

Start the Year Off Right

As another new year begins, it is time to reflect on the  last 365 days. In welcoming 2010, we not only say good-bye to 2009 but also cross the threshold into the second decade of the new millennium. Regardless of uncertainty, fear and unsettling headlines, the pages of the calendar continue to turn. And they will until God says otherwise!

Reflection gives each of us the opportunity to look back and remember all the Lord has done *for* us and *with* us during the last year. Reflection is an opportunity to put events in perspective. In many ways, reflection provides that last piece of the year's jigsaw puzzle necessary for launching into the new.

For me, 2009 was a year of milestones and pitfalls. I welcomed two new grandchildren, Lily and Samuel, in April and August. I watched my other five grandchildren grow and prosper. I helped Isaac, our 20-year-old son, move out on his own. I started planning the Twelve Tribes Prayer Garden for Glory of Zion's land on Interstate 35 in Denton, Texas. I celebrated my 55th birthday. I was rushed to the hospital for the first time in 18 years for something other than childbirth. And I finished my second book, *Rewards of Simplicity*, with my dear husband of 36 years, Chuck Pierce.

I completed the final chapters of *Rewards of Simplicity* in the days immediately following my gall-bladder surgery last March. After I regained my strength, I resumed the task of simplifying my own home in keeping with what I had written about in the book. I believed it was important to finish that task before the book was published.

In the process of cleaning out the bottom drawer of an armoire, I discovered a box full of old slides, Super 8 movie film, and 8 mm video cassettes. I hadn't thought about the box

since we moved into our house 10 years ago.

After some research, I found a place in town that could convert all of these formats into DVDs. My plan was to give Chuck a Christmas gift that would be a total surprise—something he couldn't get anywhere else.

On Christmas Eve, with all our children and grandchildren packed into our family room, I turned on the DVD from Christmas 1994. As we watched the much-younger versions of ourselves opening presents, eating and celebrating, I presented the stack of DVDs to my husband. For the first time in many years, he was speechless!

During the next few days, Chuck and I watched portions of the DVDs whenever we had time. At one point, while watching footage of Isaac in a gymnastics tournament, Chuck said, "I don't remember this. Where was I?" He didn't remember the event because he had been traveling at the time, ministering in another city or country as God directed. In fact, Chuck's demanding schedule was one reason I purchased the video camera in the first place: I wanted a visual record of moments he might miss as our children grew.

For the remainder of the time that 7-year-old Isaac (who is now 6' 7") was performing on the screen, Chuck didn't say a word. I was surprised that he sat quietly on the couch while our son tumbled across the exercise mat and flipped through the air above the trampoline, winning three of the four events he competed in. When the scene on the DVD changed from gymnastics to the Fort Worth Zoo, Chuck finally commented, "I missed so much when my kids were little. Was I a bad father?"

Isn't it just like the devil to take a gift intended for joy and twist it into a vehicle for regret and condemnation? Yes, Chuck did miss some moments from our children's childhoods, as many other parents do from their children's. But what mattered was the fact that he was a godly father who obeyed God's call

to the nations while he loved and guided his children through their formative years. As I reminded him that day, he now has the opportunity to recapture missed time through his grandchildren.

This incident reminded me of another benefit of reflection—acknowledging God’s ability to redeem every situation in our lives. Inevitably, there are missed opportunities in the past, whether they occurred 15 years ago or last week. But when we allow the Father to put those times into perspective, we can see His hand directing, arranging and ordering our lives for the present. If we allow the enemy to cloud our memories with regret and condemnation, we either miss or forget what God was doing with us and through us in those seemingly lost opportunities.

When Chuck and I wrote our new book, we dedicated it to our grandchildren—“seven reasons why we choose to simplify our lives.” Regardless of what any of us missed during the last 365 days or the last 15 years, we must commit to appreciating the past, focusing on the present and moving forward by faith into 2010.

My encouragement to you—and what I believe God is saying at the beginning of this new year—is to start it off right by letting go of *all* regrets and mistakes from the past and trusting God to direct your path as you continue to pursue Him and His plan for your life.

About the author: Pam Pierce is a minister at the Glory of Zion Outreach Center in Denton, Texas, a place of worship associated with Glory of Zion International Ministries (), and the wife of apostle and prophet Chuck D. Pierce. She is the co-author with him of two books, *One Thing: How to Keep Your Faith in a World of Chaos* (Destiny Image, 2006) and *The Rewards of Simplicity* (Chosen, 2010).