

RECIPE FOR A BLESSED 2016

Four ingredients to include in your recipe for a blessed 2016:

I. Make God #1 in Your Life

God calls us to put Him first in our lives and to value our relationship with Him above all else. Let's make it our top priority to know God and experience Him with all our hearts. ***"This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." (John 17:3) "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1Pet 2:9)***

I'm sure many of us have spent a great deal of time figuring out what we like to do, what brings joy to our lives and a feeling of self-worth. We've completed personality profiles, taken gift tests and evaluated our strengths and weaknesses. In addition, we know that God fashions, forms and equips us for His unique purposes. ***"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." (Psalm 139:1, 3, 14a, 16)*** Yet, when we get down to the nuts and bolts, God asks us the same question He asked Simon Peter. He didn't ask him his plans or if his heart burned with love to serve people. God's question was, ***"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*** Jesus wants us to know that our dreams, ambitions and goals are to be birthed out of a deep devotion to Him above what we want or feel equipped to be or do. **Is Jesus your greatest love?**

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." (John 14:21)

II. Spend Time Alone With God Daily

If often seems like we wake up each day with a full agenda. There are deadlines to meet, problems to solve, relationships to nurture, conflicts to resolve and more things to accomplish than we have time to do them. How can we operate effectively in such a busy world? Jesus answered that question by setting priorities and boundaries. We must do the same and follow in His steps. When we do, we experience freedom in the midst of our responsibilities. ***"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." (John 15:4)***

When Jesus met with Martha and Mary, He directed Martha who was busy, distracted, anxious and troubled to consider the ***"one thing necessary"*** (Luke 10:38-42). Above everything we could do for Jesus, whether it is providing for our families, sharing Him with others or serving our church, He wants us to sit at His feet. ***How often did you spend time with Him this past year?*** He doesn't need our service or our money. However, He does want an unhindered relationship with us.

We were created to spend time alone with God. There is no real, abundant life apart from Him. ***"For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28a)***

III. Be Filled With and Submitted to the Spirit Daily

God's Word commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Greek text could be translated literally to read, ***"Continually being submitted to and controlled by the Spirit."*** Each day when you get up, make Jesus Lord for that day. Surrender your day to Him. Pray through your schedule with Him: activities, priorities, encounters, challenges and possible interruptions. Ask the Spirit to take control of your thoughts, words, attitudes and actions. Be a "living sacrifice" for Jesus to use as He wills.

“Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)

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Submitting to the Spirit’s leading is especially critical when it comes to sharing our faith. Think about this. The Holy Spirit knows the spiritual condition of every person we encounter. As He works to lead people to Jesus, He knows what each soul needs to hear, see and feel. He will provide the impulse, opportunity, words and actions we are to take toward those He puts in our path.

IV. Decide on a *Word* for focus or *Design* a *Mission Plan* as a guide or road map.

A. A *Word* for 2016

How do you select the ***word***? Ask the Lord to give you a ***word*** for 2016. During the next several days, be sensitive to any ideas the Lord brings to mind. The Holy Spirit may have already been speaking to you about a certain ***word*** He wants you to focus on in 2016. If not, He will bring a ***word*** to your mind that will resonate in your heart. Ask God to confirm the ***word*** by providing situations where it becomes perfectly clear this is the ***word*** for you. Write it down in visible places (mirror, refrigerator, home page) so you won’t miss it. Ask the Holy Spirit to engineer your life for maximum impact in 2016 and conduct your life with that in mind.

B. A *Mission Plan* for 2016

Pick a day when you can carve out several hours to focus with few or no distractions. Grab a notepad and a pen. Ask God: How would You like to grow me and minister through me during 2016? Your time with Him should include time in the Word, meditation and prayer. Think about the different facets of your life including your: Personal Life, Family Life, Business Life, Community Life,

Financial Life, Intellectual Life and Physical and Recreational Life.

Prayerfully make a list of goals He desires to achieve in each area of your life in 2016. Then list activities to help you achieve them. As the days pass, review them and make adjustments as needed. Write out your **Mission Plan**, goals and activities and embark on your mission. Conduct quarterly reviews and make appropriate changes. You may want to select a specific **Bible Verse** for 2016 as well. Finally, ***“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” (Proverbs 16:3)***

If you would like a sample [Mission Plan for 2016](#) with goals, activities and quarterly review check-offs, click on link.



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