Looking Forward to 2012 **[1]**

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As another calendar year draws to a close, it is a good time to reflect on the year past, and one that lies ahead.

2011 was an important year for me. I started working and I took on more responsibility than ever before. (Admittedly I did not always do so with grace, but on a whole I am satisfied with the progress that I made.) Work has been going well and I am blessed to be at a company with so many professional and kind people. But there also is still plenty of room for self-improvement, both professionally and personally. The past year has also dealt its share of difficulties. Again there was sickness in the family, and again God's grace has (and continues to) sustain us. Working while also finishing up my degree has been very taxing, and I also suffered a number of setbacks in this regard.

For the new year I look forward to finally finishing my degree in the first two-to-three months. Thereafter I am not sure which direction I am going to take. I might decide to continue studying, al be it in another field. Professionally, there are a couple of exciting opportunities of which I can grab hold, although I still need to seek out the will of the Father about this. I want to run a long distance race again. I also want to get more involved in the church which I am attending.

In 2012 I want to run this website more professionally. As my vision for this website has changed slightly, it is going to need a cosmetic overhaul at some point. I began posting regularly two or three months ago, but because of an unexpected setback in my studies, I stopped the posts for a while. I apologise for that but, as I said, only a couple more months (for real, this time)! The plus side is that I have a few posts which are works-in-progress. Some of them will seem a little out-of-date, but I hope that the ideas and messages which I want to convey will still be relevant.

Yesterday I was speaking to a brother and found encouragement when he shared with me the lesson which God is teaching him at the moment: obedience. This is definitely something in which I also need growth. God still also continues with His long-term plan of instructing me in patience...

Thinking about the new year, a certain passage in Matthew came to me. Many people are joking that 2012 will be the year in which the world ends. I have said enough [2] about such matters for now, but it again raises the question of when the world will really end. This should not be a preoccupation for the Christian, however, as they should be wholly occupied in obedience, patience and vigilance:

> [1]Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. [2]Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. [3]Those who were foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them, [4]but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. [5]Now while the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept. [6]

> But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!'
> [7]Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. [8]The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us
> some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' [9]But the wise answered, saying, 'What if there
> isn't enough for us and you? You go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' [10]While
> they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to
> the marriage feast, and the door was shut. [11]Afterward the other virgins also came, saying,
> 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' [12]But he answered, 'Most certainly I tell you, I don't know you.' [13]
> Watch therefore, for you don't know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.
>
> Matthew 25:1–13 (WEB)

I close with a quote which I found very inspiring over the last few months. I hope that every Christian will carry it every day of the new year, and beyond:

> Read the Bible. Work hard and honestly. And don't complain.
>
> Billy Graham

Grace and peace. Shalom alicheim.

Categories:

- Encouragements [3]
- Updates [4]

Tags:

- reflections [5]
- new year [6]

Source URL: https://siyach.org/node/154

Links
[1] https://siyach.org/node/154
[2] https://siyach.org/node/133
[3] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/34
[4] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/4
[5] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/52
[6] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/53