



# Happy New Year 2023

January 1, 2023

Let's talk about four things that will make you happier and enable you to lead a more blessed life, make a bigger impact, and make the church a life changing force in our community and in the world:

## 1. The Presence of God.

What is it that brings about God's manifest presence in a persons life or in the life of a church?

- If you seek Him with all your heart, you find Him. (Deuteronomy 4:29; Jeremiah 29:13)
- If you draw near to God, He will draw near to you. (James 4:8)
- God inhabits the praises of His people. (Psalm 22:3)

It is important that we are true worshippers, individually and corporately, in 2023.

### Individually – Being a true worshipper is key to:

- A. Being Changed** – *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."* (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- B. Being Fulfilled** – *"...In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."* (Psalm 16:11)
- C. Being Empowered** – *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5)
- D. Being Motivated** – *"Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.. ."* (Proverbs 29:18)

Why are so many people so unmotivated, apathetic, and undisciplined? It is because they have no vision. When we connect with God, we get revelation, vision, and motivation.

### Corporately – We need to be:

#### E. We need to be a worshipping church.

*"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 2:5)

When people of God gather they don't *meet* in the house of God, they *become* the House of God. Come ready to seek the Lord with all your heart.

## 2. The Power of God

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 2:4-6)*

God releases His kingdom power on the earth through the prayers of the saints.

*"You do not have because you do not ask."* (James 4:2)

Don't just think it. Don't just wish for it. Don't just worry out loud. Focus on faith-filled prayer.

Why don't we pray more?

1. Unbelief
2. We just don't schedule it

### **3. The Love of God** – *“And if I ...do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:2)*

We cannot have an impact individually or corporately without love.

What is it that keeps us from loving better than we do? **Overload.**

We live in a culture of overload, but overload sabotages love. Therefore, we must overcome overload if we are going to grow in love.

#### **How do we overcome overload and focus on love?**

##### **A. Consciously choose not to hurry – slow down.**

Choose not hurry this year. Choose to slow down. Notice people around you.

##### **B. Reduce your schedule. (Ephesians 5:15-17)**

Make a schedule of all the things that you are planning on doing this month, and then cut unnecessary things out of your schedule. Some of you are so overcommitted that you don't have time to notice people, much less stop and love them.

##### **C. Limit time with draining, negative people.**

There are people who are always negative. Minimize the amount of time you give to those kind of people.

##### **D. Spend time with caring friends.**

Make sure to spend some time this year with those friends that build you up and bring you joy just being with them. Those times will energize and encourage you. You need to experience love as well as give it to others.

##### **E. Exercise away stress.**

If you are stressed out then you won't be able to love others. Exercise will help you with the stresses of life.

##### **F. Laugh – laughter is good medicine. (Proverbs 17:22)**

The therapeutic benefits of laughter are well established in modern medicine as state of the art, stress reducing therapeutics. Laughter lowers the pulse and blood pressure and seems to improve immune functioning. The happier and healthier you are, the more you will be able to offer to others.

##### **G. Get plenty of sleep (Psalm 127:2)**

Sleep is an act of trust: I am reminded when I go to sleep that the world is in God's hands, not mine. And sleep is good for you.

Even short amounts of sleep debt have adverse effects on the body such as the ability to process carbohydrates, manage stress, maintain proper hormone balance, fight infections, process glucose, critical thinking, memory and mental sharpness, thyroid hormone levels, and the bodies immune system.

##### **H. Focus on loving the person right in front of you.**

Jesus had the toughest job description of all time, and yet He always focused on loving the person right in front of Him. Focus on loving the person right in front of you wherever you are.

Commit to making some changes that will reduce your load, and then focus on loving the person right in front of you.

### **4. The Pleasure of God**

God made each of us unique and to function according to your SHAPE. You were shaped to serve God!  
(S - Spiritual Gifts, H - Heart, A - Abilities, P - Personality, E - Experiences)

Make this the best year yet! Scheduling, planning, and sticking with your plan is key to these things happening!