin to steal my hope for this year.

Now, choosing to be hopeful and live by faith doesn't mean that we ignore our circumstances, but it means that we choose to focus on God and believe that He is greater than anything we've gone through (see Eph. 3:20).

Do Not Allow the Fear of Others to Rub Off on You!

Living with hope is an important part of receiving all of the good things God has for you. Hope is the confident expectation that something good is going to happen. When we dare to hope, it floods our life with joy and peace.

Our enemy, Satan, wants us to be hope-less. He attempts to use fear to keep us from moving forward and enjoying the good life God has for us. Especially when something negative happens, the enemy wants to fill our lives with worry and anxiety. He desires to pull our focus away from God's love and faithfulness.

For example, we can watch the news and begin to worry about all the "what ifs" as we look at the condition of the world. Or well-meaning people can even bring fear through simple conversations. However, God doesn't want us to get pulled in by fear. Instead, we can remain positive and focused on Him.

There's nothing wrong with being informed; however, the Lord desires for us to believe His Word even more than what we see around us. Regardless of what things look like, He has good things in store for His people in 2023!

The fastest way to fill your heart with hope (and combat fear) is to open God's Word and begin reading about His promises, His love, and His great plan for your future. Meditate on these promises and speak them out whenever you can (see Rom. 12:2). I encourage you to speak God's Word out loud and say things like:

"God has a great plan for my future, and I believe something good is going to happen to me today!" (See Jer. 29:11).

"My future is bright, and I have nothing to worry about—God is taking care of me. The Lord's goodness and mercy follow me every single day of my life!" (See Phil. 4:6; Ps. 23:6).

"I don't have to fear, because God is always with me," (See Josh. 1:9).

God's Word is powerful, and when you choose to say what His Word says, it has the power to change your life. You are cooperating with Him to bring about His good plans for your future! (See Prov. 18:2).

Be a Force for Good

Just as God wants to fill our lives with hope, He also calls us—His church—to offer that hope to the world around us. It's up to us to come together, grow stronger, and shine our lights everywhere we go.

In Matthew 5:13-16, the Bible says that Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In the same way, 2 Corinthians 5:20 says that "we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us..." (NIV).

We may need to ask ourselves: What are we showing the world? What is it that keeps us "salty"? How do we, as Christians, keep our lights shining in the darkness around us? What sets us apart?

There is so much turmoil in people's lives today—so much darkness—and they're looking for hope. As Christians, we are the ones who can help them find what they need through a relationship with God.

The truth is, so many people may never set foot inside of a church or read their Bible, but they do see us. And what they think about God has a lot to do with what they think about us. It's time for the church to grow up and show the world what God is really like!

I want to challenge you this year to be a force for good. While you are praying and believing for your own breakthrough, choose to demonstrate God's goodness to others. Get up every day and ask God how you can be a blessing to someone else and use your time, attention, talents and resources to represent

Him to a world in need.

In Acts 10:38, the Bible says that Jesus went around doing good. Like Jesus, you and I are called to do the same thing. We are God's representatives, sent to bring people hope and show them what He is like.

So, as we begin 2023, I challenge you to release your faith and expect God's goodness everywhere you go. And while you are believing for Him to work in your own life, take some time to reach out and be the answer to someone else's prayers. Because you have tremendous influence, and you may be the greatest message they ever see. {eo}

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