

Message-based Study

Video is available online at messages.visitccc.com

Connection

Do you have any New Year's Eve or New Years Day traditions? What are they?

Cheer and Challenge

- How did it go living out your "I will..." statement from last week? Share your experience.
- Tell about any experiences you had this week following through on the B.L.E.S.S. challenge.

Content

1. In the movie "The Nativity" one wise man asked another "How is your faith now?" as they saw the miraculous star come into view. What would be *your* response to that same question? In light of the year you have just experienced, how is *your* faith now?

What have you experienced that has grown your faith?

What in life has eroded your faith?

2. When life is hard, our imaginations can lead us into discouraged thinking. We can fear the worst, as we imagine that things will never get better. On the continuum below, where would you say you are in your thinking right now?

Discouraged _____ Hopeful

3. Regardless of where you put yourself on that continuum, realize that God's idea for your situation is markedly different from what your imagination has come up with. Consider what **Ephesians 3:20** says (we'll look at it here in two different versions of the Bible to get a broader understanding).

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." (NLT)

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us..." (NIV)

Underline the words that jump out at you in this verse. Why do those words feel significant?

4. In the verse above, the word which is translated "*infinitely more / immeasurably more*" conveys the idea of an *out-of-this world surplus, hyper-amount, above and beyond*. Understanding this, where would you put God's idea for your future on the continuum on the previous page?

Rewrite the Ephesians 3:20 in your own words, incorporating this truth:

5. The key to this abundance isn't your ability, but God's ability. What phrases in the verse above point to God's ability?

Have you personally invited Jesus into your life so He can empower you in this way? Which sounds most like you:

- I'm just beginning to explore who Jesus is.
- I'd like to believe, but I have lots of doubts I'm wrestling with.
- I have some faith in Jesus.
- I have put my full faith in Jesus.
- Other: _____

Commitment

What is one way you can incorporate the truth we have studied as you move forward into this year?

"I will _____."



Begin with prayer. Listen with care. Eat / Engage with another. Serve. Share your story.

Often our imaginations take us into worry for loved ones who are struggling. Begin this year praying for those who come to mind. Write their names here as you pray for them: _____