

TEN QUESTIONS

Have you really thought about your new year yet? The turning of your calendar provides a great time to turn over some things in your mind. About your past, your present, your future.

"Consider your ways," exhorts Haggai 1:5-7. The Lord says His people "have sown much and harvested little...eat but never have enough...earning wages to put into a bag of holes..."

It's time for the truth about yourself, and about what God has written for you. Here's a list of ten questions to ask yourself at the start of a new year. It's part of a series by seminary professor Don Whitney, author of several helpful books (including *Spiritual Disciplines* and *Praying the Bible*, and more at www.BiblicalSpirituality.org). Trust the Holy Spirit's power to change you!

ONE THING - "What's one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?" You might start by reading His written-down Word of grace and truth. It takes about 15 minutes a day to read through the entire Bible in one year (see www.ligonier.org/posts/bible-reading-plans). God gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness through our knowledge of Him (2Peter 1:3).

IMPOSSIBLE - "What's the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do this year?" Jesus said nothing is impossible with God. What big thing will you trust the Almighty to do? Not magical thinking, it's simply knowing what the Lord has written is true, and trusting Him to do it.

FAMILY - "What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life this year?" The family is the first institution that God established, and the first line of attack by the enemy of your soul. The evidence is all around. Put God's light in your dark world.

PROGRESS - "In which spiritual discipline do you most want to make progress this year, and what will you do about it?" Spiritual disciplines include Bible reading and Bible study, prayer, fasting, worship, service, solitude, discernment, evangelism. Pray about it, and make changes.

TIME - "What's the single biggest time-waster in your life, and what will you do about it?" Every person has 24 hours a day (1,440 minutes...86,400 seconds). How will you invest them? In Psalm 90, Moses prayed, "Teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom."

CHURCH - "What is the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?" Many act as if church is optional, but Scripture presents church as essential. God's salvation is not merely individual, it is corporate. Believers are in union with Christ and all of His people (John 17:20-21). Church is not merely a meeting or meeting-place. It is the family of God gathered together.

SAVED - "For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?" Never give up. As you pray for others, pray for the Holy Spirit to open their hearts and minds and wills to God's truth, and to transform them in Christ. Ask God to bring the right messages and messengers into their lives.

DIFFERENT - "What's the most important way you will, by God's grace, try to make this year different from last year?" Recognizing what needs to change is only the beginning. What's your follow-through? Prayerfully develop your goal, and strategies and tactics needed to reach it.

PRAY - "What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?" For some, it means establishing a time or place without distractions. But Scripture also says "pray constantly." You can make your every thought, word, and deed a prayer to the Lord. As you read the truths of Scripture, pray that God will make them real in your life, and step out in faith to live them out.

MATTER - "What single thing that you plan to do this year will matter most in ten years? In eternity?" Our culture pushes people to make instant decisions, for immediate gratification. God's Word takes a long view. Understanding what God values is your first step in changing your mind about people and things, so that you invest in what God says really matters. To Him. Forever.

MORE - "The beginning of a new year is an ideal time to stop, look up, and get our bearings," notes Whitney. "Even those most faithful to God occasionally need to pause and think about the direction of their lives. It's so easy to bump along from one busy week to another, without ever stopping to ponder where we're going and where we should be going."

"Consider your ways," was the word of the Lord through Haggai. You might ponder these ten questions in one sitting, or one a day or one a week, as the Lord leads you to examine your life. How will you respond to God's prompting? Step out in faith, trusting and obeying God's Word! ☐