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## Where Is Our Focus For The Upcoming Year?

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As we begin to make plans for the New Year, we are faced with the problem; do we need to be making a New Year's resolution? What will the New Year be bringing? The old year is just about gone and what has happened in the old year, some of it will be good and some will be bad, but let's just dwell on the good. We know that believers who trust in the Lord will not be disappointed and because they know their God they will do exploits.

Isaiah 42:10 "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." KJV

Isaiah 46:10 "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" KJV

Isaiah begins to say that the Lord declares the end from the beginning.

This new year that we are beginning to enter into, we need to declare that the goodness of God is going to follow us and overtake us, that we will begin to have revelation knowledge working in us and that we are out of debt, healed and prosperous whatever we are believing for.

Isaiah 43:18-19 "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." KJV

Isaiah 43:18-19 " "Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands" MESSAGE

God is saying that He will be making a new way for us, in the midst of the desert season in our lives. We tend to only to see the impossible or the bad that is happening, but Jesus said that He is going to make a new thing for us and we will not be without direction.

If we were to see a newspaper at the end of the year, what would the headlines read? "Believers had the worst year of their lives or would it say that believers had the most successful year of their lives." We make new year's resolutions because we know that we need to be making a change; ie; diet, more consistent in our prayer lives, being more committed and faithful to the things of the Lord. The reason we make the resolution is we are aware that we need to be making a change. The success of the new year that we are getting ready to enter into, the success or failure of it, lies within us, it won't be a great year unless we chose to make it a great year, putting God first, being committed to Him. Deuteronomy chapter 30 tells us to chose this day who we are going to serve, chose life that you may have good days and be blessed, putting life over death.

There are some principles in order for us to have a good year but we will have to learn how to apply them. (these principles are listed below) The following scriptures are during the period while Paul was in prison, the conditions that he was having to undergo. (resurrection means to have your personal resurrection over the calamity that has come your way) Paul is saying that the situation he is in, is not what he wants, he is wanting to experience resurrection victory over it and that he not

lose the power of God or the joy of the Lord. Paul is wanting to have victory over this season of his life, not giving in to discouragement, self pity or despondency. He was wanting to reach forward as Isaiah had said, forgetting those things behind.

All of us have opportunity to remember the bad things of the past, those things whatever they were, which have tried to destroy us. If we are hanging on to the things of the past, we are like something that is teetered with a chain we are limited, feeling the hurt and pain of the past and we can't break out of the mold and receive the goodness of God. This is what Paul is telling us in these scriptures and that is what he is encouraging us as believers to do. Forgetting the things of the past, reaching out for the things ahead, pressing forward to the mark for the prize, continuing to pursue the things of God.

Whatever we might be believing God for, healing or finances, we must continue to keep pursuing regardless of what it might be that we have need of, continue to pursue God. However, we will never be healed in the area of emotions until we forgive.

Phil 3:10-14 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" KJV

"Every step that I take and every decision that I make should bring me closer to the finish line. However, if that decision that I am making doesn't bring me closer to the finish line then it is a wrong step." Stay focused!

Phil 3:10-14 "I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it. I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back" MESSAGE

Wherever we may be in life today, remember that God is not basing His love to us based on our performances. God's love is unconditional, the love that we are familiar with is conditional, "you do right to me and I will love you, if you don't do right to me, I will cut you off." God's love loves us regardless of our attitudes or proper behavior; it keeps reaching out to us. Paul was not looking at the circumstances, he was continuing in his pursuit of the Lord. How was Paul able to do what he was doing? Living in conditions that were so unfavorable, he had reached the place where he wasn't looking at the situation he was in but was focused only on Jesus.

What are the goals that we might be faced with now? This coming year that we are facing, we will be living in some challenging times, "Paul said they were in perilous times", and as believers we need to learn how to appropriate the "blood of Jesus" for our lives and for the protection of our families and live in the 91st Psalm. Isaiah chapter 60 tells us that "dark times were coming, but believers should rejoice for the glory of the Lord would rest upon them".

