

# **Project Culminate 2024: A Faith-Based Approach to Coping and Visioning for the New Year (With Attached Timeline)**

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*As we approach the last weeks of this year in light of the election, many of us find ourselves reflecting deeply. For some, the results may bring a sense of hope, yet for others, there is a mix of frustration, disappointment, or even distress. For those of us who see injustices left unaddressed—both within the wider community and within the household of faith—the election outcome feels like another instance of “hope deferred makes the heart sick,” intensifying our feelings of disillusionment.*

To find perspective, we look to the Prophet Habakkuk. Faced with injustices in his society, both within the wider community and within the household of faith, Habakkuk struggled with raw and difficult questions. He didn't simply accept these injustices; he wrestled with their painful reality and asked God directly, expressing anger, confusion, and disappointment. This authenticity in his dialogue with God forms the basis of healthy coping in times of challenge. By honestly bringing our questions and concerns to God, we create space for divine guidance and inner peace.

Habakkuk's approach to navigating injustice offers us a timeless framework. He moved through five distinct stages of coping, which serve as pillars for our own journey:

## **1. Cry to the Lord in Question**

*Scripture:* Habakkuk 1:2-4 (NIV) – “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?”

*Insight:* In this first phase, Habakkuk demonstrates the power of honesty in our relationship with God. He doesn't suppress his frustration or doubts; instead, he brings them directly to God, questioning why injustice seems to prevail. This teaches us that it's okay to ask hard questions and express raw emotions to God. Rather than distancing ourselves, questioning opens the door for deeper communication and authenticity.

## **2. Climb on the Watchtower**

*Scripture:* Habakkuk 2:1 (NIV) – “I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.”

*Insight:* Here, Habakkuk takes a posture of waiting and listening. By positioning himself on the watchtower, he symbolically elevates himself to gain perspective and actively waits for God's response. This phase reminds us that after expressing our concerns, we need to take time to listen, drawing closer to God and setting aside distractions. It's a call to rise above immediate frustrations and look expectantly for God's voice.

## **3. Write the Vision**

*Scripture:* Habakkuk 2:2 (KJV) – “And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

*Insight:* Once God speaks, Habakkuk is instructed to document the vision clearly. Writing down the vision solidifies God's response, making it accessible and actionable. This step shows the importance of clarity in our faith journey; when we record what we believe God is showing

us, it helps us stay focused and allows others to understand and support our vision. It's about turning divine insights into tangible goals that guide us forward.

#### 4. **Just Live by Faith**

*Scripture:* Habakkuk 2:4 (KJV) – “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

*Insight:* In this verse, God assures Habakkuk that, despite present injustices, the righteous will live by faith. This calls us to trust God's plan even when outcomes are unseen. Living by faith means continuing to walk with integrity and commitment to God's principles, even when circumstances don't align with our expectations. It's a reminder that our faith isn't just for moments of clarity; it's the foundation we stand on through uncertainty.

#### 5. **Rejoice While Waiting**

*Scripture:* Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NIV) – “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines... yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

*Insight:* Finally, Habakkuk chooses to praise God despite unresolved circumstances. This stage underscores the power of worship as a coping mechanism. By rejoicing in God, Habakkuk shifts his focus from what's lacking to who God is. This act of faith-filled praise brings peace and fortifies his spirit. It teaches us that joy is a choice, one that sustains us while we wait on God's timing and trust in His goodness.

These stages of faith and perseverance can provide structure as we navigate the close of this year. Applying them to our context, we enter *Project Culminate 2024*, with an example of Sarah, followed by a proposed timeline designed to help us process our emotions, establish a vision for the new year, and engage in self-care inspired by the Holy Spirit.

## **Applying Habakkuk's Lessons: The Story of Sarah**

To illustrate how Habakkuk's stages might look in today's world, consider Sarah, a 30-year-old African-American woman deeply involved in advocating for social justice. The recent election results leave her with a mix of emotions—anger, exhaustion, and a lingering disappointment in God's timing. She feels that many of the injustices she has dedicated her life to addressing—both in the wider community and within her own faith community—remain ignored. By following Habakkuk's example, Sarah finds her way forward.

**Cry to the Lord in Question:** Sarah brings her frustrations to God openly, saying, “Lord, I am weary and disheartened. I see so much pain and inequality that doesn't seem to be ending, even in the places that should stand for justice. Why, God? Why does it seem like the wicked prosper while those who stand for what's right continue to suffer?”

This prayer is filled with her raw feelings, and Sarah allows herself to cry as she expresses her pain to God. She doesn't hold back, voicing her disappointment with honesty. “God, I know You are just, but sometimes I struggle to see that justice at work in my world. Show me, Lord. Help me understand.”

