

THE HARRIS HAPPENINGS

“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9

JANUARY 2020

As one year ends, and another begins...

We look back and THANK God:

As always, every year, every day and in every way: God has been abundantly good to us. He has done and gone “above and beyond ALL we could even ask or imagine.” There is a saying in Kenya that we have come to love that goes:

“God is good, all the time.

And all the time, God is good.

Because that is His nature.”

So, we can look forward and TRUST God:

We knew God was with us, and we trusted He would take care of us. But we didn't know what that would look like. And although it does not always look the way we would imagine or choose...it is even better! Because our Heavenly Father Who made us and loves us, knows us and our needs, even better than we do ourselves!

As our time in America is “winding down” and we are planning and preparing to head back to Kenya...there is SO much that needs to take place, (according to a certain timetable), in order to work well (or at all)! And we can find ourselves feeling rushed and stressed, impatient and irritable especially with distractions and interruptions, of our plans etc. These are the same sentiments that tend to surface when we are trying to do things in our own strength, and according to our own time, and way.

I was listening to a message the other day, and I was convicted by the caution against an attitude of independence from God, in the book of James. And a couple of days later, in my reading, I was again encouraged to take the posture of a humble human being, totally dependent on my Creator, and surrendered to my Savior. I want to share with you, what I feel like the Lord may be reminding me to be mindful of in my own life and walk with Him, wherever I am going, and whatever I am doing. May I always be walking closer towards Him, in step with Him, on this journey with Jesus.

Within these lines is text taken from a Bible commentary I use as a devotional. We want to make clear that these words/thoughts were not original to us.

“A man’s heart plans his way”: this is not a bad thing. We, as the God in whose image we are made, think about and plan our way. Many people would do well to more carefully plan their way.

“But the Lord directs his steps”: we plan as we can and should, but we should never think that our ability to plan makes us lord over our lives. It is the LORD who directs our steps. Every plan we make should be held in humility before God and surrendered to His ultimate will.”

“As rational agents we think, consult, act freely. We are dependent agents, and the Lord exercises His own power in permitting, overruling, or furthering our actions. Thus, man proposes, and God disposes.” (Bridges)

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.

James rebuked the kind of heart that lives and makes its plans apart from a constant awareness of the hand of God, and with an underestimation of our own limitations (you do not know what will happen tomorrow).

This attitude that James challenged goes far beyond making wise plans for the future. “Not, let us go, but we will go, in the indicative mood; noting the peremptoriness of their purposes, and their presuming upon future times and things, which were not in their power.” (Poole)

“Notice, that these people, while they thought everything was at their disposal, used everything for worldly objects. What did they say? Did they determine with each other ‘We will today or tomorrow do such and such a thing for the glory of God, and for the extension of his kingdom’? Oh, no, there was not a word about God in it, from beginning to end!” (Spurgeon)

“There are two great certainties about things that shall come to pass—one is that God knows, and the other is that we do not know.” (Spurgeon)

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

James asked us to consider the fragility of human life, and the fact that we live and move only at the permission of God. James does not discourage us from planning and doing, only from planning and doing apart from reliance on God.

Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

It is nothing but sheer arrogance that makes us think that we can live and move and have our being independent of God. This boastful arrogance is the essence of sin: a proud independence, the root of all sin, as was the case with Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15) and Adam (Genesis 3:5-7).

Paul knew and lived this principle: I will return again to you, God willing (Acts 18:21). But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills (1 Corinthians 4:19). I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits (1 Corinthians 16:7).

But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

All such boasting, when life is so precarious, is worse than absurd, it is wicked, a positive sin, a specimen of the ungodly haughtiness (James 4:6) of which men should repent.” (Moffatt)

When I find myself making plans without even consulting the Lord or asking Him (afterward) to bless the plans I have made on my own-I want to recognize this for the rebellion that it is, and to repent. So, we would like to ask you to join us in prayer before our Heavenly Father for these petitions on our behalf, according to HIS perfect will, plan, and timing. And we would love to lift up our voices together in praise with you, to Him from Whom ALL blessings flow!

