

## THE FIRST 15

Friday, January 10, 2025

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Today is Friday, January 10. This week we prayerfully explore what God has next for us in the upcoming new year.

### OPENING PRAYER

*As I enter a time of prayer, I pause and become still. I calm my thoughts and silence my mind. I breathe deeply and slowly, and center myself upon the presence of God. Come Holy Lord, reveal whatever You have next for me in this new year. I surrender myself to Your pleasing and perfect will, trusting in the knowledge that You work all things together for good. Guide and equip me to fulfill Your desires, purposes and plans. Order my steps, instruct my ways, inspire my intentions and direct my motivations. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE

***“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:8-11***

### REFLECTION

As I peer into the future and seek to make plans for a new year, I sometimes get ahead of what God has for me. If I want to know what is most important to me, I need only look at my calendar and bank account. Where do I spend my time and my money? What most occupies my thoughts?

In this passage from the book of Isaiah, I am reminded that my thoughts and understanding are vastly limited when compared with God's. If that is the case, why would I spend so much time and energy making my own plans for the future, thinking about what I want, deciding where I will go and what I will do without consulting the Lord. God's knowledge and wisdom is where I place my trust for whatever is next.

I gaze outside at the sky on this January day. I look at the beauty of the clouds, the sun, the moon or the stars and consider how far they soar above the earth. In the same way, God's thoughts and ways are far beyond my comprehension and understanding. I am too limited to even consider what God's purposes and plans are for my life. Yet I often lean on my own understanding when it comes to the future. When I have a decision to make or when I am looking for a path forward, I find myself consulting Google rather than God.

How can I spend more time in prayer consulting God about my future? How can I better learn to hear His voice? As the ancient words of the prophet Isaiah tell me, rainy days will come and the water will refresh and nourish the ground bringing the earth to life. God's Word is alive in the same way. God's Word will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purposes for which it is sent. The Word of God will speak into my life and accomplish God's desires and achieve God's purposes.

**Ask:** In a new year, how might I prepare the soil of my heart to receive God's living word and yield fresh fruit for Him? How can I spend more time in God's word in the new year and prayerfully seek to understand His thoughts and ways?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy Lord God, Your Word is truth and has the power to bring forth Your perfect will in the world. Forgive me when I foolishly think my thoughts and ways are enough to guide me. Remind me to slow down, listen to you and allow Your Word to work in me to accomplish Your desires and achieve Your purposes. I place my complete trust and confidence in You to realize my best future. Prepare the soil of my heart to receive what You are speaking into my life. Sow the seed of Your Word in the ground of my soul. Open the scriptures to me and give me understanding. Do not permit Your Word to return empty, but accomplish the plans and purposes You desire through a life surrendered to You. Let me bear fruit for You. Amen.*