



## WOW: Word Of the Week

### PONDER

December 20, 2023 [December, 2025]

The funeral was over. I was sitting at the house with the family as evening fell. The phone rang. I heard only one side of the conversation, "We are sitting around and putting up the memories."

In Luke 2:19, Mary is contemplating all that has happened in the events surrounding the birth of her son. She is gathering up the pieces so she will not lose them (preserve, keep, treasure up). She is putting everything together as she tries to understand (combining, thinking, pondering).

Mary pondered the details of the beginning of Jesus' life. The end of the year is a good time for pondering. We do well to think clearly about past, present, future. We must cherish the memories or they will escape us. The nature of human beings is that we remember selectively. Sometimes we can remember the positives and forget the negatives. As often, more often, we remember the negatives and fail to ponder the positives.

As another year concludes, I am prone to pondering. Jan and I enjoy pondering – putting up the memories, preparing to make new memories. After almost six decades of ministry together, 25 years in fulltime church ministry, 15 years combining work in the universities with ministry, and almost 20 years in mission work after my retirement, we ponder what God has in store for us.

An old song, *Precious Memories* (original lyrics by Roy Acuff), says in part, "As I ponder, hope grow fonder...." Jan and I are hopeful as we think about the future – different than the past, anticipating new open doors, challenges, opportunities.

Enough about us. I write for you. This WOW is for you! The year is rapidly drawing to a close. Time to ponder. Time to reflect, remember. Memory is what helps us grow. Memory connects us to the past. Often overlooked is that memory informs and forms our future. The etymology of the word "ponder" is related to that which has weight.

Ponder. What really matters? When all is said and done? What is worthy of our time, resources, conversations, prayers? What tugs at your heart continually? What will you do in the coming year? Goals, hopes, dreams, aspirations? What will you talk about? What will you pray about? Where is your heart?

I pray that your heart is aligned with God's heart. May we seek first His things, kingdom things! May your end-of-year ponderings point you to eternal priorities in my prayer.