



This Year

The month of January means the start of a New Year. It also means that many people will use the words "this year" in their conversations. This year I am going to_____. This year I am not going to_____. This year I will do more_____. This year I will do less _____. There will be many goals, promises, and vows made in the first weeks of January. I want to reflect with you on the topic of making decisions for this year.

My encouragement to you is that you use the words this year only after you have looked into your heart for the things God is asking you to accomplish this year. Let me explain. I have been writing reflection letters now for 11 plus years. I have learned so much through this process. Over the years I received encouragement to compile my writings into a book. Being quite sure I would never do that I brushed these comments off as being polite. The encouragement continued and about 5 years ago I began to feel a strong pull toward compiling my reflections. So I moved this idea to my bucket list as something I would like to do before I died as way for my family and friends to understand what made me tick, what motivated my life, and to define my personal relationship with God to them.

Then in January of 2011 within the first week of the New Year I had 5 different people ask me if I was ever going to write a book. Hm, I wondered what was God telling me? Next, I had a self-publishing company send me an email. Curious? I had not solicited any information. Was God telling me that this year I was to do that which he had been prompting through the encouragement of others? Was he lining up the details for completion of a book? I could have put him off, but the signs were too strong. My heart was being pulled. The feeling in my heart to honor him and his commitment to sending messages monthly had become too strong to overlook. I vowed to compile his messages into a book trusting that he would give me the strength to do it.

I began to investigate the publishing company only to find that it was going to be cumbersome and more money than I was going to be able to afford. But I trusted that God would continue to lead me in the right direction. A couple of weeks later as I waited for the next step to be revealed I received another email from an unsolicited self-publishing company. This one was perfect. Less money, more help! Now I was committed.

The rest is a bit of a blur. It was as if God took over and I simply moved my fingers. God was present every step of the way. He opened time for me to work on the process, provided opportunities for support along the way, energized me to tackle even the technical questions I would have preferred to put off onto someone else. When my doubt of making deadlines overwhelmed me God met them. I could not have done this on my own. Indeed, whenever I would lose sight of the reason I was writing I would be stopped cold. When I redirected my vision to settle on praising God through the work things would unfold smoothly. God was in the whole thing right down to the creation of the book cover and as the months seemed to fly by, an amazing thing happened, a book was born.

God has a purpose for your life, a purpose for you this year. I am not sure what you have experienced in the last year, but God wants to call you to a new future. He is prompting you to listen to your heart. He may send messengers of encouragement. He might even use technology (it is the going thing) as a way to get your attention. Mostly, he asks that you do not lose sight of his presence in your life. I invite you to embrace the challenges you are facing knowing that with God's strength you can accomplish them, perhaps even in this year.

Questions to ponder:

What is my heart calling me to do this year?

Who are the encouragers God has sent into my life?

How can I honor God through my work?

Wishing you God's blessings,

Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL

Spiritual Care Coordinator, RAMC