



A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT JANUARY 2007

“LOOK BACK~ LOOK FORWARD~ LOOK UP”

We are what we are right now by the grace of God- women touched by the Lord in many wonderful ways. We are beginning a new year with Him, and there are three directions [places to look] as we think about, pray about and express continually our thankfulness to God for this new year.

Look back- not in introspection, or sorrow, or guilt at failures, unfulfilled wishes or dreams, seemingly unanswered prayer, or the hardness of the way. Instead- look back at how GOOD God has been to you! He kept you, protected you and yours, revealed Himself to you, provided for you and met your needs. He comforted you, healed you, reassured you, and cheered you on. He spoke truth to you, led you [even when you didn't know you were being led]. Psalm 37:23 LB says "The steps of good men are directed by the Lord". He put people in your life to help you, gave you a place [His Church] where you could learn and grow and be part of His family. He changed you [a lifelong process!] and gave you hope. In the worst of your situations and circumstances He was God. Always there, always ready to help. His goodness and mercy were your portion [Psalm 136:1]. We are changeable but He is not [Mal. 3:6 and James 1: 17]. He has loved us with an everlasting love [Jer. 31:3] and brought us to this day. It is good to remember His deeds, wonders, and works of the days gone by [Psalm 77:11, 12]. What a springboard for the next place to look- look forward.

As we look forward- we remember that last years January word was "Behold I do a new thing - it is the same at the beginning of this year. The "fresh and new" is our portion. New revelation of Him, new gifts to open from Him, new ways of understanding, new ways of walking, new ways of loving Him, new desires, new actions, new ways of connecting with Him, new ways of serving, new ways of loving people, new ways of looking at [and loving] yourself.

One way of looking forward is to set goals for yourself in Christ. Someone said if you aim at nothing that's what you'll get. If you are in the Word [and a student of it] the Word will be a mirror to you [James 1: 23-25]. You will see yourself and areas in your life that need to change. He will give you the strength, power, and ability to change, and He will be glorified. We are a people wonderfully fed by the Lord and His servants. When you were a baby, you were fed by your mother. When you got a little older you began to feed yourself. Yes- you wore your food, you played with your food and you spilled your food. Sooner or later you made a connection between your empty stomach, your hunger, and the food that was set before you- and you learned to eat. So it is now. You learn to eat the Word for yourself. You learn the Word, love the Word, believe the Word, act on the Word, confess and share the Word, and find the LIFE that is in the Word. It becomes your necessary food as Scripture declares.

It is so important to spend time with Him. In that time He will be working [Eph. 2:10 and Phil. 1:6] - revealing Himself to you, speaking to your heart, and conforming you to the image of His dear Son Jesus [Romans 8:29]. Jesus will be seen and partaken of through your life! Every good thing in your life will be increased as you spend time with Him. When you put Him first, everything else will have its proper place [Matthew 6:33]. You will want what He wants, love what He loves, and be what He is in this world.

It is a wonderful thing to know that you are growing and changing. You will know that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek after Him [Hebrews 11:6]. You will know that there is work to be done [Eph. 2:10 NIV] - and find your place in His Body [the Body of Christ]. You will discover your gifts and talents- and use them for the benefit and blessing of others. John 3:16 says "For God so LOVED that He GAVE His only begotten Son...". We will follow the example He set for us.

We can look forward with hope and expectancy. God's promises are sure. Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". The same Scripture in the KJV says "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end". Thoughts and plans- of you and for you! Plans of prospering you, plans beyond this day and every day of your life! He is thinking peaceful thoughts of you- and yes- you have an expected end in Him. His very Presence in our lives changes everything. Whatever happens in our lives- it didn't come to stay- "it came to pass". There is continual motion in our lives as we walk forward with Him. By His sovereign power we go from faith to faith, strength to strength, and glory to glory. He goes before us- walks with us- carries us at times- and all in great love and care with His eternal purpose in mind.

Finally- look up. There is a God in heaven who sits on a glorious high throne with dear Jesus seated at His right hand praying for you and me [Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25]! There is an eternal plan for those who love Him, obey Him and walk with Him beyond this life. Everything that happens to us is filtered through Him, and is allowed for our growth, maturity, and that we might know Him in the here and now. Yes, we will have hard places to walk in, tests and trials, different seasons in our lives to WALK THROUGH- but not without Him!! Romans 8:18 NIV declares "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed IN US." May God give you His perspective- that all that is in your life now is preparation for what is to come. May we remember and learn to look up- beholding our beautiful and powerful God- willingly setting our affections on things above [Col. 3:1, 2 AMP] and walk as the redeemed, the blessed loving daughters of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us!



Beholding Him in His beauty-

Toni Quinn
For His Glory Women's Ministry