

## Happy New Year

Happy New Year! A time of new things, of new hopes and dreams. A time of new beginnings. Jesus is the source of all new beginnings. Because He is the creator of new things and new people, Jesus has the power to re-create us and give us brand new lives when we give ourselves to Him. Unfortunately, many of us, for a long time, thought we had to try to bring about a new beginning for ourselves and then give ourselves to God. We have it backwards. While we struggle, God invites us to come. If we believe in His power to change us, accept Him and the new life He offers, we will become children of God filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

The Bible teaches us about Jesus, the living word when it says: *In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. He was in the beginning with God. He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. Life itself was in him, and this life gives light to everyone. The light shines through the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. But although the world was made through him, the world didn't recognize him when he came. Even in his own land and among his own people, he was not accepted. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.* (From John 1)

The same power that created the universe is available to create a new life from our shattered hopes. The light of that life that exposes and drives away the darkness of the human race is the same light that brightens the dark corners of our personal world. The source of all life and true light of the world is the source of our recovery. Eternal life and true recovery are ours when we believe what God says. We need to renounce our tendency to do things our own way and receive the one whom God sent to help us.

We are not God. God has power and wisdom far greater than ours. Jesus Christ alone has the power to forgive sins and give us right relationship as children of God. We are invited to believe and

accept. We are not asked to produce or reason our way to our own solutions. We are gently but clearly informed that Jesus Christ is different and what He brings to our lives is the one true light that can show us how to live beyond our shadows.

As we live in this new healthy dependency on God's wisdom and God's power, we will find the satisfaction and acceptance our hearts have longed for all our lives.

How do we welcome God into our lives? **First** of all, by a simple decision to live in relationship with God. **Second**, we surrender our own twisted thinking to God's description of life and we start obeying a new set of principles life, as described in the Bible. We need to read God's word and learn what God says works in this new life. It's a lifetime of new choices for God's way rather than my own. Mature Christian friends can help us sort through priorities in the beginning and know where to start with new lifestyle choices. **Third**, when God's way of living and my usual way of doing things conflict, I need to change and turn to the new way. Ongoing surrender is vital to a new life. **Fourth**, we need to talk to God and share our lives, our circumstances, our hopes and our dreams with God and trust that God hears, God understands, and God cares. **Fifth**, God stresses that we are to reach out to care for others, and share the good news with them by our life and by our words.

It's a new year, a new beginning. Will I have more of the old this year or will I welcome God's new way of life?

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How has my handling of questions and problems enabled me to realize the presence of Jesus Christ in my life?
2. In what area do God and I most often disagree? What does it mean to surrender without "stuffing" my questions, fear or pain?
3. Many Christians relapse. What needs to happen in me in order for God's power to make a difference in my life so I don't need to?
4. What does it mean for me to be a "witness to the light" or "to carry this message to others?"