

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"END OF YEAR RECAP AND NEW YEAR" | ROMANS 12: 1-2 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What's a good quote or piece of advice for the New Year?

"A New Year" (Romans 12: 1-2)

The Bible challenges people to not conform to the world but to be transformed by the Holy Spirit renewing the mind. **What is something you want God to change in your life in 2023?**

"End of the Year Recap"

Pastor Brian shared many highlights of the past year at Calvary Murrieta. **Which one surprised you? Which one did you get to be a part of? Which one is something you were especially thankful for?**

"New Year Thoughts" (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

The Bible encourages people to focus on the eternal as they go about their lives. **How does keeping eternity in mind change the way someone lives?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian started the message with an image of a Calendar of the year 2023. **What emotions and thoughts come up as you think about 2023? Have you asked God about what He wants for you this coming year? Pray and ask for His Spirit to lead you this coming year.**

End of Year Recap & New Year

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-7 Lar: R&R. BCC. Women's Min. Men's Breakfast. Unfolding Gospel. JM.
- B. Slide8 New Wed Night Series: 4 Part: *But I say ... Jesus Speaks To Our Culture*.
1. Truth: while our culture says that truth is determined by people, the Bible says that truth is revealed by God. (Andrew L)
- C. Prayer: God, may we hear afresh and anew today, that **You, the Maker of all things loves and forgives us**. Lord we realize we will progress, not by making *every right decision* (perfection), **but** responding appropriately to wrong one's (repentance).

II. Slide9 NEW YEAR (Part I) [explain: End of Yr Recap *sandwiched by* New Year Thoughts]

- A. Please stare at this 2023 year calendar on screen. What comes to your mind/heart?
1. What **emotion** wells up inside you? Fear? Weight? Guilt? (from last year). Or maybe Excitement? (ready to bust out of 2022, *ready for the new!*)
 2. Friends, these are all *unlived days!* (I know pretty profound)
 - a) Slide10 Ellen Goodman (American journalist & syndicated columnist) *"We spend January I walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives ... not looking for flaws, but for **potential!**"*
 3. Maybe we ask, *Would it be possible for me to make a difference in someone's life this year?*
- B. We've learned by now *clichés* will not rescue us. *New Year, New You?*
1. Slide11 G.K.Chesterton: *"The **object of a new year** is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul"*.
- C. Slide12 Do you want to change in 2023? We already know how to change. Rom.12 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present** (your will/choice) your **bodies** (your body) as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,*

which is your **spiritual** worship (your spirit). *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind* (your mind).

1. Practically, to **renew our minds** we know we must do things a different way for a long time, until the neural pathways in our mind, that were causing us to do things we no longer want to do, are changed.
2. Just like that **physical pathway** on the ground, if you keep going over the same route, it becomes a habit.
 - a) Eg. A **baby** smiles, they are rewarded by a smile in return and a cuddle. A **toddler** touches something sharp, it may hurt. **Both** of these are valuable learning experiences.
 - b) Neural pathways are essential; *however*, not all of them are beneficial, and can become negative habits.
3. Whether that's an addiction to pornography, or an addiction to a substance. Or an addiction, to food, or gossip. Or worse, and addiction to **judging people** that have problems with *pornography, substance abuse, food abuse, or gossip abuse*.
 - a) Now, if you're sitting there thinking, *Pastor Brian, I don't struggle with any of these sins that you mentioned. I'm actually starting this year with a pretty clean slate. I've been walking with the Lord this many years. I don't have any of these struggles ... *except* the struggles of *self righteousness* that I'm expressing, by expressing that I don't need anything **new** from **God** this year*
4. See if you're looking for **change** in 2023, you need **Mind Transformation**.
 - a) Like choosing **a different path** to walk down, God designed our brains to be able to change & adapt (neuroplasticity), so we can change old habits.
Good news: The brain can create new routes and shut off old ones.
5. **But**, not only **Mind Transformation** we also need **Spiritual power & Inspiration** (fresh filling & listening to what the Sp is speaking to you this yr).
 - a) Saints we have **Somebody** on the **inside** that can show us where the attack is, and how to battle it.

- b) **Listen** to the Spirit saying, *Don't return that text on your phone.*
Don't comment on that post. Ask the Spirit of God what areas to **avoid** this year. There are **some places** that you cannot afford to go this year. Your soul cannot afford it. **Your joy** could not afford it. **Your peace** could not afford it.
- c) For God to do something **new** in your life this year save your strength for *the things that matter*. Listen to **the Spirit of God**.

