

Preparing for a New Year

Scripture used: [Ephesians 6:13-18 \(MSG\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today, Bishop Green provided a sermon to prepare us for the upcoming year. Life is a mixture of joy and sorrow, but Jesus, our Emmanuel, is with us in both. God's Word instructs us how to conduct ourselves in every situation, and He will guide us through 2024.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Directives for 2024 found in this passage:
 - a) **Be aware of the enemy:** [Ephesians 6:10-13 \(NJKV\)](#) Because we have to wrestle with a battle against evil, we need to be prepared. The battle does not end because we are entering into a new year. Temptation is still around. Our lives might not change much in 2024. We might still have the same job, family life, house, church etc, but we need to be aware that the enemy is still at work. He doesn't stop just because there is a new year. Thankfully, we can trust that God is still on the throne and still in control.
 - b) **Be prepared to ask God for help.** No matter what might come in 2024, we will need God's help. We need to be aware that we are up against far more than we can handle on our own. We should go into 2024 aware that we need God's help. We need Him every moment of our lives. We can't think that we are capable on our own just when we have good jobs or a nice house. No matter our circumstances, we need God.
 - c) **Be prepared to ask others for help and to receive it.** We need to push our pride aside and realize that "no man is an island." That's why God instructs us in His Word to not be ashamed to ask and receive help. "Lord, give us this day our daily bread." God uses individuals to help us. We need to open ourselves up to receiving the help that is offered to us.
 - d) **Be persistent in prayer for yourself and others.** Prayer is essential in the ongoing warfare against the enemy. Be consistent in our prayer lives. Pray for ourselves and especially for our brothers and sisters. Keep our eyes open so we notice when and what we need to pray for. We are our brother's keeper. **Prayer is that invisible force connecting us to God, who has made Himself visible in Jesus Christ.**
- 2) Bishop Green provided the following blessing for NBCC for 2024 from [Numbers 6:24-26 \(NIV\)](#) heard in the song "The Lord Bless You and Keep You": "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - As we prepare to enter a new year, we should pause for a moment and reflect on 2023. Ask God to reveal to you what lessons He wants you to take forward into 2024. How did God show up for you? How were you drawn into a closer relationship with Him? Or perhaps, did you feel further from God because of your circumstances?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Bishop Green challenged us to be prepared as we move into 2024. He gave us four directives to help us to do so. Do any of these directives challenge you? What one seems particularly difficult? Why does that directive seem more difficult? What directive seems easier to you? Why is that so? How will you prepare to live out these directives in 2024?
- 3) **DO** - Bishop Green reminded us of the importance of prayer. He suggested that we make a habit of daily prayer time similar to how we might have a specific time to eat a meal. Decide to set aside a time daily to pray for yourself and for others as we journey into 2024. During that prayer time, ask God to make you aware of the enemy, to provide you with help, and to humble your heart so you can seek help from others.