

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

DECEMBER

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2019

## REFLECTIONS ON 2019

by Jim Stauffer

Michael Angier is the head of an organization called SuccessNet. He is an expert in concepts designed to produce personal success whether in business, personal relationships or any aspect of your life.

Here is a short list of ideas he proposes as one looks back on the previous year. He says:

In order to embrace the new, we must release the old. A trapeze artist cannot swing from one bar to another without letting go. An important part of preparing for the New Year is to review the past year—to release it—and to learn from it....

The following questions should stimulate your thinking for this process. I hope that you take time out of your busy schedule this holiday season to ponder where you are and where you've been. Talk with people you care about. Write out your thoughts and feelings. Do some journaling. Consider writing a letter—an end-of-the-year-epistle to yourself. It could be profound to write it and valuable to read it in the years ahead.

Reflect upon what you did, how you felt, what you liked, what you didn't and what you learned. Try to look at yourself and your experience with as much objectivity as you can—much like a biographer would.

Here are some suggestions to get you started in mulling over the past year—perhaps the last decade. Feel free to add your own.

1. What did I learn? (skills, knowledge, awareness, etc.)
2. What did I accomplish? A list of my wins and achievements.
3. What would I have done differently? Why?
4. What did I complete or release? What still feels incomplete to me?
5. What were the most significant events of the year past? List the top three.
6. What did I do right? What do I feel especially good about? What was my greatest contribution?
7. What were the fun things I did? What were the not-so-fun?
8. What were my biggest challenges/roadblocks/

difficulties?

9. How am I different this year than last?

10. For what am I particularly grateful?

Another Suggestion: Consider listing all the things in your life of which you'd like to let go—anything you no longer want. Give thanks for what they've brought you in terms of learning and usefulness and then burn the list. It's a symbolic gesture to help you release the old and be open to the new. The next step is to list what you do want—experiences, knowledge, material things, relationships, healings, whatever....

I'm confident that anything you can do to make this year-end more dramatic in terms of your own personal and spiritual growth will be valuable.

While I am confident these suggestions have great merit relative to material success, it seems many of them would be helpful to the child of God as he reflects on his personal service in the kingdom.

1. How has your Bible study plan worked out for you this past year? Has your understanding increased as a result of your plan for study? If not does the plan need alteration?

2. What have you accomplished spiritually this past year? Have you taught others? Maybe helped members of your own family grow spiritually?

3. Are there changes needing to be made? Should you do some things differently? Do you need to interact more with brethren or neighbors?

4. Are there things you undertook that were left incomplete? Did you fail to finish what you started? Were there friends you did not follow up with that might be drawn to the Lord?

5. By listing your top three events of the year, you may be able to find your strengths and focus on methods you use effectively to edify brethren or teach friends and neighbors or bring them to worship with you.

6. Think about your greatest accomplishment. Was it what it should have been? How can you repeat that and maybe even increase it.

7. We do not usually think in terms of fun regarding spiritual matters, but frankly it is fun to share the word of

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God with people whose souls are in need. Maybe there are some fun things you do in life that can be accompanied by spiritual encouragement for those with whom you participate.

8. It is very important to assess the roadblocks you incurred this past year and how in the coming year you can overcome those.

9. What about the experiences of this past year have changed you and how have you been changed? Will the change be for the better? How can last year better prepare you to reach your spiritual goals this year?

10. Finally, reflect on the bounty of blessings the Lord has granted you this year and vow to use those to His glory in 2020.

May God continue to bless us all next year and may we never forget what He does for us each day and what He has done for us through His Son that we can now communicate to everyone we contact.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE WITH THE BIBLE THIS YEAR?

