
Theme: New Year's and What Is Truly Important
Spiritual Focus: Growing Faith – Making Christ Our Foundation

Key Scripture References

1. “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” – Matthew 6:33
 2. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” – Proverbs 3:5
 3. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105
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Daily Challenges for Building Faith

Monday: 1. Starting Each Day with Christ

- **Key Scripture:** “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” – Matthew 6:33 This verse calls believers to put God’s kingdom and righteousness first in their priorities, assuring us that when we seek Him, He provides for all our needs. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” – Mark 1:35 Jesus’ example of early morning prayer shows us the importance of starting each day centered on God, setting a tone of dependence and focus.
 - **Biblical Characters:**
 - **Jesus:** His regular practice of praying early in the morning serves as a model for prioritizing time with God. Throughout His ministry, Jesus often withdrew to pray (Luke 5:16). His early-morning prayer in Mark 1:35 teaches us to begin the day by seeking guidance and strength from God.
 - **Application:** Encourage believers to dedicate the first few minutes of their day to Scripture reading or a simple prayer like, “Lord, guide me today.”
 - **David:** In Psalm 5:3, David writes, “In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.” David demonstrates his habit of starting the day by laying his requests before God and waiting expectantly.
 - **Application:** Journaling prayers in the morning or reflecting on God’s promises can help believers adopt David’s practice of starting the day with faith.
 - **Morning:** Begin the day by praying, “Lord, I give this day to You. Help me seek Your will in all I do.”
 - **Challenge:** Read one Bible verse or devotional and reflect on it for 5 minutes.
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Tuesday: 2. Seeking God’s Will in Decisions

- **Key Scripture:** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” – Proverbs 3:5-6 Trusting God in all decisions means recognizing His wisdom over our understanding. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11 This verse assures believers of God’s plans for hope and a future, encouraging trust in His guidance.
 - **Biblical Characters:**
 - **King Solomon:** When faced with a monumental decision as king, Solomon sought God’s wisdom instead of riches or power (1 Kings 3:5-14). When given the opportunity to ask for anything, Solomon chose wisdom -- His reliance on God’s guidance made him one of Israel’s greatest leaders.
 - **Application:** Teach believers to pray for wisdom in their decisions, such as when facing career changes, parenting challenges, or financial concerns.
 - **Gideon:**
 - **Gideon:** Before leading Israel into battle, Gideon sought confirmation of God’s will by asking for signs (Judges 6:36-40).
 - Gideon doubted his ability to lead Israel, so he asked for clear signs from God to confirm His will (Judges 6:36-40). Despite his initial hesitation, Gideon obeyed.
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- **Application:** Highlight the importance of prayer and seeking godly counsel when making difficult choices, trusting that God will make His will clear.
 - **Morning:** Write down one area where you need God's guidance this week. Pray for wisdom and trust Him to lead.
 - **Challenge:** Pause before making a decision today and ask, "Does this honor God?"
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Wednesday: 3. Trusting God with the Uncertain and Difficult

- **Key Scripture:** "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." – 1 Peter 5:7
"The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing." – Psalm 23:1 --"The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you." –
 - Deuteronomy 31:8 -- Casting anxieties on God reminds believers that they are never alone.
 - God's promise to never leave or forsake His people offers comfort in times of uncertainty.
 - **Biblical Characters:**
The Israelites at the Red Sea:
 - Facing Pharaoh's army and the sea, the Israelites doubted, but Moses encouraged them to trust in God's deliverance (Exodus 14:13-31). God parted the Red Sea, showing His power over impossible situations. Moses trusted God, and He miraculously parted the waters
 - Application: Remind believers to trust God even when the way forward seems blocked, praying for patience and faith.
 - **Job:**
 - Job experienced profound loss but remained steadfast in trusting God's sovereignty, saying, "Though He slay me, yet I will hope in Him" (Job 13:15).
 - **Job:** Despite losing everything, Job trusted God's sovereignty, saying, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).
 - **Application:** Encourage believers to hold onto God's promises when facing illness, grief, or financial hardship, as Job did.
 - **Morning:** Write down one worry or fear. Surrender it to God in prayer, trusting His plan.
 - **Challenge:** Read Philippians 4:6-7. Ask God to replace your worry with His peace.
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Thursday: 4. Living Out Faith in Relationships

