

Happy New Year!

Introduction:

1. This is the first Sunday in the year 2015. Already, the new year is four days old.
2. The passing of an old year and the beginning of a new year is always a time to pause, to reflect upon the year which has just passed, and to make plans for the future.
3. At the beginning of a new year People can't help but to be reminded of certain important facts:
 - a. They are one year closer to death than they were at the beginning of the previous year. Hebrews 9:27.
 - b. They are one year closer to the time when they will stand before the Lord to be judged, 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - c. They are one year closer to entering their eternal destiny than they were at the beginning of the year which has just passed, Matt. 25:46. Cf. Psalm 90:9,12.
4. Mindful of these facts, sober-minded people are more prone to focus upon the words of the apostle Paul, as recorded in Philippians 1:13-14 (quote).
 - a. And as we think about obtaining "*the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,*" we tend to make resolutions – especially at the beginning of a new year.
 - b. This is a time to realign our priorities and give greater attention to things that really matter.
 - c. And we should resolve to help each other keep the noble resolutions they have made.
 - (1) Illus. The wife whose resolution was to make sure her husband kept his resolution.
5. This lesson is in the form of an Acrostic, in which each letter of "Happy New Year" is used to introduce separate resolutions.

Discussion:

I. "Happy."

- A. **H** – onor your commitment to the Lord.
 1. God required the children of Israel to keep their vows. Eccl. 5:4-5.
 2. Grooms and brides, in wedding ceremonies make wedding vows. Cf. Matt. 19:6.
 - a. The stability of modern society has greatly deteriorated because so many husbands and wives have not kept their wedding vows.
 3. Properly understood, the "*good confession*" is a vow of commitment to the one whose name is confessed. Rom. 10:10; Matt. 10:32; I Tim. 6:12. Confess (verb) is from *homologeō*, and "conveys the thought of confessing allegiance to Christ as one's Master and Lord..." Vine.
- B. **A** – dvantage.
 1. Take advantage of opportunities to do good and to assist others as needed, Gal. 6:10
 2. Take advantage of opportunities to share the word of God with others, I Peter 3:15.
 3. Take advantage of opportunities to meet with the saints and to worship God, Acts 2:42.
 4. Take advantage of opportunities to increase your knowledge of the sacred scriptures. Ps. 119:97, 105, 130.
 - a. Cf. the eunuch from Ethiopia did this. Acts 8:27-28
- C. **P** – ray!
 1. Pray earnestly, pray often, pray daily! Thess. 5:17-18.
 2. Pray for wisdom, James 1:5.
 3. Pray for boldness, Eph. 6:19.
 4. Pray for our nation's leaders, I Tim. 2:1-2.
 5. Pray for the sick, James 5:15.
 6. Pray for forgiveness, Acts 8:22.
 7. Pray for doors for evangelism to opened, Col. 4:2-3.
- D. **P** – ersevere!
 1. Be steadfast! I Cor. 15:58.
 2. History is filled with examples of those who did not persevere.
 - a. Demas, "*having loved*" the world, forsook Paul, 2 Timothy 4:10.
 - b. The saints at Ephesus left their "*first love,*" Rev. 2:4.
 - c. The Israelites became discouraged, and wanted to return to Egypt! Deut 1:28; Num. 14:4.
- E. **Y** – ield!
 1. Yield not to temptation, Romans 6:12-13.
 2. Yield:

- a. *"Yourselves unto God,"* Rom. 6:13.
- b. The members of your body *"as instruments of righteousness unto God,"* Rom. 6:13.

II. "New."

- A. **N** – ewness of life.
 1. *"Walk in newness of life,"* Romans 6:4.
 2. *"Walk" (peripateo),* "signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life...," Vine.
 3. The Christian is to *"walk:"*
 - a. *"In newness of life,"* Rom. 6:4.
 - b. *"after the Spirit,"* Rom. 8:4.
 - c. *"Honesty,"* Rom. 13:13.
 - d. *"By faith,"* 2 Cor. 5:17
 - e. *"In wisdom,"* Col. 4:5.
 - f. *"In love,"* Eph. 5:2.
- B. **E** – amine.
 1. Examine Yourselves, 2 Cor. 13:5.
 2. The saints at Corinth had been busy examining Paul, 2 Cor. 10:10; 13:3.
 3. Each of us should examine ourselves – our thoughts, our habits, our speech, our attitude, our faithfulness to God, etc.
- C. **W** – ork!
 1. *"Work out your own salvation,"* Phil. 2:12.
 2. Work for the Lord, I Cor. 15:58.
 3. Work for a living, Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10.
 4. Be involved in good works, Matt. 5:16; Titus 2:7,14.

III. "Year."

- A. **Y** – esterday!
 1. It is past; look to the future! Phil. 3:13-14.
 2. If we continually relive the mistakes of the past, we get depressed and discouraged.
 3. If we continually relive the successes of the past, we may easily lose our humility, and conclude that we have done enough for the lord.
- B. **E** – ncourage.
 1. Encourage others. Barnabas was an encourager! Acts 4:36; 9:26-27; 11:22-23.
 2. Paul was an encourager of his brethren, I Thess. 2:10-12.
 3. We need to encourage others in their efforts to be faithful to the Lord, Heb. 10:23-24.
- C. **A** – ssemble!
 1. Assemble with your brethren in Bible study and worship, Hebrews. 10:25; Acts 2:42.
 2. When God is worshipped, when saints are admonished to live for God, when the Bible is studied, etc., every faithful Christian should long to be present!
- D. **R** – esolve!
 1. Resolve to read the entire Bible this year! I Tim. 4:13; Eph. 3:3-4.
 2. Resolve to live for God! I Cor. 15:58.
 3. Resolve to go to heaven! Phil. 3:14.

Conclusion:

1. The old year has passed; it is a part of history; it is gone forever; it cannot return.
2. The new year has begun! Each of us should make the resolutions set forth in the acrostic, "Happy New Year," and then press forward with a determined effort to keep every one of them to the extent of our ability.
 - a. If you are a Christian and if you keep these resolutions, when you begin to pass from earth's stage, you will be able to say as did the apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 4:6-8.
 - b. If you are not a Christian, you should resolve right now to become a Christian!