

Beginning the New Year

Introduction

1. **Today, a new year begins!**
 - A. **It will be good for us to think about how we can better live for the Lord in 2023.**
 - B. **In order to do this, we must get in God's picture of practicing righteousness, getting involved in the Lord's work, and to stay focused on His ordinances each day of our lives.**
2. **The new year will bring new experiences (friends, opportunities)**
3. **We can plan, hope, and pray, but still, how the events of the year unfold are uncertain.**

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. **For what is your life?** It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

- 4 **At the end of 2023, let it not be said that we did not earnestly strive to do more in the Lord's work than we did this past year.**

What Can I Do at this Point in Time?

1. We can lay aside things which have hindered us this past year.

Hebrews 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,

1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking

2. Let us put away all apathy and lukewarmness from our lives and concentrate on doing the Lord's work!

Revelation 3:15-16

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

3. We should lay aside ALL worldliness.

James 4:4

1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world.

4. We must lay aside our sorrows, disappointments, or failures, no matter how far back these have occurred.

- Forget the past (don't linger on it) and reach forward!
- A. Sometimes we may even be disappointed in a brother and then take it out on the Lord.

James 1:2-4, 12

What Positive Action Can We Begin Now?

1. We can improve ourselves by longing for God's truths!

Romans 10:17

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

1 Peter 2:2-3 as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, **give attention** to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

2. We may need to change our attitude on attendance of the services.

A. Even though we assemble together, sometimes our hearts and proper attitude is not where it should be.

Hebrews 10:24-26

1) We must remember that our presence or absence at any particular assembly, is not as important as WHY we are present or absent. (Bible Classes)

a) When present we should have a sincere desire to please God by worship;

- Association with others of like faith;
- Improve our self;
- Be an example to others

b) When we are absent it should be against our desire!

3. **We can determine to work according to our ability.**
 - A. **Be responsible and accept our responsibilities.**
 - 1) **Teaching classes.**
 - 2) **Men - Preparing to take part in the services.**
 - 3) **Be on time and prepared to worship God.**
(Greeting visitors; uplift - be an encourager to others)
4. **Be determined to make progress in our life and service to God.**
Philippians 3:13-14

Conclusion

1. **Together we could generate a long list of things we could do.**
2. **However, whether it be one thing or several, if we don't have a desire to do them - we won't do them!**
3. **If we really desire to be pleasing to God, we most likely will find more than we can get done this coming year.**
4. **It is a simple matter of do we love the Lord, the truth, and the church to give all of these our very best?**
5. **Do we love our own soul? The souls of others?**
6. **Are we willing to do what we can?**
 - **In 2023!**
 - A. **We all need to be part of the picture and stay focused.**
 - B. **If we do, then we will develop into the kind of individuals and congregation that God would want us to be!**