- **Key Scripture:** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." – Ephesians 4:32 Forgiveness is a hallmark of a Christ-centered life.
 - 1 John 3:18 – "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." –This verse emphasizes that faith is demonstrated through loving actions.
 - **Biblical Character:**
 - **The Good Samaritan:** He demonstrated Christ-like love by caring for a stranger, even when others passed by (Luke 10:25-37). The Samaritan showed love to a stranger despite cultural and personal differences (Luke 10:25-37).
 - **Application:** Challenge believers to act with compassion in their communities, whether by helping a neighbor or supporting a charitable cause.
 - **Joseph:** After being betrayed by his brothers, Joseph chose forgiveness over bitterness and provided for them during a famine (Genesis 50:19-21). Betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery, Joseph forgave them and provided for their needs.
 - **Application:** Encourage believers to let go of resentment and offer forgiveness, trusting God to heal broken relationships.
 - **Morning:** Reflect on a relationship that needs forgiveness or encouragement. Pray for God's help to act in love.
 - **Challenge:** Do one kind act for someone—a family member, friend, or stranger.
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Friday: 5. Staying Anchored in Community

- **Key Scripture:** “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.” – Hebrews 10:24-25 This passage highlights the importance of encouraging one another and gathering in fellowship.
- Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” – Acts 2:42 The early church serves as a model of community built on teaching, prayer, and shared life.
- **Biblical Character:**
 - **Paul:** Paul emphasized the importance of the church as a body of believers working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Paul often referred to the church as a body of believers who function together for God’s glory (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).
 - Application: Highlight the importance of small groups, church participation, and mutual accountability in growing faith.
 - **Ruth and Naomi:** Their relationship demonstrated the strength and support found in godly community (Ruth 1:16-18). Ruth’s loyalty to Naomi demonstrates the strength of godly relationships, as she committed herself not only to Naomi but also to God (Ruth 1:16-18).
 - Application: Encourage believers to invest in mentoring relationships and to support one another spiritually.
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- **Morning:** Ask God to show you how to use your time, talents, or money for His Kingdom this year.
- **Challenge:** Consider one change you can make to prioritize God’s work (e.g., giving, volunteering, or serving).

Saturday:

6. Seeking Christ’s Kingdom in Priorities

- **Key Scripture:** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” – Matthew 6:19-20 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21
 - **Biblical Character:**
 - Mary of Bethany: She prioritized sitting at Jesus’ feet to learn from Him, choosing what was truly important over busyness (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus reminds us to prioritize eternal treasures over earthly possessions. Jesus commends Mary of Bethany for choosing what is most important: time with Him. While Martha was distracted by busyness, Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to His teaching (Luke 10:38-42).
 - **Application:** Encourage believers to prioritize quiet time with God over constant activity, even in a busy New Year.
 - **The Rich Young Ruler:**
 - **The Rich Young Ruler:** His story (Mark 10:17-31) serves as a warning against prioritizing earthly possessions over God’s Kingdom.
 - His story (Mark 10:17-31) contrasts the danger of clinging to material wealth with the call to follow Christ wholeheartedly.
 - **Application:** Teach believers to examine their priorities and surrender anything that competes with their devotion to Christ.
 - **Morning:** Reflect on your week. Where did you see God’s hand at work? Thank Him for His presence.
 - **Challenge:** Share one way God has blessed you with a friend or family member.
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Sunday: 7. Seeking Christ's Kingdom in Priorities

- **Key Scripture:** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” – Matthew 6:19-20
“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21 Jesus reminds us to prioritize eternal treasures over earthly possessions.
- Luke 10:42 – Jesus commends Mary of Bethany for choosing what is most important: time with Him.
- **Biblical Character:**
 - **Mary of Bethany:** She prioritized sitting at Jesus’ feet to learn from Him, choosing what was truly important over busyness (Luke 10:38-42). While Martha was distracted by busyness, Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to His teaching (Luke 10:38-42).
 - **Application:** Encourage believers to prioritize quiet time with God over constant activity, even in a busy New Year.
 - The Rich Young Ruler: His story (Mark 10:17-31) serves as a warning against prioritizing earthly possessions over God’s Kingdom His story (Mark 10:17-31) contrasts the danger of clinging to material wealth with the call to follow Christ wholeheartedly.
 - **Application:** Teach believers to examine their priorities and surrender anything that competes with their devotion to Christ.
- **Morning:** Pray for your church, its leaders, and your own spiritual growth.
- **Challenge:** Attend a service or join a small group for encouragement and fellowship.

