

We Have Not Passed
This Way Before

“The start of a new year is a time when many Americans are inclined to think about ways to make improvements for the future. Creating a family emergency plan is a great place to start. Families can create a plan that will allow them to know how best to communicate with one another in the event of an emergency” – Tom Ridge

1 Pt.5:8

- Josh.3:...4, you have not passed this way before
 - Life is a journey; each year brings new challenges and opportunities
- Mt.6:34
 - Must be strong to face uncertain future
 - Those who don't keep going, fall
 - A new year is ripe with opportunities...

Three types of people who need this lesson

- Some need to *begin*
- Some need to *continue*
- Some need to *improve*
 - NT offers many admonitions to this group
 - The focus on their needs naturally encourages the other two groups

I. Variety of Words Stress
Need to Keep Getting Better

Increase

- Lk.17:....5, faith . . .
 - Mt.4:1-11, *it is written*
 - Resolve to read / study Bible each day
 - Who learned more Egyptian wisdom than Moses, Ac.7:22
 - Who was stronger than Samson, Jg.16:19
 - Who gave better advice than Ahithophel, 2 Sm.16:23; 17:5-14
 - Who was wiser than Solomon, 1 K.11:1-25
- Ro.10:17, cure for a weak faith

Strive

- Acts 24:16
- Resolve to be more diligent in your duty to God and man
- Never say you don't care
- Ja.4:17, the cure for a wounded conscience

Grow

- Ep.4:15
- Increase, become greater
- Resolve to imitate Christ in every situation
 - 1 Pt.2:2, *by word*. How is your appetite?
 - 2 Pt.3:18, *in grace, knowledge*
 - Repeats 1:2: *grace* [peace] and *knowledge*
 - Knowledge of Christ is ¹safeguard against heresy and ²means of growth in grace

Progress

- Phil.1:25
- Advancement. Resolve: be more zealous this year than last
- Rv.2:19, Thyatira... *works...works*

Press on (pursue)

Ph.3:12

- Fig.: of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal
- Resolve to think about heaven every day

Fruitful

- Col.1:10
- Resolve to share the gospel with someone each week
 - Mt.21:...19, fig tree
 - 2 Pt.1:8, cure for unfruitfulness
 - 2 Pt.1:5-9, the way to bear much fruit
- Col.4:3-6
- Col.4:16

More and more

- 1 Th.4:1
- Resolve to improve your overall attitude, growing in joy and love
- E.g.: 1 Pt.3 –
 - 1-7: resolve to treat family members with a rule of gold
 - 8-12: love brothers / sisters [Christians]
 - ...control tongue?
 - ...help the sick?

Go on

- Hb.6:1
 - To press on. Resolve to serve God no matter what...
- Rv.3:15-17 [when satisfaction with past progress fills our soul, we are in danger]
- Satisfaction with past progress stifles growth

I. Variety of Words Stress
Need to Keep Getting Better

II. Things To Remember
About Resolutions

1. Improvement begins in the mind; resolve to do whatever it takes to succeed
- Mt.22:37, love God with all the powers that you have: emotions, intellect, will
 - Not different parts of man...but a way of viewing the whole man in connection with God
- Ro.12:2, renewing the mind...
 - Renewing: new + again; renovation; a complete change for the better
- Ep.4:23, be renewed in the spirit of your mind [change from old man to new]

2. Resolutions work only when we evaluate ourselves accurately

- Lk.10:27, You shall love the LORD **your** God with all **your** heart, with all **your** soul, with all **your** strength, and with all **your** mind, and **your** neighbor as **yourself**.
- “I am resolved...”

3. Honestly / Specifically admit your faults...

1. Neglect to pray regularly?
2. Do not control tongue?
3. Struggle with lustful thoughts?
4. Hypersensitive to correction or criticism?
5. Problem with pride?
6. Unconcern for needy saints?

4. Make a list of things you need to do;
prioritize them; then 'just do it'

1. Ec.9:10, *do it with all your might*
2. Ep.5:16, *redeeming the time...*
3. Col.4:3, *pray for open door...*