

Title: Looking Back and Looking Forward

It's amazing how certain experiences have a way of sticking with us. I remember growing up the time we would spend as family bringing in the New Year. I remember staying up late ringing in the New Year. Dick Clark was still doing the countdown in New York City. We would count down along with him. We would have sparkling grape juice and food to enjoy.

New Year's day was even better. We would go to my great grandmother's house for most of the day. We would play games like spoons, card games, along with games on the Nintendo. New Year's day was the day of college bowl games. And of course, I remember the food. I love the peanut butter cookies with a Hershey kiss in the middle.

The end of the year is an exciting time. There's a sense of new beginnings for 2019. There are new opportunities for us to consider as individuals and as a congregation. What is 2019 going to hold? What great things are going to happen? Only time will tell. Yet, as we go into the New Year, I think it's also a good time to hit the pause button. It's good to reflect upon what took place in 2018: both good and bad.

It's good to examine ourselves. We are told to do this, 2 Corinthians 13:5. When you look back in 2018, what do you see? Do you see...

***A year of worship?*** As Abraham journeyed in life he was able to look back and see worship, Genesis 13, 15, 17. What about us? I know we will see long hours of work and maybe even some sleepless nights. But will we see that we took the time to worship God? Not merely on Sundays, but throughout the rest of the week?

***A year of giving?*** Were we givers in 2018? Did we give of our time to others? Did we share our time with our family and children who need it? Did we give of our time to

the kingdom? What about our money? Did we give or our finances to those in need?

Christians are to be givers, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

- Benjamin lee