A Foundation Prayer for the New Year

Heavenly Father, -- Thank You for Your faithfulness and love. This year, help me to build my life on the foundation of Christ. Guide my decisions, replace my worries with Your peace, and teach me to trust You in every moment. Let Your Word be my light, and Your love be my guide. Strengthen my faith so I may live for Your glory and share Your grace with others. I surrender this year to You, knowing Your plans are good and perfect. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Guided by His Light

Through each sunrise, His light will shine,
A guiding hand, a love divine.
In every shadow, His voice is clear,
"Be not afraid, for I am near."
When paths are tangled, and steps unsure,
His wisdom leads, His hope endures.
Through trials faced and joys we share,
He walks beside us, ever aware.
Each moment offered, each prayer we speak,
He strengthens the weary, upholds the weak.
With every season, His grace is true,
Our Savior guides in all we do.
So trust the Lord as the days unfold,
With faith unshaken, and hearts made bold.
For in His hands, the journey’s bright,
Led by His love, and endless light.

Here's the enhanced list, with prayers added that focus on the themes, the love of Jesus, and the call for God's guidance and direction:

Faith-Building Worksheet

1. Reflection:

- What areas of my life need more trust in God?
- How can I make time for God daily?

2. Practical Goals for 2025:

- I will spend ____ minutes in daily prayer and Scripture.
- I will serve God by _____.

3. Accountability:

- Who can I share my faith journey with this year?
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1. Starting Each Day with Christ

Key Scriptures:

- Matthew 6:33
- Mark 1:35

Biblical Characters:

- Jesus: Starting His day with prayer.
- David: Laying his requests before God in the morning.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as I begin this new day, I place my heart and mind in Your hands. Teach me to seek You first in all that I do. Let my words, thoughts, and actions reflect Your love and bring glory to Your name. Lord Jesus, guide me to walk closely with You, relying on Your strength and wisdom. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

2. Seeking God's Will in Decisions

Key Scriptures:

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Jeremiah 29:11

Biblical Characters:

- King Solomon: Prayed for wisdom.
- Gideon: Sought signs for God's will.

Prayer:

Gracious God, I come before You, seeking Your wisdom and direction. Teach me to trust You with all my heart and not lean on my own understanding. Help me to discern Your will in every decision I face. Remind me that Your plans are for my good, even when the path seems unclear. Jesus, be my guide, my counselor, and my peace. In Your precious name, I pray. Amen.

3. Trusting God with the Uncertain and Difficult

Key Scriptures:

- 1 Peter 5:7
- Deuteronomy 31:8

Biblical Characters:

- The Israelites at the Red Sea: Trusted God's deliverance.
- Job: Held fast to hope in God's sovereignty.

Prayer:

Lord God, I bring my worries, fears, and uncertainties to You. Help me to cast my anxieties at Your feet, trusting that You care for me. Remind me of Your faithfulness when the road is hard, and strengthen my heart to follow You. Thank You for being my rock and my refuge. In times of trouble, I will rest in Your unfailing love, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

4. Living Out Faith in Relationships

Key Scriptures:

- Ephesians 4:32
- 1 John 3:18

Biblical Characters:

- The Good Samaritan: Acted with love and compassion.
- Joseph: Forgave his brothers and cared for them.

Prayer:

Loving Father, thank You for the relationships You have placed in my life. Teach me to love as Jesus loves—with patience, kindness, and forgiveness. When I face hurt or disappointment, help me to rely on Your grace to heal and restore. Let my faith be evident through acts of compassion, and may others see Jesus in me. Lord, help me to build relationships that honor You. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

5. Staying Anchored in Community

Key Scriptures:

- Hebrews 10:24-25
- Acts 2:42

Biblical Characters:

- Paul: Taught the church as a body of believers.
- Ruth and Naomi: Modeled godly loyalty and support.

Prayer:

Father God, thank You for the gift of community. Teach me to encourage and uplift those around me. Help me to stay connected to the body of Christ, where I can grow in faith and share in Your work. Lord, strengthen my relationships with fellow believers, and show me how to reflect Your love to those who are seeking You. May we walk together in unity and purpose, in Jesus' name. Amen.

