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It's 2021?!?! - Now What Do We Do?



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #202 ~

Are you looking forward to 2021? Yes? No? Yes and no? 2020 was a rough and difficult year for many of us. It did not turn out how we expected, with the pandemic, lockdowns, wearing masks, people getting sick, many dying, others losing jobs, not seeing family, and not going to church. All this, coupled with other challenging trials, has led to worry, anger, fear, and frustration. Without question, 2020 was a tough year, a strange year, the kind of year you don't want to see again. So what do you think about the new year? What do you think is going to happen in 2021? More importantly, what are you planning to do? But most importantly, how are you to live for God when life seems like it's out of control, when people are becoming increasingly evil, and when the world around you is growing worse and worse?

First, recognize that we live in a sinful, devil-controlled world. There will always be problems, trials, and just plain wickedness. In fact, the closer we get to Christ's return to rapture the church, the harder life will get.

Second, understand that God is sovereign over all things, including every aspect of your own life. Third, remember that God never changes, and the way you are to live for God never changes. Fourth, know what God wants you to know, be who He wants you to be, and do what He wants you to do. And how to live for God, this knowing, being, and doing, is all found in God's word.

Psalm 119:87 – *"They almost **destroyed me** on earth, but I have not forsaken Your **precepts**."* Psalm 119:92 – *"If Your **laws** had not been my delight, I would have perished in **my affliction."*** Psalm 119:143 – ***"Trouble and distress** come upon me, but Your **commands** give me delight."* Psalm 119:157 – *"Many are the foes who persecute me, but I have not turned from Your **statutes**."* Do you see that we need God's word in the midst of persecution, troubles, and affliction? Regardless of how many trials you face, the answer is to always keep trusting God and obeying His word. Holding on to God and His truth is the means to being truly safe and strong and being able to stay the course. No matter what happens in 2021, God and His unchanging word will keep you on the road He has planned out for you. *"Your **word** is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* Psalm 119:105

Here are seven truths you need to understand and apply to your life this year and for all time:

1. Your Relationship with God. Focus on your relationship with God. Know who He is, that He is the living God, your Creator, Lord, and Savior. Get to know Him, for He is loving, kind, wise, sovereign, holy, faithful, forgiving, gentle, and powerful. Love Him with all your heart. Worship Him. Enjoy Him. Stay close to Him (Ps. 63:8). Be satisfied by His love (Ps. 90:14). Spend time with Him (Phil. 3:10). Think of how Jesus got alone with His Father (Mark 1:35), how Mary sat at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:40-42), and how Enoch walked with God. Gen. 5:21-24

2. Your identity. Believe what God says about you, not what the world says. Your identity is not about your race, color, sex, looks, build, upbringing, job, the money you have, the neighborhood you live in, or

the things you own. It's knowing that God Himself is your Creator, that you did not evolve from some animal, but that He made you in His own image. It means you have a soul, are eternal, are God's most important creation, and are made to have a meaningful purpose in life. It means knowing you are a saint, a child of God, His servant, a temple of the Spirit, and a member of the church. These powerful and unchanging truths result in you realizing that you are special to God, and will help you fulfill His will for your life. Gen. 1:27, Eph. 1:4-5, 1 Cor. 6:19-20

3. Thankfulness. God commands you to thank Him, for it's the right thing and a good thing to do. *"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting."* (Ps. 136:1, 1 Thess. 5:18, Col. 1:11-12). God has done so much for you, and if you don't thank Him, you are ungrateful, you will be grumbling, and you won't be spiritually happy – you will be miserable. Being thankful leads to more blessings, more fruitfulness, a positive attitude, and being a good witness.

4. Humility. Being humble is a result of knowing God for who He is, that He is the Lord God Almighty. It means you see who you are in relationship to Him, that He's infinitely greater than you, that He's your Master, and therefore you are His servant. Here are some benefits to being humble: you will fear God; you will praise God; you will pray to Him; you will serve God and others; you will learn from God and others; you will have good relationships; and you will be infinitely blessed. Always remember – "*humble yourself in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."* James 4:10, Matt. 23:12

