

CHRISTIAN LIFE NOTES

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THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Prosperity Through Our Father's Eyes

but *prosperity* is the reward of the righteous. Proverbs 13:21b
The dictionary defines prosperity as the condition of having success, flourishing. It is to be fortunate; to thrive.

Are you *prosperous*? Most of us immediately think in terms of material wealth when we think of *prosperity* and most often think in terms of what we don't have rather than what we do possess. We may have a home that keeps us safe and warm; but—if only it had another bathroom, or a family room, or a larger kitchen. We may have two cars, but they aren't enough with three drivers in the family. We may have vacation time from work, but if only we could afford to go to Disney World.

Once again, coming through the Christmas season, we have been bombarded with gift suggestions which all cost money that many of us can ill afford to spend, but feel obligated to express our love, care or concern for others through tangible gifts.

As Christians, however, we know that our love is not measured by dollar signs and our *prosperity* is not measured by our material goods that are all too soon broken, outdated, boring or taken for granted. We have the example of God's love for us which is totally selfless to the point of offering up His own dear Son for the sake of people who deserve neither compassion nor salvation. This God of agape love offers a reward of prosperity for the righteous in the Proverbs passage. The entire Proverb states, *Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous*. Although we are born with a sinful nature, God made us righteous ("right" with Him) by His Spirit when we put our faith and trust in Him. By our faith we are the righteous to whom God promises prosperity.

However, sometimes our *prosperity* goes unrecognized because we are looking from the world's standpoint. How am I *prosperous* if I am out of work?...if I am lonely?...if my spouse has asked for a divorce?...if my health is deteriorating? ...if my children are rebellious? How am I *prosperous* if I am depressed or stress-out or hungry?

Amy Grant sings a song about having her Father's Eyes. Looking through our Father's eyes is how we should look at our circumstances. Although God cares deeply about our physical well-being, He is primarily concerned with our Spiritual well-being—with our relationship to Him which often finds expression in our relationship with other people. He measures prosperity by a different standard than the world. We are *prosperous* when we trust God for comfort, peace, and encouragement in our hard times. These non-materialistic gifts may come to us through the ministrations of others. Or we may be the gift to others as we give the gift of time. Can we offer to baby-sit to give a single-parent a night out? Can we make ourselves available to make a meal or serve in a homeless shelter? Or listen to another rather than trying to "fix" their problem.

For the new year, let's look for our *prosperity* through our Father's eyes. As we recognize His ongoing love and care for us, we can respond by sharing these blessings with others.(JC)

"I Wonder"

by Kim

How soft my foot on forest snow,
In glistening, sparkling silence.
Falling flakes that kiss my cheek
And rest like peace on trees and trail.

I wonder why such beauty, Lord?

Could the reason be Thy grace?
Where sins of nature, like our own –
the barbs and brambles,
Broken branches, bare and brown
All disappear in graceful cover,
pure and white?

I remember Thou hast said,

*At end of time when all's made right
Thy glory only shining bright,
There'll not be pain and not be sorrow,
No need or want, **no cold or dark.**
So does this mean, no moonlit snow?
No winter's beauty anymore?*

And will I miss these if they're gone?

I wonder and I ponder all;
But then I cling to Who Thou art.
Without thy love, thy warmth, and
care,
Winter's cloak I could not wear.
So I will put my trust in Thee.
Whatever Thou hast planned to be,
'Twill be true joy, the best for me.

Happy NEW YOU.....Debbie, Judy, Anita, Kim, Pat
See: 2 Cor 5:17, Eph 4:22-24, Col. 3:9-10