

Looking To God in the New Year

Making Christ Centered Plans

I. Introductory Remarks.

Today is the first Sunday of a new year. The new year should be a time of reflection for all of us -- to ponder the plans and goals we set for ourselves in the previous year in relationship to where we are at now. How well did you do? Did you succeed in the things you set out to do or did you find yourself coming up short?

The new year offers us the chance to wipe the slate clean and start over once again. It is a time to set new goals and to make plans as to how you will meet those goals. As every day in the Lord should be, the new year is a day of new beginnings. My question to you today is, "What kind of goals and plans will you make in this new year as you seek to serve Christ and His Kingdom in a greater way?"

2 Corinthians 3:18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

This scripture shows us that we should be continually growing in the Lord Jesus Christ from glory to glory. His desire is that we would be conformed into His image in all areas of our lives.

Has your relationships with Jesus Christ deepened in this past year? Has your marriage grown from one glory to another in the past year? Has your family grown and matured? Has your involvement and commitment to the church grown? Have your gifts and ministries increased? Has your testimony and witness at work, school or play increased?

It is God's desire for us as Christians to be continually growing in all of these areas. The question is -- do you have vision and purpose in each of these areas or are you simply drifting along hoping that something productive and fruitful will take place?

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.*

- **You must have a vision and goals for your...**

Relationship with
Jesus

Marriage
Family life

Church life
Gifts and ministries
Job or school

Without a vision and purpose in these areas you will cast off all restraint and just be tossed to and fro, sowing to the wind. What do you see God doing in these areas of your life? What kind of plans are you making to experience fulfillment and growth in all of these areas? A righteous man or woman will make plans to grow and mature in Christ in every area of his or her life.

In this message, I would like to talk about some of the principles that are involved in making Christ centered plans in each of the areas that have been mentioned.

II. Principles For Making Christ Centered Plans.

1. Have a Proper Perspective of God's View For Your Life.

Psalms 39:4-5 *"LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah*

James 4:13-15 *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."*

Romans 14:12 *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

What God is talking about here is our whole approach to the Christian life. What is more important – building our lives for ourselves or for God and His kingdom? This is the primary issue each of us must face as we determine to move forward in life.

In our few short years of our life span, what will we have accomplished when we are called to give an account of our live before God? If our plans are Christ centered and filtered through God's purpose there will be fruit. Do you want God's will for your marriage... family.... church life... job... etc? If so, consecrate these areas to God and allow His purpose to come forth in each of these areas.

2. Set Your Goals For Each Of These Areas.

Luke 14:28-30 *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it; "lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, "saying,*

'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (See verses 31-33 also).

It is important that you have goals for each of these areas and to strategically plan on how you will meet those goals. The goals should be 1) written, 2) personal, 3) specific, 4) positive, 5) measurable. They should also be achievable, believable and convictional.

Planning is not an attempt to foretell the future. Planning is an attempt to regulate and shape the future and to prepare to negotiate unforeseen circumstances to one's advantage. Good planning contemplates how a current decision is going to affect the future environment.

3. Prioritize Which Areas Need The Most Attention.

Without a secure relationship with Jesus Christ it would be very difficult to grow in a Christ centered marriage and family life and very difficult in the other areas as well.

If your marriage and family life is not in order it is difficult to be committed to an ongoing church life with your gifts and ministries being developed.

4. Develop an Overcoming Mentality with the Failure Syndrome.

Philippians 3:13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead...*

The price of success is perseverance – our greatest glory lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fail. Avoiding failure is not practical because everybody is going to fail from time to time.

Proverbs 24:16 *for a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.*

Notice the difference between what happens when a man says to himself, "I have failed three times," and what happens when he says, "I am a failure." Overcoming the failure syndrome is coming in fourth exhausted but excited, because you came in fifth last time. "Maybe I didn't achieve the kind of success I was looking for last year, but it still better than it was the year before.

The difference between greatness and mediocrity is often how an individual views a mistake...

Tom Landry, Chuck Noll, and Bill Walsh accounted for nine of the Super Bowl victories from 1974 to 1989. What else do they have in common? They also had the worst records of first-season head coaches in NFL history. They became winners because they didn't fall into the failure syndrome.

5. There Must Be A Dependence Upon The Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.*

Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.*

2 Corinthians 3:5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God...*

6. Apply Diligence With An Attitude To Win.

Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.*

Matthew 11:12 *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

III. Concluding Remarks.

My prayer for each one of us is that as we begin this new year we would focus on making Christ centered plans with a desire for what God wants to do in each of our lives. As a result we would allow the vision that God is giving to us in each of these areas cause us to grow to new levels of victory in Him.

Hopefully, at the end of this year you will be able to say, "My relationship with the Lord has deepened and matured, my marriage is considerably better, my family is more secure, my involvement and commitment to church life has grown, my gifts and ministries are being exercised and I have a good testimony at work, where I am a witness for Jesus Christ." The plans of a righteous man will cause these things to happen for you in this coming year!

God bless you!