

# APPLES OF GOLD

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## THE NEW YEAR'S TREASURES

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# A NEW YEAR

IS NEW REALLY BETTER?

There are new houses, new color schemes, new diets, new clothes, new marriages, new babies, new jobs, and new friends. Those are great, but what is so significant about a new year?

We say it's a time for starting over.

Yet only the last digit of the year changes. It's simply another new day. True - every day is an opportunity to do something new, maybe to begin again, but some things are better when they're old.

## What are some valuable things that are OLD?

The OLD hymns

The OLD, OLD story

The OLD cross versus the new cross

"Gimme that OLD time religion"

OLD fashioned cooking

OLD fashioned purity

The OLD homestead

Dad's OLD Bible

The OLD paths

OLD friends



## *GEMS FROM PASTOR ROB*

Have a Happy New Year

1. GOD WILL PROTECT YOU, BUT HE WON'T PAMPER YOU.
  - a. Jacob was a conniver and deceiver. He wanted to do it his own way. He ran from his problems. He refused to trust God.
  - b. Esau wanted to kill Jacob, so Jacob ran and lived for 20 years in the wilderness in the "school of hard knocks."
  - c. Esau comes with an army, but God says He will protect Jacob. God still lets the army come against him; He didn't remove the difficulty.
2. GOD WILL HURT YOU, BUT NOT HARM YOU.
  - a. "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply" (A.W.Tozer).
  - b. God came to Jacob as the Angel of the Lord. God fights with him to deliver him from his self-sufficiency.
  - c. At daybreak, when the Angel is going to leave, Jacob begs Him to stay and bless him.
  - d. First, the Angel cripples Jacob. Now the Angel lets Jacob know that He wants Jacob to pursue Him. This is when most Christians quit.

- e. Now Jacob realizes he has nothing but God.
- f. We should beg, but not bargain with God.
- g. If God is going to do anything with us, He must hurt us first.

3. GOD WILL BREAK AND BLESS YOU
  - a. God gives Jacob a new name – Israel.
  - b. Israel is still crippled and limps.
  - c. But Israel is going to receive a crown.
  - d. One reason Israel will be blessed is because he's now broken, and God loves broken things:  
BROKED BREAD  
ALABASTER BOX  
LAMPS  
CHRIST'S BODY  
A BROKEN AND CONTRITE  
HEART



# FOR and ABOUT SENIORS

"Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,

.....and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds." Then he added, "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come." (Psalm 71:18)

There is a line in the play, "Angel at My Shoulder" that always causes me to smile. The new minister of a church is introduced to the old janitor who has been there a long time. Striving to be cordial the young minister asks, "Have you lived all your life in this town?" "Nope, not yet!" says the janitor.

I like that. He hadn't shut down or given up on living. Ogden Nash once wrote, "People expect old men to die; they look at them with eyes that wonder when."

Attitude has so much to do with the aging process and how you respond to it. Some shut down at the first challenge from arthritis or worn-out cartilage in that left knee; but others focus on what they can do and keep moving.

Moses, as you may well remember, was 80 when he started his greatest work in life, delivering God's people from Egypt. David Ben-Gurion gave birth to Israel at a time in life when most of his contemporaries were lounging in the sun on the Riviera (retirement age). At age 85 Monet painted his finest work.

One of my heroes, Jonathan Goforth, returned to China and opened a new work to the Gospel at the age of 70. Michelangelo started work on the Sistine Chapel at—are you ready for this? — age 76, and was still sculpting masterfully at age 89.

On his 88th birthday, Arturo Rubinstein told the press that he had reached the happiest part of life for a pianist, that of playing encores. He said, "That is when we pianists feel always the happiest, giving encores. We can play all sorts of things that we want to. People applaud. That is just my state of life."

Someone once described the senior years as The Metallic Age when you have silver in your hair, gold in your teeth, and lead in your heels. But they failed to add that there is wisdom in your soul, experience in your past, and compassion in your heart because you have learned that the race is not always to the swift or the victory to the smartest. That, too, must count for something.

True, the elderly among us slow down some. At the age of 82, Arthur Fiedler cut down the number of concerts he was able to give, reducing the load of 194 a year to just 164 a year. For many, those senior years are the very best of their lives. Jonathan Swift once wrote, "no wise man ever wishes to be younger." But I hasten to say that for many, something of our youth is wasted wishing we were older.

"What can I do?" older folks sometimes ask, telling me quickly what they cannot do. **First**—you can pray, something that requires time, commitment and energy but something that pays great dividends. Your prayers can be a powerful link between the resources of heaven and the needs of your grandchildren, the troubled marriages of younger couples, and the great needs of our world. **Second** — you can share your wisdom and experience, but just not everything you know all at once. In his senior years, David, in Psalm 71, cried out, "Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds." Then he added, "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come."

I am convinced that there are some things which we can learn only by experience, perhaps described as wisdom; and when we who are older can by our lives, our conversation, and our examples share that, our children and our contemporaries are the better for it. **Sharing your life** is the subject of our next commentary. Resource reading: Psalm 71 (Source: Harold Sala)

A monastery decides to start a fish and chips store. When the store opens, a client comes in, and asks one of the clerics: "are you the fish fryer?"

"Oh, no," the cleric answers, "I'm the chip monk!"

As migration approached, two elderly vultures decided to go by airplane.

When they checked their baggage, the attendant noticed that they were carrying two dead raccoons.

"Do you wish to check the raccoons through as luggage?" she asked.

