

*“Let us examine
our ways...”*

Lamentations 3:40



We underestimate the
magnitude of what can
happen
when we live
intentionally.”

Dr. Caroline Leaf

Reflect on 2023 & Prepare for 2024

- Reflection (key moments and gratitudes)
- Life lessons (things I learned and am growing in)
- Goals (my focus for next year)
- Learning (expanding soul & skill toward those goals)
- Tentative plans (make it real on a calendar)
- Pray through (recognize Who’s in control)

Photo courtesy of Janat Hetrick



(Sample schedule for a 3-hour time of reflection)

Arrive 1:30-2pm

Your heart may still be en route, filled with the last hours' concerns. Give yourself time to relax, breathe, lay concerns down, and prepare an open heart to recognize how far you've come.

Ponder: Where is your heart's focus right now?

Incline your heart to receive God's love and to welcome His gentle searching.

Read Psalm 16 **or** 90 slowly.

Invite God into the process.

Write down a concern you want to lay aside for now.

Look Back 2-3pm

Begin with orienting yourself to the year behind you. It is often difficult to do this from memory. Consider what would help you recall the highs and lows of your year (journal, calendar, social media posts, etc.) (Psalm 78:7)

Think through each month. What were your high points last year? What were your low points?

Collect confessions and lessons learned (1 John 1:9). Notice themes and patterns. "Ponder the path of your feet..." (Prov. 4:26). Write down what is sinking into your soul and life.

List gratitudes. List laments. What is your greatest celebration and greatest lament of the year? Is there a concrete way you can enact them? (e.g., Hosting a dinner party and telling what the Lord has done to enact gratitude (Psalm 71:15-16). Wearing a particular color or article of clothing that represents mourning to enact lament (Lam. 2:10.)

Accept 3-3:30pm

Settle in to who God has made you. Let go of unrealistic expectations from yourself and others.

What else is cluttering your soul? Ask God to help you declutter... What do you want to let go of so energy is freed up for the new? Where do you need courage for this? (Ephesians 2:10)

READ slowly:

"Gather Me. O God, gather me to be with you as you are with me. Keep me in touch with myself, with my needs, my anxieties, my angers, my pains, my corruptions, that I may claim them as my own rather than blame them on someone else. O Lord, deepen my wounds into wisdom; shape my weaknesses into compassion; gentle my envy into enjoyment, my fear into trust, my guilt into honesty. O God, gather me to be with you as you are with me."

TED LODER, GUERRILLAS OF GRACE

Write down something you want to accept about your life.

No matter what changes about you, your world, or your work this year what do you want to honor, nurture, protect, or preserve? Write it down.

Look Forward 3:30 – 4:30pm

Imagine a year from now sitting with God looking over this year. What do you want to see? Outcomes at home, at work, in your heart, etc.? Who have you become and what qualities have you embodied? What were your priorities and how did that show in your schedule?

God has uniquely created you for this world. Ask God for His words to you. (Hebrews 4:12) What is His invitation to you? What do you need to let go of? (Consider inviting a few trusted others into this process. Ask them, based on their knowledge of your history and heart, where they see the Lord at work in you.)

Write down one priority for this year. (Psalm 90:12)

What do you need to move toward this priority? (Galatians 5:16) Write down one step you will take *this month*. Put your main commitments on the calendar.

Pray over your desires. Pray God's wisdom, grace, strength into each plan. Welcome the new year as a gift from the Lord. Open your palms and heart to receive it.

Go in peace.

(adapted by Rachel Wood from 2023 Reflection Guide designed by Jacqueline Scott)



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