

### *Let God Lead You Into the New Year*

A friend of mine invited me to join him at Lambeau field for a Packer game. I've been to Lambeau a few times before, to see the Hall of Fame and to enjoy a pre-season game, but my friend has season tickets and grew up in Green Bay. He knew his way around, and he invited me, so I didn't think twice about letting him lead the way.

Good thing I did, too. We went to that Saturday night game against the Vikings, and I wasn't sure I could find my way in the dark. We met in Shawano and he drove into Green Bay, but on side streets that he knew well, avoiding traffic. Instead of going online to pay for parking, we parked in the driveway of a couple he's known for decades, and only had to walk a few blocks to the stadium. He knew which gate to go in, and which entrance would get us closest to our seats. In short, it was wise to follow someone who already knew what he was doing. In spite of the final score, we had a great time.

This is the time of year when people make New Year's resolutions, setting goals for themselves as they plan to accomplish things they might not have done before. It's no secret that a lot of these resolutions fail. One of the reasons for that—a reason we might overlook—is that people don't know how to do what they want to do. They think they can lead themselves to new heights, but in the end they just get lost.

A lot of Christians go at their faith life the same way. They think, "I'll just let God lead me," but then they don't really follow God. Instead, they do what they want to do and, without bothering to check, imagine that their will is also God's will.

Martin Luther had a three step guide to living out God's will. In Latin: *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*. Pray, meditate, struggle.

**Pray.** God called you to faith in Jesus through His Word. He baptized you into His family. He forgives you your sins. He feeds you with His Supper. As if all that weren't enough, he invites and commands you to pray to him, to ask him for whatever you need. So ask!

But don't just sit there staring up into the sky or gazing into your navel, waiting for an answer to come to you. **Meditate.** (For me, this has always been the fun part!) Listen to God's Word, the Bible. That's where he speaks to you. Listen, read, mark, and learn what the Bible says and what it means. Get to know God's Story as well as your own, and see how God has fit your story into His Story. Keep doing that, and you'll start to see what God really wants, what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ in today's world.

Then comes the hard part. **Struggle.** You don't have to look for struggles—they'll find you. But when they do, don't default to your old, sinful way of doing things. Hold fast to God's Word in what you say and do. Hold on to God through your trials, and let God hold on to you. And don't forget to look to your fellow believers for guidance. That includes the saints of the Bible, the saints of history who have gone before you, as well as the saints who sit beside you in church on Sunday mornings.

*Oratio, meditatio, tentatio.* Pray, meditate, struggle. So let God lead you into and through this New Year!

