

This short booklet aims to help you reflect on the last year, to notice the different ways that God is present and at work, and be a useful tool as you look forward to the year ahead.

Through and A-Z of questions and reflections, it is designed to help you engage with all that God has done and will do in the time ahead. It is called Mirrors and Windows because mirrors help us look back at what has been, and we can look through windows to what lies ahead.

Give yourself space, time and peace as you move through each of the sections. Maybe remove yourself from any distractions, so you are able to fully and properly engage.

Don't rush! Think, pray, talk with God, listen to what he is saying to you, the things he wants to point out, the things he wants you to remember and the things he wants to inspire you for.

We hope and pray that you find this useful, encouraging and inspirational as you recognise where God has been at work and look to where God may be leading you for the coming year.

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### **A - Affirmation**

God is not a father who wants to continuously point out our failings, where we have gone wrong or anything like that. He wants to affirm us and tell us what he really thinks about us; that we are loved and valued by our God. Affirmation can only really come from God, not from others, so let's look to the one who gives real, true, meaningful affirmation to us and our lives.

Questions:

Where have you felt God's affirmation over this last year?

What do you need in your life to help you hear God's affirmation for you?

### **B - Breakthrough**

God is not a God who just leaves things as they are. God wants us to experience his breakthrough, whether that be in relationships, finances, work or in any other area of our lives.

Questions:

Where have you experienced God's breakthrough over the last year?

What is there that lies ahead that you need God's breakthrough for?

### **C - Celebration**

God is about celebration! Jesus himself celebrated when he was on Earth, at the wedding for example. Celebrations are good things, points where we can, with God, recognise great happenings and breakthroughs. It is good to celebrate all that God is doing in our lives and in the lives of people around us.

Questions:

What has God done over the last year that is worth celebrating?

What is coming up over the year ahead that you would like to celebrate at the end of next year?

### **D - Doors**

So many times we hear phrases about doors opening or closing. Doors need to be open, obviously, for us to walk through them. In this case, we either have to open the doors ourselves or someone else has to open them for us. Equally, we need to recognise and be wise to know when doors are closed, so we don't try and walk through them.

Questions:

Look back over this year. Can you recognise when God has opened and closed doors for you?

What doors are there ahead for the coming year for you? Which ones need to be opened and closed?

### **E - Encouragement**

God is our greatest encourager. He is cheering us on, encouraging us to keep going and not to stop. He is there in all areas of life, encouraging us through the tough places as well as the easier

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ones. God would want us to know that even when things get hard, he is always there, encouraging us along the journey he has for us.

**Questions:**

Where have you experienced God's encouragement over the last year?

What is there that lies ahead where you need to know God's encouragement?

### **F - Follow**

As disciples, we are called to follow God. Sometimes that is easier than others, but we are still called to follow. Following means trust, trusting in the one who is leading us. Following also means that we don't choose to go off and do things our own way; We commit to following God.

**Questions:**

Can you identify the easy and the tough places, where you have had to really focus on following God this year?

What decisions/choices are there that lie ahead, where you need to say, "I will follow you, Lord"?

### **G - Guide**

Sometimes it is easy and obvious to notice where God has been leading us, but sometimes we don't spend the time thinking through and reflecting on those moments where maybe we just haven't recognised God's guiding hand in our lives. To be guided means that we trust whoever is doing the guiding will get us to where we are meant to be. As our guide, God wants to show us the way he wants us to go.

**Questions:**

Think back through this year. Can you identify where God has guided you, even if you didn't recognise it at the time?

What is there that lies ahead that you are asking God to guide you through?

### **H - Hunger**

Often a hunger burns inside of us. Something we recognise what we need, but often hunger is simply an uncomfortable place, where we know something is missing and we need to take something in to fill up.

Questions:

Where has God satisfied a hunger in you over this last year?

What are you hungry for God to do over the year ahead?

### **I - Inspiration**

Being inspired enables us to feel encouraged, excited and motivated about what is coming up. We can find inspiration in a whole stack of different ways, and in different places and people at different times. The important thing to recognise is that we all need inspiration to be who we are meant to be and do the stuff we are meant to do.

Questions:

Who has been inspirational to you over the last year? Give thanks for them and maybe even send them a message to thank them for their inspiration.

What lies ahead that you could do with some inspiration about?

### **J - Joy**

God promises us a spirit of joy. At times, we may not feel as though we are allowed to experience joy or don't see how joy can be experienced when things are tough. But if joy is one of those promises from God, we should seek it and embrace it.

Questions:

Where have you felt joy over the previous year?

What fills you with joy about what you know lies ahead?

### **K - Knowledge**

There is a phrase that says we learn something new every day. As we go through life, experience teaches us so much, and we pick up much information through the stuff we read, listen to and observe all around us.

Questions:

What knowledge have you gained over the last year?

What do you feel you need knowledge about for the year ahead?

### **L - Leadership**

Whether we recognise it as an official position or not, all of us by being here lead people in different ways at different times. We are also led by others, through their words, feelings and emotions, as well as those who are appointed to lead us. Leadership isn't necessarily about power, it is more about showing someone the way to go, the right direction or helping them stay away from distraction and wrong direction.

Questions:

Where have you been led well over this last year?

Where are you being nudged to lead over the coming year? Where can you help support others?

### **M - Momentum**

At times it is right to stop and wait, but at the right time it is important to move and to recognise what keeps us moving. Momentum is not necessarily about moving itself, but is more about what keeps us moving. Getting moving in the first place can be difficult, but what sustains us in moving forward is also important to reflect upon and think through.

