



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



A New Year

Yes, it is a new year! For some, a new year is the beginning of new expectations; high hopes; and the ability for a fresh, new start.

For others, it is a fear of the unknown! Will things get better? Will the pandemic get worse? Will we ever be able to get rid of our masks?

The New Testament world Christ entered carried many of the same hopes and ambitions we bring into each New Year. The pagan society at that time consisted of divided social classes. There were wealthy landowners, politicians, government contractors and others who lived in luxury. There was the middle class, a group of people who were often homeless and food deprived due to their absence of job security. And then there were the slaves, who did most of the work. Family values were challenged by easy divorces and widespread immorality. As Charles Dickens wrote in his famous book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom. It was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief. It was the epoch of incredulity."

The Jews had hoped for a deliverer who would rescue them from the Roman government's oppression. Their expectation was to be rid of Roman dictatorship. And so they anticipated the coming Messiah would change all of their unresolved problems. The Old Testament Scriptures promised, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

For the Jews, this was great news. But there was a problem. When Jesus the Messiah came, He spoke of no revolts or uprisings, but spoke instead of peace. He promised a peace that surpassed their understanding. It was a revolution of the heart. But then He was crucified, and things became complicated. Suddenly, little change seemed possible. Those who

had set their expectations for change on Him were disappointed. They experienced a pandemic of grief.

Yet those who had received Christ as their Savior received something much better than political or economic change. They were given incomprehensible power. John said in his Gospel, "But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13 HCSB) After Jesus' resurrection, believers received power to become children of God, to live holy lives, to resist temptation, to please God, to experience a peace that was alien to their culture and to find a foundation for their eternal hope in Him.

You may feel either a pandemic of grief, or the power of eternal hope as you enter the New Year. More than likely, you've already decided what outlook you will take, so there may not be much that I can say to change your view. I will say this: Don't be discouraged or afraid if the headlines are still focusing on the pandemic and the news media is still talking about the problems of our society. Remember the story of good news that was shared by an angel with a few shepherds on a cold night in Bethlehem: "Fear not, I bring you good news and glad tidings. A baby is born in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes." (Luke 2:10-12)

This was good news, but it didn't stop in the manger. The good news is, the baby was Christ our Lord, whose resurrection still provides hope for us despite all that is happening in our fallen world. Christ has come, and He is able to provide peace amidst the discouraging storms of our life, no matter how difficult things may seem. If you haven't received His peace, please follow this [link](#) which will tell you how. If you already know Jesus as your Savior, even though you might see reasons for discouragement, He is able to give you His peace so you will not only have a happy New Year; but you can also have a New Year with a new mindset, that will produce in you a new joy!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

Choose to Be Free



Dr. Edith Eger

Edith's Story

Edith grew up in a Jewish home in Hungary [1] shortly before World War II. She was a talented athlete, and excelled as a ballerina and gymnast. She dreamed of someday competing in the Olympics, but her trainer refused to work with her because she was Jewish. Anti-Semitism had swept over Eastern Europe as quickly as Hitler's advancing armies.

But soon, the discrimination became even more personal. At the age of 16 Edith and her parents, along with one of her two older sisters, was sent by Nazi soldiers to Auschwitz, the infamous German concentration camp. Immediately upon arrival, the men were separated from the women. Edith never saw her father again, and later learned he had been killed in a gas chamber.

The women stood together in another line. Edith and her sister stood at the end, their mother between them. Dr. Josef Mengele, known as The Angel of Death, asked Edith about her mother, "Is this your mother or is this your sister?" When she told him the woman was her mother, Mengele pointed for her to join a line on the left, while the two sisters were sent to a line on the right. The line on the left was for those who would head to the gas chambers. The line on the right was for those fortunate enough to survive . . . that day. [2]

When Edith found out her mother had been killed, she wanted to die. But she was inspired by her mother's words when they had first arrived at the concentration camp: "We don't know where we're going, we don't know what's going to happen, just remember no one can take away from you what you put here in your own mind." [3] Of these words, Edith says, "It was the first time I saw that we have a choice: to pay attention to what we've lost or to pay attention to what we still have." [4]

Edith's Choice

"You can't change what happened. You can't change what you did or what was done to you. But you can choose how you live now. . . . You can choose to be free." [5] Edith made that daily, conscious choice for the rest of her brutal Nazi incarceration. And she survived. Today, at age 94, she is a licensed clinical therapist, international bestselling author and public speaker who inspires others with her compelling story.

Your Story

Few of us will ever experience suffering as dire as Dr. Eger's in our lifetime, but sometimes we feel the same emotions of despair, hopelessness, grief, anger and loss when life deals us a hard blow: The ominous medical report. A devastating natural disaster. Conflict. Abuse. The death of a loved one. A debilitating injury. That car accident. A deadly virus outbreak. Each of us has been touched by pain's broad, heavy fingers in the past year. Its fingerprints run through every chapter of our life story.

But as Dr. Eger demonstrates, all who suffer are not victims. What's the secret to triumphing through adversity without becoming a victim?

The Bible Way Through Pain

The Bible gives us two keys: 1. Daily heart renewal and 2. An eternal perspective. The Apostle Paul wrote, ". . . Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient [temporary], but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16–18)

When our hearts and minds are renewed each day through reading and meditating on Scripture, we will be like houses built on a rock in a wind storm. The winds of life may huff and puff, but they will never destroy us because of our solid foundation. Add to this a perspective which sees eternal rewards beyond temporary hardships, and you have a winning formula to power through the year ahead.

Your Choice

No one can take away from you what you choose to put in your mind. You may choose to live as a helpless victim trapped by your past, or you can choose to live in freedom and victory. I pray you will choose to be free today, and in the year ahead.

[1] <https://dreditheger.com/about/>

[2] Hollander, Sophia, <https://history.com/news/auschwitz-holocaust-survivors-stories>, January 22, 2020.

[3] Loc. cit.

[4] Pompiano, Polina, "The Profile," <https://theprofile.substack.com/p/edith-eva-eger>, April 7, 2022.

[5] Loc. cit.

