

new years prayers

by Brooke P. Lee

a word from brooke

It's been close to two decades since I first started exchanging New Year's Resolutions for something I call "New Year's Prayers."

Rather than setting resolutions for the upcoming year, I instead start a dialogue with God about some areas of my life in need of renewal, transformation, and/or healing. I started doing this after realizing that resolutions just didn't work for me. They always seemed to bring out my ugliest parts; black and white thinking, inner-obsessive control, pride, shame, and worst of all it put me in control of the change in my life rather than God. They also rarely seemed to stick. So, I decided to try something different, and I've been doing it ever since.

These New Year's Prayers kick off the year with a little less hustle and a lot more grace. Sometimes, before you can gain vision for what's ahead, you have to reflect on where you've been, so we'll start by looking back. After we've reflected on the year behind us, we'll then look forward to the new year, remembering that God will do the transformation in our lives, not us. These New Year's Prayers also aren't results-based, they're journey-based. Meaning, we leave the results and outcome to God and take responsibility for our commitment to the yearlong journey.

A quick word about pace: I would suggest doing a couple pages at a time and setting aside the entire month of January to work your way through this guide. Think of this guide more like a slow stroll, rather than a sprint. Sometimes we need time and space for things to percolate and be revealed, so I encourage you to allow that. One of my favorite traditions my husband and I have (and the kids are getting in on it, too!) is to talk through some of the questions during New Year's Eve dinner, and to continue those conversations throughout the month of January,

So, whenever you're ready, carve out some time, pull out your pen/journal/bible, and join me in reflecting on 2025, and praying through 2026.

Expectant for a God-year ahead,
with God as our Guide,



brooke

God

Thank you for being with me all year, whether I've felt you or not. Give me eyes to see how you've moved in my life this past year.

As I reflect on 2025, give me the clarity to see the year for all that it was. Give me pause as I remember the joys, successes, gains, and victories. Give me courage to acknowledge the sadness, confusion, grief, and disappointment.

**Give me ears to hear anything you want to say to me or show me about 2025.
I'm listening.**

In Jesus' Name,

amen



reflect

to turn over in one's mind

overview

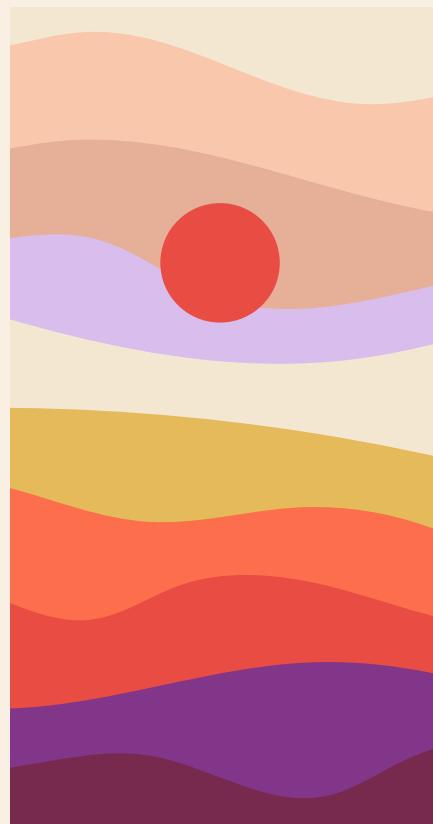
Let's begin by reflecting on 2025. Think back over the year chronologically. Jot down any major moments or benchmarks from the year. What all happened this year? (One thing that helps me remember is to glance back through my photo reel on my phone or look back through my calendar. Try this to jog your memory.)

Jan-Mar:

Apr-Jun:

Jul-Sept:

Oct-Dec:



Which memories speak loudest to you from the past year? (Whether or not they seem “significant” on paper). Were there conversations, activities, events, trips, projects, relationships, etc. that bring up strong emotions? List those out here.

From those you listed above, what emotions are brought up now as you remember them? Close your eyes and think through each one and see if you can acknowledge the emotion that you feel about it/towards it. Ask God for help to stay in the emotion (in other words, don’t solve or explain the emotion away, just acknowledge it) and then write out the emotion next to each memory above.

Is there anything God is saying to you as you reflect on these emotional memories/events/activities? If you are unsure, take a few minutes in prayer and silence. If nothing comes up, that’s ok.

highs & lows

My top three highlights/favorite moments from the year were:

1.

2.

3.

My top three most difficult moments from the year were:

1.

2.

