

Your Power-Packed Plan to Refresh, Reset and Receive From the Lord

The rush of the holidays can leave many in its wake.

From Nov. 1 to Dec. 31, the days seem to fly past, filled with constant activity. The celebrating can be fun, but the after-effects of deliciously heavy meals, non-stop travel, marathon cooking sprees, late-night family visits and parties filled with constant caroling can take their toll.

When Jan. 1 arrives, we're left wondering, "Where did the end of the year go?"

If we're not mindful, that same pace can continue into the new year as we replace all the celebration and activity with work, obligations and our list of responsibilities.

Instead of continuing the hectic pace of life or slowly drifting in the sway of others' demands on our schedules, January is an opportune time to ready ourselves and prepare for the what the Lord has in store for 2018.

In life, taking the time to refresh, reset and receive doesn't come easily—our lives are just not set up that way.

During an average day there is much to do and accomplish. There rarely seems to be just the right amount of time to do the things we desire.

In the pursuit of focused connection with the Lord, we often have to intentionally set aside the time to seek Him without numerous distractions. Some would see this time of focused pursuit as a luxury, but for many, it can be an investment that yields results in this life and the next.

The Lord is constantly speaking, but many times our ears are attune to the cries of those around us—children, spouses, friends, coworkers, social media. The ones we love and are in relationship with need us. We reason that we're simply being attentive, responsible and engaged, which is understandable, legitimate and can also be dangerous, that is, undermine our progress with the Lord.

There are topics the Lord desires to talk to us about concerning our lives, our families, our colleagues, friends and even our nations. He desires to draw us into greater fellowship with Himself and deeper levels of intimacy, that we would know Him and reflect Him to a hurting world.

"But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

There are many voices we can listen to, but it's the Lord's words that matter most in our lives—only He has the words of life. Our Father, Provider, Healer, Redeemer, Restorer and Creator has been intent on drawing His children near to reveal His nature, kindness, love and commitment from before the foundations of this world (Eph. 1:6–8).

As we draw near to Him, He fulfillls His promise and draws near to us. The closer we draw to Him in fellowship, through prayer, praise and worship, the more we begin to look like our Father. Our hearts are open to Him, and we realize we are strategically positioned to receive from Him.

And like children who observe their fathers' habits and look to emulate them, we too can see what the Lord has done and what He has enabled us to do through His sacrifice and His power He has placed within us. As we mature and our love grows, we are able to walk with Him in righteousness in our day to day and realize we are strategically positioned to give

the way He gave, love the way He loved and lead the way He led.

In this place, we're able to see that there are things the Lord wants to say not just to us, but *through* us. He has a message of hope, joy, peace and perseverance that He desires to pour into and out of His people, but that message comes through intimacy, fellowship and drawing near.

Whether it's two hours set aside to seek Him on the first day of the new year or a full week, we can never waste our time by pouring it into seeking Him. Everything is secure in His hands; there is no waste, loss or lack in Him. Our God is the life that overcomes in every situation. And that's what He offers to us, the invitation to come close again and receive in order to be His and do what we were made to do—love Him and be loved by Him so we can love others fully. {eo}

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