

THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW YEAR

Text: Phil. 3:13-14

INTRO: As we pass from the 1990's to the 2000's and face the challenges of a new year, three things that helped Paul be a successful servant of God will also help us to be successful and productive in the years ahead.

I. THE ABILITY TO FORGET.

A. Of course we do not mean to totally forget & annihilate all memory of the past.

1. There are gains to be remembered so that we may build upon them.

2. There are mistakes we must remember lest we repeat them.

B. But if we are to be successful in the year 2000, we must basically leave the previous years behind us. We must not try to live in the past, Lk 9:62. (plow looking back)

1. Let us thank God for His help in time past--then move on to serve Him in the NOW and in the remainder of our time.

2. Be sure our past sins are forgiven--then leave them in the past where they belong, & serve God NOW and in the remainder of our time.

II. THE POWER TO CONCENTRATE. "One thing I do."

A. Concentration involves discrimination. I can spread myself too thin. I can do a few things effectively--or I can dabble in 40 different things & probably not do any of them very well.

B. "A dabbler at 40 things will gain quicker recognition than a doer of one thing--but the dabbler will be forgotten when the doer has been remembered 40 years"

John Snape

C. What talents & abilities do I have that can be used effectively in God's service? Use them!

- III. THE ABILITY TO PERSIST. "I press on." I keep on.
- A. We must finish the course, keep the faith. 2 Tim 4:7
 - B. Must be faithful until death, Rev. 2:10.
 - C. If we cease to serve faithfully, we will fail in three areas:
 - 1. We will fail in the sight of our peers.
 - 2. We will be condemned by our own conscience,
1 John 3:20
 - 3. We will face the judgment of Almighty God in the world to come.

READ EZEKIEL 18:24

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 31, 1995
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, January 2, 2000