

'A GOOD & PERFECT NEW YEAR'
(Recognizing the Good & Perfect Gifts God has for You in 2020)
James 1:12-25

2020 Vision

At this time of year, some people reflect back at last year. Others are trying to peer into the future of the year ahead. Nothing can be done about the past, but the coming year is not a fatalistic destiny we have no ability to do anything about. If you are a Christian there are some things on the calendar that are predestined for the world because they are prophesied in Scripture, but much of the day to day future is up to how we choose to live our lives-- obedient to God or doing our own thing in the world.

Unbelievers seek astrologers, fortune tellers, palm readers, or other soothsayer methods to get foreknowledge about the year ahead. Christians are forbidden to even consult such superstitious, demonic predictions about things yet to happen. We are to trust in the Lord completely (***Proverbs 3:5-6***) knowing that He loves us and will only allow that which is in His perfect will in making us grow in grace, serve others, and bless Him (***Colossians 3:17***).

General information about the future has been written out for us in the Bible as prophetic Scripture, but most of the detailed specifics of our daily lives is not. And since our view of the future isn't a 20/20 vision we need to put on *spiritual spectacles* daily to see very clearly how we are to *walk in grace* every single day (***Matthew 6:33-34, Ephesians 5:10-11***).

Non-Christians consult crystal balls, tarot cards, tea leaves, and other demonically manipulated superstitions to guess about the future, but the Christian's spiritual spectacles to see God's way with 20/20 vision don't change what was going to happen anyway, but they do help us see the Lord's way through, around, or as an overcomer in anything God allows into our lives. Even as Christians, we need the corrective lenses of Bible study and prayer without ceasing to perceive what's coming daily and the way God wants us to deal with it.

Our *spiritual spectacles* get us focused on seeing things through God's eyes and feeling His impulses within our spirit while we pray, steering us away from the wrong and toward what is good and perfect (***Romans 14:22-23, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22***). Like spectacles we wear to help our vision, God's spiritual spectacles of Bible study and continual prayer must be worn, not just possessed.

If you leave your glasses on a table or prop them up on the top of your head, they won't be of much benefit in correcting your vision to a 20/20 view of the reality of things and the biblical way to deal with it (***Philippians 1:9-11***).

Some of 2020 is in God's plan as *your spiritual destiny*; but some of 2020 is yet to be determined by whether or not you faithfully *wear your glasses*-- your *spiritual spectacles*-- each and every day in the coming year. Much of the future is beyond your control, but as you see it day by day through Christ's eyes and God's Word, you will experience 20/20 spiritual vision throughout 2020 and beyond (***Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 3:14-21***). **PtL**

Good & Perfect New Year Resolutions
(3 Things that Guarantee You Full Blessability in 2020)
James 1:12-25

Resolution #1: Cost Estimation / Will this be worth it in the end?
(Who or Whatever Tempts You to Sin is Never a Blessing from God)

“Blessed is the man (or woman) who endures temptation for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he (she) is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren ...”

1:12-15

Resolution #2: Truth Evaluation / What does God say about this?
(Anything or Anyone Contradicting God’s Word Is Not a Blessing from Above)

“Do not be deceived my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man doesn’t produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.”

1:15-21

Resolution #3: Self Examination / Lifestyle Application?
(Whoever Hears, Reads, Studies and Obeys Will Be Blessed)

“But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he (she) is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he (she) who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he (she) does.”

1:22-25

God’s Christmas Gift Application:

The Christmas story in **Luke 2** concludes with a general overview of Jesus’ life and presents it as the typical ‘good and perfect’ life for all who continue to care for and experience the new life God gives to all true Christians: **“And the Child (Jesus) grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40)**. This lifestyle continued during Jesus’ teen and young adult years: **“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52)**.

If you have received God’s Gift of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, His Spirit has entered you and is enabling you to have the very same Spirit-filled life. Living by the 3 resolutions above in 2020 won’t always be easy – it wasn’t for Jesus either – but when you look back on life someday, you will have no regrets, plenty of blessings, and an awesome future in God’s Kingdom on earth and all eternity in heaven to look forward to with great hope and joy. Have a happy, holy New Year in His love and grace (**Proverbs 4:18**)!

PtL