

# Before You Start 2025, Take Time to Evaluate Your Spiritual Growth

When God created the heavens, the earth, the oceans, the plants and the animals, He took time to assess His creation—and according to Genesis 1, He “saw that it was good” (v. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, NASB 1995). When He finished the job, He took a day to rest—and set in motion a rhythm of rest for all of us. God didn’t need a break; He was teaching us the importance of rest and quiet trust.

This principle of Sabbath has affected the way I start a new year. When one year ends, I always take time to celebrate the highlights by looking at photos, savoring memories and writing down my best moments. I also mourn my losses. And I carefully consider how I can grow spiritually in the coming year.

We all need to take a deep breath before racing into a new year. This has become a spiritual discipline for me. I relish the memories, smell the flowers I saw on my journey and thank God for the victories. It’s my way of saying, “It is good” before I rush into my next assignment.

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Serious self-examination is good for the soul. Psalm 119:59 (NASB) says: “I considered my ways And turned my feet to Your testimonies.” Lamentations 3:40 (KJV) adds: “Let us search and try our ways, and turn back to the Lord.” As you begin 2025, I urge you to set aside some time to ask yourself these 10 questions:

**“What were my highlights in 2024?”** It’s important to celebrate your victories and mountaintop moments. Psalm 103:2b (NASB 1995) says: “Forget none of His benefits.” I love to write down my best memories of the year and thank God for each one.

**“What did I learn in the past year?”** The Holy Spirit has been working in your life, perhaps in ways you didn’t notice. Take time to record what you learned from God’s Word, from sermons, from mentors, at your job and even from your mistakes.

**“If I could do 2024 over, what would I do differently?”** Be honest. What mistakes did you make in the past year? You don’t have to stay stuck in the ruts of 2024. Repent for your moments of weakness. Turn away from your willful sins and run back into the Father’s arms. God has forgiven you, and you can move forward! The year 2025 can be a new beginning.

**“Have I made time alone with God a priority?”** Fires don’t last long if you don’t regularly pile wood on the flames. You can’t survive spiritually without regular communion with the Lord. If you neglected prayer or reading God’s Word in 2024, identify your time-wasters and rekindle your devotional life.

**“Did I develop bad habits that need to be broken?”** Paul told the Thessalonians, “Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19). Are you doing anything that is extinguishing the Spirit’s flames in your life? Have you been struggling with anger, anxiety, fear, lust, doubt or resentment? Identify the spiritual strongholds in your life and ask Jesus to replace them with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

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**“What are my spiritual gifts, and am I using them?”** Many Christians bury their talents because of fear, or they avoid serving others because of selfishness. The year 2025 is the time to swallow your fears, stretch your faith and step out of

your boat. It won't be easy, but you will find there is no greater joy than being an instrument of the Holy Spirit to bless people.

**"How did I influence others for Christ in the past year?"** My greatest joy in life is investing in others—especially as I grow older and realize that life is not about me. Jesus said our mission is to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19), yet many Christians never make a mark on anyone. If you aren't currently making disciples, look around and ask God to show you your harvest field.

**"Am I aligned with the right people?"** God called us to be in community. But make sure you are in a church that is on fire for God. If your church compromises God's Word, you should find a new spiritual home. And if your closest friends aren't challenging you to live for Jesus, you need new relationships. Don't live in isolation.

**"What is God saying to me as I enter this new year?"** God knows your future. He also knows the challenges you face and the storms that may come in 2025. Jeremiah 29:11 (MEV) says: "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." If you seek the Lord, He will speak a word to your heart—and that word will propel you into a new season.

**"What goals do I need to make?"** We laugh about New Year's resolutions—as if they are silly. But the truth is, no one ever lost weight without making a serious decision to change their eating and exercise habits. If you need change in an area—whether it relates to fitness, relationships, Bible study, prayer, reading books, travel or finances—set a goal. The prophet said in Habakkuk 2:2b: "Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets, that he who reads it may run." I pray the Lord will give you fresh strength to run the race of faith in 2025.

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