3.



beginnings & endings

What new things happened this year? (New job, new hobby, new rhythm, new friendship, new schedule, new skill, new role, etc.)

What things ended this year? (A season, a job, a rhythm, a project, a certain schedule, etc.)



celebrate & grieve

I want to celebrate these things from the past year (personal growth, accomplishments, courageous step, milestones, small wins, adaptations, etc.):

I grieve these losses from the past year (this doesn't necessarily have to be loss of life, but also loss of a friendship, stage of life, and/or rhythm, etc.):



internal well-being

What things gave you life this past year? What things made you feel more alive, more excited, more full?

What things drained you this past year?

Were there any “undercurrents of stress” that weighed on you throughout the year? (i.e. financial, medical, relational, etc.)



God

Were there any words, verses, themes you sensed God speaking to you in the past year?

Did you choose a word for 2025? If so, reflect back on it. How did God move in regards to this word?

Reflect on your time with God. When did you feel closest to God in the past year?

Was there anything that made you pull away from God?

What's the state of your relationship with God at the close of the year?

relationships

Reflect on your relationships.

What relationships poured into you?

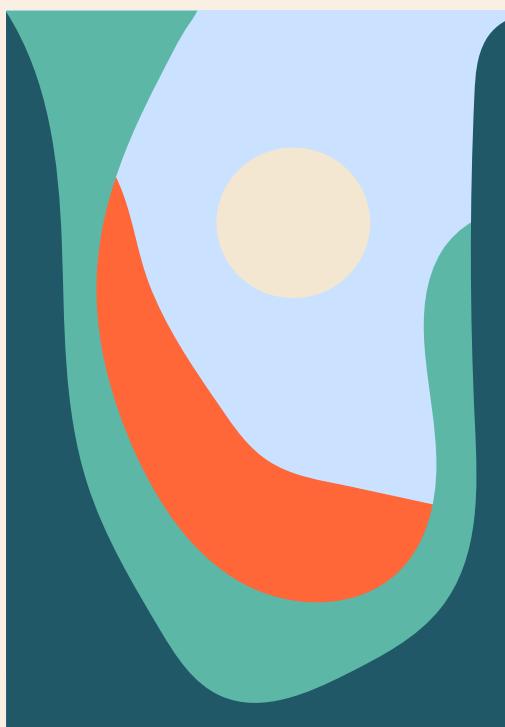
What relationships did you pour into and invest in?

Were there any relationships that were unfruitful, dysfunctional, unhealthy or draining to you?

If married, what is the state of your marriage?

What's going well in your marriage?

What isn't going well?



time

Reflect on your schedule.

How did your schedule feel to you? Circle One.

Overwhelmed

Full

Balanced

Light

Underwhelmed

Reflect on your rhythms of rest. What sort of things did you do that rested you this past year? (Social Media fast, weekly Sabbath, solitude, reading, getting out in nature, baths, vacation, walks, etc.)

Were your times of rest consistent? If not, why?

If I had to summarize this past year in 1-3 words, I would say:

Here are the things, both big and small, that I am thankful for this past year...

selah

"Selah" is a Hebrew word found often in the book of Psalms. It's meant to indicate a suggested pause for contemplation or a call for break.

As we close out this reflection time on 2025, I want to encourage you to selah; to take a pause for contemplation. Perhaps some strong or heavy emotions were evoked in you as you reflected on the past year, and you need to simply feel them. Or perhaps some dots need to be connected, or themes need to be unsurfaced through a process of percolation.

Give yourself some time and space over the coming days or even weeks to feel and filter through this reflection process. Whatever comes to the surface, allow it, welcome it, feel it, and let the process be the point.

When you are ready, you can move forward to the dialogue portion of this guide.



dialogue

**a discussion between two or more people,
directed toward exploration of a particular
subject or resolution of a problem.**

begin

Now, that you've had a chance to reflect on 2025, it's time to look forward to 2026. To start, let's first take some time to pray. Feel free to use the prayer below or pray in your own words to center your mind, heart and soul on what God might want to say to you and lead you in this new year.

Dear Lord,

As I look forward to 2026, quiet any plans and/or ambitions that are not from you. Help me release control of what I want to happen in the coming year and help me welcome the plans You have for me. (Spend a minute now and open your hands, palms facing up, as a physical posture of prayer to God. Take a few deep breaths as your body comes into surrender and alignment with God's sovereignty over the year ahead.)

