

I've seen the saying, "Do not pray for an easy life. Pray for the strength to handle whatever life gives you."

We sometimes live under the illusion that we are in control of things. Praying for an easy life can be a part of this illusion -- if we can't make things go right ourselves, then maybe we can get God to do it. Of course, we all know that life is always going to present us with a wide range of experiences to deal with, including the good, the bad, and the ugly. The tighter we hold on to our illusion of controlling the future, the more traumatic it is when that illusion is shattered by the reality of life.

Praying for the strength to handle whatever life gives us is a way to face life squarely and honestly. More subtly, it is an acknowledgment that we, with God's help, have what it takes to deal with what life gives us. This is necessary in order to hold on to hope, and have peace of mind and Spirit, and avoid constant fear and anxiety.

We face a new year. After the chaos of 2020, it would be foolish to think that anyone has an accurate prediction of what 2021 holds. But what we can predict is that if we face each challenge with integrity, honesty, and compassion, trusting in the Spirit powerfully working through ourselves and each other, we will survive and thrive in the New Year. And at the end of 2021 we will be a few steps closer to the Reign of God here on earth.