

31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

## Search

**"We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time."**

T S Elliot, *Little Gidding*

There's an inevitability that on the last day of a year we'll review the past year and look forward to what's to come. The good and bad of 2025, and our hopes and dreams for 2026, will be on our minds on Hogmanay. And we'll try to make sense of it all and find meaning and purpose in it.

In *Welcoming Each Wonder* ([www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com)) I explored that search for meaning (and not just at the end of a year) in this way.

### The search

There was once a man who went on a search for the meaning of life.  
He travelled far and wide, covered many miles, and looked in many places.

He gained wealth, status and fame. 'I will find meaning here,' he said.  
But wealth gave no purpose, status no peace, and fame was an illusion of worth.

He found ritual and tradition. 'I will find meaning here,' he said.  
But ritual was devoid of substance, and tradition became a dull set of routines.

He met saints and heroes. 'They will give me meaning,' he said.  
But though he sought to emulate their living, he felt no fulfilment of his own.

He saw sights and wonders. 'They will give me meaning,' he said.  
But though he marvelled at mystery and delighted in beauty, he was not changed.

So he abandoned his travels and gave up his search for meaning.  
He came home to what was familiar, where he knew what to expect.

He lived simply, for he needed no wealth.

He reflected deeply, for he had no ritual to use.

He communed with his own soul, for he had no other companion.

He found meaning in the silence, and guidance in his dreams.

There was once a man who went on a search for the meaning of life,  
but discovered it only when he came home and found himself.

If I know anything about anything, I know that in 2026 "we shall not cease from exploration". For didn't we look for insight and understanding in 2025 and in the years before that? But might it be that we'll find meaning and purpose closer to home in 2026 than we could ever have expected?

### A prayer for today

*God of meaning and purpose, help me come home and find myself again. Amen*

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon*

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