III. Slide13 **END OF THE YEAR RECAP**

- A. In 2022 we just opened our **learning center** (and we are about to open a kids multi purpose room). We remained **incredibly financially stable** and as a result we were able to put more resources into **missions**, into **ministry**, and into **properly taking care of our staff**. We have **zero debt** at either church or school, and even before the property closed we have a healthy reserve between them. Oh and we closed on the property! We also encouraged **goal setting** as a staff and w/ministry leaders, and saw fruit from that in ministry.
- B. **Local Generosity:** From our month of Giving (Nov). You brought a **few truck loads** of specific items for Project Touch. You bought out all of *Tiffany & Jimmie Tacos* 1 Sunday for their Tacos for Toys (donated **\$2,000** to CFLC). You also bought about **500 gifts** for Foster Kids in our County, via CFLC (people also gave online towards that). Ladies collected **carloads of diapers and other various baby items** for the Elsinore Valley Preg Center. **20 gifts** were given for women in the Rebirth Homes program, and **\$3000** to Rebirth. **30** of you showed up for the *CFLC wrapping party* to help wrap 1000's of gifts.
- C. **KELLY**
- Women's Ministry:** It's been a growing year and I'd sum it up with one word **New**. *New ladies stepping up to lead and serve. New ways of doing things. New studies. New people. New servants. New ideas. And we are trying to meet New needs.* (Close to 300 ladies registered in last BS)
 - Our Christmas Celebration this year** was outstanding. We had an amazing **Women's Retreat** this year.

2. **Foster/Adopt Support Group:** We recently hit our **1 year mark** of beginning this ministry. My biggest blessing has been 2 people have told me, *“I don’t know what I’d do without this group. Knowing you guys support us is such a comfort and brings me such peace.”* (that statement was exactly the prayer Charlotte and I had for the group).
3. Our Justice Meeting **At-Risk** supported and offered so many things this year. **Including:** awareness, advocacy & action, education, celebrations, support for individuals and ministries, prayer meetings, Fair-Trade class & sales at church. Started a small group study. **Made 10 Christmas gifts** for survivors. **Made 9 baskets** at thanksgiving for survivors.
4. **Collected over \$6000** for the Elsinore Valley Preg Center (Baby bottles).
5. **Community pantry:** hundreds of eggs and cartons. **165 backpacks for back to school.** **And** almost monthly donation drives to pantry.

D. **MISSIONS** Larry

1. **Mike & Lorie** had the opportunity to get back on the field and connect with several partners to minister to the “H” people.
2. **Ryan and Julie** have been on the field for 1 year now, and our both involved in the *RO Bible translation* going on.
3. Thank you to the generosity our church showed in supporting **Mercy Projects** work in **Ukraine** (and the support of the sustainable dairy farm in **Armenia**).
4. We were able to add **Missions to most ministry budgets.**
5. **We formed a corporation in Nepal** to purchase property for the Rohingya living in the settlements there. **And** all we’ve been able to help with this year, *food, this years rent, warm clothes during the winter season*, all because of you CM.

E. **CMCS**

1. Enrollment grew by 15% overall, and 57% in Jr.High.

2. Our admin team welcomed *Christy Hartman* as k-8th principal and *Janelle Williams* as K-8th assistant principal.
3. Spring of last year 84% of our students tested at or above grade level in **math**, and 82% at or above grade level in **Reading**. This is a huge accomplishment compared to the **State scores** of 33% proficient in **math**, and 47% proficient in **Reading**.
4. This year we remodeled the inside of our classrooms, remodeled our science and technology labs, and created a junior high lounge. And we just **turfed** our field.
5. The school is financially secure, financially independent from the Church, and financially stable.
6. And 16 middle school students were **baptized**.

F. **CalvaryKids** Jasmine

1. CK put on a Winter Camp & a Summer Camp. **1st time holding a kids baptism class** (20+ kids baptized at spring baptism).
2. Tons of summer activities. **VBS. Trauma Training, 1st time**, How to identify kids dealing with trauma & build relationships w/them.
3. Harvest Festival. Volunteer appreciation dinner & Christmas Brunch. Christmas Play.
4. Looking forward to having MPR finished. **Will be changing the way CK classes run. More VBS style with large group lessons taught together and then break into small groups for discussion and relationship building.**

G. **Middle School** Shane/678

1. **10-12 student leaders** serving consistently throughout the entire year. They help working slides (computer), doing sound for worship, and doing announcements.
2. **Events:** Beach Days, Tuesday Hoopday, Game Nights, Boys and Girls Bible Studies, Winter and Summer Camps, Summer Kickoff.

