



A New Year

Starting a new year is a time that is always a mixture of excitement and sadness; and a good time for reflection on what has been and on what is to come. If the passing year has been a good

one, there will be the warmth of remembered pleasures and the satisfaction of service given and accomplishments realized to carry into the new year. If the passing year has been a trying or sad one, its end may bring relief and longing for better things to come.

For many in our world, the prospects for the new year do not seem promising. The political realities we live in are not encouraging or hopeful. We may feel more like we are standing on the edge of disaster than with infinite possibilities in front of us. A number of key world leaders and many citizens are focusing more on themselves and their own wants and need for power or control than on the good of everyone. Ideological differences have become all-consuming and truth, reality, and morals in decision making seem to have been forgotten.

Like each new day, a new year has endless possibilities and no mistakes in it as we stand at its dawning. However, our past choices and each new decision made will impact our future options and how easy it can be to change course or correct past wrongs. Each of us should remember to turn to the Lord for guidance; get the facts; consider the consequences for ourselves and others; and seek wise council when making decisions. We should insist that our leaders do the same. In Christ, the possibility for a bright future is there, but we have been given the responsibility that comes with making choices!

This week, in your prayer time remember:

- The **people and Wildlife of Australia** facing an unprecedented fire season. There are at least 136 fires burning. At least 1,300 homes have been destroyed and at least half a billion animals have died or face extinction as a result of the fires. There are 300 native species in the country. 81% of them are found only in Australia. The fires have already burned 18 million acres.
- **The people of Iran and the political leaders involved on all sides.** Recent U.S. action has heightened tension in the area and resulted in an increasingly dangerous exchange of threats. Pray for restraint and reason to prevail. Pray that all sides seek dialogue not violence.



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