

Son Morning

THE RACE BEFORE US

PASTOR PAUL CHAPPELL | DECEMBER 31, 2023

Text: Hebrews 12:1-3

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

INTRODUCTION

a) Meet Jesus, Son of God
b) Meet great cloud of witnesses
c) Meet your own inner self
"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:12-14)

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:39-40)

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

1. THE Preparation FOR THE RACE

A. Lay Aside the weights (of daily life)

chain & ball

"Is the thing a weight, or is it a wing? Is it that which speeds you on your course or does it hold you back?... Weights are not necessarily external: they are first of all in the heart... But the moment a thing gets a place in my heart and mind which is not in God's mind for me, it becomes a weight, no matter what it is."—William Newell

book "Spiritual Disciplines"

Discipline toward holiness begins then with the Scriptures - with a disciplined plan for regular intake of the Scriptures and a disciplined plan for applying them to our daily lives." —Jerry Bridges

- weights in life can be addictions, hatreds, emotional traps, bad habits

- Ranking your priorities of action -
OK, good, better, best

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."
(1 Corinthians 6:12)

B. Lay Aside the besetting sins (traps & snares)

Heb 3:12
unbelieving heart
- evil
- ~~deceit~~
deceive

"Unbelief easily 'besets us,' is ever present with us, and hath a peculiar readiness to oppose all the actings of grace in every faculty of the soul. 'The flesh' always and in all things 'lusteth against the Spirit'" - John Owen Gal 5:17

"I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity."
(Psalm 18:23)

Natural man

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22) & 1 Cor 2:14

HOW TO LAY ASIDE SIN

1. Present your body as a sacrifice (Romans 12:1)
2. Reckon your position in Christ (Romans 6) Rom 6:11
- God sees you as saint - live like one
3. Saturate in the Word of God (Matthew 4:4)
- written Bible

C. Resist and the rush - have patience

all human growth takes years

- no "microwave" christianity
"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."
(James 1:2-3)

same in spiritual growth

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
(Romans 5:3-5)

2. THE Pattern FOR THE RACE

Jesus the finisher (ending)

A. He is the perfecter of Our Faith - gives grace
- Jesus the author (beginning)

Jesus on the cross

B. He is the power of Our Faith
- Rom 1:16 power of God to salvation
"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3)

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."
(Isaiah 53:4-5)

C. He is the pattern of our faith
- read all 4 gospels to see Jesus

~ Christian life is a lifetime journey

Jesus on
the cross

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." (Psalm 22:6-8)

D. D. E. He is the ~~path~~ ^{Provider} of Our Faith

this man
Jesus

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Psalm 10:12)

copy
Jesus -
look at
all 4
gospels

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16)

3. THE Passion IN THE RACE

A. Remember His suffering (on the cross)

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:2-4)

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12)

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11)

"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7)

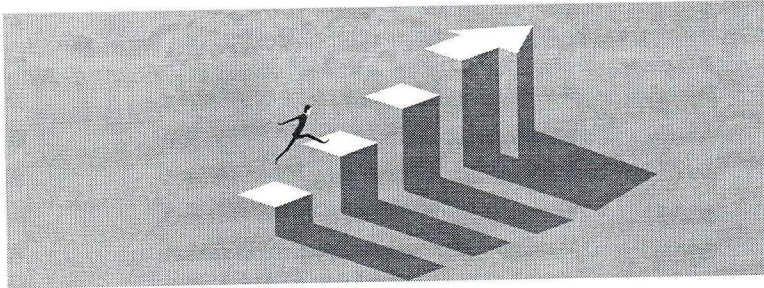
B. Renew Your mind

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16)

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9)

INTRODUCTION CONCLUSION

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:30-31)



HOW TO SET GOD-HONORING GOALS YOU CAN REACH THIS YEAR

BY PAUL CHAPPELL

Do your new year's goals ever feel repetitious? Do you find yourself making the same goals year after year with little progress?

It may be that the weakness isn't so much with your resolve as it is with your plan.

