



HOW TO FOCUS YOUR LIFE FOR THE NEW YEAR*

*"So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom."
Psalm 90:12*

How do you begin the new year 2021 with a renewed spiritual focus? Two things are necessary: (1) a *DELIBERATE SPACE* for God and His guidance; and (2) a *SIMPLE STRUCTURE* for discipline and support. Here are five practical suggestions and guidelines on how you can create space and structure for the new year.

1. SOLITUDE & SILENCE: Begin the new year in a deliberate space for God.

- 1) As you begin the new year, spend at least 2-3 hours of solitude and silence to just listen to God.
- 2) Go to your favorite solitary place—a park, a library, a beach, etc.—and listen to God's guidance on this single question: *"Lord, what do you desire to see in my life this year?"*
- 3) The key principle to remember during solitude and silence is this: **BE ACTIVELY PASSIVE.**
 - Don't be *merely active* by too much reading, writing or doing things to keep yourself busy.
 - Don't be *merely passive* by daydreaming or falling asleep.
 - Do remember to wait for the Lord in silence, but be *actively passive* by intently listening to God. This is a time for solitude *before* God (as opposed to merely being alone).

2. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION STATEMENT: Write out your spiritual direction for the new year 2021.

- 1) As you seek God's guidance in your solitude and silence, discern one word (or one phrase) as your spiritual focus of the year; from that one word or phrase, write a one-sentence statement of your life's overall spiritual direction for the year 2021. In so doing, write this sentence in a form of a covenant with God—"Lord, I will _____." (e.g., "Lord, I will treasure your WORD each day.")
- 2) Look ahead at the new year and ask God:
 - *"Lord, what do you desire to see in my life this new year 2021?"*
 - ✓ *"is there anything that would please you in this year?"*
 - ✓ *"Is there anything in me that displeases you?"*
 - ✓ *"Is there anything that you desire me to see (which I am not aware of)?"*

3. MY VERSE OF THE YEAR: Choose a Scripture verse(s) that can help your spiritual focus.

- 1) Select a verse(s) that will help you focus on your spiritual direction statement.
- 2) Post it. Carry it with you. Memorize it—let it be a part of your constant thought life!

4. TOP 10 LIST: Have a plan to follow through your decisions for the next three months.

- 1) Towards the end of your solitude and silence, write down some practical decisions to arrange your life—including some spiritual disciplines that may be needed and helpful for the direction. From this list, pick only 10 most wanted items as your "rules of life" for the next three months.
- 2) Leave # 1 for Quiet Time as the ultimate "top priority" of your life.
- 3) However, feel free to organize the rest of them in any order. The rest is not in the order of importance.
- 4) **Start with a verb** on each item—this will help you to think in concrete terms of action. Keep the **MAPS** principles in mind—**M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **P**ractical and **S**pecific.
- 5) Keep your sentences simple, succinct, and clear.
- 6) Consider all areas of life: **Think "GOD-CENTEREDNESS" in every arena of your life!**
 - Spiritual/Social/Mental/Physical Life
 - Family/Work/School/Church/Ministry/Friendship/Relationship Roles/Character-building
- 7) Pray for your Top 10 List and share it with a few friends. Evaluate and revise your Top 10 List quarterly. Refocus on the items that didn't work well and refine measurable ways to train yourself for godliness.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY: Seek vertical & horizontal accountability.

- 1) It is very helpful and wise to have accountability both vertically and horizontally.
- 2) *Vertical Accountability:* Write to God about your decisions in your spiritual journal.
- 3) *Horizontal Accountability:* Share your decisions of your Top 10 List as well as your spiritual direction statement of the year with a friend (or two) who can hold you accountable throughout the quarter/year.

