

Reflections

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee” Deut. 8:2

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Dec. 31st

The week between Christmas and New Year is an ideal time for reflection.

The current of “current events” often and easily pulls us off course. It’s easy to spend our time and energy “moving” on the treadmill of today. It will be a tragic day for many to wake up in eternity to discover that we’ve been “making progress” in the wrong direction!

Pr. 29:18 reminds us that *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”*

- **Vision:** ḥāzôn: revelation, sight. From ḥāzâ which means to perceive or gaze at.
- **Perish:** pāra’: loosen, dismiss, avoid, go/turn back, set at naught, perish.
- **Keepeth:** shāmar’: guards, protects, attends to.
- **Law:** tôrâ: God’s Word. From yārâ’: To point out or aim at.
- **Happy:** ’esher: Blessed. From āshar: to be straight, go forward, prosper.

What this verse is saying is that unless we’re committed to God’s Course, the current of this world will inevitably tug us away. Even the committed find themselves occasionally “drifting” and need to make “mid-course” corrections. Pastors are part of God’s plan to guide us toward eternal goals. (Heb. 13:7,17) As we stand on the brink of a new year, perhaps our last, I’d like us to reflect on where the Lord has tried to lead us, and where we might have gotten side-tracked.

The first message I preached on New Years Day, 2017 was about the Wise Men of Mt. 2.

- **Do you think their family and friends (and even enemies) considered them “Wise”?**
- **What was so special about them that even 2000 years later they’re universally recognized as “Wise Men”?**

1. They responded to the light (vision, purpose) God gave them. James 1:22

- A. They had much less “light” than the priests in Jerusalem, but they journeyed across deserts to find the Christ.
- B. They had much less “light” than most of us in this room, yet they chose to act on the “vision” or revelation God did give them, allowing God to guide them to Christ!

What are we doing with the Light we’ve received?

2. They made the choices that others were not willing to make.

A. They chose to follow the light.

- 1) Many must have “noticed” the star’s light, but they chose to follow it.
Do you just “notice” or do you really follow God’s light?

B. They purposed to “find” the Christ regardless of dangers, delays, deceit, and discouragement. (Others wouldn’t be inconvenienced.)

What does it take to “sidetrack” you from pursuing God’s purposes?

C. They focused on Christ’s incarnation not the circumstances he was in.

- 1) Mary and Joseph’s (Jesus’) story was known to some (certainly neighbors, family, friends) who ignored (or even worse judged) them because of their familiarity. (Mt. 13:54-58)

Matthew 2:11 *"when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: pros-koo-neh'-o: pros: toward: to reverence, pay homage*

1) The heart of Worship involves our **Focus** (Phil. 4:6!) proseuchē' (pros-yoo-khay')
Pros: toward or near and eu'chomai: to pray and worship.
Where is your "focus", particularly in times of "disappointment?"

2) Worship always involves some **sacrifice**". (Mt. 6:21)

"and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

a) Treasures: thēsauros': a deposit, wealth

b) The first time the word "Worship" is found in Scripture is in Gen. 22:5

"I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

What "treasures" and sacrifices does your worship involve?

D. They were willing to **Flex** (adjust) their lives around God's plan. Ps 37:4,5

Delight (anag: be pliable) *thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

Commit (gaw-lal': to roll together) *thy way unto the LORD; Trust* (baw-takh': place confidence in) *also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."*

1) Delighting (Loving) requires "Flexibility". (Pr. 3:5,6)

2) Loving naturally leads to **Committing**! 1 Jn 5:2,3 *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

3) Committing requires "Trust". Heb. 11:6

4) Trust Grows with familiarity/fellowship 1 Jn. 1:7

Application: Honest "Reflection" should lead to a clearer "Direction"!

Ps. 37:4,5 *"Delight... commit, trust... and He shall bring it to pass"*

What is the "it" that God trying to bring to pass in your life? (Jer. 29:11)

The "wise men" found the "it" for their lives because they were willing to "follow, find, focus, and Flex" (adjust) their lives around God's plan. (Are You?)

Application: Which was "negotiable" or non-essential?

Follow the star? (light) Find the Christ?

Focus? (worship, give) Flex (adjust) around this "light"?

Which is "negotiable" to you?

Pr. 29:18 *"Where there is no vision, the people perish"*

- What's your "vision"?
- Where (who) does it come from?
- Where is it taking you?
- What does it take to sidetrack you?
- What will be different in 2018?

Mt. 2:1 *"We have come to worship Him."*

What have you "come" for?