



World Christian Fellowship

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New Year 2026.

Go Home Another Way (Matthew 2:1-12)

Matthew 2:1-12, *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' " ⁷Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." ⁹When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and*

stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The Cost of the Familiar Map.

Imagine a seasoned traveller driving across the country to visit a new city. He has done this drive many times. He knows the first 50 miles like the back of his hand—every exit, every rest stop, every shortcut.

This time, however, he has a brand-new, high-tech GPS system. Before he leaves, the GPS calculates the fastest route, factoring in a new bypass that was just completed, which saves him an hour of driving around a major metropolitan area.

He starts his trip. For the first five hours, he ignores the voice of the GPS. "Turn left," it says. David ignores it, thinking, "Nonsense! My old way, exit 14, is the way to go." "Recalculating..." the GPS sighs.

Then, just as he hits the old, familiar route—the route he's always taken—he grinds to a halt. There was a massive, unforeseen construction. That familiar road, the one he trusted for years, is now a dead stop. He sits there for two hours, watching the clock tick, frustrated and defeated.

Finally, he looks at the GPS, which had been patiently recalculating all along. It shows the new bypass, now miles behind him, completely clear and fast. He realizes his mistake:

He trusted the comfort and predictability of his **familiar map** over the **new, updated guidance** that promised a better result. The familiar path felt safe, but it led to stagnation and failure.

As we stand at the start of this New Year, we are all holding our "familiar maps." These maps represent the old ways we navigate life:

- The habitual ways we respond to stress.
- The familiar ways we prioritize our time.
- The old ruts of compromise and self-reliance that we feel comfortable in.

We have all done this: we know what we *should* do, but we revert to the familiar, hoping somehow that this time, the old route won't lead to the old roadblock.

The truth is, **if we walk the same familiar paths this year, we will arrive at the same familiar results.** For a truly successful and transformed year, we need a complete shift in our navigation.

Our text today introduces travellers, **the Magi**, who had the humility to follow new, divine guidance. They encountered the King, and they received a critical, non-negotiable instruction: **They had to Go Home Another Way.**

Their *physical* change of route symbolizes the *spiritual* change that must happen in our lives if we want true, lasting success in the new year. **We must leave the familiar roads and choose the Christ-directed detour.**

1. A Call to a Different Kind of Success

We stand today at the beginning of a fresh calendar, looking forward with hope.

The word "new" is everywhere right now: new resolutions, new planners, new gym memberships.

But let us be honest: **if we walk the same familiar paths this year, we will arrive at the same familiar results.**

The definition of **foolishness** is often cited as doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different outcome.

As we look back at the challenges of the past year, we must admit that the paths we habitually chose the paths of least resistance, the paths of self-reliance, the paths of fear, or the paths of compromise did not produce the transformation we truly longed for. The familiar paths don't produce new results they just lead us back to where we started.

If we want a truly **successful** and transformed year, it is **necessary** to look for a new path. We need a divine intervention, a radical redirection, and a clear sign showing us a way we haven't travelled before.

The Magi, the wise men from the East, in **Matthew 2:1-12** their journey, culminating in a divine detour, provides the perfect blueprint for a successful and purposeful year. They found what they were looking for, and because of it, they literally **went home another way (Matthew 2:12)**.

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How can this new year be a successful one?

1. Success Begins with Seeking.

The Magi were successful because they were seekers.

They were people of great learning and status, yet they were willing to travel hundreds of miles, follow an astronomical sign, and ask uncomfortable questions, all for the sake of finding the newborn King.

- **Know What You are Truly Seeking:**

The Magi sought "**Him who has been born King of the Jews.**"

They were not seeking a better star, a better job, or just a better feeling—they were seeking the **King**.

In the new year, we often make resolutions cantered on *better things* (better health, better finances), but true success comes from centring our pursuit on **Jesus Christ** himself.

Make a resolution to put your relationship with Christ first. If you seek Him, everything else will find its proper place.

The Rich Young Ruler:

In the New Testament, a wealthy young man asked Jesus what he needed to do to have eternal life. When Jesus told him to

sell his possessions and give to the poor, the man "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions".

His love for his worldly wealth outweighed his desire to follow Jesus fully, illustrating the teaching that one cannot serve both God and money (**Matthew 6:24**).

King Uzziah:

Uzziah was a powerful and successful king of Judah who prospered as long as he sought the Lord's guidance through the prophet Zechariah.

However, once he became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He entered the temple to burn incense, an act reserved only for the priests, in an attempt to consolidate all power (political and religious) in himself. For this act of selfish ambition, God afflicted him with leprosy for the rest of his life.

King Solomon (in his later years):

Though initially renowned for his God-given wisdom and wealth, which he used to build the temple, Solomon's later life saw him accumulate vast personal riches, wives, and power, eventually turning his heart away from God. The book of Ecclesiastes, reflects on the futility of worldly pursuits and riches without God.

Demas:

A companion of the Apostle Paul, Demas is mentioned as having deserted Paul because he "loved this present world" (**2 Timothy 4:10**).

This indicates a choice to prioritize worldly attractions and security over the demanding work of ministry and devotion to God.

