

WHAT I WISH TO EMBRACE IN 2010

Phil 3:12-13
January 3, 2010

INTRODUCTION: Last week we looked at what we wish to leave behind in 2009. I am reminded of **Heb 12:1**

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”

Dr. Bob Pierce, founder of Samaritan’s Purse lived by a principal called “God Room”. That’s the phrase he coined that simply means believing God to meet a need that is bigger than your human abilities to meet. Here is how it works as explained by Franklin Graham who succeeded Bob Piece who died in 1979.

You see a need you believe God wants you to meet, but no matter what you do, you just can’t bring it about. After you have exhausted all your human effort, there’s still a gap. That’s when you pray and leave room for God to work. You can trust Him to close the gap and watch a miracle unfold by His own provision.

Franklin said, Bob told me, “faith isn’t required as long as you set your goal only as high as the most intelligent and expert human efforts can reach.” You don’t exercise faith until you have committed more than it’s possible to give. Nothing is a miracle until it reaches the place where the utmost that human effort can do still isn’t enough. God has to fill that gap – that room- between what’s possible and what He wants done that’s impossible. That’s “God Room.”

Those who think they had reached spiritual maturity will not see the need to pursue a better condition. Paul felt he had not reached a state of non-development. His ultimate goal still lay ahead of him.

Paul, not unlike Samuel, knew the Lord had “helped” him “thus far” and he knew He would never forsake him.

1 Samuel 7:12, “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the LORD has helped us.’”

Charles Spurgeon, *“The words ‘thus far’ appear to be a hand pointing to the past. Through poverty and wealth, through sickness and health, at home and abroad, on land and at sea, in honor and dishonor, in difficulty and joy, in trials and triumphs, and in prayer and temptations, thus far has the Lord helped us.”*

But, these words also point forward, for when someone marks a certain place, it means he is not yet at the end and there is still some distance to travel.

*“The Lord who “thus far” has helped you
Will help you all your journey through.”*

John Newton

Note Paul’s prayer for the Colossians:

Colossians 1:9-11, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy”

Oswald Chambers:

“If there is one standard in the New Testament revealed by the light of God and you do not come up to it and do not feel inclined to come up to it, that is the beginning of backsliding, because it means your conscience does not answer to the truth. You can never be the same after the unveiling of a truth. That moment marks you for going on as a more true disciple of Jesus Christ or for going back as a deserter.”

“That is the Great Divide in the life; from that point we either go forward or towards a more and more useless type of Christian life, or we become more and more ablaze for the glory of God – My Utmost for His Highest.”

“There are whole tracts of our lives which have not yet been brought into subjection, and it can only be done by this continuous conversion. Slowly but surely we can claim the whole territory for the Spirit of God.”

In the late 80’s I wrote a sermon and talked about what it takes to embrace a future greater than your past.

1. Dissatisfaction with performance
2. Dedication in progress
3. Not distracted by the past
4. Determined to reach my potential

I. DEVOTIONAL PARTNERS. 13

v.13 “brethren” – intimate and affectionate term. He had endeared himself to his people.
Galatians 4:19, “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you”

Paul, as a leader, desired God’s best for his family of faith.

Proverbs 20:7, “The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.”

III. Katie Carswell – Youth Leadership

Paul had a holy passionate devotion to Christ and hoped to not only follow and obey Christ fully, but was in hopes of bringing others along with him.

A locomotive moves faster by itself, but it is not doing what it was designed for, bringing others behind.

II. DILIGENT PURSUIT. 12,13

v.12 “I press on” – it is one thing for Paul to perceive his need, it is another thing altogether to pursue it. To **“press on”** speaks of an aggressive energetic endeavor.

“You and I love in an age when only a rare minority of individuals desire to spend their lives in pursuit of objectives which are bigger than they are. In our age, for most people, when they die, it will be as though they never lived.”

Rusty Rustenback

Thayer says, **“press on”** is both a hunting and an athletic term. Stalking the prey with unrelentlessness or to run as to gain a victory; out to win.

“You will never find out what you can do until you do all you can to find out.”

John Maxwell

v.13 “reaching forward” - to stretch, stretching a muscle to its limit in order to reach the finish line.

This word spells **DISCIPLINE**

Paul knew that no one ever achieved anything significant without becoming better as an individual. Too many have their lives on cruise.

What difficult task stands between you and your calling? Are you putting it off? The longer you wait the more you delay making your most significant contribution for His kingdom.

“I am willing to put myself through anything; temporary pain or discomfort means nothing to me as long as I can see that the experience will take me to a new level. I am interested in

the unknown, and the only push to the unknown is through breaking barriers, an often painful process.”

Diana Nyod

III. DIVINE PURPOSE. 13

“to those things which are ahead” – an intriguing statement

Paul’s goal in life was consistent with Christ’s goal in saving him. That purpose for which God saved us is also the purpose for which we live.