6. Seeking Christ's Kingdom in Priorities

Key Scriptures:

- Matthew 6:19-21
- Luke 10:42

Biblical Characters:

- Mary of Bethany: Chose time with Jesus over busyness.
- The Rich Young Ruler: Struggled with priorities.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help me to treasure what is eternal and lasting. Teach me to set my heart on Your kingdom and not on the fleeting things of this world. Like Mary, may I choose to sit at Your feet and hear Your words. Let my life be a reflection of Your grace and truth, and guide me to live with purpose and faith. I surrender my plans to You, trusting in Your perfect will. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

"A New Year, A Renewed Faith: Prioritizing What Matters Most"

“This year, let’s make our faith in Christ the foundation of everything we do. Let us seek His will first and trust Him with the rest.”

Key Scripture:

- Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
 - Philippians 3:13-14: "Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
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Course Outline:

1. Reflection on the Year Past

- Acknowledge both the blessings and challenges of the previous year.
- Share how faith helped navigate those moments.
- Emphasize the importance of learning from the past without being burdened by it.
- Scripture: Lamentations 3:22-23 - "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning."

2. What Truly Matters

- Challenge the congregation to evaluate their priorities: Are they seeking God first?
- Discuss the distractions of materialism, busyness, or fear that pull us away from growing in faith.
- Story/Analogy: A jar filled with rocks (representing God’s priorities) versus sand (worldly distractions).

3. Growing Faith in the New Year

- Faith is not static but requires intentional nurturing.
- Three practical steps:
 1. Daily Prayer and Scripture: Start each day centered on God.
 2. Commit to Community: Attend church, small groups, or serve others.
 3. Trust in God’s Timing: Leave the "unknowns" of the year ahead to Him.

4. God’s Promises for the Year Ahead

- Assure them of God’s faithfulness: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).
 - Encourage them to let go of fear and embrace God’s plan, trusting His love and grace.
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Call to Action:

- **End with a challenge:** “This year, let’s make our faith in Christ the foundation of everything we do. Let us seek His will first and trust Him with the rest.”
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Closing Prayer: “Lord, as we step into a new year, guide us to seek You first in all things. Help us grow in faith, prioritize what truly matters, and trust in Your plans for us. May we glorify You in every season of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Where do we begin?

Building a Foundation of Faith: A Daily Guide

1. Start Each Day with Christ

- **What it looks like:** Begin every morning by spending time with God. This could mean reading a passage from Scripture, praying, or reflecting on a devotion.
 - **Why it matters:** It centers your heart on God’s will rather than being swept away by the day’s demands.
 - **Practical Example:** A busy parent might pray “Lord, guide me today to show Your love to my children and others.”
 - **Scripture:** “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).
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2. Seek God's Will in Everyday Decisions

- What it looks like: Invite God into the small and big decisions of life—whether it's how you spend your time, your money, or how you interact with others.
- Why it matters: Faith is built when we trust God with decisions and see how He works through them.
- Practical Example: Before making a decision at work or school, pause and pray, "Lord, give me wisdom to choose what honors You."
- Scripture: "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act" (Psalm 37:5).

3. Trust God with the Uncertain and Difficult

- What it looks like: When faced with fear, disappointment, or setbacks, lean into God's promises instead of reacting with worry or doubt.
- Why it matters: Faith grows when we learn to trust in God's timing and provision, even when life feels out of control.
- Practical Example: A struggling student might pray, "God, I feel overwhelmed, but I trust You to help me focus and do my best."
- Scripture: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

4. Live Out Faith in Relationships

- What it looks like: Show Christ's love in how you treat others—friends, family, coworkers, or even strangers. Forgive quickly, encourage often, and serve selflessly.
- Why it matters: Faith becomes real when it impacts others through our actions.
- Practical Example: A believer might prioritize spending time with a struggling friend, sharing hope and encouragement in Christ.
- Scripture: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another"(John 13:34).

5. Stay Anchored in Community

- What it looks like: Be part of a church or small group where you can grow spiritually, be encouraged, and hold each other accountable.
- Why it matters: Faith thrives in community, where we are reminded we're not alone.
- Practical Example: Someone considering faith might attend a Bible study to explore questions and find support.
- Scripture: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

6. Seek Christ's Kingdom in Priorities

- What it looks like: Align your goals with God's purposes. Ask, "Does this decision glorify God? Will it deepen my faith or lead others to Him?"
- Why it matters: Seeking God first reorders our lives to reflect His eternal priorities over worldly ones.
- Practical Example: A family might decide to cut back on unnecessary spending to give more generously to their church or a mission.
- Scripture: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

For Someone Exploring Faith

- Start small: Encourage them to begin with curiosity—reading the Gospel of John, joining a service, or simply asking God to show Himself in their life.
- Why it matters: Faith begins with openness and grows through encountering Christ personally.