Martin Luther once said: "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me." Can you say that the word of God affects you in the same way? Throughout this year you have heard many sermons, sat in many Bible classes, engaged in personal Bible reading and study, and you have read (I assume) 52 front page bulletin articles that Brother Taylor and I have written. What has all of this done for you spiritually? Are you stronger in your faith because of your encounters with the Bible? Are you more determined than ever to be faithful to the Lord? Have you actively participated in trying to learn more and apply more of God's word in your life? We cannot get the days, weeks, and months of this year back. Yet, we can look back on this past year and be thankful if we have truly been paying attention to God's word.

The final verses of the book of Revelation remind us that the Lord will return. *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7). "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (22:12). "He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20).* Jesus is telling us that we do not have forever to do His will. We do not have forever to spread His word throughout the world. We do not have forever to learn and apply His will in our own lives and hearts. Time is running out for ourselves and for the lost. Whatever we did this year and whatever we do in any days that are to come must be dedicated to Christ and His word and to the teaching of that word—to the lost and to ourselves. Again, let us remember: spreading the word must be done NOW, in this life! When Revelation

speaks of the holy city of the redeemed, it speaks of those who had already heard and obeyed the word.

How much time remains between now and the end of time is known only by heaven's will. How much time you and I have this next year to study and use God's word, only He knows. But for the time we do have, whether much or little, let us use it NOW. The Spirit and the Bride are inviting us and all others to come to the fount of blessing. It is for whoever will come. What have we done with the Bible this year? If we will face Christ's word (**John 12:48**), then what have we thought about the Bible? What have we written? What have we applied?

Faith comes by hearing; action comes by hearing, too. God wants all to be saved. He depends upon you and me to help spread that message. The gospels say: Here is the Savior. Acts says: Here are people who have accepted who Jesus is. The epistles say: This is how Christ's people should live. Revelation pulls the curtain back on the joys of heaven—joys that came only after great struggles. In the days to come, let us be thirsty for God's word. And let's try to find someone else who is thirsty, too.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## Time to Look Back

The last two verses of **Luke 9** read thus, *"And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* This man wanted Jesus to wait on him, possibly for a considerable period of inaction or indecision: Time for Satan to change his mind. That, Jesus said, is unacceptable. In the days before GPS controlled tractors the way to plow a straight furrow in a field was to pick a landmark on the opposite end of the field and plow straight toward that mark without looking back because when you did the furrow would become crooked.

Jesus never intended for us to forget the past, nor did He intend for us to never examine the events of the last year in order to see where we've failed, where we've succeeded, where we have problems and learn from our past in order to live a more faithful Christian life. Socrates, a philosopher of some renown, said: "The unexamined life is not worth living." Of course, he is not our authority but what he said is true! Paul made specific references to his past several times in the letters he wrote such as **1 Tim.1:12-16**. Peter did also in **2 Peter 1:18**. They both learned from their past.

As you look back, what can you learn that will help you to live a better, more faithful life in the future? Where are your weak-points and how can you strengthen yourself there? How many blessings have you received from the Lord for which you should

express gratitude? Do you have a thorn in the flesh? What is God trying to teach you?

**Cleveland Reddinger**

## Trudging Up Those Hills

Calvin and Hobbes, I love'm. Some of you won't know whom I'm talking about, but comic's aficionados will recognize them as a boy and his tiger companion. Calvin's a pistol and Hobbes can be quite philosophical at times. Comic strips can and often are a reflection of our lives and times.

In one strip, the duo is out sledding in the snow. Calvin complains, "I hate trudging up those hills. I didn't come out here to work! I came out here to ride and have fun!"

Hobbes replies, "Well, you can't ride the sled if you don't climb the hills."

Calvin counters, "I could if you pulled me up." The next strip shows Calvin alone with a grumpy look on his face. His friend has "abandoned" him and he says, "He's so lazy and selfish."

Calvin has his counterparts in our real world. They came here for a fast ride and to have fun and they intend to have fun come what may. If sin should happen to be in the formula, that's no obstacle. Fun is fun no matter its source.

