

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

By: Jan Davis

Today is Tuesday, January 7. 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

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

REFLECTION

God has a will for the world, all of humanity and each individual person. As Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer, Christians are to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. I can pray for God's will to be accomplished in my life and the lives of those around me. I can pray that I will be able to identify God's will and fulfill it. God's will is always for the good and best - it is right. God has a will for my life, my marriage, my children, my grandchildren, my family, my friends, my church, my occupation, and my future. How do I know it? How do I do it?

In the letter to the Romans, Paul teaches me how I will be able to identify and understand God's will. How do I discover and claim His will for my future? How will I learn to test what I am doing and see if it is in line with God's will? How will I learn to test what I am doing and see if it is adverse to God's will? How can I come to agree with God's direction for me and approve of what God has next for me? Paul indicates this sacred discernment comes from a renewal of the mind, a separation from worldly thought patterns and synchronization with the mind of Christ.

This knowledge begins with surrender. I bow down to worship God and offer myself - body, mind and soul as a living sacrifice. I do this alongside fellow believers in devout awareness of God's great mercy and love demonstrated through the sacrifice of His Son, our Savior, Jesus.

On this cold January morning as I prayerfully consider a new year stretched out before me, I reflect on how God might be guiding me on my journey. Perhaps there is an indication of what God desires for me next in the upcoming year. Maybe a change in my thinking is needed or perhaps a new focus is required. Maybe God wants me to take the next step to understand His

will for my life. Perhaps I have skipped a step or overlooked something needed for me to make progress. No matter what, I can trust God to show me the way through the power of the Holy Spirit, if only I am willingly paying attention.

Ask: How is my mind conformed to this world and not to Christ? What do I need to relinquish in order to more fully surrender myself to God and what He has next for me?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord God, thank You for your great mercy and love. Forgive me when I insist on conforming to the imperfect patterns of this world and prevent Your grace from improving me. Help me understand what it means to truly offer myself as a living sacrifice to You. Work Your grace in me so that I can grow in holiness and live a life that is pleasing to You. Transform my mind and give me a new way of thinking. Change my heart and show me a new way of loving. Awaken my soul and reveal a new way of being. I surrender all to You and seek Your perfect will for me in 2025. Amen.