



REFLECTIONS

December 31, 2023

**Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

Psalms 51:10

Why Did God Put Me Here

It's a good question to ask at the beginning of a new year. That's the question that came to me one unsuspecting day, the day God chose to redirect my life. Today, I'm asking it again.

The question draws me back in time as far as I can remember. It sends me in search of memories that shaped my life like the place I was born and the people there and beyond who influenced the way I live. I recall countless blessings and wonder why God blessed me with them. Then I reason: Doesn't it make sense that God would provide me talents to fulfill his purposes for me? And isn't it logical that God would use heartfelt joy as a reward when I did it?

But I pose my question not to reveal what I previously found, but to expose the power of the search for answers to it. You may recall Jesus' question to Paul, first called Saul.

As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:3-4)

Blinded by the light, Paul could do nothing but listen and what he heard convinced him to learn more about the Way. Evidenced by his education and zeal to serve the Lord, together with his communication skills, both in voice and pen, made him a strong choice to build the Church for Christ Jesus. He only needed to redirect his efforts and practices. And boy, did he!

Remember, he spent three years in the desert before heading to Jerusalem to spend 15 days with Peter. Then, with Barnabas alongside, he set about on the first of his missionary trips.

Paul summarized the message he taught in his first letter to Timothy: *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

Then, in dismay, Paul found why God put him here: *And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.* (1 Timothy 2:1-7)

Now, at the beginning of a new year might it be time to find the answer the question Jesus is asking each of us. Whether we wonder why God put us here, or hear Jesus' voice asking us to assess our ways, is it time to go in search of our answers? Just don't expect to find them easily. Paul didn't.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org