

8 Prayerful Ways to Reflect on the Past and Look to the Future



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by [Kim Butts](#)

Once a year, it's usual and appropriate to prayerfully look back, remember, assess, and reflect on how the year has gone...and then to prayerfully take a look forward...seeking the heart of God about how to live more grace-filled, courageous lives that bring glory to His Kingdom.

I suggest that, despite all that has changed, been different or unsettling, or that has challenged the limits of our faith – we should not be paralyzed in our efforts to see God at work in the midst of it all. Allow the Father to show you the joy-filled blessings in your life also. Sometimes the difficult times overshadow the many goodnesses of God.

Here is a prayerful way to process all that has happened in the midst of your relationships with God and others, and to look forward to what lies ahead. I hope it will be a blessing to you:

Sit in silence for a few minutes daily – perhaps light a candle as a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World, and that you are seated in His presence. Breathe out any burden, heartache, pain, fear, uncertainty or anger. Breathe in His peace.

Remind yourself that He is very near as you pray from Psalm 46:1-3, “Lord Jesus, thank You for being my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Because of Your presence I will not fear...even if the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”

Reflect on all that has swirled around you this year:

- Name the things that stand out from this past year as you sit in the stillness.
- Invite God to meet you in the midst of every remembered situation, relationship, struggle or joy that comes to mind.
- Take time to imagine Him being near in every circumstance even if you cannot remember His presence when the event happened. Ask Him to show you where He was in the midst of everything that comes to mind. Thank Him for His presence.
- Ask Him to help you to find joy and peace in whatever

has caused turmoil or distress.

- Give God thanks for everything He has walked you through. Thank Him for the blessings, expected and unexpected, that have come your way.
- Thank Him for the way He has shown up in your life this past year.

Have you reflected Christ to others in the midst of the upheaval, fear, anger, angst, violence, uncertainty and pain?

Ask God to show you those who have experienced His love or encouragement through you this past year...and those who haven't. Ask Him to bring to mind those who have experienced darkness, pain or distress, but have seen and experienced extraordinary love, forgiveness, patience, peace, kindness, generosity and even joy from Jesus living within you. When God shows you those who needed encouragement, peace, etc. from you and didn't receive it, ask God for His forgiveness. Ask for His help and strength to reflect Jesus better and more fully in your relationships in this new year.

Have you prayed for those who have disagreed with you or done harm to you and/or others this year? Think about every painful, frustrating or difficult experience with others and release each person to God. Ask Him to restore your joy and give you a deep desire to pray for His presence to be evident in their lives. Ask Him to help you to learn to love those who may have persecuted you or treated you badly this past year.

Has your life been marked by forgiveness? Ask the Father to give you the grace gift of forgiveness to extend to each person who came to your mind in #5. Ask God to forgive you for each person you may have damaged by your words or actions as He brings them to mind. Next, ask Him to show you anyone you may need to go to and ask to be forgiven by. Determine to set things right in any relationship that has been damaged. Deny any attempts of the enemy to make you feel guilty. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Receive His pleasure as you seek His heart in each

circumstance and relationship.

What does God have for you in this new year? Take time to seek the heart of God for your direction and purpose. Perhaps He will give you a Scripture, a word of encouragement or a challenge. Ask Him to fill you with His hope, joy and peace. Most of all, ask Him to strengthen your desire to carry the Light of the World into the darkness with every step, word, and action. Renew your desire to be His hands and feet in great love.

End this time in silence. As your time of reflection comes to a close, give thanks to Father, Son and Holy Spirit for meeting with you in this season of prayer. Sit quietly for a few moments in the peace of His presence. When you feel ready, blow out the candle and carry His presence into the world.

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Biography

Kim serves as the Executive Director of Harvest Prayer Ministries which she co-founded in 1993 with her late husband, Dave (1953-2022). Her ministry involves teaching/training and consulting as well as writing and developing resources. She is content coordinator for HPM's teaching platform, PrayerU.com

and also compiles and edits HPM's free daily devotional, [Connection!](#) as well as [Prayer Tip Tuesday](#).

Kim has written multiple books and has published articles in a variety of magazines and publications. She is a member of America's National Prayer Committee and serves as President of Gospel Revivals, Inc. (Herald of His Coming).

Kim has a BA in Psychology and a Masters degree in Spiritual Formation and Leadership.

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