

# ONWARD

from the desk of Chris Greer



---

Hey ,

Are you more likely to think about the past, the present, or the future?

Fifteen years ago, while interviewing to become a pastor, a committee member asked me, "Chris — where do you see yourself in ten years?"

I said, "Honestly, I don't know. I hope to follow Jesus every day and see where he takes me."

I was proud of my answer. But the committee member wasn't too impressed.

Today, my hope is the same...*and* different.

**I still hope listen to God every day, but I'm *also* learning how important and helpful it is to look ahead with him.**

That said, I still don't *like* it. I'm far more comfortable ignoring the future, camping out emotionally in the present, and focusing on whatever comes my way today.

But this past Christmas, God reminded me that he's eternally present *and* he's a planner. Jesus' coming is part of a *plan*. And God's aiming all creation toward the perfect fulfillment of his beautiful, well-planned future.

Whether you're like me ("Present-tense is the best tense!") or someone who's most at home looking back ("There's lots to learn from the past!"), it's a good and potentially life-changing practice to join our friends who are comfortable looking forward into God's good future.

**And as always, God will guide the way if we let him.**

So now that we've looked back at 2023 ([CLICK HERE to see last week's ONWARD](#)), let's get unstuck and move onward with Jesus by looking ahead into 2024...

---

## quote of the week

"Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." — Proverbs 3:6

Let's begin with an intriguing passage from chapter 4 of the book of James. It says...

*Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone.*

*What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. (James 4:13-16 NLT)*

The Spirit's point is well made: Our lives are a wisp. A breath. A single dot on eternity's timeline.

**If eternity belongs to the God we love and serve because he first loved and served us\*, why waste a single moment boastfully striving toward *our* plans when we could humbly participate in *his*?**

Usually, the obvious and honest answers are because...

We're selfish.

We like the illusion of control.

We're afraid he will send us to Africa!

The less obvious (but no less honest) answer is that we simply haven't asked God what his plans are.

Well, , God *wants* you to participate with him. He even wants you to *plan* with him.

**God's got a plan he wants to work together on this year.**

Here's how to look forward with him to 2024.

**First, PRAY.**

Take a deep breath, settle in, and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and guide this process.

**Second, LOOK FORWARD.**

Look at the year ahead using questions like these...

- How does God's work in 2023 shed light on what he might do in 2024?
- What has God made you and called you to do?\*
- What needs in your community, church, and friendships are you interested in or well-suited to address?

**Third, ANSWER GOD.**

Jesus asks people "What do you want?" (John 1:38) and "What can I do for you?" (Matt. 20:32, etc), and our honest answers factor into God's plans. With that in mind...

- How would you fill in this blank: "I want \_\_\_\_\_ to happen in my life and community this year"?

**Fourth, ASK GOD.**

Now, present those ideas and desires to God, asking him...

- What do *you* want, Father?
- What am I missing so far, Jesus?
- How do you want me to participate in what you're doing, Holy Spirit?

Keep asking deep questions this week and next, and pay close attention to God's answers.

### **Finally, SHARE IT and DO IT!**

Once you've heard from God, tell your friend, spouse, parent, or pastor. Weigh their input, ask them to help and/or pray, then get after it. Waste no time to "live and do this or that." (James 4:16)

### **God's got plans, and he deeply desires to bless others (and you!) as you participate with him in those good plans. (John 13:17)**

Imagine — a group of people like you and me committed to acting on God's plans in 2024. No telling what he will do!

What does God have in store for you and those around you in 2024? Let's find out.

Onward,

Chris

P.s. As I mentioned last week... *This practice (like all meaningful practices) takes a time!* But do it. Alone, or with your spouse, kids, or friends. You won't regret it!

\*See 1 John 4:19, John 13:1-17, Phil 2:6-8

\*\*Get help with that in [ONWARD Issues #15, #16, and #17](#).

## **PLAN FOR THIS...**

Need help listening to Jesus and setting the tone for 2024? Our weekend retreat experience - **STILL** - is crafted to help you slow down and experience God in a way that's real, powerful, and refreshingly simple. **STILL** will reconnect you with God and recalibrate your year. Don't miss it.

### **STILL for Women:**

February 23-25 | Central Arkansas | Only 2 spots left! | [Click HERE](#) for more details and/or to sign up.

### **STILL for Men:**

April 12-14 | Central Arkansas | [Click HERE](#) for more details and to stay updated.

---

## **dad joke of the week**

Some astronauts wanted to celebrate New Year's on Mars...

But they just didn't planet in time.

---

Miss an edition of ONWARD?

Get this email from a friend and want to get ONWARD in *your* inbox?

**Read past editions or Sign up at [Chris-Greer.com/Onward](https://Chris-Greer.com/Onward).**

---

### **M Street Publishing**

6834 Cantrell Rd PMB 1479

Little Rock Arkansas, United States of America

You received this because you signed up for it or asked me to send it to you. Feel free to unsubscribe if it isn't helpful or you changed your mind.

[Unsubscribe](#)

