

Looking Forward, Glimpsing Back

CARS. Now my knowledge of cars is very limited. In fact, I think I inherited Car Dyslexia from my Mum. That's a condition where we don't understand why our key isn't unlocking **our** vehicle... until the owner approaches wanting to know what we are doing with their car! Realising it's not **our** vehicle after all! (The only way Mum can recognise a vehicle is by their numberplates.)

Anyway, what I do know is... cars come in all different shapes and sizes. Models and colours ... much like us I suppose. And they all have something in common. Can you guess what it is? Windscreen and rear vision mirror. (Yes, I suppose there are tyres and lights and other things, but today we are going to talk about the **Windscreen and Rear Vision Mirror**.)

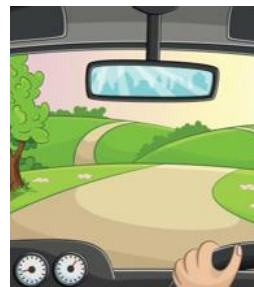
Windscreen – to see where you are going.

Rear Vision Mirror – to glimpse or check behind.

Note the size difference is intentional. The Windscreen is large – giving a much greater view. The Rear Vision Mirror is small, giving us a glimpse.

This is like the Christian Walk. We are called to look ahead; to move forward with hope; to glimpse behind but not 'live there'. To learn from the past but not stay there. To know our destination without wavering. So today I pose **four questions as we drive our 'cars' into 2026.**

1. Where are our eyes focused?
2. How well are we driving?
3. Who is guiding us on our journey?
4. What's our final destination?



As we enter the New Year....

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- How well are we driving?
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1. Where are our eyes focused?

As we reflect on 2025, we should ask ... What has my attention right now? Where are my eyes focused? Past pain and regrets or God's future purpose?

When my son was learning to ride his bike, he had to stay focused with his eyes ahead. If he was distracted or tried to talk to the person next to him, his bike would turn in the direction his eyes looked, leading to wobbles, over-steering, off the path bumps and ultimately crashes.

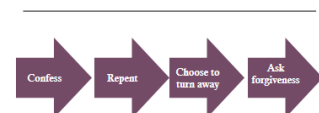
Similarly, when I was helping teach someone to drive, the same thing happened... if they took their eyes off the road for a milli-second, we were suddenly up on the Kerb (luckily not in a ditch). The Christian Walk can be like this. Keep your eyes looking ahead.

Hebrews 12:2 says, *"Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end."*

But sometimes stuff happens in life and it causes our eyes, (our minds eye/focus, our attention) to keep looking back. Not just glimpsing, causing wobbles and minor bumps, but trying to drive forward while fixated on the rear view mirror!

Let Go of What's Behind- Are our eyes focused on past pain and regrets or God's future purpose?

Philippians 3:13 Paul says – '*... Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead...*



Sometimes our mind keeps going back. Our thoughts return to the incident, the circumstances, the temptation. The enemy keeps reminding you of the shame, pain, or hurts or decisions and you can't let go of it. Now is the time to give it to God, spend time with God before 2026 and give it to him. First, **confess** to God, then **repent**... that is, admit to God what you did or didn't do, and tell him about it, **choose to turn away** from it ("do a 180") and **ask for forgiveness**. Ask God to help you focus on Him moving forward.

If you have repented already, and it keeps returning to plague you, then take authority, in the name of Jesus Christ – remind the devil that you are forgiven, you are redeemed, through Christ, and God does not hold it against you, it has been forgotten. Use scripture:

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Hebrews 8:12 *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

Micah 7:19 *He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

2. How well are we driving?

- a. **Created to worship to God** - our thoughts, love, devotion, trust, adoration and obedience are directed to God above all else.

Hebrews 13:15 *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

Sometimes praise is a sacrifice, other times a joy – do it anyway.