3. **Gospel U (Univ):** we had 23 students attend a 2-day class in understanding the Gospel, how it is important in their life, and how to know and live out their faith.

H. **H.S.** Cam/Rise High

1. **Exalt Summer Discipleship Program:** (1st time) 6 weeks, 4 different homes of people in the church, 15-18 students each week.
 2. These past 2 years we've gotten involved in **Student Venture Christian Clubs** on both Murrieta Mesa and Murrieta Valley HS campuses, and saw the Lord move and create beautiful relationships with student, faculty, and other local youth pastors in the valley.
- I. * **Also, Calvary Kids + Middle School + HS** provided 400 Jackets for **the H children's** Winter, as well as \$ & blankets.

J. **MOM's** (Moms On a Mission)

1. Jessica has a 6-mom leadership team in place. When moms have a baby they set up a meal train to help them.
2. We are **thankful for this years volunteers** with child care in that none of the moms have had to leave the meetings to help.
3. A Letter from one of the moms, Jess Williams: **I am just so thankful for this ministry! Coming from attending the same church for 25 years, I am not used to being the new girl. When we first started at Calvary Murrieta in February, I immediately knew this was our home. After a couple of months, I craved community, I searched the app and found MOMs. When I emailed Jessica, she replied right away and was so welcoming, I liked her from the start. The very next day was a meeting and when I went, I felt it even stronger. Everyone I met was kind, had a good sense of humor (this is a must for me) and loved Jesus (another must of course) and I no longer felt new, but a part of something special. I knew from the first meeting that I wanted to be a part of this group. I had been praying about where I could serve in the church and was super excited when Jessica**

reached out about the MOMs hospitality ministry a few months later! I've only been a part of it for a short while, but knowing Jessica and the other leaders has already changed me for the better.

4. Also, an answered prayer request from Oct: *We were praying for 1 mom's pregnancy, because she shared that not only had she had previous miscarriages, but her ultrasound showed serious complications. Praise God, 2 months later, she & her baby (still in the womb) are perfectly healthy! All tests have come back normal :)*

K. TONY

1. **Starting Point Classes:** provided an opportunity for new, or newer people to the church to have a chance to connect with others, and for them to hear who we are as a church.
2. **Baptisms:** we were able to celebrate with over 50 kids and adults who were baptized at one of our church baptisms.
3. **Easter BBQ:** We had a great turn out for our first annual Easter Church BBQ and Scavenger Hunt.

L. AP

1. **Community Groups:** in both the spring and the fall, we had about 70 people sign up to participate in 5 community groups.
2. One woman shared that out of their group a bible reading accountability group chat was started. One group started a hiking club.
3. Another group was thrilled to see an answer to prayer as Frank Melendez's eyesight was restored.
4. The Thursday afternoon group was interrupted by a **solar panel salesman** one day. They told him it wasn't a good time, but he was more than welcome to stay for a bible study and prayer. He decided to jump in and said he enjoyed it, it was the first time in a long time he had done something like that.
5. **Operation Unity:** we had 20 groups with almost 300 people attending for the 4 week series on Authentic Love.

- a) People appreciated the hosts who were very hospitable, warm, gracious, friendly and welcoming. People really enjoyed getting to know others, having fellowship, and being part of groups.
- b) Many shared they liked how multi-generations met together and learned from each other.

M. GRIEF SHARE Des & Jan Starr

1. We had about 38 people 1st session; 50 people this last session.

3 quotes from attenders:

- a) *“You sometimes feel after an experience like this that you’re talking a foreign language, says a mother, whose daughter died. You feel like there’s no way anybody can know what you’re feeling. There is absolutely no way anyone can know the depth of your pain. So you feel like it’s futile to talk about it because words can’t express the pain.”*
- b) *“I realized that life would go on even when I initially thought I couldn’t live without my loved one. I realized, I can’t live without Jesus leading me through my grief.”*
- c) *“I realized the leaders demonstrated a love and concern for me. They truly care about me and everyone in our group.”*

2. *Which reminds me of other members we had to say goodbye to, that went to be with the Lord: Zac Zarate, John Hughes, Gaile Yoder, John Irving, Ruben Heredia, Kenny McGuire, John Medeiros, Johnny Pyburn. Rosie DeCourte (Linda Rivers mom). Florine Kelly (Zandra Karvelot’s mom). Cynthia Bearn lost her husband Donald (married 64 yrs). Nicole Pedlowe lost her mom Sherry this year. And I know there are many more.

