

A New Year

It is 2024, another year has gone by. Personally, I never thought I would reach this year. If I would have known I would be around this long, I might have taken better care of myself. New Year's is a time of reflection. We think about what we've done and what we want to be better at. We think of the changes we want to make in our lives. Things that will make us healthier, wiser, happier, more fulfilled. These are mostly good things; flaws we see in ourselves. The frustration comes when we want the same thing year after year, or when we do well at our changes and then comes February and our lives slip back into the same habits. Why do we fail? Is it perhaps because we trust our flawed selves instead of relying on the one who calls to us. Are our changes just cosmetic and don't address the areas that we are weak in. Do we admit to God our failures, ask him to change us and then blame him when we fail? I am puzzled by people who don't accept the blame for their own conduct. Was it Flip Wilson who always said, "The devil made me do it?" A good excuse but won't get you a free pass. The devil tempted Jesus and offered him the world if he would deny God. Jesus denied the devil's power, we too are tempted by earthly things, and in our temptation, we look away from the God who loved us before we were born, even before we were formed in our mother's womb, and had a plan for us. Let us remember Jesus called us to service, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to serve those less fortunate.

1 Corinthians 13:2-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered. It does not keep a record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Almighty God, let us heed your call, to serve you, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and help the unfortunate. We ask that you help us to comfort the sick and the grieving. We ask Lord that you be with our Pastor as he serves people in Africa, grant him safety and good health, be with him in his travel, and in his service to the needs of others. Be with those who are serving with him. May all they do be in your name almighty God. Be with our church, may we serve others always, may we be the hands and feet of Jesus now, in this place, in your name. Be with our staff and leaders, bless those who take on new roles this month, guide them and bless their work. May all we do be pleasing to you almighty God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson