



By Dr. Richard Youngblood

Question: How should we approach another New Year?

As we approach the beginning of another year, I have pondered and prayed about what to write that can give fresh insight. I once heard that John Wesley was asked what he would do if he knew this was his last day. He replied that he would do the same that he did the day before. If we have sought to live in the will of God in the past year, we should do the same in the coming year. We should always live as if this might be our last day or year.

However, I do believe that each New Year's Day can serve as a useful reminder and opportunity for reflection and self-examination. Just as a ship's navigator must regularly check to see that the ship does not drift off-course, we need this time to make sure that our lives are not drifting off course. Every day or year we need to be very careful how we live and be wise enough to make "the most of every opportunity" (Ephesians 5:15-16). The psalmist has taught us to pray that the Lord will "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

With this in mind, I ask that you reflect on the prayer attributed to Francis of Assisi. Most of us are familiar with at least part of it, but I will include all of it.

"Lord make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, Let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is error, truth; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; And where there is sadness, Joy. O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled As to console; To be understood, as to understand; To be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life" ([The](#)

[Writings of St. Francis of Assisi: Part II. Six Letters of St. Francis ...](#) www.sacred-exts.com/chr/wosf/wosf11.htm).

I believe this prayer well expresses the compassion and love that Jesus demonstrated in his life. May we learn to follow him in 2012 and as long as we may live beyond that. Have a Happy New Year.

[Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071 or phone

