

Worthwhile Goals

Philippians 2:7-15

I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. **2** Do you feel a little tired?
 - A. We have come to the end of another long leg of life's journey here on earth.
 - B. In addition to all of the things you did in 2014, did you know you traveled 584 million miles (length of earth's orbit around the sun); too bad we didn't get "frequent flyer" miles!
2. The passing of another year means we are just that much closer to death, judgment, and eternity.
3. **3** Tonight let us give consideration to some worthwhile goals worth pursuing this year; let us seek to:

II. DISCUSSION:

- I. **4** Be more faithful in church attendance:
 - A. What could possibly be more important than attending the services where we worship the one true and living God and encourage one another?! **Heb. 10:24-25:** *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*; **Matt. 18:20:** *"...where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*; **Rev. 4:2-11**
 - B. It should be our highest priority to remove all hindrances that might be keeping us away from the assemblies of the church.
 - C. I'm not suggesting there are not legitimate reasons for missing a service from time to time (e.g., health reasons, night driving, work schedule, etc.).
 - D. But there are some members in every congregation who make very little effort to be present for all the assemblies; attendance is not a high priority for them. Others rarely ever miss a service; let us praise the latter and encourage the former!
 - E. We should never seek to find a reason or excuse for not attending.
 - (1) Do we put the same emphasis on attending every service as we do for our jobs or school?
 - (2) When the time for church services rolls around is it a joy for us or drudgery?
 - F. I'm not saying that all there is to being a Christian is a perfect attendance record at our services. However, if we feel church services are a real chore, we need to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5).
 - (1) There are 168 hours in a week.
 - (2) At most, our three services, including driving time, only take about 5.5 hours out of our week (~3.3% of our week).
 - (3) We must remember our priorities (Matt. 6:33; 5:6).
 - (4) Am I doing my very best to be present every time the church meets? Matt. 18:20
 - G. Also, if you have had trouble getting to services on time, may we then suggest you begin preparing a few minutes earlier. This will enable you to be present before the services start.
2. **5** Give liberally, cheerfully, and with purpose:
 - 2 Cor. 9:7:** *"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."*

1 Cor. 16:1-2: *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*

- A. When each of us accepts this challenge, the congregation can meet its financial obligations to carry on the work the Lord has authorized in His Word.
- B. In fact, it will help open doors for us to do even more in the future.
- C. It is also important we learn to give sacrificially in order to be like God (Jn. 3:16).
- D. David said, *“Neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing”* (2 Sam. 24:24).
 - (1) If our giving isn’t “sacrificial”; if we don’t feel some “pain”; have a feeling of “loss”; then how can we be in agreement with David?
 - (2) Despite this idea of sacrifice, pain, and loss; we must be upbeat! *“God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Cor. 9:7), *“And remember the words of the Lord Jesus that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’”* (Acts 20:35).
- E. We also have obligations separate and apart from our giving on the Lord’s Day (Lk. 10:25-37; Jas. 1:27; Matt. 25:31-46).

3. **6** Be more humble and unselfish:

- A. We must guard against making “self” the center of attention, and then expect everything to revolve around us. It is easy to let this poor attitude creep into our life!
- B. The Word of God warns against pride and selfishness: *“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble”* (Jas. 4:6).
- C. What a wonderful world it would be if all heeded Paul’s admonition: *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Phil. 2:3-4).

4. **7** Be friendly and hospitable:

- A. As a rule, these two factors will be what makes our first impression upon anyone who visits our services.
 - (1) Thus, it is understandable why Paul instructed Christians to *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you”* (Rom. 16:16).
 - (2) Any time we show unfriendliness and a lack of warmth to any individual, we make a lasting, negative impression upon that person.
- B. Right or wrong, some will judge an entire congregation on the basis of the unfriendliness of one member. Our “unfriendliness” may not necessarily intentional! We must be aware!
- C. All Christians are commanded to *“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling”* (1 Pet. 4:9).
- D. If you don’t have any friends, have you ever wondered why? **Prov. 18:24:** *“A man who has friends must himself be friendly,”*

5. **8** Be more prayerful:

- A. God has commanded us to pray (**1 Tim. 2:8:** *“Therefore I desire that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting”*; **1 Tim. 2:1-3:** *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior”*; **1 Thess. 5:17:** *“Pray without ceasing”*).

- B. Before our Lord gave the Parable of the Persistent Widow, Luke states, “*Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart*” (**Lk. 18:1-8**).
- C. Our prayers don’t have to be long and flowery to be accepted and effective!
 - (1) When the Lord taught the disciples to pray in Matthew 6:11-13 His model prayer consisted of only 45 words.
 - (2) Do you need ideas of how to pray and what to pray for? Study the Psalms and some of the great prayers of the Bible (e.g., Daniel’s prayer in Dan. 9:3-19).

6. **9** Be of assistance to others:

- A. Our Lord taught a tremendous lesson concerning helping others and being a good neighbor in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (**Mk. 12:31**: “*And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.*”; Lk. 10:25-37).
- B. After the lawyer, who had come to Jesus, realized that being a good neighbor involved showing mercy and assisting someone in need (**Lk. 10:36-37**: “*So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?*” 37 *And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’*”). Jesus said to him, “*Go and do likewise*” (V. 37).
- C. The Apostle John instructed, “*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*” (1 Jn. 3:18).
- D. The Apostle Peter described the life of Jesus while on earth as one “*who went about doing good*” (Acts 10:38).
- E. In our daily lives, “*as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith*” (Gal. 6:10).

7. **10** Study the Bible more diligently:

- A. Take time each day for Bible study and meditation (e.g., Bible class and personal study; **2 Tim. 2:15**: “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”).
- B. Make it a consistent practice in your life as a Christian to attend all the Bible classes offered by the church (**2 Pet. 3:17-18**: “*You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”; **Eph. 4:14**: “*that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.*”).
 - (1) As a parent, it is so vital to the spiritual development of our children that they attend all the Bible classes regularly (**Eph. 6:4**: “*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*”).
 - (2) Don’t starve yourself and your family spiritually! Feed your flock!
 - (3) We must feast upon God’s Word: “*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- C. Increasing in Bible knowledge is so important (**Heb. 5:12-6:1-8**).

8. **11** Become a Christian if you are not one:

- A. We become a Christian by obeying the gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16-17**: “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and*

also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"; **Rom. 2:16**: "in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."; **2 Thess. 1:7-9**: "and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,").

B. Have you obeyed the gospel yet? Mk. 16:15-16; Act 2:37-38, 41, 47; Eph. 5:23

C. Remember, Jesus is the "author of salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

III. CONCLUSION: 12

1. Let us all make it our goal to be what Paul told Titus: "in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7; Matt. 5:14-16).
2. It is our hope and prayer all of us pursue worthwhile goals in our lives, and encourage one another to do the same.

Adapted from a sermon (*Some Worthwhile Goals For 2015*) by R. J. Evans.