Determine Daily Routines

There is a significant reason many people fail to make progress on their goals: they don't have daily routines that support their efforts.

Life is a gift from God, and it comes to us, not in *years* but in *days*. It is the days that count.

Moses, contemplating the brevity of life, prayed, "So teach us to number our *days*, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

One author said, "You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret to success is found in daily routines."

I believe those daily routines should start each morning with the one *main thing*—spending time with God in Bible reading and prayer.

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." (Mark 1:35)

Do you have daily routines that support this practice? Do you have daily routines that support the other goals you are working to accomplish?

Taking some time to thoughtfully set daily routines for your morning and evening can be one of the best first steps toward reaching your annual goals.

Set SMART Goals

Not all goals are created equal. Some goals are so vague or unattainable as to be defeating before you even begin.

A common acronym for writing out good goals uses the word SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-based

These five words should all be present in any type of goal you set—personal, family, ministry, or anything else. Here are some brief thoughts on each of them:

Specific—Goals shouldn't be vague, or you will never know when you have reached them. For instance, "Pray more" isn't nearly as helpful a goal as "Create a written prayer list, and pray for fifteen minutes daily."

Also, I encourage you to write out your goals. Some studies show that written goals increase the probability of success by as much as 42 percent. Don't just think generally about what you hope to do, but write down a specific habit you are forming or goal you are planning to accomplish.

This step is also a good place to consider *why* you are pursuing this particular goal. The momentum you feel at the beginning of January isn't enough to carry you through the entire year. You need to keep your goal connected to your purpose.

*"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
(Philippians 4:13)*

- How does this goal fit your God-given life roles?
- In what ways will God be glorified by you fulfilling this goal? In what ways will you or your family be strengthened or encouraged?
- How will fulfilling this goal increase your effectiveness or fruitfulness for Christ?

There is a reason you are considering the goal you are setting. What is that reason? Why do you want to reach it? If you can't answer these questions now, you'll struggle to push through the obstacles that arise during the year.

We lose our way when we lose our why. And one of the best ways to find the way forward to reaching a goal is going back and remembering the why.

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14)

Measurable—How will you know when you have reached your goal? How will you know if you are making progress?

By setting measurable goals, you have something in writing that you can use to review and to record progress. It also gives you something to revise as needed throughout the year. This is true not only for individuals, but also for teams and churches. Some leaders, including pastors, love setting goals and strategic plans, but they don't make their goals measurable, so they don't have anything against which to determine progress. A personal or church strategic plan must have regular checkpoints to be reviewed and revised.

Achievable—Your goals should be realistic, yet challenging. Consider your season in life. If you're newly married, a goal to pay off your mortgage this year, is probably not achievable. A goal to set a budget and stretch your faith by increasing your giving probably is.

Annual goals should not be a list of dreams. They shouldn't be happy talk. They should spell out what you prayerfully believe would honor God for you to complete by His grace in the coming year.

Relevant—Is this a goal that is motivating to you? Does it relate to your roles in life and your God-given desires?

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

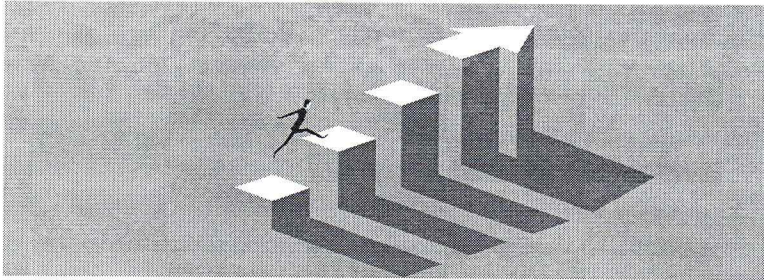
“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

(2 Corinthians 5: 14-15)

Low goals create no enthusiasm. If you set a goal for something you are already doing or that is irrelevant to your growth, it will undermine your motivation.

Time-based—What time of day or week are you planning to work toward this goal? Or what is the time frame within which you want to complete it?

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly,



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