

## Taking Inventory

Joe Slater

Businesses may take inventory at the first of the year for tax purposes or to see if the company was profitable last year. What about you and me? How did we do last year? What adjustments do we need to make? Several matters call for an inventory:

1. Bible study (not just reading, but study). Both public and private study instill God's word into our hearts. We ought to be known as walking Bibles! It can be so, but not without serious Bible study.

2. Prayer. *"You do not have because you do not ask"* (James 4:3). *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Need we say more?

3. Attendance. Satan has used the pandemic to condition us into thinking in-person attendance is a mere option. For the truly ill, watching the service on an electronic device is helpful. I know that by experience! Nevertheless, when healthy, active people simply choose not to show up, Scripture calls it sin (Hebrews 10:26). Lame excuses, justifications, and rationalizations will never solve this!

4. Giving. God doesn't "need" anything from us (Acts 17:25). Giving has always been an indication of love for God. The poorest Jew under the Law gave ten percent of his gross income (not what was left after paying the bills). Most Jews gave a good deal more. Under the New Covenant we are to give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:2). How would your income be affected if God prospered you in proportion to the generosity of your giving?

5. Good works. You can name dozens of bad things you haven't done. That's great? Now, what good works have you done? That's one purpose God has for you in Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

It's time to take inventory!

## Don't Believe It - Believe Him!

Many and varied are the deceptive messages of the world around us. Sometimes the voices are so blatantly false as to hardly escape the attention of any objectively-minded seeker of truth. Even then, we are reminded of the old adage that says, "If you say something loud enough and often enough, people will believe it." Isaiah decried the twisted values of his day, saying, *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter?"* (Isaiah 5:20). We are similarly shocked by the audacity of some who boldly perpetuate such lies among the unsuspecting of our day.

However, most of the deception in the world exists in the form of subtle, gradual departures from the truth, often unnoticed until the passing of time draws its stark contrast between things accepted today which were once rejected as immoral and ungodly. Discernment is in short supply these days because we lack training in God's word (Hebrews 4:14). Consequently, we have become desensitized to evil and led in the direction of outright repudiation of moral and spiritual truth. Our moral compass has been corrupted and we are spinning out of control.

Jesus is the answer. He is *"the way, the truth, and the life..."* (John 14:6). If we come to *"know the truth,"* *"the truth will set us free"* (John 8:32). If we would be rescued from darkness, we must *"practice 'the truth' and 'come to the Light'"* (John 3:21). Jesus is *"the Light of the world"* and His *"word is truth"* (John 8:12; 17:17). Truth hardly registers in a world dominated by *"the father of lies"* (John 8:44). But, when we encounter his message, we must not believe it; but, instead, we must hold to the One who is the embodiment of truth and believe Him (Ephesians 4:21).

—Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)

## Time's Paces

When I was a babe and wept and slept  
Time crept.

When I was a boy and laughed and talked  
Time walked.

Then when the years saw me a man  
Time ran.

When older still I daily grew  
Time flew.

Soon I shall find while traveling on  
Time gone.

May Christ have saved my soul by then!  
Amen!

--Henry Twells (via Campbellsville, KY)

## Why Is Hell So Awful?

1. It is prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

2. It is the second death, eternal separation from God (Revelation 21:8).

3. There is no peace there; Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

4. There is no comfort there; God is the God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3).

5. There is no love there; God is love (1 John 4:8).

6. Only darkness is there; God is light (1 John 1:5).

The good news is, you don't have to go there! But the only way to avoid it is through the salvation from sin found only in Jesus Christ!  
—via Facebook (adapted)