

How to Smile Back at the New Year

Written by Bill Perkins

Don't be deceived into thinking it's meaningless to number your days. It isn't. And don't kid yourself into thinking it's easy. It's not. Indeed, the psalmist pleaded with God to help him do just that. In Psalm 39:4 he cried out, "Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life." In Psalm 90:12 he uttered a similar prayer but mentioned why he wanted to diligently count every day. He said, "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom."

The Hours Await Your Decision

Stretching before you, further than the eye can see, lays the New Year. It consists of 365 Days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536, 000 seconds. In the course of the next year you'll take approximately 8,000,000 breaths, blink over 11.5 million times, and spend over 100 days sleeping—assuming you sleep seven hours a night.

All of these are given. However, there are many blocks of time, large and small, that await a decision on how you'll spend them. If you're an average working adult, you'll spend more time talking with your co-workers than your spouse. You'll spend more hours listening to the radio and watching TV than listening to your kids.

You'll spend more time thinking about how you can please your boss than how you can please your family and friends. This isn't the beginning of a guilt trip—just the reciting of a few well known facts based on years of research by scholars who study how people spend their time.

Who You Live For

Of course, none of us can control things like breathing and blinking. And we must sleep every night to stay alert and healthy. But we can control who we live for. Ultimately, on December 31st when you reflect on how you spent the previous year, you'll either smile or frown. If you decide on December 31st to order your life around God and those who will cry at your funeral, you'll smile at the end of the year. Why? Because you'll have spent time each day alone with God, your spouse and your family.

A Little Time Each Day

Never forget, a little time each day adds up to a lot of time over a year. If you spend ten minutes with God a day it will add up to 3,650 minutes or sixty hours alone with your heavenly Father during the year. If you choose to listen to your spouse 30 minutes a day it will add up to 10,950 minutes or 182.5 hours over the course of the year. The same applies to your kids.

You won't become a godly in a day. And you won't become a great spouse or parent in 24 hours. But if you chose to love God and your family one day at a time over the course of a year you'll become a different person—one who loves the Lord and your children more than a year ago.

Ultimately, if we're going to live one day at a time for God and family, we'll need God to give us a sense of priority and urgency. And if he does, we'll give him a life well-lived.

The First Day of the Year

Can you see the New Year stretching before you? Don't try to see the end from the beginning. It can't be seen yet. But you can see the first day of the year and a few days beyond. Ask God to enable you to value those days. And each day that follows—one day at a time. Plead with him to motivate you to live each day for those you love the most. If you do—you'll not only smile on December 31st you'll smile each day along the way.