

## ***Not Just for New Year's***

Usually as one year ends and another is about to begin, people reflect on their lives, especially considering the accomplishments and failures of the past year. Then they make resolutions for the coming year which, most of the time, are promptly forgotten and broken.

Such self-examination is necessary for the Christian, not only at that time of the year, but every day. He must take stock of himself in relation to his service and accomplishments for the Lord and the growth and maturity in his character. He must ask, "Am I doing all I can to insure my growth, stabilization and maturation as a child of God? Am I lending my abilities to the congregation to help it grow and prosper both physically and spiritually?"

If he finds himself lacking in these things, he needs to resolve to do better and to do more for the Lord in the future. And such a resolution must not be abandoned but he must persistently and devotedly retain it in his heart. The apostle Paul possessed this attitude. It is what allowed him to be successful as a disciple of the Lord. He said, "...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

As Christians, we must also be looking forward. We should not dwell upon or worry about past failures. Neither should we sit back and rest upon or gloat over past accomplishments. The child of God never reaches a point where he does not need to continue to grow. He never reaches a point in his service to Christ where he has done enough. Diligence in both these areas must always be given to make "our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

The following are some questions that all of us need to ask ourselves to see if we are what we should be in the sight of God or if we need to change our attitudes.

- Do I study the Bible diligently? Bible classes and sermons do not supply all the needs of the Christian do grow as he should. Personal, diligent study on his part is essential if he is to gain the knowledge of God's word necessary to function and mature as he should.
- Am I present at every service that I am able to attend? Attendance is usually a barometer of faithfulness. Each must ask, "Are worship assemblies important to me or do I let just anything or anyone keep me from them?" The assemblies are important enough for Christ to be there (Matt. 18:20), what could be more important to you?
- Can I be counted on to support the efforts of this church? Am I concerned about my brethren and my relationship with them? Each Christian needs to be actively involved in the work of the church in any way he can. No one is to be passive and depend upon others to do the work. If one possesses a proper love for the Lord and his brethren, he will want to working and doing his part. He will also seek to be aware of his brethren who need his help materially, emotionally and spiritually and do what he can to meet those needs.
- Am I really concerned about saving the lost? God's desire is that all should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). His desire is so strong that He sent His Son to earth to save all who believe and obey Him (John 3:16; Heb. 5:8-9). The Christian is to have that same desire. If he does, he will do what he can personally to take the gospel to the lost.

Do you see some things in which you may be lacking? If so, resolve to change and set things in order, then, "press on."

**- by Gene Taylor**

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## ***YOUR Year In Review***

As this year comes to a close, it would be a worthwhile activity for each of us to look back and do some analysis (2 Cor. 13:5). What we have in mind here is a retrospective look at our most important work - that which we have done for the Lord (Mark 8:36,37). So, Christian, how have you done?

- Are you are stronger Christian today than you were at the start of the year? (2 Pet. 3:18)
- Have you read and studied your Bible more than ever before? (2 Tim.2:15)
- Have you established a more consistent practice of prayer? (Phil 4:6)
- In regards to the worship assemblies and public Bible studies, has your attendance been

steady and faithful? (Heb. 10:25)

- God expects us to give liberally of our financial blessings. Have you done so? (2 Cor. 9:7)
- Have you developed a readiness to help the needy? (Gal. 6:10)
- Brotherly love is a defining sign of discipleship. (In. 13:35) Have you grown in this area? Have you done more than just shake hands and say "hello" at the services?
- Teaching the lost is a job that belongs to every Christian - including YOU (Mt. 28:19,20). Have you taught others about salvation through Jesus? Have you gotten involved with your personal work group? Have you invited others to attend the assemblies with you? Have you mailed bulletins, tracts, etc., to lost people you know? There are, obviously, lots of ways to teach. Have you been active in this important work?
- Have you visited the sick and shut-ins? (Matt. 25:34-36) Have you treated others like you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes?
- Have you tried to encourage those who are weak and struggling spiritually? (1 Thess. 5:14) Your call or visit might make a big difference in their life.

You see, there's actually a lot that you can and should be doing. Look back - see how you've done. Look forward - see what more you can do.

**- by Greg Gwin**