

Improve Your Spiritual Life in 2025

By Bob Young

Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." As the calendar turns, an old year ends and a new year begins. I prefer strategic planning over making resolutions.

Truth! We do not get to decide if next year will be a great year – we only get to decide if we will be great. A New Year focused on meaningful goals aligned with God's eternal purpose, improving my spiritual life, does not begin January 1. Waiting until January 1 means being behind right out of the starting blocks.

For me, the direction and tenor of the coming year begins in that magical time between Christmas and New Year's – the last week or ten days of the calendar year.

For me, growing spiritually in the coming year begins with planning and commitments made before the year begins. The influence I have on others is intentional, the result of advance planning. My spiritual leadership is shaped by how I prepare myself to lead. Taking time to ask what is possible in the coming year sets the bar high!

Planning begins with place, asks about process, and evaluates possibilities. This truth easily becomes theoretical. I share five helpful questions for spiritual planning that bridges from the year ending to the year beginning. You may want to develop your own questions.

- What victories of the past year could be repeated? How can I repeat things that went well?
- What actions and relationships contributed to spiritual growth? How can those be nurtured?
- What obstacles recurred that must be addressed?
- What are two or three things I need to change (or eliminate) for increased spiritual vitality and passion?
- What is one thing you want to do better to transform your spiritual life?

My end-of-year planning for spiritual growth, impact, and leadership has at least five benefits.

- My calendar fills first with spiritually-focused priorities, focused on the eternal over the urgent. My calendar fills with events designed for spiritual impact and leadership. Planning protects my calendar.
- I start the new year at full speed. Planning and preparations trump aspirations, resolutions, and foundationless hopefulness.
- My spiritual commitments help me live proactively rather than reactively.
- My spiritual growth goals shape my schedule. Reading, mediating, writing, and other priorities do not get pushed aside or postponed.
- Having a "spiritual life" template in place helps me continue with the same fervor and focus I had at the beginning, following the plan, making adjustments as needed.

I wish for you in 2025 a healthy spiritual life filled with opportunities to serve, a life that makes a difference!