

Recalibrating for a New Year

Preview

Whether we have been intentionally living for God or if we have let some things slip, we all need to recalibrate at times. Even the best cars need a tune-up now and then. Sometimes we go to the doctor when we know we are sick; other times we go for a routine checkup. Let's make sure we are heading into our future with the right priorities and mindset!

Praise

We give thanks to God because He always guides us and directs our paths. He has made His ways known to us, and He has given us clear direction on how to live our lives. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," and as we live our lives to bring glory to God, He walks with us and shows us where to go. As we compare ourselves to His perfect Word and example, we see ourselves more clearly so we can become more like Him.

Parable

Have you ever been in the passenger seat and noticed the driver turning his head to look at something on the side of the road? Inevitably, he starts to drift. It isn't that he wants to go in the direction he is looking; it just happens. The same is true for us. If we don't keep our eyes on Jesus, we will begin to drift toward things in life that don't really matter. Drifting may not look like leaving the church or participating in every sin on the planet. It may look like settling for less than God has for you. If we lose focus on what matters most, before we know it, we can find ourselves heading in a direction that we never intended. Have you ever looked at your life and wondered, How did I end up here? Take a moment and write down (or talk about) some areas of your life in which you know you could do better. What are some aspects of your walk with God that need recalibrating?

Present

If we want to stay on the right track, we need to remember our first love. We don't live for God out of obligation or fear. We live for God out of love—and love is the only motivator that will consistently keep us headed in the right direction. If our love for God begins to falter, eventually our walk with God will falter as well. In Revelation 2, Jesus had many good things to say about the church in Ephesus, but He corrected them on the issue of love. "But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!" (Revelation 2:4, NLT).

Even though the Ephesians were doing a great work for God, He knew that if they didn't recalibrate their lives on the issue of love, they would get off track. Likewise, let's not get so busy with life that we forget the ultimate reason why we are here.

Once we refocus on God, we are in a great position to address other potential areas of drift in our lives. Are we being faithful to the mission of Jesus? Are we living to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)? Are we setting ourselves apart for God's purpose and living lives of holiness (Romans 12:1)? Are we spending time with God in prayer and Bible reading? Are we representing Him well in every area of our life?

"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31, NLT).

We must remember that whatever we do, we are called to do it in a way that brings glory to God. Every action we take and every decision we make reflects on the God we serve. It's not only the "spiritual" things that matter. When we don't do our best work (at our job, at school, at home, etc.) it reflects on our God (Romans 12:11). When we focus on the negative and are quick to fixate on what is wrong, it reflects on our God (Philippians 4:8). Yet if we realize that everything we do cultivates the soil for spiritual growth in ourselves and those around us, we gain the opportunity to make a greater, lasting impact in our world.

Practice

1. Prioritize devotion to God; fall in love with Jesus again! Give Him your time in Bible-reading, prayer, fasting,

and church attendance.

2. Commit to the mission of Jesus and share the gospel with someone you're connected to.

3. Make sure you aren't slacking in areas of your life. Are you bringing glory to God by your work and behavior at school?

4. Reflect daily and weekly on where your life is headed. Are you prioritizing the right things? Are you focused on Jesus or have you begun to drift?

Pray

Lord, help us to stay focused on what truly matters. Help us to see ourselves clearly through Your Word and help us to recalibrate our lives so we can boldly walk in Your plan for our lives. We pray that our love for You will never falter, and that we will live as powerful examples of Your grace and glory. Help us to represent You in everything we do.

Plus

Discuss the following questions:

1. How does everything we do reflect on Jesus (even the "non-spiritual" stuff)?

2. Can a wrong attitude or laziness at school or work make people less likely to listen to us when we talk about Jesus?

3. How can we help each other be accountable in our devotion and daily walk with God?