Holy Spirit reveal to me the areas of my life that are holding me back, weighing me down, and separating me from You. And as I reflect on these areas and process them with you, please cover me in grace, reminding me that I am not bad, or too far gone, or flawed in your eyes. I also ask for courage as I confront different areas of my life, seeking to do so honestly and authentically with You.

In Jesus' name I pray,

amen

overview

Here is what's coming up in 2026...

Jan-Mar:

Apr-Jun:

Jul-Sept:

Oct-Dec:

I am looking forward to...

I am nervous about...

Here are some decisions that need to be made...

Here are some challenges I anticipate...



areas of life

As you go through this next portion, remind yourself that this isn't black & white, it isn't permanent, and we aren't really setting goals. Rather, it's helpful to think of this more like starting a conversation with God about different areas of your life that are in need of hope, renewal, growth, healing and/or transformation.

Are there any areas of your life that God has revealed to you, or the Holy Spirit has stirred in you that need transformation, growth, healing, freedom, renewal? Below are some categories to help get you thinking. If it's helpful, whisper a prayer before reading through the list and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate which area is most in need. Check any and all that apply.

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Psalm 139:23-24

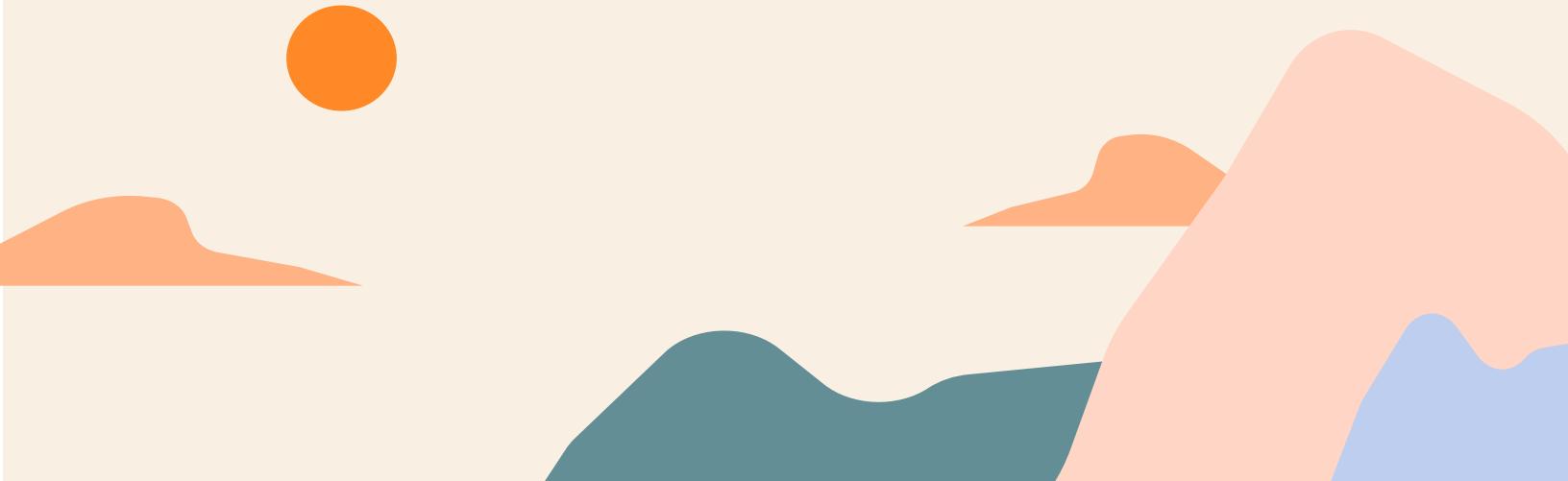
- Friendships/Isolation/ Loneliness
 - Family Relationships
 - Body/Eating/Exercise
 - Church
 - Marriage/Romantic Relationship
 - Quiet Times/Personal Time with God
 - Anger/Bitterness
 - Money/Spending/Shopping
 - Past/Childhood
 - Substances (Alcohol, Drugs, Etc)
 - Rest/Work Balance
 - Fun/Play
 - Emotional Well-Being
 - Jealousy/Comparison
 - Therapy/Soul Care
 - Co-dependency/People Pleasing
 - Parenting
 - Control/Pride/ Self-Sufficiency
 - Anxiety/Depression
 - Boundaries
 - Social Media
 - Burnout/Apathy
 - Addictive impulses
 - Perfectionism/Shame
 - Other:

what do you want?