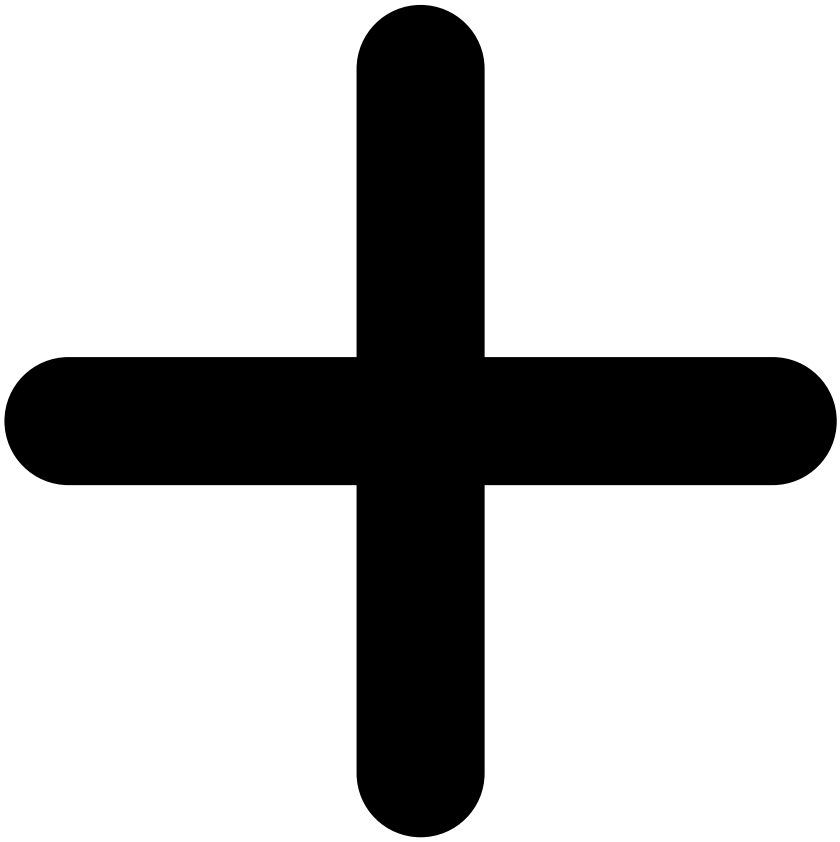
5. Faith. When you have faith, you are relying on God and not on yourself *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord"* (Jer. 17:17:7-8). You are to trust God, even when you go through trials (1 Pet. 1:6-7). You are to depend on Him to love you, and to give you wisdom, strength, and direction in life. Spiritual success, along with grace, peace, joy and hope, all come from having faith, from believing God and His word. Heb. 11:6, Rom. 15:13

6. Prayer. A person who is praying has faith, is believing that God actually hears and answers His prayers (1 Jn. 5:14-15). With respect to Elijah it is said, *"the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much"* (James 5:16b). About Epaphras, Paul said, *"(he is) always laboring earnestly in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God"* (Col. 4:12). At all times and in all situations, pray to God, and then you will be useful to Him, blessed by Him, and at peace. Neh. 2:4, Dan. 6:10-11, Phil. 4:6-7

7. Purpose. The Bible records many stories of people who did God's work, and so too, He has given you work to do. *"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Eph. 2:10). And Jesus Christ is our #1 example – *"I brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do"* (John 17:4). As part of His team, as a member of the church, God has special assignments He wants you to carry out, and oftentimes it relates to the spiritual gift He has given you (1 Pet. 4:10). Ask God to show you the work He has planned out for you; be willing to do what He wants you to do; and obey His commands, for they will outline and lead you in the work He has for you.

Who knows what will happen in 2021? People sure don't know – none of us can predict the future. But God, our heavenly Father, knows exactly what will be taking place in our little world as well as throughout this world. Yes, life can be hard, and may even be more difficult in 2021 than it was in 2020. In fact some who are reading this may be here when the Antichrist is ruling the world and bringing great tribulation. But no matter what happens, you need to always and in everything keep looking to Him. There is no question that God, working through His word and the Spirit, will enable you to be and do all that He wants this year and in the years ahead, all the way to the end of your life on this earth. *"Yet I am always with You; You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but You, and besides You, I desire nothing on earth."* Psalm 73:23-25

P.S. What a blessing to have a new year! Of course, we know that our lives and our time is for God and His purposes. Here is a good article on time – *“The Time of My Life,”* and more instructions about how we are to live for God now and in the future – *“What Does God Want Me to Do in the End-Times?”*



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