You may have heard the old saying, *Familiarity breeds contempt!* A saying which has been proven “truer,” than not! Over time anything can become “contemptable” if we’re not “open” to fresh and “new things.” In the Book of Isaiah God declared: *(Isaiah 43:19)* Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert. The experiences of the past, can cause one to “settle,” rather than look forward to the “new thing” God desires in our lives.

No doubt many of us have experienced *times of suffering* this past year, but we must resist the temptation to allow; *that “diagnosis,” “failure,” “circumstance,” or even “loss,”* to define us! **But rather, allow God’s word, to guide our “destiny!” God has not taken you out of the “game!”**

An experienced coach, in the NFL, understands the value keeping a player in the game even after a “blown play!” We’re sitting at home screaming, “Why haven’t they benched him already, he’s stinking up the place!” But the coach continues to call his number; because by faith he believes, the time, talent, and treasure, “invested” in his player will “pay-off!” **God is still calling your “number,” not because you’ve had a perfect season; but because of the time, talent, and, treasure His Son has “invested” in the salvation of our souls! (Romans 5:10) For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Philippians 1:3) “...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**

God is calling us to press on beyond the rut of our comfort zone, to the “destiny” He has “graciously” ordained for each one of us? In scripture Noah, and the apostle Peter, serve as examples of what it means to live beyond our “comfort zone.” **First, let’s consider Noah:** In the genealogy of Genesis 6:9 we read; *‘Noah walked with God.’* In order to avoid “ruts” in this New Year, we have to Keep Walking. It sounds “simple,” but if it was so
simple, why do so many Christians struggle in their walk? One reason is because of “unbelief.” Faith moves us beyond the rut of “apathy.” (Hebrews 11:7) By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

If “unbelief” is the trajectory of your heart is guided by “unbelief,” rather than “faith,” our “walk” will look more like a “rut,” in this New Year! The New Oxford Online Dictionary defines trajectory as “the path followed by a projectile flying or an object moving under the action of given forces” (n/p). The term is used of everything from ammunition to astronomy, but in its figurative sense can be used to speak of the law of sowing and reaping or cause and effect. There appears to be three elements to this definition: the path, the object, and the action of given forces. These three aid us in understanding how to keep the “trajectory” of our “walk,” with God, and not the world!

The Path – The Lord never promised the “path” would be “easy.” Many hype themselves up for the New Year with promises of greatness, prosperity, success; but Jesus is about “keeping it real!” (Matthew 7:13-14) “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” We all want a successful year, but “success” should not be our “motivation” for “walking with God!” We “walk” with Him because His path is the “right way,” and the “only way!” (John 14:6) “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

The Object – the “object” is you and me! It’s not whether others are “walking with God...the real question is, “am I walking with God.” Your personal trajectory impacts the lives of others and our nation! (John 21:22) "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." Am I “picking up my cross and following Christ daily?” You are the “object” of God’s love; and His heart should be our “primary” target!

The Action – The decisions we make, the people we allow to have influence on us, our choices, what we prioritize, and what values we establish become the forces moving us to the destination. “Force” implies; pressure, resistance, and influence. The “forces” I allow to govern my life will determine the “trajectory” of my “walk” in this New Year! (1 Corinthians 15:33) “Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits.” The old saying is true: “If you lay down
“with dogs, you will get up with fleas!” (2 Timothy 2:22) Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Despite the “peer-pressure,” Noah was able to move beyond what the world deemed socially acceptable, into unfamiliar territory; for the “glory” of God! As it was in the day of Noah, so it is today! (Matthew 24:38-39) For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. But despite the world’s condition then and now God calls us to not be swayed by the world, but to “walk with Him,” as Noah did! If God says you can; you can be sure, the devil will send a “dozen” more to say, “you can’t!”

But it’s the assessment of ourselves, or others, which matters; but the assessment of “God’s word!” ‘Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.’ (Genesis 6:22 NIV) Although some have fallen, there is renewal and healing in Christ; that we might “walk with God!” (Psalm 37:23-24) The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand.

The second example of faith beyond our “comfort zone,” is found in the life of Peter. (ttt) Luke 5:4-11. Here we find “two reasons” why many believers fail to “launch out,” have a “vibrant “walk with God”: 1) Tone deafness. (v.4) Peter heard the teaching, but remained, spiritually “tone deaf.” 2) Limited human understanding. (v.5) “Fishing” was Peter’s area of “expertise”; therefore, he thought he knew better than the Lord. Our “expertise” can “exclude” us from experiencing God’s power, in this next year! (Proverbs 3:5-8) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

In Peter’s experience we find two aspects of faith: 1) Humility. (v.8) Peter realized he had doubted God, who created the fish! A sense of unworthiness came over him as he
realized, the foolishness in relying upon His “fishing skills,” rather than on the One who “created the fish!” It’s a humbling experience to accept the fact, God is “smarter” than you! (Proverbs 30:2-3, 5-6) Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom Nor have knowledge of the Holy One...Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

2) Discovery. (v.10b) because Peter was willing to launch, he “discovered,” a far “great purpose,” than “fishing! He became a “fisher of men!” If we continue to hug the “shoreline” of unbelief we will never experience fully, our “divine purpose!” in life! But if we will trust Him; God will fill our nets (lives) to “overflowing! (Ephesians 3:20-21) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION: May our walk, in this next year, be a reflection of the life of Enoch. (Genesis 5:24) And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. “Enoch walked”; lifestyle – “and was not”; for me to live is Christ – “for God took Him”; in the end we will forever be with the Lord! This year, “dare” to move beyond your “comfort zone”; “walk with Jesus!” When I was a child; didn’t matter where daddy was going, I just wanted to ride; to be with Him! The issue in this New Year is not where God may be take us; but being with Him, wherever “He is!”