

Dear Parents and Students,

This past week I had a parent in my office who shared a great illustration with me that fits well with the main event of this coming month of January. I don't know how many of you have a GPS in your vehicle or have ever ridden with someone who does but if you make a wrong turn it says, "Recalculating," and then gives you the directions of how to get back on the right path. You can either choose to listen or you can shut off the voice and try to figure it out on your own. The same illustration is true in life. Sometimes we get off on the wrong path and need to "recalculate" and listen to God so that we get back on the right path. We can either choose to listen to God or we can shut him out and try to figure out life on our own, which only gets us more lost. At any point we can choose to turn back to God and He will get us back on the right path. On January 7 & 8 we will be hosting our annual Prayer Summit. This is a time to stop and "recalculate" and take a look at what path we are on. I would encourage all students to consider joining us for this time of "recalculating." We must know no later than Tuesday, January 4 by noon for planning purposes. **The office will be closed on Monday, January 3.**

As we close out another year I would like to offer some suggestions for how your family might close out the year of 2010. These ideas and thoughts came from an article by Doug Phillips. He has three ideas on how to close out the year with your family.

1. Outline and Chronicle the many Providences of God

Using simple bullet points, outline the key events for every week of every month of the year. Here are a couple of his suggestions on things that could be recorded in this outline.

1. Where did we travel?
2. What books did we read?
3. What significant household projects did we accomplish in 2010?
4. What special friendships were made this year?
5. Make your own list of important things your family would like to keep records of.

2. Say "Thank You" to those who have invested in your life

Before the year ends, make a list of two types of people: The first list is the names of people whose life, ministry, or personal investment in you have deeply touched you and changed your life. You might want to list parents, pastors, and some teachers. The second list should include those people who played the most significant role in your life in 2010. Once you have made the lists then write a brief, meaningful letter to each of them. Be specific in your gratitude. Explain what they did for you and why it was important to you. Show them how they were God's instruments of blessing in your own life.

One reason why Christians are often limited in vision, energy, and blessings is that, contrary to the Lord's command, we are ungrateful, unforgiving, and bitter. Far too many who profess the name of Christ spend more time obsessing on those who have wronged them than rejoicing in those who have blessed them.

3. Forgive those who have wronged you

Think through every grief, minor and major, caused by others to you in the year 2010. Now add to the list any other personal offenses that continue to linger from past years. Write them down as bullets on a sheet of paper. Now prayerfully walk through the list – bullet by bullet. With each offense, remind yourself that the most despicable action taken against you by another, utterly (and infinitely) pales in comparison to the least of your offenses against the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope this will help your family to look back with gratitude for all God has blessed you with over the past year of 2010 and I hope that it gives you a clean slate to begin 2011!