The Gospel Message

- Remind both believers and seekers:
"Our foundation is not built on our efforts but on Christ's work for us. He invites us to trust Him daily and find peace, joy, and purpose through His grace."
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Here's how we can expand the message into specific challenges, illustrations, and stories to bring it to life for both believers and seekers:

1. Starting Each Day with Christ

Challenge:

- Encourage the congregation to commit to spending the first 10 minutes of each day in prayer, reading Scripture, or meditating on God's Word.
- Example: Suggest using a devotional app or writing a verse on a notecard to carry through the day.

Illustration:

- Share a story about Martin Luther, who said, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." While this may seem extreme, it highlights the importance of grounding your day in God's presence.

2. Seeking God's Will in Decisions

Challenge:

- Before making a choice this week—big or small—pause to pray: "Lord, what would honor You?" Write down one decision where you will practice this.

Illustration:

- Use the story of King Solomon asking God for wisdom instead of riches or power (1 Kings 3:5-12). Explain how seeking God's will led to blessings for Solomon and those he led.

Story:

- Share a personal testimony or a congregant's story about a time they trusted God with a significant decision and saw His faithfulness.

3. Trusting God with the Uncertain and Difficult

Challenge:

- Ask the congregation to write down one fear or worry they need to surrender to God this week. Pray over it daily and remind themselves of His promise to carry their burdens.

Illustration:

- Share the biblical story of the Israelites at the Red Sea (Exodus 14). When they trusted God despite their fear, He made a way where there was no way.

Story:

- Share about someone who faced uncertainty—such as losing a job, health struggles, or family challenges—and found peace by trusting God with the outcome.

4. Living Out Faith in Relationships

Challenge:

- Encourage each person to perform one act of Christ-like love this week: forgiving someone, helping a neighbor, or reaching out to a lonely friend.
- Ask: "How can you reflect Jesus to someone who needs to see His love?"

Illustration:

- Use the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Explain how the Samaritan's willingness to go out of his way reflected God's love for us.

Story:

- Share a modern story of someone who served selflessly, like a nurse, teacher, or parent who demonstrated love in a profound way.
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5. Staying Anchored in Community

Challenge:

- Invite them to join or recommit to a small group, Bible study, or church ministry in the new year.
- Encourage them to find one person in the church to pray for and encourage.

Illustration:

- Share how the early church in Acts (Acts 2:42-47) thrived because they devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, and prayer.

Story:

- Highlight someone who found strength and accountability in a small group or church community, emphasizing how it helped them grow in their faith.
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6. Seeking Christ's Kingdom in Priorities

Challenge:

- Encourage the congregation to reflect on their time, money, and energy. Ask: "Am I seeking first the Kingdom of God in these areas?" Challenge them to prioritize one change this week.

Illustration:

- Use the analogy of the jar with rocks and sand: The rocks represent God's priorities (faith, family, serving others), and the sand represents worldly distractions. When we put the rocks in first, the sand fits around them. If we fill the jar with sand first, there's no room for the rocks.

Story:

- Share a story of someone who simplified their life or shifted their priorities to focus on God's will and how it transformed them.
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Building our Faith with the Gospel

- **Illustration of God's Grace:** Use the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) to remind both believers and seekers that God welcomes them, no matter their past. Highlight the father's joy in welcoming his son home as a picture of God's love and grace.
 - **Invitation to Faith:** Encourage seekers to take a step of faith: "If you've never made Christ your foundation, today is the perfect time. Come to Him as you are, and let Him guide your new year with His love and forgiveness."
 - **Encouragement for Believers:** "This year, growing your faith means seeking Christ in everything and trusting that His plans for you are far greater than anything you could imagine."
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A Foundation of Faith

As the dawn of the New Year breaks,
A path of hope, a road it makes.
Not built on sand that shifts with time,
But faith in Christ, steadfast, sublime.

The storms will come, the winds will roar,
Yet firm remains this sacred floor.
His Word our rock, His love our guide,
In Him we stand, in Him abide.

Each step we take, a prayer we raise,
Through trials faced, we give Him praise.
This year, O Lord, our hearts renew,
Our faith, the cornerstone in You.
