

Joyful Life Bible Studies

New Year's Lesson 1996

FIRST DAY: Read Psalm 65:11

1. Reflect on this past year, 1995, as you write Psalm 65:11a.

a. Reading Psalm 65:9-13 we recognize that the harvest is God's crown of the year. Another view of Psalm 65:11a is: *God's love encircles the year as with a crown; each month has its gems, each day its pearl.* (Spurgeon) Mentally review last year's calendar and briefly share how you experienced this to be true in 1995.

2. Notice the Lord's instruction to Israel recorded in Deuteronomy 8:2a. When you **remember** *how the Lord led you* in 1995, how are you led to respond to His faithfulness?

a. Use the following scriptures to rev up your remembrance of the Lord's goodness to you in 1995. List anything from these verses that you experienced:

(1.) Psalm 63:3-7

(2.) Psalm 77:11,12

(3.) Psalm 105:5

b. How does remembering His past blessings, guidance, counsel, and deliverance affect your trust in Him for the future?

c. Why did the Lord command Joshua to have the stones taken out of the Jordan river when the children of Israel walked through it? Joshua 4:(2,3)20-24

(1.) Think of the significance of these *stones of remembrance*. Share a practical way you can adapt this example to help you remember the Lord's blessings and miracles; as a tool to teach the next generation; and as a witness to the *people of the earth*.

3. Interesting and momentous events will be taking place in 1996. Jerusalem is in a year long celebration commemorating 3,000 years of being the capital of Israel. Our nation will host the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia. We will be subjected to fierce campaigning by candidates aspiring to be our next President and then, in November, we have the election. Will we have peacekeeping troops stationed in Bosnia? We're hearing more and more about the *New World Order*. We sense we're living in a conflicted and chaotic time and we're fast approaching what social scientists term the *post modern* age. With all this in mind, what is our role according to Philippians 2:15,16a?
- a. Write your prayer here asking the Lord to create a deeper desire in you than you've ever known to live the life in a dark world.

*As the old year ends and the new one begins
I commit myself anew:
Each prayer, each thought, each word, each deed
Lord, may each of these please you.*
J.S.M.

SECOND DAY: Read Psalm 90:12

1. How does Psalm 90:12 speak to you about each day of your life?
 - a. The phrase *number our days* alerts us to the *brevity of life here on earth* in relationship to eternity. Describe this from James 4:14b. Selah
 - (1.) If you knew you had only one more day to live, what would you want to accomplish?
2. What does the phrase *apply our hearts to wisdom* mean and how do we do this?
3. What was the Psalmist's request in Psalm 39:4? Use other versions for your answer if you desire.
 - a. The following is a prayer based on Psalm 39:4-7. *Lord, Help us to live without desperation or futility as we travel from our home to yours. Focus on the word futility. How can we avoid living a life of futility?*

- (1.) Consider the word *travel* in this prayer. Perhaps you've heard the song: *This world is not my home, I'm just a travelin' through*. Think about this as you recall the confession of those *travelers* in Hebrews 11:13c(14-16). What are you *confessing* or *acknowledging* about this earthly life?

(a.) How does II Corinthians 4:18 help you keep the pilgrim focus?

Challenge: Using Psalm 84:5-7^{NIV} describe more fully the pilgrim's journey.

*Blessed are those whose strength is in You,
Who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.*

Psalm 84:5^{NIV}

THIRD DAY: Read Philippians 3:13b,14

1. The start of a new year is a good time to simplify our lives. Especially is this essential in these days of fast-track living with so many demands on our time and attention. Now is the time to sort out, eliminate, pare down. How does Paul's example in Philippians 3:13b encourage you to do this?
 - a. *Forgetting* suggests leaving behind, letting go of, walking away from, or eliminating. What do these verses indicate about this:
 - (1.) Luke 8:14
 - (2.) Ephesians 4:31
 - (3.) Colossians 3:8,9
 - (4.) II Timothy 1:7a
 - b. Explain as you would to someone hanging on to the past how she can be set free or released from any of these.

Personal: If any of these are impeding your progress, today is the day to deal with them.

- c. Perhaps none of these apply to you but there are other areas you are aware of where you need to *let go*. Remember the wise traveler always packs lightly with just the basic necessities so she can focus on the place she's going. What does Hebrews 12:1 exhort us to do about *weights*? (*Weights* are not sins, but they impede your spiritual progress.)

2. Observe from Philippians 3:12,13a that Paul didn't consider himself to have *arrived* (to a state of perfection) but he didn't let his past sins or failures become roadblocks to his spiritual progress. How do we know this? Philippians 3:13c,14
 - a. Why is it imperative to *forget* sins and failures of the past (that have been cleansed)?
 - b. The words *reaching forth* have been defined as *straining forward*. What does that suggest to you?
 - (1.) What does this mean in your life?
3. What goal does Paul *press* towards?
 - a. How does the picture of someone pressing weights help you understand the word *press*?
 - b. How will living Romans 12:1,2 produce that single-mindedness in you that will advance your spiritual progress?
4. Review Philippians 3:13,14. How is the *prize* of heaven the greatest incentive possible for *forgetting, reaching, and pressing*?

*Heaven is a wonderful place
filled with glory and grace
I want to see my Savior's face
Heaven is a wonderful place.*

FOURTH DAY: Read Romans 13:11-14

1. What *time* is it? Romans 13:11
 - a. In awareness of the *time* what does Romans 13:13,14 tell us we are to do?
 - (1.) Report what Ephesians 5:(15)16 exhorts believers to do.

- b. What speaks to you most urgently in these verses? (Romans 13:11-14)
 - c. This passage is like a spiritual alarm clock for 1996. Wake up! What safeguards must we clothe ourselves with to withstand the seductions of this world? verses 12-14
2. In what way do the titles of these books shape your perspective on life in 1996:
- a. Living for What Really Matters (Stacy and Paula Rinehart)
 - b. Living the Life That Counts (Melvin Cheatham, M.D.)
3. How will the following promises encourage you as you *press* on towards the *goal* in this new year:
- a. Joshua 1:9
 - b. Isaiah 41:10
 - c. Isaiah 43:2
 - d. Isaiah 58:11
 - e. Add any other promises that encourage you
4. For some the days are long and dreary and painful. What are the encouraging promises here: Selah
- a. Romans 8:18
 - b. II Corinthians 4:16
 - c. II Corinthians 12:9a
 - d. Galatians 6:9
 - e. What are the benefits of embracing these promises?

FIFTH DAY: Review

1. In what way has this lesson blessed, encouraged, or challenged you for the year ahead?

2. How does Jude 21a speak to you about your responsibility in 1996?

a. What can you do on a daily basis to *keep yourself in the love of God*?

(1.) List the exhortations from Jude 20,21 that will help you with this.

3. *You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in Your book. Psalm 139:16TLB* How will this verse help you decide what to write in on your 1996 calendar?

a. Using a dictionary define Deo volente. (D.v.)

(1.) Why should D.v. be written over the calendar of our heart every day? See James 4:15

4. Complete this lesson by meditating on the comfort of Psalm 31:15a. What does it mean to you that *your times are in His hand*?

*Therefore go gladly to the year assigned thee,
Having My promise, needing nothing more
Than just to know, where 'er the future find thee,
In all thy journeying I go before.*

Author Unknown