

STARTING WELL IN 2021

Opening texts: *Luke 15:11-22; Isaiah 43:19-21*

2020 is a year like no other.

The race of life was tough and difficult.

Most people struggled to reach the finish line.

By God's grace, He saw us through and has given us a brand-new year, a brand-new start –
FOR ALL OF US.

Like in a marathon race, 2021 has set another race for us, all of us are in that same starting line.

Talking about 2021, we need to start well.

To start well, we must be intentional as we plan for this year because if we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

Here are some timely and timeless truths, some principles to live by...

#1 Start your journey with God.

The prodigal son started his journey without the Father. He started plenty and ended up with nothing.

Let Him be part of our agenda, of our decision in each passing day. Let Jesus be the prime mover of each day of 2021.

Prov. 3:6 NIV - In all your ways acknowledge Him (submit) and He will make your paths straight.

Also read James 4:6-7.

Operating in God's power does not mean **to have power** but **to be under God's power.**

Ex. Roman Centurion

Matt. 8:5-13 – I am also a man under authority..

God wired us to depend on Him.

In God's economy, getting to the end of ourselves is the beginning of hope.

Matthew 5:3 – “God blesses those who realise their need for him.”

#2 Place high value on wisdom.

The prodigal son despised the wisdom and instruction of His Father and lived in his own way. His life was totally messed up and wasted.

Wisdom is the skill to do things in a practical way.

Wisdom cries out. Read Prov. 1: 20-23

True wisdom comes from God alone.

Prov. 2:6 - For the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

Asking God is the first step to gain wisdom.

James writes this, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”* **James 1:5**

God knows what to do even if we don't.
All we have to do is to ask Him.

#3 Travel with godly and wise people.

The prodigal son left the people who were concerned about his welfare, people who were willing to love, protect and support him but he chose to travel alone.

Do not travel alone.

As you begin your 2021, ***choose your travelling companion wisely.***

God uses others.

You may be at a point where you don't know how or where to start.

The good news is that there is somebody out there who knows how and where to start, someone with the right knowledge.

Prov. 13:20 - Walk with the wise and become wise...

Prov. 11:14 - Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Prov. 15:22 - *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

Put good people around you who are gifted to help you get where you need to go.

#4 Travel light.

The prodigal son went on his journey carrying all the baggage that is loaded with resentment and disobedience. He travelled with a heavy load.

Travelling light is a principle applied by experienced runners, especially long-distance runners.

Experienced travellers choose lightweight gear so they can easily travel around from one place to the other without any hassle at all.

The Bible encourages us to get rid of the things that will weigh us down.

James 1:21 - *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

Eph. 4:31 - *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour.*

Sometimes, the hurts, the pain and the misfortunes that we experienced in the past have

no appropriate finishing or closure.

That baggage will not go away until it is dealt with. Hand it over to God.

1 Peter 5:7 - *Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you.*

Matt. 11:28 - *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*

Cut yourself free from the past.
Let go and let God.

Know that you can't change your past, whatever it is. Even God cannot change your past but He can change your future by giving you a fresh start.

He is a God of second chance.

1 John 3:20 - *Even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our feelings, and He knows everything.*

God knows everything!

You must also forgive those who have wounded you. Read *Matt. 6:14-15*.

Forgiveness is resolving and putting an end to your past so you can travel light.