Questions:

What has kept your momentum going over the last year?

What is there that you need to put in place to keep momentum going for the year ahead?

### **N - Need**

It is part of our humanness that we recognise we have needs. They show themselves in all sorts of different ways and at different times. Often we know how a need can be met, whether it is met healthily or unhealthily. Nevertheless, it is good not to rely on ourselves to know the very best way to deal with the needs that we have.

Questions:

What needs have you had over this last year, and how has God helped meet those needs for you? What do you feel are your needs for the coming year ahead? Bring them before God in your prayers.

### **O - Opportunity**

As we go through life, we are given many different opportunities, some of which are good and useful, others of which are distractions and are unhelpful for the stuff we are meant to do in life. Every day we face opportunities, but the challenge is how we engage with them and take up the right ones.

Questions:

Which have been God opportunities for you over the last year? Which opportunities have you taken up that were not necessarily God ones?

What opportunities are there that lie ahead for you? Bring them before God as you start the year ahead, so you know which ones are from God.

### **P - Persistence**

Not everything in life comes easily. Sometimes it requires us to push through, to keep going even when it seems really tough. To keep going can be a gift, but it does require us to be persistent. It is important, though, for us to recognise the right times to be persistent and when it is right to stop.

Questions:

Recognise the times over the last year when you have had to be persistent. Have you approached these times in the way that God wanted you to?

What is there that lies ahead that you feel you may need to be persistent about? Pray also you have the strength when it is needed to be persistent.

### **Q - Questions**

Often we ask questions such as, Why has something happened? What is going on? What am I doing? And so many more!! Questions are part of our daily lives, but it is how we deal with those questions that is important to think through. We cannot, and should not, avoid questions, but we should have a good approach to them.

Questions:

What have been the key questions for you this last year? Where have you seen God answer them? What are the key questions that lie before you as you move into the new year?

### **R - Restore**

Part of what God is about, is restoring relationship; restoring things that are broken, so that they can exist in the way that God wanted in the first place. Restoration does not mean fixing things the way we want them fixed but putting them back together in the way that God had them set in the first place. Relationships are just an example of one thing that God might want to restore.

Questions:

What is there over the last year that God has started to restore in your life or work?

What is there over the coming year you are praying for, that you would like God to restore?

### **S - Stop**

This is one of those things that most of us find so hard to do. We feel as though we have to keep doing, but yet, if we continue to make ourselves busy, how can we hear God in the midst of

busyness? Stopping is an important activity if we are going to be able to reflect, observe, listen, think and work things through in our lives.

Questions:

What has God been asking you to stop over the last year? Have you done it?

What is there that God might be asking you to stop in the year ahead?

### **T - Thanks**

Saying thank you is one of those things that children are taught as they grow up. When you are given something, you say thank you for it. We are good at asking for things, but when we receive, do we spend as much time thanking God or people around us?

Questions:

What have you received over the last year that you want to thank God for?

What is there over the coming year that you are thankful for already?

### **U - Unique**

So much around us is unique, even if we don't recognise it as such straight away. Each house, each garden, each person - all unique, all bringing something different to life around us. The challenge is to recognise people and things around us as unique and not just different, and to celebrate the uniqueness that exists in every person we encounter.

Questions:

What are the unique things you have brought to different circumstances over the last year?

What is there that is unique about the year ahead, that you know already and that you are thankful for?



### **V - Vision**

To keep going forward, we need to have something to aim for - a goal and yes, even, a vision. Without something to head toward, we will have no idea if we are actually heading the right way. Vision isn't necessarily a physical thing, it is often about the direction we are heading and knowing it is the right way.

Questions:

Where have you seen any little bits of vision being reached over the last year?

What is the vision that God has given you for the year ahead?

### **W - Wisdom**

We are fed so much information in our daily lives, but is all of it really as useful as people/organisations suggest? We can open ourselves to receiving too much information, which can lead to confusion, conflict and so much more. The challenge for us in life is to recognise the wisdom that God offers and use it in our lives.

Questions:

Where have you had to submit to Gods wisdom over the last year, rather than going on your own ideas?

What is there over the year ahead that you are praying for more of Gods wisdom about?

### **X - X-ray**

So many times we go with what is obvious. We can fall into the easy trap of giving credence to the superficial or what we see in front of us, but very often we need to see past the obvious or superficial to what is really going on. Having an X-ray approach, gives us God's ability to look beyond.

Questions:

As you look back over the last year, ask God to give you an x-ray like vision to see past the obvious. What is it that he really wants to show you from the last year?

In terms of the year ahead, ask God to give you insight past the superficial to all that lies ahead. What are you beginning to see?

### **Y - You**

Often we look around us and observe what is happening, what others have done or what they bring to a context, but we don't necessarily look at ourselves. We are not always comfortable looking at ourselves. However, we are made in God's image; we reflect something of God and so we should not be quite so quick to dismiss ourselves.

Questions:

Think back over the last year and note down the different ways and different times that you have brought something to an issue, or context. What do you observe?

Ask God that he would use you, all that you are and all that you bring, in ways that he would want over the next year.

### **Z - Zest**

As we come to the end of the reflection alphabet, it is important to take into consideration all the things we have thought about from the year that is finishing and use them as good learning tools. It is important to move into a place of zest and passion for the year ahead.

Questions:

What is there from the year that is finishing that gives you passion and zest for the one that lies ahead?

What is there that you are already aware of in the new year that gives you zest for it?