

*You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance. They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; The valleys also are covered with grain; They shout for joy, they also sing.* Psalm 65:11-13 NKJV

It's an interesting thought that God has pathways. He has paths that we are called to walk on, journeying through life with Him. Just like the Pilgrim's Progress or even games like Sonic the Hedgehog illustrate the way we can choose to continue on a path or leave it.

When we continue on God's path, we are blessed. Psalm 84 says we go from strength to strength, Proverbs 4:18-19 says our way shines brighter and 2 Corinthians 3:18 says we go from glory to glory.

Sometimes the path can be hard and Paul describes in Romans the battle between following God and the desires of our "natural man". It is our mind that needs to be transformed to stay on the path and over time it will be (Ephesians 4:23). We need to harness our thoughts for good: Paul says to think only on the good things and Isaiah reminds us not to think long on the past. Guilt is one thing that has to go when you choose God's path because it keeps you thinking about the past. When the people of God made an offering for their sins at the temple, the priest checked the condition of the offering, not the person bringing it. We bring Jesus the perfect, spotless lamb and we are forgiven because of His condition, not our own.

Goodness is waiting for us on the path of God (Philippians 4:18-19). In today's world where so many are under financial stress it is wonderful to know that God provides for us, not according to what WE deem our needs, but "according to HIS riches". The Bible is full of stories of God providing more than was needed. There was the river out of a rock in the desert, sandals that did not wear out for 40 years, vats of wine at the wedding, leftovers at the feeding of the five thousand and net-breaking catches of fish.

God has a different idea of need than we do, He wants to provide for our desires and dreams as well as food and shelter (Psalm 37:3). But as we travel along on His path, one spiritual law to remember is measure: you sow what you reap. God's pathway is one of generous giving: we are being transformed into His likeness and He did not withhold even His own son. As Christmas draws near let's embrace God's son, Jesus, stay on the path with Him and renew our minds with His Word.

Something to talk about:

What does the Christmas story have to say about God's provision?

How has God provided for you this year?

Who can you invite to church this Christmas to hear the message of hope?