

God doesn't give us a set of rules - you do this, you do this, you do this, and keep record on what we succeeded in doing and what we failed to do. God's attitude toward us is like that of a father who sees his little child toddling along and trying to go, and when the child <sup>stumbles</sup> ~~stumbles~~ a little this way or that the father takes hold and helps him. But the father is there and gives the child confidence. The father is helping the child to grow and is interested in the child's welfare and will protect the child from that which is evil. But if the father goes away and leaves the child anything can happen. And as far as we are concerned if we forget the Lord's presence with us we are in a way like one who has been forsaken even though we know of course God hasn't forsaken us but it affects our attitude in every point. Examine yourself whether you be in the faith. Little grudges come, little feelings of irritation against other people. If these people are those who know the Lord, whom God has called into his kingdom, who have believed in Jesus Christ they have faults even as you have faults. But our Saviour loves them and wants them to receive what is good and He wants you to love them in the Lord, because they are His and if He was standing here and you saw Him you would not think of taking an attitude toward some other one whom the Lord has saved that would be other than that which would help and benefit them. You would forget all these little irritations. But how easy it is for them to get into our hearts and minds and to grow there and for us to compare ourselves with others instead of thinking God is interested in me. Am I living and growing and thinking as He wants me to? Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Lets think of this through 1973. Lets do it repeatedly. Lets <sup>pray</sup> ~~pay~~ that God will help us to live as His -- as in His presence and to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, to have that faith which gives us a sure confidence in those things we know He's going to bring about that we hope in the Scriptural term of hope, but also to have that faith which is the underpinning in that it is God's way of bringing these things to pass in our lives. As Ellicott quotes Hare as saying: "Faith is the faculty in man through which the spiritual world exercises its sway over him and thereby enables him to overcome the world of sin and death."

Our Father we thank you that you have given us this change in the year, this beginning of a new year. We have made failures. We've had disappointments in 1972. We've also had successes and accomplishments. but we start a new page help us as we start to examine ourselves and be sure that we really are in the faith. Help us to go on day by day examining ourselves whether we are conscious of your presences and striving to learn more of your will