

FORWARD

The Key Word for the New Year is the word FORWARD

This next year we are going to talk about with it takes to Move Life Forward.

Luke 9:61,62 ESV Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." **62** Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

The plow represents:

A new season

A new planting

A new attitude

Moving Life Forward in these four areas:

- 1) Our Faith
- 2) Our Flesh
- 3) Our Family
- 4) Our Finances

THE MESSAGE BIBLE: Luke 9:61,62 MSG Then another said, "I'm ready to follow you, Master, but first excuse me while I get things straightened out at home." Jesus said, "No procrastination. No backward looks. You can't put God's kingdom off till tomorrow. Seize the day."

1) Seize the Day – Begin a Fast

- a) Fasting: Eating sparingly or abstaining from food altogether, either from necessity or desire.
 - i) In medical terms, fasting is the detoxification of the body through the restriction of food.
 - ii) Spiritual fasting entails setting aside activities as well as reducing the intake of food and replacing these activities with the exercise of prayer and intensely focusing on spiritual concerns.
- b) Jesus instructed us to fast: Mt 6:16 ESV "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
 - i) Don't fast to be noticed by men
 - ii) John Piper, in A Hunger for God, comments, "if the reward you aim at in fasting is the admiration of others, that is what you will get, and that will be all you get. In other words, the danger of hypocrisy is that it is so successful. It aims at the praise of men, and it succeeds. But that's all." Our reward should be the knowledge of God, not the praise of men.
- c) 3 Reasons to Fast
 - i) Fasting is Feasting on God.

We spend a lot of time fasting from God and feasting on food and life's other pleasures.

Fasting is an intentional way of saying "You mean more to me Father, than any of these things"

Fasting is feasting, and if you fast for no other reason, this one is good enough.

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

ii) Fasting makes Doing His Will our Highest Priority.

John 4:32-34 "... I have food to eat that you do not know about." **33** So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" **34** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

iii) Fasting Breaks the Yoke of Sin.

Isa. 58:6 ESV Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

(1) A sin yoke keeps you bound.

(2) A sin yoke keeps you plowing in the wrong field.

(3) A sin yoke wears you out.

Mt 11:28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING:

- Settle on the type of fast you will do before you get started.
- Examples:
 - Total food fast
 - Daniel fast, you give up choice foods (sweets, breads, etc...)
 - Media fast – detox yourself
- Prayer – fasting is prayer intensified.
- Word – commit to getting the word in you.

2) No Backward Looks – Push Forward

Illus. – My track coach in high school was very wise man. He had many words of advice both on and off the track, but when it came to running races and relays, there was one above all others. He used to say: "Run as fast as you can, and whatever you do, don't look back."

The reason is three fold:

First, looking back during a race BREAKS YOUR CONCENTRATION.

Second, it BREAKS YOUR FLOW.

Third, it SLOWS YOU DOWN.

Memories can become your enemies.

Consider this: your brain is capable of recording 800 memories per second for 75 years without ever getting tired."

In fact, specialist tell us that our brain retains everything it takes in. You never really forget anything; you just don't recall it. Everything is on permanent file in your brain."

Good memories we don't mind so much.

But what are you and I to do with all of our bad memories? How do we handle them?

3) Stop Procrastinating - Set Some Goals.

a) Goals are biblical. Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

b) Moving Forward through Goals.

i) Goals are decisions to action.

A goal is more than a dream; it is a dream being acted upon. It is more than an "Oh, I wish I could." A goal is a clear statement of "This is what I am going to do."

ii) Goals get us involved in the present.

The steps to accomplishment must be taken today.

iii) Goals are exciting because they keep you active.

Work is a sure way to success and happiness.

c) 2 Important things for setting goals

i) Make your goals specific.

ii) Make your goals reachable.