



## God Loves Me To Life



It's the beginning of a new year and God is calling you and I to think about life.

- The gift of our life is valuable to God.
- The new year ahead is filled with hope because God promises
  - ✓ to be with us,
  - ✓ to lead us, and
  - ✓ to help us face what comes.

**SAM** -- Four years ago today my family was watching the life of my little nephew - 1 lb 13 oz.

- ✓ He was born at 26 weeks - one week beyond the sextuplets born in Women's Hospital 3 days ago
- ✓ His little twin had died after four days.
- ✓ He was okay but still had challenges

So many of my family loved that little guy - grandpa, his uncles and so on.

Now that little life is a lively 4-yr old - on Thanksgiving Weekend when I was there he was entertaining the world.

He's living in relationship and we all think about our connection to him, his parents, and all the rest of the family -- and to life every time we see him.

It's fearful to **face an unknown** time, such as the year ahead, alone.

- ✓ We already feel pressures and
- ✓ worry about what's coming next.

### GOD'S INTENTION

It's wonderful to know that God never intended us to deal with it on our own.

- ✓ We were created to live in relationship and
- ✓ experience loving care in every set of circumstances.
- ✓ We were created to live as children of a loving Heavenly Father.

**BUT SO MUCH OF OUR LIFE EXPERIENCE TAKES PLACE APART FROM GOD ...**

So much of our life experience takes place apart from God, either

- ✓ because we didn't know God was there for us or
- ✓ we chose to deal with our circumstances on our own.

God is not surprised when things don't work out for us in those times. He tells us in the Bible, "**apart from me you can do nothing.**" (John 15:5) No matter how hard we try we'll fail.

So, as we begin this new season of our life, if we feel like a failure, our first move is to

- ✓ turn to God and tell Him we're sorry for trying to live without Him.
- ✓ It's time to admit to God that we just can't do it alone.

### CAR EXAMPLE

It's like trying to run a car with no gas.

- ✓ We can turn the ignition again and again but all we'll do is drain the battery.
- ✓ We can push the car and try to get it started but it just won't go.

There's nothing wrong with the car. It is simply made to operate with gas in the tank and without gas, it can't Go anywhere.

- ✓ We need to get a red can,
- ✓ fill it with gas and
- ✓ pour it into the gas tank of the car.

Then a simple turning of the ignition and the engine will turn over, ready to take us where we need to go.

How do we fill our lives with what we need in order to get to where we need to go in life?

- ✓ We need to fill ourselves with God.
- ✓ We need to find out and tell ourselves **who God really is** and **what God has promised** us.
- ✓ We need to start praying and asking God to help us live in relationship with Him and His truth.
- ✓ We need to organize what we do around God's loving promises to be with us and to care for us.

## WHAT ARE THOSE PROMISES?

God knows us and is interested in what happens to us. **O Lord, you have searched me and you know me ... You are familiar with all my ways.** (Psalm 139:1,3 NIV)

God really cares about my experiences, my feelings, and my circumstances. **The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. He redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion. He satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.** (Psalm 103:8, 3-5 NIV)

SOUNDS SIMPLE - SO WHAT'S THE CATCH? WHY DON'T WE ALL JUMP ON BOARD AS SOON AS WE HEAR ABOUT THESE THINGS?

Many of us have the impression that God just has a list of wrongs that we've done.

- ✓ He's never satisfied no matter how hard we try.
- ✓ He's impatient that we're not who He wants us to be and
- ✓ He's often angry and punishing.

Nothing could be further from the truth. **The Lord is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.** (from 2 Peter 3:9 and Hebrews 13:5 NIV)

As we face the new and unknown before us, we sometimes don't dare to trust God and put our faith in Him because we think God has a long list of "don'ts" and a harsh list of "shoulds". We think that if we follow God, He'll take all the fun out of life.

The devil has done a great job of deceiving us because the truth is **"The thief (the devil) comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."** (John 10:10 NIV)

It's time to find the life we've always wanted. It's time to leave the disappointment and despair behind.

Our loving Heavenly Father stands ready today to help us face our unknown future with hope and real help.

Will we accept His offer of a loving and caring relationship?

Will we let God help us as a father provides for and protects his children?

Our job is to get to know this loving God and then to trust and obey Him so he can bless us and care for us.

God clearly wants to give this kind of loving relationship to us, "See how much our Heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are." 1 John 3

God chooses to offer us relationship even though we are sometimes living

- ✓ in whining and self pity like a child who pouts in the corner
- ✓ Sometimes we live in anger and violence and blame and resentment just like a child who pounds fists and feet in the middle of a temper tantrum.
- ✓ At other times we just, run away.

Each of these children is unavailable to be loved and to experience love even though the parent loves the child dearly and is providing a set of circumstances that is healthy and safe and caring.

- ✓ They don't want a hug.
- ✓ They don't want a gift.
- ✓ They don't want anything.

So the question for you and I at the beginning of this new year is:

**Will I let God love me to life today?**

1. Will I pretend God isn't there and try to push forward in my life like the car without gas?
2. Will I hang onto a false impression of an angry punishing God and try to live independently?
3. Will I pout, rage, or isolate instead of placing my broken heart in the hands of a healing God?

OR

Will I now turn to God and say, "Here's my will and my life. I hand it over to your care."

We've just celebrated Christmas - the story of God coming close to us to show us how much our Heavenly Father loves us. Jesus lived on earth, healed people and cared for them. Then he died on the cross to take the consequences for our broken actions and harmful ways. He was our substitute because our actions really do deserve punishment. We've been wrong and done wrong and harmed ourselves and others. The amazing thing about God though, is that he will take those consequences on Himself if we'll give them away.

So, let's each ask ourselves: **As I face this new year will I try it on my own again or will I let God love me to life?**