Balancing Success with Godly Pursuit

Conversely, the Bible also presents figures who had worldly success but maintained their faith and focus on God:

Joseph:

Sold into slavery and unjustly imprisoned, Joseph remained faithful to God throughout his trials. God eventually elevated him to a position of power as second-in-command of Egypt, which he used to save his family and the nation during a famine. His integrity and faith were central to his success.

Abraham:

Described as very wealthy with livestock, silver, and gold, Abraham's wealth grew alongside his faith and relationship

with the Lord. He used his resources wisely and was always focused on God's promises, demonstrating that wealth itself is not sinful, but the *love* of money can be.

Lydia:

In the New Testament as a **successful businesswoman** who traded purple cloth, Lydia was a worshiper of God. When she heard Paul preach, she and her household were baptized, and she used her home and resources to support the early church.

Be Willing to Follow the Light:

They followed *His star*.

God will give you a light for your path in this new year—it might be a passage of Scripture, the counsel of a friend, or a quiet prompting in prayer.

Don't let the confusion of the world (like Herod's court) distract you. Keep your eyes fixed on the light God provides.

2. Success Requires a Confrontation.

The journey of the Magi was complicated by King Herod. He represents the forces that will inevitably try to derail our success and steal our joy this year: **Fear, Ego, and Deception**.

Zacchaeus:

A wealthy chief tax collector who was widely considered a traitor and a cheat. After an encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus publicly repented. Promising to give half of his possessions to the poor and pay back anyone he had cheated four times. Thus making amends and fundamentally changing his relationship with his community.

Confront the Way of Herod in Yourself:

Herod was **troubled** by the news of a new king. He was comfortable in his own power and was afraid of anything that challenged his control.

In the **New Year**, your fear, your need to control everything, or your pride (your "Herod-nature") will tell you to reject any path that requires humility or surrender to God.

Don't Fall for the Lie:

Herod pretended he wanted to worship, but his true intent was murder. The devil often disguises temptations and pitfalls as opportunities or comforts.

Success in the new year means recognizing the paths that look easy but lead to destruction. Be discerning. Listen to the Word of God, not the deceptive voice of comfort or fear.

3. Success Demands a Change of Direction.

After a long journey, the Magi finally reached the house, and their encounter with Jesus was the catalyst for their ultimate success—the **Another Way** home.

True Success is Defined by Worship.

V 11, And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They "**fell down and worshiped him**" and "**opened their treasures and offered him gifts.**"

The moment they met Jesus, their whole perspective changed.

True success isn't just about what we *achieve* in the new year, but what we *give* to God our time, our talent, and our treasure. Success is a life of worship.

True Success Requires the "Another Way".

V 12, Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

They were warned in a dream and **"departed for their own country another way."** They had met the King, and they could not go back to Herod's way of doing things.

This is the key to your successful New Year.

The old path—the path of anxiety, self-reliance, giving in to temptation, or chasing empty goals—is the path back to Herod.

When you leave this place and walk into 2026, you cannot go back the way you came. Your encounter with Christ must change your route.

What does it mean for you to "Go Home Another Way" this year?

1. **If your old way was the way of fear, your Another Way is the way of Faith.**
2. **If your old way was the way of constant worry, your Another Way is the way of Trust.**
3. **If your old way was the way of sin and self-will, your Another Way is the way of Obedience to Christ.**

Conclusion

The Phone on the Nightstand

We have talked about **the Magi** who "went home another way," symbolizing the need for a spiritual detour. But what does this look like in the small, **daily choices of a successful new year?**

Think about one of the most familiar and destructive habits of our modern lives: **the phone on the nightstand.**

For many of us, the familiar map of the morning looks like this:

- We wake up, and before we say "Amen" or even "Good morning, Lord," we pick up the phone.
- We check the emails, the news, the social media feeds.
- We invite the anxiety, the comparison, and the chaos of the world *before* we invite the peace of Christ.

This is the very definition of going back the **old way—the way of Herod**, the way of the troubled world—right at the start of our day. We know that following this familiar path rarely produces peace, joy, or spiritual success. It just produces stress and distraction.

In the new year, if you want to achieve true spiritual success, you need a **"Go Home Another Way"** resolution that starts small.

The "Another Way" Resolution: Instead of placing your phone right next to your pillow (the old way), resolve to charge your phone **in the kitchen or another room** (the new way).

- Now, when you wake up, the first thing you interact with is not a screen, but your Bible, your prayer journal, or the quiet stillness of your morning.
- You are intentionally creating a gap between waking up and entering the world's noise.
- You are choosing to worship first, choosing to seek the King before seeking the world's approval or problems.

This simple, practical act of redirection—physically moving the device—is how we put the principle of **"Go Home Another Way"** into action.

It is the spiritual detour that leads to success.

The Magi's journey was a success not because they became richer or more famous, but because they found Christ and allowed Him to redirect their lives.

They were transformed from mere travellers into protected, obedient worshippers.

As you step into this new year, I encourage you: **Go home another way.**

Leave behind the old habits, the old fears, and the old deceptions.

You have found the King!

You have worshiped Him.

Let this encounter change your route.

Follow His guidance, trust His protection, and your success this year will be found in walking the new, redirected path He has planned for you.