

The Challenge Of The New Year

Intro: Phi. 3:13-14 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.” Whether or not we can truthfully say that our best year is now closing, we ought to be able to say with confidence that a better one is in prospect. As we pause between the past and the future, let us consider some things that will help this new year to be successful.

I. THE ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE.

A. Phi. 3:13 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,”

1. From this we see that Paul was a specialist, he was not engaged in a dozen different enterprises, not even two.
2. All his energies, time and talents were spent to accomplish one thing.
 - a. As we look at his life we see such was true.
 - b. 1 Cor. 11:1 ¹ Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.”

B. Mark you, the life of the individual becomes mighty only when it is concentrated on one goal.

1. Down near the Panama Canal American engineers moved mountains of earth with a steady stream of concentrated water.
2. A dispersion of energies is fatal to any enterprise;
 - a. Mat. 6:22 ²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”
 - b. Mat. 6:33 ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
3. The great men of faith had but one idea and concentrated all thought and energy to carrying it out; Heb. 12:1-2 ¹ 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.”
4. The same must be true of us in succeeding this year.

II. THE ABILITY TO FORGET.

A. Phi. 3:13 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,”

1. Here is the secret of true progress and the ground for true happiness.
2. Memory is a precious heritage but so also is forgetfulness: as one can be trained so also can the other be trained.

B. There are some things we should not forget.

1. Debts of gratitude.
 - a. What we owe our fellowman.
 - (1) Gen. 40:1-23
 - (2) Gen. 41:9 ⁹ Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:”

- b. What we owe the Lord.
 - (1) Look back over the past year: what stands out? Often one week of illness is fresher than fifty-one weeks of excellent health.
 - (2) Psa. 116:12 ^{“12} What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?”
 - c. The cleansing of our sins.
 - (1) 2 Pet. 1:9 ^{“9} But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”
 - (2) Rom. 5:8 ^{“8} But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - 2. The good we hear; Phi. 4:8 ^{“8} Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”
- C. But, there are other things we ought to forget.**
- 1. Our injuries.
 - 2. Sins that have been forgiven.
 - 3. Our failures.
 - a. We become discouraged, despondent and a greater failure.
 - b. Forget those things we cannot change.
 - 4. Our attainments.
 - a. We should be grateful and use them as stepping stones.
 - b. However, we should never become chained by them become complacent.

III. THE ABILITY TO PERSIST.

- A. Phi. 3:13-14** ^{“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.”
- B. Success, materially, comes only to the persistent: so also in spiritual matters.**
- C. 1 Cor. 15:58** ^{“58} Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
- D. We must “keep on keeping on.”**

Conclusion: Never, never, never, never, never, never give up. Press on to the goal before us. The victory will be those those who keep on: 2 Tim. 4:6-8 ^{“6} For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”