**Climb on the Watchtower:** Following this outpouring, Sarah sits quietly, attempting to still her heart and listen for God’s voice. She waits, surrendering her need for immediate answers, whispering, “I trust that You will speak, Lord, in Your way, in Your time. Help me to hear You.” During these moments of silence, Sarah fights the urge to pick up her phone or distract herself. Instead, she meditates on verses that speak of God’s patience and His wisdom, allowing her spirit to calm and open to God’s guidance.

**Write the Vision:** After days of prayer and reflection, Sarah begins to document her thoughts and what she believes God might be guiding her toward. She writes in her journal, “I envision a community where justice flows like a river, where everyone—especially the marginalized—feels valued and seen.” As she writes, Sarah jots down specific goals for the new year: “Host monthly dialogues in my community on racial and economic justice. Reach out to local churches to address inequalities within faith communities.” Writing this vision down clarifies her purpose and provides a foundation for concrete action steps.

**Just Live by Faith:** Despite her fears and disappointments, Sarah commits to continue walking in faith. She reminds herself, “God, You have called me to be salt and light. Even in times when I don’t see the fruit of my efforts, I will live by faith, trusting that You are at work.” She chooses to engage in her daily routines, allowing her actions to reflect her faith in God’s ultimate justice.

**Rejoice While Waiting:** Lastly, Sarah makes the intentional choice to rejoice in who God is, saying, “God, even in this, I will trust You and praise You for who You are.” This act of worship strengthens her resolve and brings peace in the midst of her waiting.

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With Sarah’s example in mind, we conclude *Project Culminate 2024 with* a timeline (below) for engaging in self-care, reflection, and Holy Spirit-guided planning as we look ahead.

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## **Project Culminate 2024 Timeline: Renewal, Reflection, and Intentional Awareness**

### *Introduction*

This timeline is a flexible guide designed to encourage rest, renewal, and spiritual reflection throughout the holiday season. Feel free to use it as a roadmap to experience peace and fellowship, allowing space for God to bring clarity and renewal.

Consider going through this timeline with a prayer partner or small group for weekly encouragement. Brief check-ins—whether by phone or virtual gatherings—can provide opportunities to share experiences, reflect on insights, and support each other in the journey.

As aforementioned, we encourage you to treat the timeline as a guide, not a strict syllabus. Use it in a manner that works for you. May God bless you as you go through this timeline of renewal.

### *Timeline*

This timeline follows a weekly structure whose primary focus is self-care in the areas that relevant to you. A smaller portion is allocated to staying informed, with the intention of guiding prayer and capturing initial insights for January planning.

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### **Weeks 1-3 (November 25 - December 14): Self-Care, Spiritual Reflection, and Healing**

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#### **Week 1 (November 25-December 1): Establishing a Routine of Spiritual Reflection and Renewal**

- **Cry to the Lord in Question:** Begin each day with ten to fifteen minutes of prayer, sharing your thoughts, concerns, and questions with God. Example prayer: “Lord, help me understand where I’m being led. Bring peace to my heart.”
- **Climb on the Watchtower:** Set aside moments to listen in stillness, inviting any insights or clarity God may offer.

- **Mindfulness and Relaxation:** Incorporate five minutes each day for deep breathing or a body scan to release tension and center yourself in God's presence.
  - **Journaling for Personal Reflection:** Write down any insights or guidance that come up in prayer or listening. Focus on what you sense God is revealing without feeling pressure to act immediately.
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### **Week 2 (December 2-8): Continuing Reflection with Light Awareness of Current Events**

- **Daily Prayer and Reflection:** Continue the practice of daily prayer, bringing specific questions or concerns to God.
  - **Climb on the Watchtower:** Journal any themes or insights from God that arise during prayer. Capture what you feel might be instructions or revelations.
  - **Selective News Intake for Prayer:** Briefly check trusted news sources to stay aware of key issues related to social justice or the election.
  - **Fellowship with Family and Friends:** Spend time with supportive, like-minded individuals who encourage and inspire you.
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### **Week 3 (December 9-15): Focused Worship, Reflection, and Light Awareness**

- **Daily Prayer and Worship Through Music:** Spend extra time in worship, listening to music that inspires peace and hope. This can be combined with prayer, allowing worship to center your mind on God.
  - **Climb on the Watchtower:** Dedicate quiet moments each day to listen for God's voice, reflecting on any responses or insights.
  - **Write the Vision:** Write down any divine impressions or instructions that feel meaningful, without pressure to plan or act. Focus on capturing a flow of revelation.
  - **Selective News for Informed Prayer:** Briefly tune in to trusted news sources to stay updated on important issues for prayer. Note anything that could influence future planning in January.
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**Weeks 4-5 (December 16 - December 31):  
Holiday Season – Fellowship, Holiday Rest, and Limited Awareness**

