

A close-up of a blue car's side-view mirror. The mirror's frame is blue and glossy. The reflection inside the mirror shows a two-lane asphalt road that curves gently to the right. The road is flanked by dense evergreen trees on the left and some deciduous trees with yellowing leaves on the right. In the distance, a small white guardrail and a road sign are visible. The background of the entire image is a soft-focus landscape of rolling hills under a warm, golden sunset sky. The text "Looking Back, Moving Forward" is centered in the mirror's reflection in a white, sans-serif font.

Looking Back,
Moving Forward



Dec 28, 2025

Looking Back, Moving Forward

Focus: Celebrating where we've seen God at work this year, and getting our hearts ready for what He will do next year.

Intro: The Power of Looking Back

This week isn't just about a calendar change. It's about pausing at the crossing.

When we look back at where God has shown up, it builds our trust for where He's leading us next.

We're going to hear some real testimonies from people here today, and I pray that their journeys will increase your faith and build your confidence in God.

1. When God Steps Into Our Struggles.

He meets us in our hardest places and brings change we couldn't manage alone.

****Carlos testimony****

What That Shows Us About God

Psalm 107:13-16 (NLT) *"Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. 14 He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. 15 Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. 16 For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron.*

John 8:36 (NLT) *If the Son sets you free, you are truly free*

II Corinthians 3:17 (NLT) *... Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*

For 2025: Thank God for the rescues, big and small.

For 2026: Identify one area where you need God's freeing power? What habit, worry, or past hurt do you need Him to step into?

2. When God Gives Us a Place to Belong.

God knows our need for connection and guides us to the right community.

****Deidre testimony****

Psalm 68:6 (NLT) *God places the lonely in families...*

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT) *... You are members of God's family*

I Corinthians 12:18 (NLT) *... God has put each part [of the body] just where he wants it.*

For 2025: Thank God for the people He's placed around you.

For 2026: How can you go from attending to belonging? Who needs you to help them find a home here?

3. When God Does What Only He Can Do.

His timing is perfect, even when it tests our patience, and He is the source of genuine joy.

****Olumoto family testimony****

Psalm 113 (NLT) *Praise the Lord! Yes, give praise, O servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord! 2 Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forever. 3 Everywhere—from east to west—praise the name of the Lord. 4 For the Lord is high above the nations; his glory is higher than the heavens. 5 Who can be compared with the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high? 6 He stoops to look down on heaven and on earth. 7 He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. 8 He sets them among princes, even the princes of his own people! 9 He gives the childless woman a family, making her a happy mother. Praise the Lord!*

Isaiah 43:19 Context

God speaks to His people who feel stuck in past failures or present wilderness, promising not just a repeat of past miracles (like the Exodus) but a brand new work of restoration and refreshment.

Isaiah 43:16-21 (NLT) *I am the Lord, who opened a way through the waters, making a dry path through the sea. 17 I called forth the mighty army of Egypt with all its chariots and horses. I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned, their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick. 18 “But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. 19 For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. 20 The wild animals in the fields will thank me, the jackals and owls, too, for giving them water in the desert. Yes, I will make rivers in the dry wasteland so my chosen people can be refmotreshed. 21 I have made Israel for myself, and they will someday honor me before the whole world.*

Galatians 4:4-7 (NLT)

The Apostle Paul explains God's strategic, timely plan to move humanity from a place of spiritual distance and obligation ("under the law") into the intimate, legal standing of beloved children.

4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. 6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.” 7 Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

For 2025: Thank God for His "yes" and for His "not yet," trusting both are for our good.

For 2026: What dream, promise, or hope have you maybe given up on? Let these stories remind you: God's clock is different. What can you begin praying about again with fresh faith?

Closing: From Gratitude to Expectation

·These stories aren't just their stories; they are pictures of what God is like for all of us: A Rescuer, a Family Maker, a Promise Keeper.

Your story this year; the hard parts and the good parts all matter. Look for where He was in it. Trust me, He was there.

As we walk into a new year, let's do it with two postures:

1. A Thankful Heart: For all God did in 2025.
2. An Expectant Heart: Believing that the same God is already at work in 2026.

Let's choose to step into the new year not with fear, but with active faith, ready to see what He will do.