

It's that time of the year when we people begin to ask each other, "What's your New Year's resolution?". The problem with resolutions is that they are very hard to keep.

Statistics tell us that less than 25% of people stay committed to their resolutions after just 30 days, and only 8% of people actually accomplish a New Year's resolution.

Rather than making resolutions that you can't keep, I want you to pray and let God show you what He is doing in the world and in your life, and then set some spiritual goals instead.

Allow Him to show you where he wants to take you in 2021, and then set spiritual goals; long and short-range goals, which will help you get to the place where God wants you to be.

Spiritual Goals Vs Resolutions

- Goals Draw Out Your Sense of Purpose
- Goals Give You the "Go"
- Goals Show You What to Do
- Goals Get Your Focus on Improvement, Not Activity
- Goals Help You Measure Your Progress

Understanding Our Times

As we prepare for 2021, with our new theme of Enabled Boldness, we can see that the scriptures are full of the stories of men and women who boldly did what God told them to do.

Some of the boldest men in the Bible were David's Mighty Men who are listed in **1 Chronicles 12**.

These mighty men of war came to support David as he fled from King Saul. As they and their numbers are listed, their battle specialties and skills are also listed. And in verse 32 the sons of Issachar are noted as being "men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do."

**1 Chronicles 12:32 from Issachar,
men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do...**

Understanding the times and knowledge of what direction to take was considered a weapon of war!

**Proper discernment of what God is doing will equal victory.
A lack of discernment will equal destruction.**

I want to encourage you to seek God and understand what He is doing in our times. Then, in light of what God is doing, ask God for direction in five areas of your life.

1. God what are you doing in me personally and what should I do?
2. God what are you doing in my family and what should I do?
3. God what are you doing in my church and what should I do?
4. God what are you doing in my community and what should I do?
5. God what are you doing in the world and what should I do?

Recognizing God's Visitation

The last thing you and I want to do is to miss, or not recognize, what God is doing in our times and lives. In **Luke 19:41-44** Jesus wept over Jerusalem's impending doom and down fall. Why the fall? "...because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Luke 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, **42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

Jesus was among them and they were unaware and missed it. Don't miss what God is doing. Don't let windows of opportunity, or open doors, shut on you before you recognize that they are open.

Hindrances to Understanding What God is Doing in Our Time and Knowing What to Do

1. Worship of The Past

Worship of the past will keep us from seeing and getting to where God wants us to be. **2 Kings 18:1-8** tells us of a new young King Hezekiah who turns Judah back to godliness. In order to do that, one of the things he had to do was destroy a bronze serpent named Nehushtan that the people were worshipping.

This is the same bronze serpent that God used with Moses to heal the people after their repentance from rebellion **Numbers 21:8-9** **The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.**

God used the bronze serpent in the past for a specific purpose, but someone must have thrown it in their bag and took it with them. The people began to worship that past experience to the point where the bronze serpent became an idol and they worshiped it!

Today, people still tend to look to past experiences, or methods, rather than taking the time to understand what God is doing in our time and to seeking God on what to do.

We tend to worship past religious experiences, rather than worshiping the giver of the experience.

2. Living in The Past

Philippians 3:12-14

- 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**
- 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,**
- 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

Many people have trouble moving on with God because they are **Crippled by the Mistakes of The**

Past.

Your Past Mistakes

“You don’t know my past; I could never serve God now. Not after what I have done.”

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The Past Mistakes of Others

- *“I just can’t go to church anymore. Not after I’ve seen what so called “Christians” have done.”*
- *“I just can’t get my husband to get involved any more, not after what that preacher did to him.”*
- *“I’m tired of the church thing. I just can’t trust people or God anymore.”*

Why should you disobey God because of the sins or offenses of others?

When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, He isn’t going to ask you about what anyone else did or didn’t do. You are going to have to give an account for your own life, not the lives of others.

Enough is enough! Forgive them and move on!

“While you are dreaming of the future or regretting the past, the present, which is all you have, slips from you and is gone.” -Hilaire Belloc

If you are trapped in the past, you can never see the future.

- Remember past victories and rejoice in them, but don’t live for the past spiritual experiences.
- Remember the past defeats and learn from them, but be forgiven and move on.
There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Knowing What to Do

In Lamentations 1:9, we are told that one of the reasons the ancient great city of Jerusalem fell was because of her sins and that **“...she did not consider her future.”** (or destiny)...” **Lamentations 1:9**

Ignorance concerning our future destiny keeps us from making urgent and needed changes now.

1 Chronicles 12:32 “...from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do...”

Your understanding of what God wants you to do will determine your goals.

Your goals map out your actions.

Your actions create results.

And the results will allow you to fulfill your God given purpose.