

**A FREE Resource
for UCB Radio
Listeners!**



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A Word for the Year

**A Gentle, Grace-Filled
Way to Begin January**

**Why focusing on one word
can be more life-giving
than a list of resolutions.**

WHY A WORD INSTEAD OF A RESOLUTION?

Every January, we feel it: the pressure to improve, fix, and achieve. New Year's resolutions often begin with hope... and end with guilt.

Last week on **UCB Radio**, while filling in for *Sarah Masters*, *Garrett Michaels* shared a refreshing way to approach the year ahead—**choosing a word for the year instead of setting a traditional resolution**. Where did this idea come from, and how can you weave it into everyday life in a way that feels gentle, pressure-free, and truly sustainable? Let's explore this idea together.

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” — Isaiah 43:18–19

A Different Approach

What if this year didn't start with striving?

Instead of asking **“What should I do better?”** we ask **“Who is God shaping me to become?”**

A Word for the Year isn't a goal to accomplish, it's a theme to live into.

Why This Works

- A word gives direction without pressure
- It allows room for grace when life changes
- It keeps God at the center, not performance
- You can't fail a word—you simply grow into it

“This isn't about doing more for God. It's about noticing what God is already doing in you.”

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WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?

While the phrase “Word for the Year” feels modern, the heart behind it is ancient.

Biblical Roots

Throughout Scripture, God works in seasons, not checklists.

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that life unfolds in rhythms.

Habakkuk 2:2 encourages us to notice and write what God is revealing.

Jesus consistently focused on heart transformation, not rule-keeping.

A Listening Practice

This approach is similar to *listening prayer*: slowing down enough to hear what God is gently highlighting.

In recent years, Christian leaders and radio voices (like Garrett mentioned on UCB) have encouraged this practice as a way to:

Release pressure

- Invite God into the year ahead
- Stay spiritually anchored through uncertainty

A word
is often
discovered,
not decided.



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HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR WORD

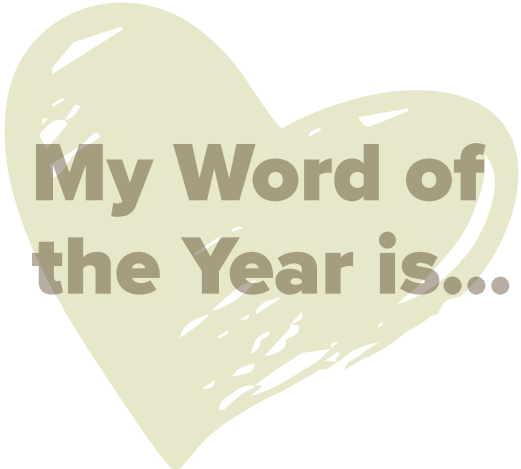
You don't need to overthink this. Let it be simple.

Step 1: Reflect

Look Back and Ask yourself:

- What stretched me last year?
- Where did I feel God's presence most?
- What do I need more of this year?

Write a few thoughts below:



My Word of
the Year is...

Step 2: Listen

Look Up and Take a moment to pray:

"God, what do You want to grow in me this year?"

Pay attention to:

- Words that stand out in Scripture
- Repeated themes in sermons or worship songs
- Gentle nudges you keep noticing

Step 3: Receive

Look Ahead. Your word may come quickly—or slowly

- It may feel comforting or challenging
- There is no "right" word—only your word
- If you don't have your word yet, you're not behind.

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LIVING YOUR WORD (NO PRESSURE)

This is where the word becomes part of real life.

Keep It Simple

You don't need new habits—just new awareness.

Try one of these:

- Say your word during morning prayer
- Ask, “How can I live this word today?”
- Reflect at night: “Where did I notice my word?”

Make It Visible

- Phone lock screen
- Bible margin
- Journal cover
- Sticky note on your mirror or dashboard

Let It Flex

**Some months your word will feel strong.
Other months it will feel quiet.**

Both are okay.

**A word isn't something you complete,
it's something you carry.**

GRACE

FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

You can't fail this.

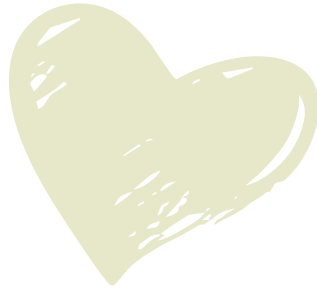
There will be busy days. Hard seasons. Unexpected turns.
Your word is not a test—it's an invitation.

When you forget it, simply return.
When you struggle with it, ask God for help.
When you notice it, give thanks.

A Prayer for the Year Ahead

God, as this year unfolds, help me to notice You.
Shape my heart and guide my steps.
Teach me what this word means—not just in theory, but in daily life.
I trust You with what's ahead.
Amen.

You can't fail this.



Final Encouragement

Stay connected with **UCB Radio** throughout the year—sometimes God confirms our word through a song, a message, or a moment we didn't expect.

**This year isn't about becoming someone new.
It's about becoming more rooted in who God created you to be.**

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