

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

January 6, 2007

A New Year

Gary Henry

The new year ahead of us will be, in some ways, like every other year that has ever been. It will repeat cycles that are centuries old. There will be the ageless round of days and seasons. There will be births and deaths, joy and sorrow. There will be triumphs and defeats, honor and shame. Solomon, the wise, perceived this truth: *"That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun"* (Eccl. 1:9).

But in other ways the new year ahead will be unique, a solitary set of events that have never before taken place and that can never happen again. As long as the world lasts, there will never again be exactly the same combination of circumstances. Never again will we be at precisely this point in our lives. Never again will we be able to see things from exactly the viewpoint we enjoy this year. Doors will open that have been shut, and will never be open again.

Because of the one-time opportunities the next twelve months will bring, the new year will be what we make of it. The Scriptures counsel us to "redeem" the time carefully (Eph. 5:16). We may joke about "new year's resolutions," but without resolve the new year will be less than it should be. We ought to rise early and work late, crafting the year's moments into worthwhile achievements. The unique value of the coming year will be damaged if we fail to act energetically. This year is ours to do with as we choose.

Sadly, many of life's greatest deeds are often left undone. Rather than "seizing the day" and proactively doing the good that is within our reach, we presume that there will be plenty of opportunity "later" to take care of these things. Through simple neglect and the mere postponement of effort, we let months and years slip by unused. The result is that our lives are unimproved. Solomon said, *"Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks"* (Eccl. 10:18). If you're like me, your life's "house" is leakier than it should be, given the time you've had to work on it.

Looking at the opportunities we failed to make use of in past years, we often wish we had been more decisive and more consistently exercised our will in the direction of good. For most of us, regret is an all-too-real component of our emotional life. And of course, the reason why that is so is that we have failed to discipline ourselves. As someone has said, there is no alternative: either we will live with the pain of self-discipline or we will live with the pain of regret. But the pain of regret can best be diminished by acting wisely in the present. During the new year, we will again be presented with daily opportunities to use ourselves actively for God's purposes. What will we do with those opportunities? For myself, I have resolved to do *each day* things that *tomorrow* I will be glad I did *yesterday!* I hope you will join me in this resolve.

We ought to keep in mind, however, that the true value of the new year consists in what God will make of it, and not we ourselves. Ultimately, we are able to speak and act for good only because of the graciousness of God. Honor for the new year's accomplishments should be His. To Christians, Peter wrote, *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet 4:10-11).

A year is not much time, really. Before we are ready, it will be this time next year. When that time has come, what will be our memories of *this* year? This writer’s wish is that you may put first things first all through this year. When the next twelve months have come and gone, may you have grown, with God’s help, toward Him in many ways. May you walk with Him, and live for Him each and every day.

The Greatest Math Equation

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \text{ Lord} \\ + \quad 3 \text{ nails} \\ \hline 4 \text{ giveness!} \end{array}$$

“Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty.” – Psalm 104:1

News and Notes

The **2008 directory** is now ready and on the table in the back.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC. He is having problems with ongoing infections.

Ken and Rhonda Hull have a new e-mail address. It is kenrhondahull@comcast.net. Please update your directory.

Cotton and Nancy Read continue to have breathing problems.

Ame White had an accident with her wheel chair running over her leg.

Robert Wray went to the emergency room with breathing problems but is now back at the nursing home. He is also having problems with his kidneys trying to shut down on him.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Robert Jenkins** (here AM, then CA).

New Reports from men we support: **Gary Hunt** (NY), **Chad Lynn** (WV).

Note – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know by Saturday night. Thanks!
– Troy

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).