

JANUARY
2024

A PUBLICATION OF FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

*Love Jesus More in 2024!***BABY NEW YEAR**

BY JIM DALY

WELL, HERE WE ARE. ANOTHER NEW YEAR IS UNDERWAY. AS YOU look ahead to the next twelve months, how do you feel? Like old Father Time? Or like Baby New Year?

For decades, editorial cartoonists have depicted the year winding down as an elderly, bearded man. He's awfully tired and looks like he could use a nap. In contrast, the New Year is a baby, usually wearing a diaper, a sash, and a top hat. He's bubbly and excited, and his smile stretches from ear to ear.

The image of the New Year as a baby symbolizes rebirth. And yet, we often head into January worn down like the aging Father Time. Instead of a fresh beginning, the onset of a new year sometimes feels like a continuation of last year's problems. In some cases, that's understandable. Our burdens don't disappear with the flip of the calendar.

If that's your situation, don't try to carry your problems alone. Troubling moments are an opportunity for you to draw close to family and friends. It's through their comfort and support that you'll find the strength to leave last year behind and move forward with hope as fresh and new as a baby in a sash and top hat.

If you need help leaving the past behind, give one of our counselors a call at 1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459).

Want to know more? Visit www.focusonthefamily.com.





TRUST THE LORD IN THE NEW YEAR

On January 1, we mark that the calendar has changed and that we're in a new year. It is a time to mark a new start, a new opportunity, a new and unspoiled page on the calendar.

Scripture affirms this impulse. The passing of time is something to be noted and observed carefully. Time is a gift, and God expects us to be stewards of it. But the dawning of a new year can sometimes be challenging.

On the one hand, it's possible the previous year was great. If that's the case, you might have high hopes for the coming year. On the other hand, it's possible the previous year was painful. And while a new year might offer a fresh start, you cannot know whether things will be better or worse.

The best way to mark the arrival of another year is to stop and think about where we can wisely put our trust.

The Lord speaks to his people regarding that very issue through the prophet Jeremiah:

Thus says the LORD:

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the

LORD.

He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good
come. . . .

Blessed is the man who trusts in the
LORD,

whose trust is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the
stream,

and does not fear when heat
comes . . .

and is not anxious in the year of
drought,

for it does not cease to bear fruit."

JEREMIAH 17:5-8

Instead of living another year in a spiritual desert, the Lord invites us to trust in Him. Jesus trusted in the Lord and yet suffered our curse on the cross so we would have access to unending streams of living water (John 4:10). In the coming year, there will be many things that we cannot control. But by God's grace, we can commit ourselves to trust in the Lord, and be trees that thrive.

—*Michael McKinley*

MODEL YOUR PRO-LIFE CONVICTIONS WITH LOVE



In the matter of the abortion debate—like other emotionally-charged issues—people of faith often rush to defend the truth. However, we must be careful to teach our children to follow the example of Jesus in how we communicate this truth. Jesus is the model for how to communicate with others: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

It’s important for our children to know that when confronting unbiblical behavior in our culture, we must place grace as a foundation to truth, just as Jesus did.

Those who exclude grace and love from truth can often appear harsh, unloving and judgmental. In his famous discourse on love, the apostle Paul declares of those who place truth ahead of love, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Those who advocate abortion will likely only hear a noisy gong if someone tries to argue with them, especially if they argue in anger. As the writer of Proverbs teaches,

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

But it is also vitally important that parents teach children the truth about abortion and its effects. Our children must be given the information they need to defend the cause of life. In addition, parents must also model ways to live out their pro-life convictions. Here are some ways you can model the pro-life lifestyle in practical ways:

- Volunteer at your local women’s care center or pro-life medical clinic.
- Travel to Washington, DC, to attend the annual March for Life.
- Attend local prayer rallies for life.
- Become a church liaison for your local pro-life center.
- Bring your expertise into service as a member of your pro-life center advisory committee or board of directors.
- Participate in local pro-life fundraising efforts, not only by giving, but by getting involved in practical ways to carry the load.

—*Craig von Buseck*



LIVE IT CHALLENGE

SIGN UP FOR THE LIVE IT CHALLENGE

What is the Live It Challenge, you ask?

It's a series of fun, practical activities that equip families to live out and pass down their faith. Take action to impact those around you and strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ!

Our model of the Live It Challenge has three components:

- **Head**—Know God's Word, the truth where the character and person of God are revealed and told.
- **Heart**—Learn to view the world and our culture through God's lens.
- **Hands**—Go and make a difference in your own life and in the lives of others through change.

Over 100,000 families have signed up and joined the movement, tackling popular family topics such as:

Honoring Your Father and Mother: What does that mean? Do we ever stop honoring them? Good questions. The Bible has even better answers!

7 Different Types of Prayer from the Bible: Learn how to take your prayer life to the next level!

9 Steps for Using Your Talents for His Glory: Check out these steps to glorifying God with your gifts.

These are just a few of the topics covered in the Live It Challenge. Don't miss out! Go to focusonthefamily.com/live-it to sign up and receive fun challenges, updates and more!

For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY BULLETIN (ISSN 0897-537X), vol. 37, no. 1, January 2024. Jim Rusnak, editor; Shirley Ree, designer. Published monthly by Tyndale House Publishers, 351 Executive Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188 in cooperation with Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO. © 2024 Focus on the Family. *Focus on the Family* and the accompanying logo and design are federally registered trademarks of Focus on the Family, 8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version™), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Cover image of grandparents with grandchild © Monkey Business Images | Dreamstime.com. Image of couple drinking tea © Robert Kneschke | Dreamstime.com. Image of gold wedding bands © Gudrun Krebs | Dreamstime.com. Image of two boys playing © Aaron Amat | Dreamstime.com. Image of hands praying over Bible © Phakorn Kasikij | Dreamstime.com. Image of The Capitol at Washington, DC © John Bilous | Dreamstime.com. Subscription \$16.00 per month per 100 copies, Canada: \$18.00 per month per 100 copies, payable in Canadian funds. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Focus on the Family, Subscription Services, P. O. Box 405, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.