

WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

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LOVING JESUS IN 2023 AND BEYOND. Number 82



SCRIPTURE
BASED
OUTLOOK ON
A VARIETY OF
TOPICS



This New Year's Eve, by the grace of God, I will be spending time with a precious elderly Christian couple and perhaps a few others. We are hoping to dedicate a few hours together to pray for the things we feel on our hearts as the New Year dawns.



We want to pray to be closer to Him, to be purged and pruned and to love Him more. John 15:1-5

We also want to be more obedient to God, so we will pray for each other. We also see so many signs of the End Time happening around the world, that we will be praying against the devices of the enemy and that they will not affect or hinder us getting out God's Message in 2023 and beyond. **

In short, we will pray also for more unity and more love for each other, so that we won't remain islands unto ourselves, but work and co-operate for His glory and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

If you get this message on or just

after December 31st, don't feel bad if you want to try to do the same thing, that would be great for you; gather even just one or two or more if you can and pray together with them, or suggest it to your church. Matthew 18:19-20

In my younger years, which were primarily on mission fields in South America, India and central Europe, at this time of year we often conducted something which we called 'The Candlelight Service' on every New Year's Eve.



It went like this, and you may like to try it.

Whoever could be present came at an evening meeting usually around late evening or in the afternoon before the evening meal. We would bring with us written down on a paper;

- The three things we were most thankful for that year that

God had done for us.

- The three things we would pray for especially for ourselves for the coming year

- A verse God had personally given us for the coming year

- and we would share all these things in a circle. This was a time of dedication for each of us.

As each person began to share, they would light a small candle from a central big candle already placed on the table which represented Jesus. (We are not Catholics!)

Finally, after all had shared, and all the individual candles were now placed back on the table with 'Jesus' we would praise the Lord together and burst out in some form of singing as we felt led by the Spirit. These events were always a very deep and inspiring experience, after which a Pastor or senior missionary would close the meeting and/or ask God to speak to us as we sat there quietly before Him.

Cool eh?

Many people shared such wonderful verses the Lord had given them. I do remember several verses I received from God for one of these events and it has always remained with me quite deeply in my spirit. I share them here below as the message for this year from me to you:

John 14: 21 **The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him.** [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]

22 Judas, not Iscariot, asked Him, Lord, how is it that You will reveal Yourself [make Yourself real] to us and not to the world?

23 Jesus answered, **If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word** [obey My teaching]; **and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.**

24 Anyone who does not [really] love Me does not observe and obey My teaching. And the teaching which you hear and heed is not Mine, but [comes] from the Father Who sent Me.

God knows what message you need for this coming year. Ask Him today while there's still time and before the mad rush of the world continues in 2023.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, MY BROTHER AND SISTER WITH JESUS!

** JOB 5:8 As for me, I would seek God and inquire of and require Him, and to God would I commit my cause—

9 Who does great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number,

10 Who gives rain upon the earth and sends waters upon the fields,

11 So that He sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn He lifts to safety.

12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise or anything of [lasting] worth.

13 He catches the [so-called] wise in their own trickiness, and the counsel of the schemers is brought to a quick end.



Some links which are nearly as good as this article!

[How Should Christians Approach the New Year?](http://christianity.com) (christianity.com)

[4 Ways to Approach the New Year with Jesus](http://thegospelcoalition.org) (thegospelcoalition.org)

A TESTIMONY FROM NEW YEAR'S EVE 1971.

[\(Taken from the book 'Shake off the Dust' by Jerry Finch\) Shake off the Dust!: True amazing testimonies from a missionary working in over 20 countries with lessons applied for the reader! eBook : FINCH, Jerry, Finch, Jerry: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store](#)

About 8 months before I knew the Lord (I was still 17 years at this time), I had gone with several mates from school to a New Year's Eve celebration in Trafalgar Square in Central London.

The current wisdom was to drink as much cider as possible and once having reached a sufficient state of intoxication, we should dance in the ice-cold waters of the fountains that decorated the square until we were thoroughly wet to the bone and in risk of pneumonia and potential death. This all sounded very appropriate to us youngsters and off we went.

We were assured of a good place to stay, one of my school friends having a relative living close by.



All things went as planned and life was cool. The waters were even cooler, and the flow of cider was definitely as hoped for. Thousands of people were there to usher in the New Year of 1972, perhaps a hundred thousand people previously unknown to each other, sang, shouted, whooped and screamed. All was as 'western' and wonderful and alcoholic or drug-fuelled as it should be.

I myself was a faithful devotee of this ritual by getting absolutely drunk with cider and dancing in the freezing fountains until I remember raising my drunken head from the waters and in a daze seeing a large sign or banner in the middle distance proclaiming the words 'JESUS SAVES'.