These fun-lovers love pleasure more than anything else in the world, or for that matter, in heaven. The Bible calls them "*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*" (2 Timothy 2:4). They search for fun in every aspect of their lives, and while fun and pleasure are not wrong, in and of themselves, they can consume us.

These folks hate, like Calvin, "trudging up these hills." If they aren't having fun, they're impossible to live with. They get thoroughly disgusted at the drudgery, tedium, and trials of life; and reality dictates that life will have its times of difficulty. It can't always be a downhill slide, no matter what our preferences.

It would be nice for our work to be something we enjoy and I think that for the most part, such is possible. But work cannot be all fun and games. It would be called something besides work. I'm thankful for those who take their work seriously and who find a way to work through the times of boredom and drudgery to do a good job anyway.

Our spiritual labors for Christ can be depicted as an uphill climb, perpetually. Anybody who has in mind that Christianity is a piece of cake needs to look for dessert elsewhere. Try climbing the hill of persecution and ridicule and see how much fun is in it. It's a tough go. Sometimes, some get weary of the uphill climb to heaven. The Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament was written to recover those who became "*weary in well-doing*." It was written to saints in the first century, when the pressure to remain faithful to Christ was very great. It is a good book to read again and again when we find ourselves beginning to hate "trudging up these hills."

Hobbes jerks Calvin back to reality when he reminds him, "You can't ride the sled if you don't climb the hills." Quite an astute statement for a stuffed tiger!

Have you ever sledded down a snow-covered hill? It is one of the true joys of life. The steeper the hill, the greater the thrill! The exhilaration during the run at the bottom of the hill is indescribable. When you've completed the run, you're ready to go at it again and again.

The tiger's telling us that reward comes from diligent effort. Some people want a paycheck without having to work for it. They'd like a year-end bonus but don't want to go above and beyond in order to receive it. They'd like the commission without having to sell.

How many want to go to heaven but aren't interested in doing what it takes to go there? While you can't "earn" your way to heaven, don't think that you can get there by being spiritually lazy. Peter reminds us of the diligent effort that will be rewarded with an "*abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom*" (2 Peter 1:5-11). He is telling us, "If you want to go to heaven, you have to be willing to climb the hills." The Lord promises "*rest from their labors*" for those who die while faithfully serving him (Revelations 14:13).

Calvin wanted to be pulled up the hill so that he could enjoy the ride up as well as the ride down. He wanted his cake and eat it, too. Some in the work place want the profit sharing but they aren't happy sharing the responsibilities to make a profit. In the spiritual realm, some are hoping to go to heaven on the coattails of a family member, or the whole congregation. Their philosophy is, "I could have a wonderful life here and in eternity if you would just pull me along."

While we do need to be an encouragement to one another, no one can pull my load. The Bible says "*For each man shall bear his own burden*" (Galatians 6:5). If you depend totally on other people to fulfill your responsibility or make you happy, you are following a damaging "Calvinistic" philosophy.

When Calvin is left alone with the sled, he points the finger of blame the other way. He thinks Hobbes is lazy and selfish because he refuses to pull him up the hill.

One of our great faults in today's world is the refusal to accept personal responsibility for our own actions and attitudes. So many want to point the finger of blame at society by saying, "You people haven't done enough for me, so I will turn to a life of crime." Folks at work can't figure out that productivity is down because they are being unproductive. Some Christians love to point the finger of blame at other Christians for their own personal failure to be faithful.

Too often, we are too lazy and too selfish to carry on in a mature and responsible way. "*Go to the ant, lazy one*," and to the comics, but most of all to the Bible and learn, "You can't ride the sled if you don't climb the hills."

**By Gary Ogden~via Pepper Road Bulletin;  
Athens, Alabama.**

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

## HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

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**Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

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**SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS:** A STUDY OF AUTHORITY -  
BILL MILLER TEACHER

**WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS:** THE BOOK OF JOB -  
JIM STAUFFER TEACHER

**SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:**  
THE CHRISTMAS STORY



## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10