Phil 3:12-19 "I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. 15-16 So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has

for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it. 17-19 Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites"

MESSAGE

For believers who are wanting everything that God has for them, there must be total commitment, we cannot pick and chose what we want to give to Him, it must be **all**. It has be total commitment, we cannot continue to do what we want regardless if it is His will and plan for our lives, giving Him only a portion will not do. If we want all that God has for us, it must be total commitment. What blurs our vision spiritually? Adversity and negative circumstances causing us to be unable to see the blessings of God that are available for us, we cannot see Gods hand reaching out to us with His favor and answered prayer and abundance that He has for us.

The busyness of life causes all of us to change our plans if we allow it to. We make plans for spiritual activity, bible reading and prayer, with the best of intentions, but before we know what has happened, things begin to cause a change in these plans, these are not bad things, just everyday happenings, it will impede our spiritual progress if allowed to continue. In order for us to stay on track, we must be careful who we are following after, not allowing ourselves to be drawn away from our goal, easy street is not the answer, following after the flesh is a dead end street.

Phil 3:20-21 "But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

Paul begins to focus on eternal value or destiny, living in the light of eternity. We are only passing through on our way to heaven, don't get to rooted. Jesus was focused on heaven.

John 17: "I glorified you on earth By completing down to the last detail What you assigned me to do." MESSAGE

The principles mentioned earlier are:

- #1 - Staying focused, as taught in Philippians by Paul.
- #2 - Making an effort, pressing in - believers will have to be hard fighters spiritually, not giving in to difficulty, resisting the opposition successfully

Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." KJV

Genesis chapter 14 tells of Abraham with his men going after Lot and the captives that the 4 kings had taken, they didn't wait until morning, but took after them immediately, returning all that had been taken, they pressed in, making an effort. We must pursue God relentlessly, until the circumstances change.

Pro 24:10 "If you fall to pieces in a crisis, there wasn't much to you in the first place." KJV

#3 - Meditation in the Word, this is probably the most important of the principles listed. The Lord told Joshua how his life would go if he followed what God told him to do. Our futures are going to be based on what we are told by the Lord and most of all it will be our time spent meditating on the word of God. Without meditating on the word of God we won't be able to be doers of the word, we

must come in our pursuit of God to put His word first in our lives, what is the result of putting the word first? Prosperity and doing well in the affairs of life. Retain the words, get wisdom, understanding, attending to the words, keeping our hearts. This upcoming year it is important that we make the word a part of our lives, expecting the best, believe the best and wait to see the miracles that will happen.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." KJV

Psa 1:2-3 "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." KJV

Deut 6:23-24 "And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day." KJV

Pro 4:4-8 "He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. 5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. 6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. 7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. 8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her." KJV

Pro 4:20-23 "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." KJV

#4 - Being led by the Holy Spirit - the witness inside each of us, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, listening to what He is saying to us, He will keep us from harm if we will just listen. He will show us things to come.

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." KJV

We must choose those things which come from God, having eternal values and have the attitude of looking forward to eternity.

Heb 12:1-3 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." KJV

Word given by Pastor Margaret:

"For some of us this has been the hardest year that you have been through, fighting giants that you didn't know that you would have to face and that it has been a hard year for you, the Lord says it is important that you make it through, that the enemy has come to steal, to put your light out, to cause your emotions to get so wounded that you pull into a rest area and decide that it is too hard and that you will just stay there, the Holy Spirit said it is just not important for you to make it through, there are people on the other side of your mountain waiting for your victory, there are people on the other side whose lives depend on what you have learned, there are people who will never know victory, if you don't have victory in your life. the Holy Spirit says it is not just about you, there are many that are dependent on your victory, don't question, saying I am not important, God sees it different, He sees every victory that you have in your life as an investment for His kingdom, that when he invests in your victory, he invested in the victory of many other people."