Keys To A Prosperous New Year

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday January 14th, 2024

Text: Philippians 3:12-14 Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 13:5

### Intro

1. For the Christian, another year is another opportunity to live for God and get that much closer to eternity.
   1. We don’t know if we will be given the whole year so we live daily for Him!
   2. *Matthew 24:36:* “But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”
   3. *Matthew 25:13:* “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (NKJV)
2. Resolutions seem to be made in jest as a thing to do this time of year, but close examination of our spiritual conditions in reflection is relevant.
   1. *II Corinthians 13:5:* “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?”
   2. Did we have the right relationships with God, with each other, and with the world around us?
   3. Did we let our light shine (be good examples) in the past year? (Matthew 5:16, 48)
3. There are four keys to have a spiritually prosperous new year if we will but use them in 2024!

#### Key 1: Serve God & Others

* 1. Determine now to serve God 1st and foremost, not only in the year to come, but always!
     1. Joshua 24:14-15: Joshua said, “Fear the lord, serve Him in sincerity and truth.”
     2. Hebrews 12:28: “Offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”
     3. Matthew 12:28-30: Jesus answered a scribe saying, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”
  2. Not only to serve God, but also to strive to serve others
     1. Galatians 5:13: “Through love serve one another.”
     2. Galatians 6:1-2: “Bear one another’s burdens.”
     3. Galatians 6:10: We are to do good to all people, but especially believers.
  3. To have the right relationship to God we must have the right relationship with each other!
     1. I John 4:20-21: One who serves God must love his brother (brethren).
  4. Christ left for us the example of service, and we must serve God and each other!

#### Key 2: Control Our Thoughts

* 1. We are what we think.
     1. *Proverbs 23:7:* “For as he thinks within himself, so he is.”
     2. Matthew 7:21-23: The import of keeping our thoughts in check is that from our thoughts come actions, and we must be careful of what we think upon!
        1. Matthew 5:27-28: Jesus said to think about committing adultery is the same as doing it!
     3. Philippians 4:8: We are to meditate on those things that are praiseworthy!
  2. We must submit every thought to the obedience of Christ.
     1. This is difficult – have to keep our thoughts in check!
     2. Think about what that means when we read Christ was sinless *(I Peter 2:22):* He was master over His thoughts as well!
     3. II Corinthians 10:5: We must bring even our thoughts into submission to Christ!
  3. We must dwell on things of virtue and fill our minds with things pleasing to God!

#### Key 3: Avoid Sin & Guilt

* 1. A life lived free from sin is truly good, because also free from guilt!
     1. I Peter 3:10-12: To love life and see good days is to “refrain his tongue from evil.”
     2. Psalm 51:3-4: David acknowledged his sin, and recognized who it was he trespassed against when he sinned. His guilt: “My sin is ever before me.”
     3. Philippians 3:12-14: “Forgetting what lies behind.” He says in 3:17: “join in following my example.”
        1. **What things did Paul have to forget?**
        2. Acts 26:9-11: He persecuted the church.
        3. **Did he feel regret or guilt?**
        4. I Corinthians 15:8-9: He considered himself the least of all apostles because of his actions and the chief (foremost) of sinners (I Timothy 1:15).
  2. Refuse temptation to sin
     1. James 1:14-15: We sin when we want to!
     2. I Corinthians 10:13: We are not tempted beyond what we can handle, escape is provided for us, and so we are without excuse when we fail.
  3. To avoid guilt is to avoid sin, which is to not give in to temptation!

#### Key 4: Keep Proper Life Perspectives

* 1. Get rid of all bitterness in our life – Hebrews 12:14-15: Can cause us to not see the Lord!
  2. Learn to be content with the things we have – Philippians 4:11: We can learn to be content!
  3. Realize that we don’t have all the answers to every question – Proverbs 3:5-6: Study!
  4. Keep focused on Heaven – Philippians 3:20: “Eagerly wait”
     1. Paul was completely focused on the glory of Heaven; and he encouraged Timothy to stay faithful as his own life was nearing its end – II Timothy 4:7-8
  5. Keeping life in the right perspective will help us to keep the faith and focus on Heaven!

## Conclusion

1. When we reflect on the last year, we can ask ourselves if we have done these things, and if we haven’t, let us “forget what lies behind” & reach “forward to what lies ahead” (Philippians 3:13).
2. We need to make these four keys a part of our life to be spiritually prosperous for God!
   1. Key 1: Serve God and others
   2. Key 2: Control our thoughts
   3. Key 3: Avoid sin & guilt
   4. Key 4: Keep proper life perspectives
3. Turn your hearts to serve God in this New Year and take hold of eternal life that is only found in Jesus!
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent of your sins and be baptized!
5. If a Christian in error, remember from what you escaped, repent and be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!