N. YAMS Jason

1. We have almost **doubled in size** this year. We have witnessed **2 baptisms**. Multiple young adults have come to a **saving faith**. Many of our leaders started to **disciple** other young adults, started up **bible studies**, and **evangelize** in our city.

2. A few of our young adults have volunteered their time for community service with our **benevolence department** and have helped with food deliveries and moving those in need.
3. **We had another marriage take place this year** (Alissa and Andrew).
4. Our leadership team is stronger than ever and working tirelessly. *They give so much of their time & energy to this ministry and all on a Saturday night. They could be anywhere else in the world, but they prefer to be here at church investing in God's kingdom.*
5. One person commented recently that the reason why they keep coming back to Yams is because *our leadership team has an Authentic love for God's word and that the leaders are so obviously committed to the ministry.*

O. **CALVARY CLASSES** Andrew L.

1. We implemented a class this year for newer believers called **Fresh Faith**. We had about 25 people complete/graduate from classes this year. Fav quote from a student was, *"I've been a Christian my whole life and I've never heard this stuff."*
2. **Our Foundations students** led the Gospel Bracelet booth at the Harvest Festival where they practiced explaining the gospel to kids and their parents and praying for the families. We had some of the school staff take classes to be better prepared to teach the Bible to our school students.

P. **MEN'S** Greg Fischer

1. Tues Morn weekly Mens Prayer. **4 Breakfasts** (average attendance 70-80). Spring Tuesday Night Series. Fall Tuesday Night Series. **Summer Grill & Chill**: 200-250 of all ages in attendance.
2. Sat Morning Men's Bible Study in Psalms (w/**Ernie Lizarraga**).
3. Many stories: of relationships that have been forged. Men rallying around other men to help them out, or helping their families left behind as was the case when our friend **John Medeiros** went home to be with the Lord.

IV. Slide14a **NEW YEAR** (Part II)

A. THAT ONLY IS IMPORTANT WHICH IS ETERNAL

B. The Florence Cathedral/Duomo has a beautiful Triple Door Entrance. All 3 doorways are crowned with arches, artistically carved with thought provoking inscriptions:

1. Slide14b Over one door is *a wreath of roses* etched in stone w/the legend, *All that which **pleases** is but for a moment.*
2. Over another is sculptured *a cross* accompanied by the words, *All that which **troubles** is but for a moment.*
3. Over the largest doorway, the great central entrance says, *That only is important which is **Eternal**.*

C. Pleasures - Don't last. Troubles - Don't last (like Jesus' cross, your troubles won't last either). Eternal - ok, that's what lasts, obviously!

1. So, what is going to **last**? What do you get to **take with you**?
2. *Don't think we don't take *anything* w/us, we actually **do**:
We take relationships with us *eg. with God & with other believers.*
We take our integrity & character w/us. *We take our experiences* with us.
We take our rewards w/us (actually send them ahead).
3. Solomon said, ***Better is the end of a thing than its beginning.*** (Eccl.7:8)
 - a) **Begin**: picking up your cross. **End**: picking up *your crown*.
 - b) **Begin**: walking through the mire of life. **End**: walking on *streets of gold*.
 - c) **Begin**: caterpillars are ugly limited to crawling. **End**: as gorgeous *butterflies* fluttering. ***The end of a thing is better than its beginning.***

D. As we move into 2023 there will be *passing pleasures* & *bruising sorrows*.

1. The spiritually wise will realize that these must be woven together with what's beyond 2023 ... *i.e. Eternity*.

E. The year ahead is untried. It is beckoning a tomorrow filled with *new experiences & possibilities, risks to take, relationships to build*.

1. The wise in heart will enter 2023 with *faith, hope, & Scriptural optimism*.
2. **Determine** to take advantage of *every God-given opportunity*.
3. **Resolve** to **not** see church as an institution, **but a family**.
4. **Decide** to get something out of your devotions & not just do them.
5. **Choose** an *intimate walk with Jesus*.
 - a) It is comforting to know that the God who guides us, sees **tomorrow** more clearly than we see **yesterday!**

F. **Communion:**

1. *Do this in remembrance of me!*
2. **Examples of things that help us remember:** Refrig magnets (advertisers). Post-it-notes. Rubber Bracelets. **Now** we *set reminders*.
3. **And so** we've *set a reminder* for us this morning. **Day 1** of our New Year.