

HAPPY NEW YEAR?

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Romans 6:4

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Philippians 3:13-14

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John 3:3: Romans 6:4: Philippians 3:13-14

A. THE GREETING OF THE SEASON

1. Countless greeting cards sent through the mails.
2. Salutations and celebrations.

B. THE NEW YEAR IS NOT REALLY NEW

1. Thousands will shout "Happy New Year,"
2. But they will awaken to the same old burdens as before.
3. Instead of a Happy New Year, for many, it will be a terrible hangover.
4. There is no magic hour at midnight that suddenly ushers in utopia.

C. WHAT MAKES A NEW YEAR HAPPY?

D. A NEW BIRTH (John 3:3-6)

1. *³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." ⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*
2. Necessity of the new birth
3. Many have dreamed of the opportunity of starting over again
4. What the new birth is not:
 - a. It is not baptism
 - b. It is not reformation
5. The new birth takes place upon receiving Christ by faith (Jn 1:12; 3:16)

E. A NEW WALK (Romans 6:1-7)

1. ***6** What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with,^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.*
2. There is no one more miserable than believer who doesn't live right
3. Let's look at the contrast between the old walk and the new.
4. The flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18)
5. *So, I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*
6. The walk before and after for the Ephesian Christians (Eph. 5:1-16)
7. *Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God... For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

8. The difference between day and night (Rom. 13:11-14)
9. *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh*
10. To practice the new walk, you must feed the new man (2 Peter 2:1-3)
11. *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*
12. You must reckon yourself dead with Christ & alive with Him (Rom. 6)

F. A NEW GOAL (Philippians 3:13-14)

1. *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. 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. 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.*
2. Paul's past goals were not important.
3. What have you done with your past goals?
4. Are they still affecting your life? Distracting you?
5. Paul looked at his past sins and failures – then moved on.
6. Paul's past victories were not important to him.
7. Paul had let everything from before he met Christ go.
8. Paul said his goal is to know Christ, & to be like Christ.
9. He wanted to achieve all Christ had in mind for him to do.
10. That goal was the entire focus for Paul, absorbing all of his energy.
11. We have all done things of which we are ashamed.
12. We live in a tension between what we have been & what we wanted to be.
13. Now that we can place our Hope in Christ, we can move on from the past.
14. We can let go of any guilt, shame or humiliation, anything that drags us down.
15. Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV): *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

16. We can look forward to being the new person God is shaping us to be.
17. The creation He had in mind for us from the beginning.
18. Do you have a new goal since becoming a Christian?
 - a. Does that goal have priority in your life?
 - b. Are you willing to forget the past in order to reach your goal?

G. RESULTS OF NEGLECTING THIS TRUTH

1. If we don't set our minds on the goal of becoming like Christ, we lose.
2. No new birth, no assurance of salvation therefore our soul is lost.
3. No change in what we do, thus we lose any opportunity for testimony.
4. Mark 5:18-20 *As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So, the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.*
5. Are you taking the opportunity to share your testimony? To amaze people?
6. If we don't have a new goal, we can't achieve, hence any reward is lost.

H. PRACTICAL RESULTS OF ACTING ON THIS TRUTH

1. By setting this goal in our lives, we benefit big time.
2. Knowing God, being like Him & achieving God's aim in our lives.
3. We are marked for Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
4. We are called to separation from the temptations of the world.
5. We are to be dedicated to living as Christ taught.
6. We can then experience the joy of living in the centre of God's will.
7. If we stay true, God promises an end, a rest & a crown. (2Tim 4:7-8)
8. *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

I. CONCLUSION

1. Be encouraged by Paul's emphasis here on forgetting the past.
2. Forget what is behind & strain forward to what lies ahead.
3. Don't let yesterday's failures derail you.
4. Set the goal of your upward call of God in Christ.
5. Press on for the gold medal prize until you meet Lord Jesus at the finish line.