

Happy New Year New Life Community!

We know there's no immediate, magical, or obvious change that has occurred between the last calendar's mailing and this one, but we are excited and hopeful for the beginning of a new year.

I'm not sure what "New Year's" brings to mind for you – maybe it's the giant ball dropping in Time's Square, or having to remember to put the right date on all the documents you sign, or the "new year, new me" declarations that we see people posting on social media as gyms near and wide fill-up for the week. This is a time of year in which many commitments are made, and hope is high, yet studies have shown around 90% of new year's resolutions don't last past January.

But sitting in prayer with our Wednesday evening group that is devoted to weekly intercession for our church and wider community for the last time in 2025, I encountered a verse from the prophet Isaiah that I believe holds transformative power for us as we enter the new calendar year.

"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more." – ISAIAH 54:4

Here Isaiah concisely names several of the most important factors or excuses that hold people back from taking the next steps God has designed for them. See if any fit your situation.

First, we are afraid that if we act on a God-given desire or direction, we may be **ashamed** or embarrassed by the outcome. So, we hold back.

Second, negative memories or **regrets** from our past – "the shame of our youth" – keeps us trapped in former identities as the old version of our self tells us that we are lesser than or unqualified to live in a new way.

Third, our **grief**, what this translation poetically describes as the "reproach [meaning disapproval or disappointment] of our widowhood" holds us captive to what we have lost.

And yet, God's messenger calls us to step forward – to act and proceed – in freedom from these powers and in obedience to God's calling on us. We are not to fear these challenging circumstances that are common to us all; rather, we are to rely on the grace of God that advocates for us and shields us from disgrace.

As we enter this new year, I encourage you to take these ancient words to heart. Are there any areas of shame, regret, or unprocessed grief that are holding you back from the fullness of who God has created you to be in Christ? Are there any fears that are dictating your decisions? What would it be like to bring these to God in prayer, process them in community, and pursue freedom from these powers in accountability and actionable steps towards receiving God's grace?

May nothing get in the way or hold you back from God's best for you this year.

Peace, Pastor Brad

January 2026

New Life Community

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
January Sermon Series: "Money Shouldn't Make You Miserable"	Memory Verse: Hebrews 13:5	"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"	1  6 PM Celebrate Recovery	2	3
4 10 AM Worship Service & Communion 5 PM Youth Group	5	6 6 AM Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM Healing Room Prayer	7 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	8 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	9	10
11 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 5 PM Youth Group	12	13 6 AM Men's Bible Study 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study (new series) 6:30 PM Healing Room Prayer	14 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	15 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	16	17
18 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 5 PM Youth Group	19 M.L. King Jr. Day (office closed)	20 6 AM Men's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson 6:30 PM Healing Room Prayer	21 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	22 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	23	24
25 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service & Special Kids' Activity 11:15 AM Family Meal 5 PM Youth Group	26	27 6 AM Men's Study 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study 2:35 Good News Club at Jefferson	28 2 PM Open Gate Food Distribution 5 PM Worship Team 6:30 PM Prayer Group	29 6 PM Celebrate Recovery	30	31
1 8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service & Communion Women's Soup Fundraiser 5 PM Youth Group	2	NOTES FEBRUARY PREVIEW: 1--Women's Ministries' Soup Fundraiser; 4--Lunch Fundraiser for Open Gate at Palm UMC; 8--"Souperbowl" Sunday Open Gate Fundraiser; 10&24--LIFT; 14--Valentine's Day; 16--Presidents' Day holiday; 20--PM: Youth For Christ Reoprt Banquet; 22--Family Meal Calendar accurate as of 12/29/25 -- most events also on website calendar at www.newlifedinuba.org				