

# Annual Reflection

As we finish up 2020, many of us are feeling like we've never been so ready for a year to be over. While it's tempting to want to shut the door behind us and not look back, we know that God does some of His best work in the midst of struggle and suffering. That's why we want to invite you to spend some time to reflect on this past year- the joy, the sorrows, the opportunities, the losses- and to recognize how God has been at work in your life. We hope this set of questions is a helpful tool as you spend time with God reflecting on the past and dreaming about the future.

To begin, gather a journal, your Bible, a pen, and a warm cup of coffee. Take 5-10 minutes to sit quietly, meditating on this passage from 2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18:

<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. <sup>12</sup> So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

## First, reflect on the themes, events, and experiences of 2020.

As you think back through each month of 2020, what stand out to you? How have these events and experiences shaped you? These can be big or small. If you need help remembering, look through your journal, the photos on your phone, or your social media page.

January – March:

April – June:

July – September:

October – December:

**Next, take some time to think through the following questions.**

What relationships have been most impactful or influential to you this year, and why?

What have been some of your biggest struggles this year? In what ways have you felt uncertainty, anxiety, grief, or disappointment?

What are you most grateful for this year? What are you least grateful for?

When have you felt fully alive?

What were some of your biggest mistakes, and what did you learn from them?

In what way has God surprised you this year? In what way has God stretched you?

What have you talked with God most about this year?

What practices have helped you to feel connected to God? In what ways have you experienced His nearness?

## Now, let's look ahead.

After working through the questions above, allow God to shift your focus to what lies ahead. Think through the different areas of your life – how do you hope to grow in this next year?

### SPIRITUALLY:

- As you move into this new year, what is God inviting you to surrender to Him?
- In what ways do you hope your relationship with God will grow over these next 12 months?
- What spiritual practices would you like to try in order to more intentionally connect with God?

### EMOTIONALLY:

- In what ways do you want to grow in your emotional health?
- How would you like to process and deal with difficult emotions differently in 2021?

### RELATIONALLY:

- Which of your relationships need to change, end, or grow healthier?
- What relationships do you want to nurture this year? What would it look like to prioritize these relationships in your life?
- Who might God be challenging you to mentor or invest more time in? Who might God have put into your life to mentor or invest in you?

### PHYSICALLY:

- When it comes to taking care of your body (sleep, eating, exercise, etc.), what thoughts and emotions are negatively influencing your current habits? How do you sense God might want you to think about these differently?
- What is one way that God is inviting you to take better care of your body or grow in healthy habits?

### FINANCIALLY:

- What is one finance-related attitude or habit that God may be encouraging you to grow in this year?

### VOCATIONALLY:

- In what ways do you hope to grow in your current or future job, role, or volunteer position?
- What skills and passions has God gifted you with, and how would you like to use these gifts this year to better love and serve those in your community?

## Finally, what are your next steps?

As you finish, spend time talking with God about what you're sensing. Ask Him for wisdom, discernment, and insight as you identify next steps and accept His invitations in your life.

As you think through each of the areas above, what are the tools, resources, or guidance that you'll need to help you take your next step?

Is there a certain passage of Scripture, or a few words that you sense God might want you to hold onto as you move into the new year?

Take some time to share your reflections with a family member or close friend. Consider inviting them to do the same and spend time praying for one another.