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**Week 4 (December 16-22): Celebrating Fellowship and Reflective Journaling**

- **Holiday Fellowship and Celebration:** Spend time with family and friends, focusing on holiday joy and shared traditions.
- **Reflective Journaling for the New Year:** Begin to jot down overarching themes or visions that emerge. Capture these reflections in preparation for January, without diving into detailed planning.
- **Daily Prayer and Releasing Concerns to God:** Continue daily prayer, focusing on releasing lingering concerns and anxieties to God.
- **Mindful Rest and Relaxation:** Prioritize restorative activities, such as nature walks, moments of silence, and personal hobbies that bring you peace.
- **Fellowship and Positive Interactions:** Spend quality time with loved ones who uplift and support you, creating an atmosphere of joy and healing.
- **Selective Updates for Informed Prayer:** Check trusted news sources briefly to stay aware of key social justice or election-related updates. Use this information solely to direct prayer.

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**Week 5 (December 23-31): Embracing Christmas and New Year's Rest**

- **Holiday Rest and Digital Detox:** Limit exposure to social media and news. Focus on family, celebration, and personal relaxation.
  - **Journaling for Future Visioning:** Write down any new inspirations, key issues, or prayer needs that arise naturally. These notes can lay a foundation for January's deeper planning.
  - **Closing the Year with Prayer and Worship:** Reflect on the past year in gratitude, asking God for wisdom and strength as you transition into the new year.
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## Conclusion: Embracing Faith as We Transition into 2025

By concluding the year with rest, reflection, and time with loved ones, we follow Habakkuk's example of moving through difficult emotions to a place of peace and purpose. Recognizing the need to retreat, we allow ourselves to wait and listen, rather than rush into action. This quiet space invites the Holy Spirit to guide us gently as we approach the new year with restored energy.

*Project Culminate 2024* reminds us that the right to vision is sacred. As we set aside immediate concerns, we open ourselves to what God may reveal in His timing. As Habakkuk discovered, deferred hope doesn't mean a denial of purpose, and "the just shall live by faith," continuing to serve as salt and light in whatever season they find themselves. Let us carry forward this faith, trusting that God's timing and wisdom are unfolding in ways we may not yet see.

## Resources

Here is a list of resources facilitators and group members can use for further study, reflection, and growth in the themes explored in *Project Culminate 2024*. This includes Bible versions, books, and other materials that complement the study:

### 1. The Holy Bible (Versions Used in this Study)

- **New International Version (NIV):** A highly readable and widely accepted translation. Available online at [BibleGateway - NIV](#).
- **English Standard Version (ESV):** Known for its balance of readability and accuracy. Available online at [BibleGateway - ESV](#).

### 2. Books for Further Study

- **"Hinds' Feet on High Places" by Hannah Hurnard**

A beautiful allegory that explores trust, perseverance, and spiritual growth through trials.

- **"The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?" by Rick Warren**

A foundational guide to understanding God's purpose for your life and living in faith.

- **“Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God” by Dallas Willard**

A comprehensive resource on learning to hear and recognize God’s voice.

- **“The Bible Study Handbook” by Lindsay Olesberg**

A practical guide for deepening your understanding of Scripture through study.

- **“Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth” by Richard J. Foster**

Explores spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, fasting, and study, to deepen your faith journey.

### 3. Online Bible Study Tools

- **Bible Gateway:** <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Offers access to multiple Bible translations, reading plans, and commentaries.

- **Blue Letter Bible:** <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

A resource for deeper Bible study with interlinear tools, Greek and Hebrew word studies, and commentaries.

- **YouVersion Bible App:** <https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>

Provides free access to numerous translations and devotional plans.

### 4. Spiritual Growth Resources

- **“Get Out of Your Head: Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts” by Jennie Allen**

Focuses on overcoming anxiety and toxic thinking with biblical truths.

- **“Emotionally Healthy Spirituality” by Peter Scazzero**

Integrates emotional health with spiritual maturity to help believers live fully in Christ.

- **“The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God” by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III**

Explores how emotions, including frustration and anger, can draw us closer to God.

### 5. Prayer and Devotion

- **“The Power of a Praying Life” by Stormie Omartian**

A guide to cultivating a deeper and more intentional prayer life.



- **“Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God” by Henry Blackaby**

A classic study on how to recognize and follow God’s guidance.

- **“Praying the Scriptures for Your Life” by Jodie Berndt**

A practical resource for learning to pray God’s Word over your life.