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|  | By **Martha Rodman** on January 2, 2025 |

*I* *pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13. NLT*.So how are you doing entering in this New Year? Do you feel strong and hopeful that God is going to be moving on your behalf this year? Or are you entering this new calendar year with uncertainty? Do you find yourself saying, "I hope it works out" or "I hope we can make it"? Sometimes our situations speak so much louder than our faith. Maybe you are growing weary in your battles, wondering if you have the strength to finish. Maybe you find the rising grocery and fuel costs overwhelming. You might wonder how you are going to maintain, much less moving ahead and If your emotions are running higher than your faith, it's time for a reset and re-evaluation.How do we do that? First, take time to look at the different areas of your life. It is a good time to examine not only your physical health, but also your physical environment. I know I need to add some more movement into my schedule (like exercise!). This is my choice! I wish I could blame someone else, but it is on me. Just because I failed in the past, doesn't mean I have to fail this year. How about your home? Do you have areas that need some changing and up doing? Maybe deep cleaning or de-cluttering? Or do you choose to "live" with it another year? These things are pretty black and white. Either you do them, or you don't.Emotional evaluation can be a bit trickier. It may be hard to admit you have some depression, discouragement or insecurity. An honest conversation with the Lord is always so helpful in these areas. He is a safe place to admit your struggles. Confess your weaknesses (perceived or real) to Him. Freedom and encouragement are waiting for you. Ask Him to show you how to move through those areas. If you need more help, then ask Him to open the right door or lead you to the right person. Sometimes He will show you the roots of your emotional situation. If He does, then trust Him to show you what to do about them. It may entail forgiveness of yourself or others, and if it does then walk that out. One time He showed me a root of abandonment, that came from my adoption story. Just that revelation brought freedom and understanding. He is after all the Mighty Counselor! I'm focusing on our emotional health because this has been a hard year for so many.Obviously, our spirit, body and soul are all integrated. I admit, sometimes, I wish I could just tend to my spirit and the rest of the stuff would be handled, but not so. So how do you evaluate how your spirit is doing? The first thing I would look at is your hope level? Are you hopeful about your future. In Romans 15:13, Paul emphatically states God is the source of hope, and will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. So the next question, how is your joy and peace level? We once had a friend who was like the old Tony the Tiger commercial. Life (or anything else you asked him about) was GREAT! We knew life wasn't always that great, but it had become his automatic response. He thought that, as a Christian, he always had to be GREAT. After growing in the Lord and in His ways he learned to have a more balanced approach. When I focus on Him more than my problems, I have more joy and peace. Hard situations do not overshadow my focus. I automatically hope for His intervention. I believe in His ability to use those things for good in my life and the lives of others. It may take a minute for my emotions to catch up, but I know He has a good plan.Looking back on my younger believer self and my self today, I can see where I have grown. I have grown through applying the Word to my situations, instead of my situations to the Word. I have grown through honest conversations with Him and submitting to His Will as I have known it. My friends, I have learned to let the Word of God be the cleansing agent in my life. I read it every day. It touches my soul. This brings the refreshment and reset I often need in my perspective. I know some of you totally understand this, while others have yet to experience it. Don't give up. *Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you, for everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds; and the one who knocks the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7 NIV.* Asking, seeking and finding are all action words. Sometimes we have to wait, but we must always ask, seek and find in faith. So my friends, if you are needing a reset He has one for you. We often have not because we ask not. So evaluate what you have been or have not been asking. It does make a difference. Maybe you thought you were asking, but actually were just whining (I may have done that a time or two or one hundred!)Living in hope is so much better than living in hopelessness. If your hope waxes and wanes, ask Him to show you why and what to do about it. Join a small group where you can encourage each other in His ways. Do not neglect assembling yourself together with His body. You will not prosper as well as you could.*Father, I thank you for helping us take the time. With courage, we do a reset and evaluation this time of year. I thank you for the courage to ask, seek and find everything we need to prosper this coming year. You are an amazing personal God who has good plans for each of us, in Jesus' Name, amen.* |

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