Without any thought seemingly, I made my frozen frame and supplied blanket towards that sign. Upon arrival I noticed an old lady speaking with some kind of authority to a fairly large group of listening people. I also listened as best as I could to what she was saying. Her husband stood by her side, both of them being perhaps well into their sixties. At least they looked appropriately ancient to me at the time.

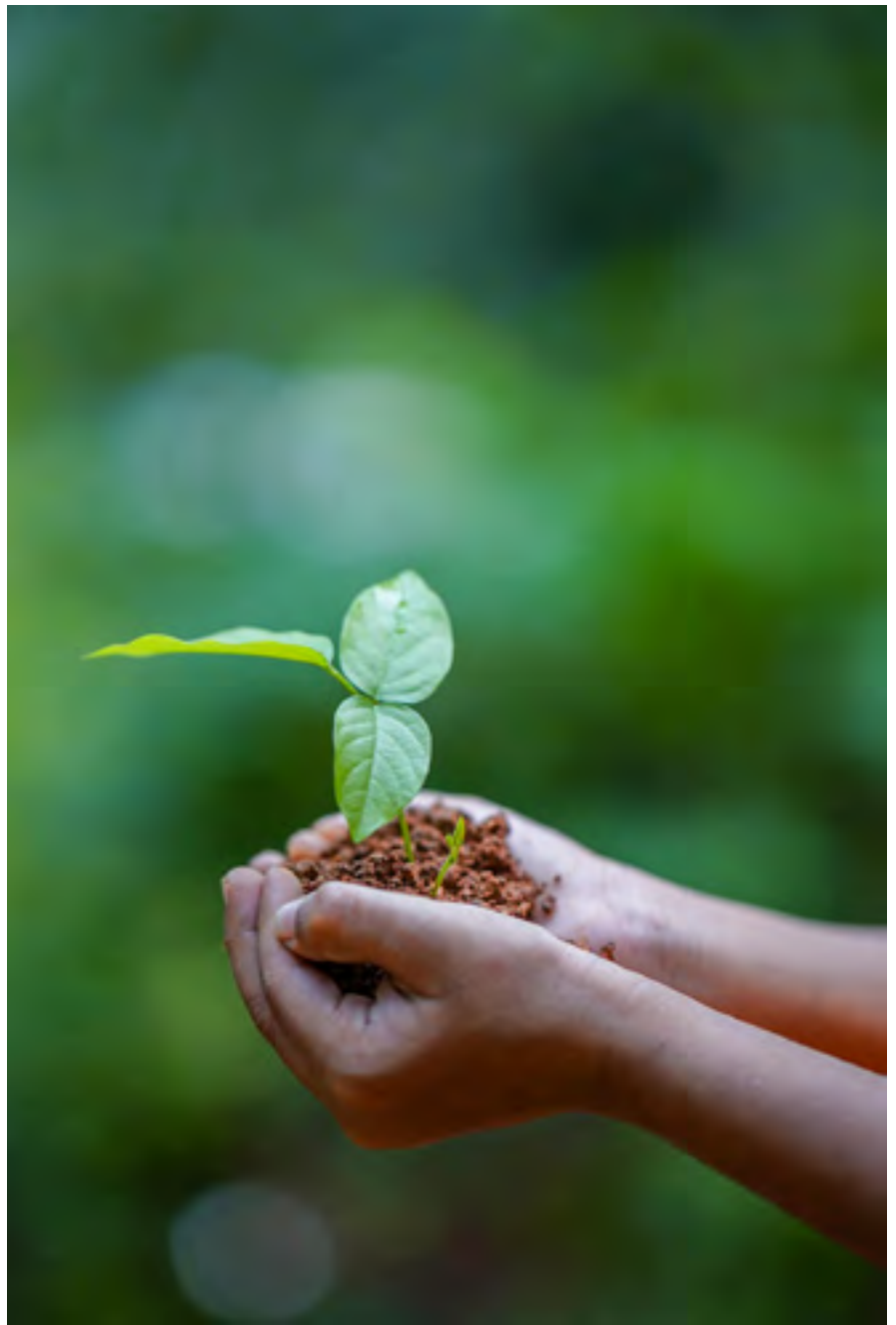
I do vaguely remember the woman saying something about 'The Lord Jesus Christ'. However, what stuck with me more than that at the time, was when she stated that both she and her husband

had somehow 'given up' their normal life and house, apparently to dedicate their full time to 'live on the streets of London and share this Good News' with everyone. I took this to mean that they were either homeless or had moved into a rented place and were at least in full time activity for 'God'.

Somehow her statement affected me quite powerfully. I thought how amazing this must be that this weak old woman and her husband had made this huge change and 'inconvenience' in their lives because they believed in something like God and Jesus and His Love for us.

This was about 8 months before I found Jesus myself, or He found me. Another seed had been planted.

THY WORD HAVE I
HID IN MY HEART,
THAT I MAY NOT
SIN AGAINST THEE.
PSALMS 119:11



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