



**THE PLATFORM
INTERNATIONAL**

NEW ERA

DECEMBER 2022

LOOKING AHEAD

Proverbs 4:25-27, Luke 9:62

INTRODUCTION: People all over the world celebrate New Year's differently. I came across an interesting story of a custom in some villages in Scotland. Barrels of tar are set ablaze and rolled through the streets, signifying the burning of the old year. Gives an attention-grabbing feel to the idea of out with the old; in with the new. But I guess in the idea of burning the old year you are not leaving any remnants behind to dwell on; you're focused on looking ahead.

This isn't to say that there aren't any aspects of the old year to

reflect on and remember fondly; of course there are. But in looking ahead we vow to put old regrets and old quarrels to rest. In looking ahead we are striving to replace old behaviours with new ones. Some things might follow us from the old year and there's not anything we can do about it except deal with them. But perhaps we deal with them in a new way or with a new attitude which can be more effective. Perhaps this is the year we finally get that monkey off our back. Perhaps this is the year we finally accomplish that long-



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A close-up photograph of autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and brown, some in focus and some blurred in the background.

LOOKING AHEAD

1 EYES FRONT!

Proverbs. 4:25-27, "Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

Here we see a recipe for success in being able to look ahead and move forward. In looking ahead we are not being distracted by things in other directions. Looking ahead has with it a stated purpose of advancement. We are striving for reaching new plateaus. Therefore, in order to do that we need not lose our focus.

Eyes front and keep it moving! Don't look to the right or to the left but keep your eyes on the prize. Walk in the way that is solid and sure and that way is with Christ; all other ways are dangerous and treacherous. And don't look back! When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah the angel sent to rescue Lot, his wife and their daughters basically told them to keep it moving and don't look back.

But **Genesis. 19:26** says that Lot's wife did look back and when she did she became a pillar of salt. She didn't look back in curiosity, she looked back in longing and sorrow. When we become born again we are called to not look back with fondness on our old lifestyle of sin with a desire to go back. That was Lot's wife's problem-she not only looked back, she desired to go back; she didn't want to let go.

Jesus cited Lot's wife in **Luke 17:28-33**, "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it."

Whoever is willing to let go of living their lives for their own desires and purposes and instead embrace the new way of living for Jesus will preserve it for eternity. When we are called to look ahead and move forward one thing that will hold us back is looking back and going back. So, moving forward involves letting go. Letting go of all the unspiritual ideals and practices in the old life that will easily mess us up in the new life.

Jesus illustrated this principle in **Matthew. 9:17**. He said if you try to put new wine in old wineskins they will burst and both would be ruined. We are new creations with a new Spirit called to walk in newness of life. If we try to mix that newness with our old ways and lifestyle it won't work; it

will come to ruin. As a new creation living a new life we're supposed to be going in a new direction. We leave the old behind and look ahead to the new.

But if I'm looking back and having a hard time letting go I will not be effective. Luke 9:62, "Jesus replied, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'"

I can't be fit for service because how can I do a good job moving forward when I'm focused on what's behind me? If I try to plow a straight furlough while looking backwards I'm going to mess everything up. Likewise, if I try to live a new life while I'm stuck in the old one I will not be successful.

And I won't be fit for God's service because my devotion won't be there. My heart will be with what I left behind and therefore my service won't be sincere. So, if I'm going to be effective at keeping focused on looking ahead and moving forward I need to leave the former things behind. "You can never change the past but by the grace of God you can win the future."

So remember those things which will help you forward, but forget those things which will only hold you back." There's a saying that goes, "old ways will not open new doors". We can't do what hasn't been working and think the results will be any different. New Spirit, new self, new purpose, new behaviours, new results.

2 LOOKING AHEAD CAN BE SCARY!

One of the reasons we might have a hard time letting go and accepting change is because of the comfort of what's behind. Perhaps we were in a place where it was predominately predictable; we knew what to expect. But when we make a decision to look ahead and move forward we don't know what lies ahead. I think of myself and how I would be starting 2023 on a very pleasant note. But, while I am here right now I need to look ahead; I need to do what Proverbs 4 talks about. And me, along with the rest of us, need to have the attitude of Paul when looking ahead is a scary thought.