- b. **Formed for fellowship with God’s family**- meet together to encourage one another and build each other up; to worship God and hear from the word of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and even more as you see the Day approaching.*

c. Living like Christ – renew your mind to be more like Christ,

Romans 12:2 (LNT) *Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person, by changing the way you think. Then you will know God's will for you, which is good, pleasing and perfect.*

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) *Fix your thoughts on what is true and honourable, and right and pure, and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

- Neuroscience is just catching up with God in learning how we can recreate neural pathways (rewire) our brains by the input; what we choose to focus on.

d. Shaped to Serve – uniquely gifted by God to serve others

1 Peter 4:1 - *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

Romans 12:6 *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us...*

Gift	Application
Prophecy	Speak out with as much faith as God has given you.
Serving	Serve enthusiastically
Teaching	Teach well
Encouraging	Be encouraging
Giving	Give generously
Leading	Take responsibility seriously
Mercy	Kindness - Gladly; cheerfully
Hospitality	Eager to practice hospitality
Love	Genuine affection; Delight to honour each other
Helping	Be ready to help others

e. **Made for Mission – made to share God’s love and message with the world**

Matthew 28:19-20 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **and teaching them to obey** everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

3. Who is guiding me on my journey?

Isaiah 43:18 *Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past, see I’m doing a new thing. Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.*

God has something new ahead. He has it planned. Don’t just forget the awful things but God says forget the past achievements and successes and victories God has something more in store! Look forward to something new! We are living in this prophesy fulfilled and it is still being fulfilled.

Prior to this verse, it talks about what God has done for the people of Israel, reminding them of how he has saved them, and been victorious – just like a glimpsing back in the rear-view mirror.

God is not against us glimpsing back to remember. He created celebrations for his people. In fact, most celebrations we have are to remember what He has done – not what WE have done. Christmas and Easter – is our focus on Jesus and what HE has done?

But we are encouraged to look ahead. Look what God is doing now and look to the one he has given us as the guide!

This verse talks about the water and streams springing up in the dry barren places, in wastelands – that is, places that are empty and desolate, will now have signs of life or growth. Rivers of living, flowing water will be poured out; causing us to become spiritually alive. A new person; A growing person; A fruitful person; A joyful person; A purpose-driven person; A faithful person.

Jesus said in John 7:37-39, *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’*

By this he meant the spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Jesus was referring to Isaiah’s prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit on Israel’s descendants (Isaiah 43:18 and Isaiah 44:3)

1. Context – This happened on the ‘great day of the feast’ a time when priests poured water, symbolizing God’s provision, but Jesus presented himself as the true source of the life-giving water.
2. Cried – Loud and urgent; a forceful, disruptive call, breaking tradition to emphasise the importance of his offer
3. Anyone – all are welcome
4. Thirsty – spiritual thirst; must have strong desire for more of God
5. Come to Him – Jesus is a gentleman; he won’t force himself to you.
6. Drink – to take in refreshment or nourishment for spiritual body; suggest it’s not just a sip put a pouring and gulping and saturation.
7. Hearts – inner working first
8. Living water -is the Holy Spirit – an internal, abundant and permanent supply of the Holy Spirit, bringing life.

Testimony of woman – Gideon’s bible.

Woman was spiritually thirsty and she was filled.

There is a filling (at salvation) and a re-filling (ie Acts 1:4-5 filled; 4:8 filled again; Acts 4:31 refilled again)

As Christians, God has given us a guide, The Holy Spirit (and a road map / GPS actually, which is the bible). He has poured out the Holy Spirit and continues to, for us –

Holy Spirit	Purpose
Refresh	Nourish our souls
Develop fruits of Spirit	Love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control (Galations 5:22-25)
Courage	Boldness to speak God's Word.
Discern	Recognise truth from error / lies
Convict	Steer us when we go the wrong way
Counsellor	Gently guiding us in His ways
Comforter	When we feel lonely or afraid or discouraged

4. What's my final destination?

Philippians 3:13-14 *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

The goal Paul pressed toward was twofold: to know Jesus Christ and to become like Him. To finally be in glory with him in heaven.