PRAISES:

- For the steadfast love of the Lord that never ceases, for His mercies that never come to an end; but are new every morning; Great is His faithfulness! We have experienced the love, the mercy, and the faithfulness of our Lord, another year.
- After various testings for RACHel regarding the strange “seizure-like” episodes she was experiencing: we have received the best possible news! As far as we can tell, she does NOT have epilepsy, and in fact what she experiences are not true, neurological seizures, that can cause any kind of neurological damage. It rather appears that she has a “hyper-sensitive” nerve and when “overloaded” it is her body’s way of shutting things down and “re-booting” again. The biggest concern would be falling and hitting her head, if/when it happens.
- So, it is safe for our family to continue where we are, and what we are doing; and we will be proactive in taking the necessary measures to make sure she is not susceptible to another “episode” and aware and ready for when it does. We are praising God for His protection of RACHel (and ALL of us also, in mind and spirit). And we praise Him for His faithful provision of answers, clarity, and peace.
- After our visa approval, we were finally finished with the long and drawn out process of “tying up all the loose ends” allowing us to re-enter the country and stay for some time again. So, we have purchased our plane tickets, praise God! We will be leaving Nebraska in just about a week, and after a short stop-over in Washington to see some friends, we will fly for Kenya on February 2nd.
- The Lord has abundantly provided for ALL of our needs, according to His riches in glory, in Christ Jesus! He has been SO good and SO faithful to our family...and to His own name.

- We have seen the Lord's hand in SO many situations: some "big" and overt, while others are seemingly "small." But it is these personal, very specific ones that mean the most, because we recognize it can only be the Lord's doing alone (because only He knew our need). Every good and perfect gift truly is from above.
- The kids finished the semester at the local public school as planned. They/we had the privilege of attending Christmas programs, basketball games, class parties...and helping with homework! The Lord was with them, and has helped them to "fight the good fight," "finish the race that was set before them"...and "keep the faith." Glory to God!
- What a special blessing to be able to be together with family for the holidays!
- Aunt LeAnn taught us a little bit about Hanukkah, Sabbath, and a traditional game called "Dreidel" celebrated in Jewish custom. I am always amazed by God when studying anything traditionally Jewish: the way He has wonderfully woven Jesus Christ as the golden thread throughout the tapestry of time is incredible!
- We have been SO incredibly blessed by all the wonderful opportunities to see and spend time together with family, friends, loved ones, supporters, and churches! Thank you for taking the time and the trouble to see and spend time with us too!

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Being full-blown "flu season" the kids have had their fair share of some of these sicknesses: they have been battling bouts of various viruses, colds, flu, ear infections, etc. Please pray for the Lord's hand of protection over the health of our family as we travel to, and transition back into Kenya.

- Rachel has been dealing with a “secondary ear/sinus infection” that developed when she got the flu since back in November. She has done 3 different rounds of antibiotics, before finally finishing after experiencing an allergic reaction to the last one. We are waiting, watching, and praying all will be cleared up by her follow-up appointment and she will be well enough by next week to travel safely.
- Brad broke a tooth, that in turn became infected and affected his jawbone. He has had it removed and cleaned, but unfortunately, he has now developed “dry socket” and it is taking its time to heal. Please pray for a quick and complete recovery, with no lingering infection or opening.
- With the health of the household being “compromised,” Brad’s mom caught the cold and is now in the hospital with pneumonia. Please pray for her complete recovery, and protection over her for the rest of the time we are here together in the house with her.
- For strength, stamina, and energy, to do ALL the things we need to do to plan and prepare to travel back to Kenya...and for patience and peace in the process.
- For all of our luggage to be packed safely and protected all the way to its final destination at the Harris household in Kenya.
- For our family: travel mercies and transitioning back to our home and life in Kenya. Getting the house re-settled/situated again. Re-connecting as a family unit and with friends. Getting back in the swing of things with homeschool, ministry, and life in general.
- Kenya has experienced some severe flooding recently. We ask prayer for the people and properties that have suffered harm. And for wisdom and discernment for our family in how to best be of help and a blessing to those we know and love who may have been affected by this.

We truly appreciate your care and prayers for our family. Thank you for your faithful love and support. We have been very blessed by you. May God bless you too!

With love,

The Harris family



Nine months of furlough will make you go funny!



Looking back and thanking God-looking forward and trusting God



Helping with homework





Kids learning to play dreidel