Paul did not compare himself with others. The mature believer honestly evaluates himself and strives to do God’s will.

I went on Twitter and asked this question: *What do you wish to embrace in 2010?*

Joshua 21:45, “Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”

Johnny Hunt – “*I wish to embrace my deepest devotion ever in being ablazed for the glory of God. To love Jesus supremely and intimately. He’s worthy!*”

Jamie Beals – “*Embrace God moving us from Louisiana to Phoenix. I’ve fought Him long enough, it’s time to get happy here.*”

Jeremy Law – “*Become addicted to seeing lost souls saved and I mean addicted. And see more orphans in Cherokee County become sons and daughters.*”

R.D. McClenagan – “*The surpassing sufficiency of Christ in all things.*”

Jim Perdue – “*To lead my church towards a GCR and change the world from Millington, Tn.*”

Brad Smith – *“To lead more people to Jesus than in any previous year.”*

Deborah Powers – *“Embrace the fullness of life promised to all who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”*

Steve Ross – *“More time in prayer and in His word. God’s direction in my life.”*

Jim Gore – *“Embrace simple daily service, anywhere, any place, anytime, in any way, for anyone, by any means available.”*

Nathan Finn - *“Embrace a more fervent and forward prayer life; praying for others.”*

Aaron Skinner – *“Embrace an unflinching commitment to the tithe and beyond.”*

J.M. Schrimshire – *“To glorify Christ in all areas of my life and carry my cross daily.”*

Rob Freshour – *“At least 55 new believers in 2010.”*

Terry Willis – *“Perfect obedience”*

Jim Harger – *“The calling God has placed on me. No excuses - just do it!”*

Kenny Brown – *“Making Christ ultimate in my finances”*

Scott Luna – *“Consistency in my walk”*

Mark Lee – *“God’s word in a James 1:22 kind of way!”*

Allen Taylor – *“Embrace Matt 6:33, Seek God’s kingdom first (not 2nd/3rd). That means to knock myself off the top. Easier said than done.”*

Larry Reesor – *“Empower as many pastors/churches as possible to reach more people for Jesus.”*

Trevor Barton – *“Greater personal awareness of opportunities to advance the gospel and obedience to the great commandment.”*

Jim Law – *“More fervent prayer life.”*

Michael Kastner – *“More bold with friends about Jesus. Give more to the Kingdom.”*

Albert (L.A.) – *“Embrace Christ’s love as my own, for me and for others. To let go of all that bounds me for Christ. Loosen chains.”*

Jeremy Law – *“Embrace the fact that every single penny I have (checking, savings, retirement) is His to do whatever He wants to do with it through me.”*

Scott White – *“1. Personal Growth Spiritually, 2. Prayer. 3, Soul-winning, 4. Worship, love, serve, invite.”*

David Shinault – *“To have more passion for Christ which will give me more compassion for others.”*

Shelley Hendrix – *“I want to embrace being fully present in each moment, trusting God that I am where He wants me and giving Him freedom to live through me.”*

Eddie Hobbs – *“Embrace the attitude of never giving in, never giving out, and never giving up to Satan.”*

Alvin Reed – *“I want to help students value wisdom as much as passion. I also want to stay home more and yet via technology influence more.”*

Dallas White – *“Removing **balance** from my spiritual life.” God doesn’t want to be part, He wants to be all.”*

Tony Nolan – *“No new verse for change in direction for 2010. It is still 1 Cor. 15:58. Keep it simple and keep at it.”*

Michael Clark – *“Embrace the path God has carved out for me.”*

Justin Owens – *“Embrace boldness to share the Gospel even if it offends people.”*

Tony Kansler - *“Jesus/Oh, I just want to draw close to Him and embrace Him.”*

Scott Gordon – *“It is my deep desire to see that the investments I make are not just in my 401K.”*

John Downey– *“Embrace orthopraxy, practicing what I believe, because that is how I truly worship God.”*

John Wellman – *“Embrace God’s perfect will for my life without shame, fear, or hesitation. To know He is in control and be O.K. with that.”*

Steven Ruff – *“As a pastor, I want my congregation to embrace forgiveness and reconciliation, without it fellowship is broken with God Himself.”*

Kevin Butler – *“Embrace the obligation of self-examination over the desire of human observation.”*

Nathan Sawyer - *“Embrace a closer walk with the Lord. Step out and trust Him in things I have been holding back on.”*

Don Matthews – *“To make a lasting spiritual impact on my grandchildren. One that they will never forget long after I am gone.”*

Donald Andrews – *“Embrace less of me and more of Him, less of my will and more of His. I wish to embrace greater service.”*

Josh Hamrick – *“Embrace ‘break my plans’ attitude and hopefully have courage to follow through. Embrace a hurting world. Love. Let go.”*

Chip Moody – *“Selfless living and generous giving”*

Bradley Sadler - *“Moral purity”*