

FINISHING STRONG  
SERIES

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SETTING THE STAGE  
FOR THE NEW YEAR

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Start Preparing For Tomorrow Today

'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.' Psalms 119:105

We're just a few days away from a new year and a new decade. But unlike most people you don't have to wait for January 1 before you start preparing for the new year. Neither do you have to reel out numerous resolutions that will have faded from your memory before the first 90 days of the year runs out.

As believers we have an advantage because the word of God acts as a guide to light and direct our paths regardless of the time of year. We have access to supernatural insight that we can tap into so we're not left wandering in the dark.

Over the next few days we will look at how to strategically position ourselves for the coming year anchoring on God's word.

Stay connected, you don't want to miss this.



## **Day 1**

### **Wisdom**

'Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.' Proverbs 4:7

One of the first things that needs to be addressed is wisdom – think back on the challenges you faced in the past year(s) simply as a result of poor judgement which led to wrong choices. Picture a year filled with sound judgement and wise choices so that your errors are kept to a minimum if not completely eliminated. Wisdom is the key tool for this and the Bible tells us clearly that wisdom is something we should make sure we get. But how do we do this?

'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.' James 1:5

'Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.' Luke 2:52

The Lord is truly generous with His wisdom, He makes it available to all who ask. And wisdom is available in degrees, meaning it's something that can continue to grow throughout your life. We see from the example of the life of Jesus that the wisdom made available to him didn't happen all at once, but it grew steadily and consistently.

'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.' James 3:17

The beauty of God's wisdom is that it isn't dependent on your strength or your ability to manipulate people or circumstances to do your bidding. It isn't focused on self-aggrandizing or pulling others down, rather it brings peace to those who walk in it.

**Prayer Focus:** Ask God to fill you with His wisdom and the grace to exercise good judgement for the last few days of this year and everyday of the coming year.

## Day 2

### Direction

'So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous.'" Judges 18:5

As you're planning for the coming year, very likely you're already making several decisions and putting strategies in place based on your assessments of what's before you. Perhaps you're planning to start a new job, move houses or relocate. If you're a parent you could be planning new schools for your children. Or you could be planning on entering into some financial ventures/investments and based on your calculations it appears to be the right thing to do. Let's pause first and ask ourselves one question - have we asked God what His counsel is concerning the plans?

"Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD." Joshua 9:14

In the text above, the Israelites had just been deceived into making a treaty with the Gibeonites based on what they (the Israelites) saw and how they assessed the situation. By the time they realised they had been deceived it was too late. And the deception occurred for one simple reason: they didn't seek God's counsel.

"Lord, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps." Jeremiah 10:23

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way." Psalm 37:23

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." Psalms 32:8

A reality we must understand and accept: we are not all knowing so our decision making capabilities are limited by what we know, see and understand. Our God knows and sees all, has the power to control all and has a plan for us. We can choose to either take the time to seek God and His plan for us for the New Year - which we have the assurance of His guidance and instruction. Alternatively we can make our own plans and inform Him not because we are open to changing our plans to follow His instructions but because we want Him to rubber stamp our decisions.

**Reflect:** Who is setting the direction for the coming year in your life, you or God?

### Day 3 Capacity

'Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle'  
Psalms 144:1

We have many ambitions for the coming year which is excellent. But as we are making these plans based on God's direction, we need to also understand that it's important we build capacity to successfully execute these ambitions. The coming year will bring many opportunities however these opportunities may come dressed up as challenges. So it's critical we appreciate this and build the necessary strength to take on the challenges.

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you' Deuteronomy 7:1

'because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.' 1 Corinthians 16:9

When the Lord gave the land of Canaan to the Israelites we may have thought that He would divinely clear the land for them in advance and they would enter with ease. But that's not what happened and not only was the land not empty, the nations were greater and mightier than Israel. So it's possible for God to give you a promise, but it may not be fulfilled without warring for it and possibly warring against what appears to be insurmountable opposition.

This wasn't only applicable in the Old Testament as Apostle Paul also faced a similar challenge – a great door was opened but with the open door came adversaries.

**Reflect:** Challenges will come with almost every opportunity. For you to fully take advantage of the opportunity you must ask God to prepare you in advance to first of all recognise that it's an opportunity. Secondly to receive His training and preparation so you are well equipped to overcome the challenges. The Lord needs to build capacity in us so we are not overwhelmed by the very things we are asking Him for. Spend time in prayer seeking His face for the battle strategies for the coming year.

## Day 4 Strategy

'There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.'  
Proverbs 19:21

There is nothing wrong with planning, the Lord expects us to be good stewards of time and to plan and develop strategies. The key to success lies however in understanding that it's the Lord's counsel that will stand. Which means that as we prepare for a successful new year, we need to constantly ask ourselves as we put strategies in place – what is God's counsel concerning this matter?

'Plans are established by seeking advice; so if you wage war, obtain guidance.'  
Proverbs 20:18

'The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.'  
Proverbs 16:1,3

You're not designed to survive without God, so as you strategize and plan for 2020 your focus should be on downloading His strategy for the year because that's where the guarantee for peace and good success are located. Ask Him for the right counsel, the right advisers, the right plans, the right execution strategy.

'But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.'  
Luke 5:5-6

Simon was a very experienced fisherman and he already had his set ways of getting fish from the sea. It wasn't something he did as a hobby, it was his daily livelihood. But Jesus stepped in and gave an instruction which Simon followed and the results were overwhelming. Simon's success was hinged on following the instructions Jesus gave even though the strategy didn't appear to make sense to him.

**Reflect:** Obedience to God's instructions in this new season is critical whether it makes sense to you or not. That's what your strategy for the new year should be based on.

## Day 5 Retreat

'However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.' Luke 5:15-16

'Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.' Mark 1:35

Jesus was extremely busy – meeting the demands of thousands daily, healing, teaching, being challenged as he went from place to place. Yet He often retreated to a solitary place. It was in the quiet place He communed with the Father and received insight, direction and strength. By doing this, Jesus also gave us a pattern to follow.

'Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.' John 5:19

In the busyness of life we need to intentionally schedule time to retreat and spend quality time in God's presence. Give sufficient time, not when you need to rush to work or meet the challenges of the day. Make room for God to speak and you have the time to listen. That's when we receive the direction, equipping, transformation and all that we need to become who the Lord created us to be.

**Action Step:** In the midst of the New Year celebrations, take some time out for a personal retreat to receive the wisdom, direction, strategy and capacity from the Lord. Don't leave it too late so you don't miss out on the opportunities the year holds for you. Commit to partnering with God to make this the best year yet.



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