

Spiritual Keys to a Prosperous 2008

Scripture Reading: *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

Introduction

- 1. The year 2007 is just about history and 2008 holds the future for each one of us. Reflecting on this past year, can we say that we progressed in our life toward God?**
- 2. Have we tried to be as Jesus encouraged us to be in Matthew 5:48?**
- 3. In the lesson this morning, I want to talk about four spiritual keys of life that if we put them into practice, we will prosper in 2008.**
 - A. Key 1 (Serve God and others)**
 - B. Key 2 (Control our thoughts)**
 - C. Key 3 (Avoid sin and guilt)**
 - D. Key 4 (Keep proper life perspectives)**

Serve God and Others

1. Determine now to serve God first and foremost in 2008.

Josh 24:14-15 "Now therefore, **fear the LORD**, serve Him in **sincerity and in truth**, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, **we will serve the LORD.**"

Heb 12:28 Therefore, *since we are receiving a kingdom* which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may **serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**

To one of the scribes Jesus says:

Mark 12:29-30 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 'And you shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**' This is the first commandment.

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

2. Don't only serve God, but strive to serve others also.

Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**

Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, **you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness**, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. **Bear one another's burdens**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Phil 2:3-4 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself.** Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the **interests of others.**

Control Our Thoughts

1. We are what we think.

Prov 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

Mark 7:21-23 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. "All these evil things **come from within and defile a man.**"

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is **any virtue** and if there is **anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things.**

2. Strive to submit every thought to the obedience of Christ.

2 Cor 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity** to the obedience of Christ,

Avoid Sin and Guilt

1. A life that is lived free from sin is truly good.

1 Pet 3:10-12 For "He who would love life and see good days, **let him refrain his tongue from evil**, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For **the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous**, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Ps 51:3-4 For I acknowledge my transgressions, and **my sin is always before me**. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight-- that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

Phil 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **I press on**, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and **reaching forward to those things which are ahead**, I press toward the goal **for the prize** of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

A. What things did Paul have to forget? Don't you think it bothered him some?

Acts 26:9-11

2. Refuse Temptation to SIN.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away **by his own desires** and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points **tempted as we are, yet without sin**.

1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who **will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation **will also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it.

Keep Proper Life Perspectives

1. Get rid of all bitterness in our life.

Heb 12:14-15 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, **without which no one will see the Lord**: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

2. Learn to be content with the things we have.

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for **I have learned** in whatever state I am, to be content:

3. Realize that we don't have all the answers to every question.

Prov 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and **lean not on your own understanding**; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

4. Keep focused on the goal of HEAVEN.

2 Cor 5:7 For we **walk by faith**, not by sight.

Phil 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also **eagerly wait** for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

A. After his conversion, Paul was completely focused on the glory of heaven that he would one day see. He wrote to Timothy:

2 Tim 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have **kept the faith**. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also **to all who have loved His appearing**.