In Mark, chapter 10, we read about a beautiful invitation extended by Jesus to a man who was just like you & me, a man in need of some change, some renewal, and some healing.

A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside when he hears that Jesus is nearby. Loudly, he begins to call out to Jesus. "Jesus! Son of David, have mercy on me!" The people around him shush him with their best attempts to quiet him down, but Bartimaeus simply shouts louder. Much to their surprise, Jesus, after hearing the shouting, invites the man to come near. The man jumps up, comes to Jesus, and Jesus, in a very simple, yet profound way, asks the man, "What do you want me to do for you?"

I want to invite you to envision yourself in the place of Bartimaeus. Taking the categories that you checked off on the previous page, imagine Jesus sitting directly in front of you asking this very same question, "What do you want me to do for you?" How might you answer. Write about that here:



prayer

"...‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6

Take some time and invite God into this area. Ask for His grace and help to change, transform, heal, grow, and/or find freedom in this or these areas of your life. Remember: this is the start of, or the continuation of a dialogue with God. This isn't about reaching some destination or fixing an area of your life. Rather, this is about acknowledging that you want change in this or these areas and then placing your trust and reliance on God to lead you through it. Pray now.

After praying, reflect on what you sense God desiring for you in this area/each of these areas. Expand on this below.

The pastor at my church will often say, "It is impossible to pray and for nothing to happen." In other words: prayer matters. It does something. We just need to actually do it. As often as this/these area(s) come(s) to mind: pray. I've found some of the biggest moves of God have come from the simplest of prayers: "Please help, God." Pray this ongoing throughout the year and watch what God does with it.

repentance

Repentance is not a shameful act, nor should it be as negatively viewed as it is in our culture. To repent is a sign of a healthy relationship with God. In fact, I've heard it said that the closer you get to Jesus, the more repenting you do, because to repent is what maturity in faith looks like.

To repent means to think differently, to reconsider, to undergo a change in frame of mind, and to change course. It's turning away from anything that keeps you from God.

And remember, there is no room for condemnation when it comes to repentance. In fact, Scripture tells us that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). When we repent there is this gracious exchange that takes place that allows the weight of our sin to be lightened.

If we are wanting the change and transformation that God desires for us in areas of our life, then some of us may first need to repent. Maybe we need to repent of something we did or repent of a belief we have been clinging to or repent of an agreement we have made with the enemy. Whatever it is for you, take some time now and tell God you are sorry for anything you've done in these areas to hold you back from Him and His good will for you.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9



action

Is there a verse that keeps coming to mind, popping up, or aligns with these areas God has revealed to you?

Is there a step God might be asking you to take right now in order to journey toward transformation in this or these area(s)? Here is one step I am going to take:

Think through any needs you might have as you begin to focus on this/these area(s) of your life (i.e. more emotional support from a loved one, encouragement, time, margin, therapy, saying no to something, etc.):



extra

Here are some additional questions to think through as you process God's plans and desires for you in 2026. You don't need to answer them all, or any for that matter, simply use them as a tool if they are helpful to you.

Some people like to choose one word to focus on for the New Year. Based on your reflection, dialogue, and prayer, is there a word that summarizes what you've been hearing from God about 2026?

In 2026 I sense God leading me to more of:

In 2026 I sense God leading me to less of:



These are the relationships I want to pursue, invest in, pour into in 2026: (friends, spouse, mentor, mentee, etc)

*Be intentional about who you write down and try not to make your list too long.

Are there any changes God is leading you to make to your schedule in 2026?

Are there any boundaries God is leading you to set, or re-set in 2026?

Are there any movements toward God, God is inviting you to take in 2026?

Is there anything else God is laying on your heart as it relates to 2026? Journal about that here.



about brooke

Brooke P. Lee is a preacher, author, wife, mother, and most importantly, Jesus-lover. She has spent the last 20 years working and serving in ministry; sharing the message of Christ with both women & men. Brooke is passionate about helping others know God in a vibrant, life-changing way and calling out the barriers that get in the way of knowing God.

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all resources available on amazon

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happy new year!

I hope this guide has been helpful for you! Tuck this away in your bible, or journal, or bedside stand and pull it out every few months. This will be a great way to ensure you are continuing this dialogue with God all year long. And remember, if you pull this guide out and you've completely forgotten to talk with God about these areas of your life, it's ok! Just jump right back in. There is no shame, or bad, or wrongdoing here.

Happy New Year!
Believing God for good in 2026,



brooke

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