

*2020-2021*

**r e f l e c t**

**&**

**r e j o i c e**

*looking back to look ahead*

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# I N V I T A T I O N

2020 was certainly one for the books. When I think back to this time last year, specifically the way I curated last year's guide, it is very clear that a global pandemic was nowhere on my periphery. I have found myself putting off looking at this (*hello, New Year's Eve eve edit session*) because I don't want to be reminded of the ambitious goals I had in mind for myself. They remind me, as if I needed any additional reminding, that the year didn't quite pan out how I had hoped. Not only did I not reach the majority/any of my goals, but I also think I may have regressed a pinch. Things that were supposed to increase, like patience, kindness, and self-control, have decreased. The things that were supposed to decrease, like screen time, anxiety, and weight have increased, some more than others and all more than I'd care to admit. So riddle me that, 2020.

But I think there is something to be learned from the goals not reached, experiences not experienced, weight found, not lost, and so on. I know that I am guilty of being a well-intentioned, overly-idealistic visionary with a tendency to dream far beyond my abilities and overcommit when it comes to making resolutions, and I think that if 2020 has taught me anything, it's been revolving around the theme of simplicity. Maybe I don't need to have 10 different goals in 10 different areas; maybe instead I need one goal, like "listen", and take that with me through the myriad of moments that make up each day. Maybe doing one thing mindfully and consistently for a year will yield some actual change.

I am no goal-achieving expert over here. Just hopeful to navigate 2021 with a little more grace, mental fortitude, and self-control than last year.

Before you get started, I encourage you to prepare your heart and mind to look back over the past year. I flipped back through my camera roll through each month to help me remember the moments that made up this year. Contrary to popular belief, there were some great moments amongst all the weird, sad, surreal ones.

I encourage you to invite God into the process of reflecting, remembering, rejoicing, and reorienting. This might not be a complete-in-one-sitting kind of exercise, so intuitively pace yourself as you process.

I don't know what your year has held, but if you're reading this, the Lord has seen you this far. We can celebrate his faithfulness, if nothing else.

*"I will remember the days of old; I will meditate on all that you have done; I will ponder the work of your hands" Psalm 143:7*

STEP 1:

# R E M E M B E R

Ask: What were your favorite moments from this year?

What were the hardest moments of this year?

The Best of Times

The Worst of Times

*"I will remember the days of old; I will meditate on all that you have done; I will ponder the work of your hands" Psalm 143:7*

## STEP 2:

# R E F L E C T

Consider the fruit of the spirit. What did it look like for you to walk in the Spirit this year? Was it evident that the Spirit dwells within you by the way you interacted with others, the way you viewed others, the way you interacted with your circumstances? Reflect.

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Gentleness

Faithfulness

Self-Control

# R E F L E C T

Ask yourself the following questions:

What did you learn this year....

- about yourself?

- about your loved ones?

- about your country?

- about God?

- about people who are different than you?

What made you feel this year....

- what made you happy?

- what did you grieve?

- what made you angry?

- what made you belly laugh?

- what made you feel worried?

- what made you feel inspired?

- what made you feel like encouraged?

- what made you feel loved?

## STEP 3:

# R E S P O N D

Ask: What are you proud of from this year that you want to continue doing in the coming year? What would you like to leave behind from this year?

I am proud of how I experienced...

I would have liked to have done this differently...

## STEP 4:

# R E J O I C E

"Rejoice In the Lord always. I will say It again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord Is near" Philippians 4:4-5.

Praise God that our actions don't define us. Praise God that Jesus qualifies us, not how well we did or didn't navigate this year. No matter what your year held, take a moment to thank God for his provisions.

All things considered, you're still standing and he hasn't left you.

Ask: What has lead you to rejoice this year? Write it down...

## STEP 5:

# R E O R I E N T

"If then you have been raised with Christ seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" Colossians 3:1-2

As you look ahead with hope and anticipation for the coming year, invite God into your hopes. Pray and ask him to align your heart with his, your vision with his, your ambitions with his, your desires with his. Ask him help you see people as he sees people, and that the fruit of the Spirit would be evident In your life. Ask him to help you steward your gifts well. Ask him to help you walk in the full life that he has promised his followers. Ask him to help you embrace your identity as his child, an ambassador for the kingdom and a minister of reconciliation.

Pray: ask that God would guide and direct you as you consider your hopes for 2021.

STEP 6:

# R E S O L V E

Goals aside, may we all resolve to hope in 2021. Below, write out what you are hopeful for in 2021. If you'd like to set goals for 2021 here, knock yourself out!