Acts 20:22-24, "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord

Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

Paul looked ahead, not knowing what would happen to him but he went anyway. He knew that imprisonments and hardships were in his future but it didn't dispel him from pressing on and moving forward. Why? Because he had a God-given mission that superseded any concerns for how his future would play out. I'm sure looking ahead was scary for Paul but he faced it with a dedication to fulfill his task and successfully finish the race.

One of the reasons looking ahead can be scary is because we cannot predict how it will go. Fear of the unknown. With the fear of the unknown comes negative anticipation; fear the worst. But we don't have to be afraid. Looking ahead can be scary but it doesn't have to be; especially when you have the Lord to guide you. In that case, it's not scary, it's actually

exciting. We see every day as a new opportunity to serve God.

Each day is filled with endless possibilities. We can look ahead to the new year as a fresh, clean slate; a pristine white canvas just waiting for splashes of colour to be added to it. We can look at 2023 with an eagerness to add each brushstroke and watch how our new portrait will develop.

Hymnist Frances Ridley Havergal took New Year's Day very seriously. She used it as a

time of reflection and she often composed a poem to send to friends expressing her feelings about the new day and year. This is one she wrote in 1874. "Another year is dawning, dear Father let it be; in working or in waiting, another year with Thee. Another year of progress, another year of praise; another year of proving, Thy presence all the days." Looking ahead can be scary but it doesn't have to be. With the Lord by our side it can actually be thrilling.

3 COLLECTIVELY LOOKING AHEAD

One of the things that can make looking ahead less scary is when you know you're not alone. Yes, we need to look ahead and move forward in our individual walk but we are also to look ahead and move forward collectively as a church. In fact, one of the motivators for us to keep it moving is to know we are part of a team and we dedicate ourselves to the collective cause

We as TPI needs to be looking ahead. As I stated a few months ago, our organization celebrated its 7th anniversary. Our church has a rich history. We've had triumphs and we've had setbacks. We've gone through changes; some were welcomed some were unwelcomed but we have never not been willing to face them. We are far from finished; our journey is far from over!

So we need to press on as we have been doing. In looking ahead we are committed to take on new challenges and look for new opportunities to reach new heights. We look ahead with zeal, fervor and an eager determination to see what can be accomplished.

We need to be like the locust. In the book of Joel, it describes the coming of an army of locusts. Although this was not going to be a good thing for the land and its inhabitants, their tenacity and resilience are something we need to try to emulate. Joel 2:7-8, "They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks."

What imagery this conjures up. The picture of unified forces; strength in numbers. These creatures were not going to be denied; they were not going to allow anything to stand in their way. Could this be accomplished by going rogue? No; only by marching in line, by not swerving from their course.

And notice they are working in sync. They're not jostling each other; they're not pushing and shoving, they're not jockeying for position. What are they doing instead? They are marching straight ahead.

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The march together so that they can plunge through defenses together. They don't break ranks they break defenses.

We have an enemy that wants nothing more than to stand in our way. We as a church need to plow him over. We need to charge like warriors; we need to scale the walls of opposition like soldiers (because that's what we are). I am a soldier of the Army of God. I've been stationed here at camp (TPI) The Platform International. I've been asked to lead you into battle. Follow me as I follow my commanding officer, Jesus Christ.

Together, arm in arm, we will march into 2023 with our game faces on and our hearts full of spiritual fire. We will fight the enemy, we will defeat the enemy and we will accomplish our mission. This year, let's be poised to look ahead and move forward.

**I Welcome You To December 2022
And Wishing You A Merry Christmas
And A Prophetic New Year in Advance.**

Yours In His Vineyard!



Dr Victory L. Godspower
TPI International President

Season's Greetings

*May The Joy That Filled The World
At The Birth of Jesus Christ Be Found
In Your Home And The Divine Presence
of Jesus Christ Be With You Throughout
This Holy Season,
May Your Days Be As Beautiful As The
Sunshine; As You Go Through
This Christmas Season.*

*Have A Bliss-Filled Christmas
And A Glorious Year Ahead.*



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