"No, thanks," replied the vultures. "They're carrion."

If you receive an email from the Department of Health telling you not to eat canned pork because of swine flu, ignore it.

It's just Spam.

A man at a restaurant asks the waiter, "How do you prepare your chickens?"

The waiter replies, "Nothing special. We just tell'em they're gonna die."

# HIDDEN TREASURES



1. **Last month's question:** What is the last enemy of mankind which is to be forever destroyed? **ANSWER: Death (I Cor. 15:26)**
2. **This month's question:** What were the three supernatural events that occurred at the death of Jesus on the cross?

## REWARDS IN HEAVEN - By Dr. Randy Alcorn

In the descriptions of Heaven and crowns to be received for faithfulness here on earth, what does it mean for us to rule over cities and judge the angels? The government won't be a democracy, a majority rule, or be driven by opinion polls. Instead, every citizen of Heaven will have an appointed role.

In addition, no one will feel worthless or insignificant regardless of our rewards, large or small. Maybe God will create new beings for us to rule. Who will rule over us? Other people. As rulers we will be able to enable, equip, and guide, offering wisdom and encouragement to those under our authority.

The fears we experience now in places of leadership or speaking in public will be all gone. Each thing God wants us to do, He'll equip and wire us for it. We will also enjoy it.

If we didn't like to sing or read or eat certain things here, those dislikes will be gone. It's possible there will be animals, and some of us will rule over them. Maybe we will manage some of God's other creations.

However, natural born leaders here on earth who have not been faithful, probably will not be given leadership positions in Heaven.

The need for government didn't come about on earth as a result of sin. God governed the universe before Satan fell. God

commanded Adam and Eve before the fall to rule. When "peace on earth" was promised at Christ's birth, it is yet future. God is now grooming us for leadership, watching to see how we demonstrate our faithfulness. Christ isn't just preparing a place for us, but He is preparing US for the place.

There is a vast difference between the world now and what it will be eternally when restored. Its present condition is evil, so when we read verses about the world, we must add "as it is now."

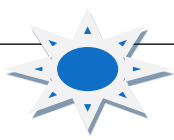
"Friendship with the world (as it is now, under the Curse) is hatred toward God" (James 4:4).

"Do not be conformed to this world ..." (as it is now, under the Curse) (Romans 12:2).

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (as it is now, under the Curse) (I Cor. 3:19).

Who will be the rulers? The poor in spirit, the meek, those who are persecuted because of righteousness. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Who is meek and humble? Who works behind the scenes doing menial jobs here as servants of one another? They will be the rulers and the kings of the New Earth.


- Do not underestimate the therapeutic power of a hug.
- The Church is God's original social network.
- Life is not about me...it's about us.



## Witnessing Challenge

Are you grateful for Calvary? Do you look at the cross with tears in your eyes? Then show God your gratitude. Give Him your "widows mite" of your evangelistic witness. The incident of the poor widow giving her last two coins to God shows us that only the gift that COSTS, counts. God knows what it takes for you to stand up for the Gospel. Perhaps for you, giving a tract to an unsaved person may be the equivalent (on a "courage level") to some other Christian standing up and preaching in the open air. So don't let fear stop you. Say, "If God is for me, nothing can be against me. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Then do it! You probably won't be thrown to the lions, or burned at the stake for giving out a tract at Wal-Mart!

# Busy



ARE YOU TOO BUSY NOWADAYS TO ATTEND CHURCH, SERVE OTHERS, TAKE ON NEW RESPONSIBILITIES? CONSIDER THE WORD **B U S Y**. SOMETIMES IT CAN MEAN **BEING UNDER SATAN'S YOKE**.

**BUSYNESS:** Without realizing it, you can become addicted to **busyness**. You become more and more tense, your stress level rises, and you are irritable with those whom you really love and esteem. Honestly, you are not the loving, caring person you once were—something that contributes to the growing pool of brokenness and conflict in our homes and lives today.

So what's our greatest need today? Better organizational skills? Knowing how to do a better job of managing? Learning to be more efficient? Or **whittling down the "to do list,"** realizing you aren't Superman or Superwoman, you can't do everything, and—far more important—God never intended you to do so much. You've got to relearn what makes life worth living—not increasing your production but increasing your compassion, your care for others, your ability to relax and be the person God wants you to be.

The only way to establish priorities is to recognize that certain tasks and responsibilities are not worth the price you pay to accomplish them. **The need does not constitute the calling**, and it is far better to refuse to make some things your number one priority when you sacrifice the best things and, certainly, the best life—the one God intended for you.

Long before there were computers, iPods, and high-octane stress, God said, "**Be still, and know that I am God**" (Psalm 46:10). The phrase "be still" means to cease from your striving, your activity, yes, your busyness. "Be still...know that I am God." Is there a connection between disconnecting from the busyness of life and a relationship with God, the kind that makes you realize **His sufficiency is more important than yours**? There is. And that is precisely why quiet time is necessary. Haste is the parent of most of our mistakes, the ones we make in a hurry when we haven't had time to think through things, to pray about them, to seek the mind of God who knows the future and who knows what is best for His children.

**You are as busy as you choose to be** and as addicted to the thrill of "more" as you allow yourself. Take time, friend. Pull the plug on busyness and get control of your life before it controls you. Be still and know that God is God. Read Psalm 46. (Source: Guidelines for Living by Harold Sala, November 2023)

- The opposite of love is not hate - it's selfishness.
  - Do the math. Count your blessings.
- Conduct is the best proof of character.

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