

Five Roadblocks to a Successful New Year!
Philippians 3:12-3:14

Intro: I don't know how many of you make new years resolutions, but I do know that more of us make new years resolutions than there are of us who keep new years resolutions. Some people are like, environmentalist when it comes to new years resolutions; they recycle them year after year. Many Christians like to make resolutions, things like, Have better quiet times with God, many Christians resolve every New Year to read through their Bibles or to be more faithful in church attendance. Some will resolve to pray more faithfully and more often. Some will even go so far as to resolve to get more involved in ministry at their Church. The problem is that sometime between January 1st and about Easter, the resolve wears out and they are right back were they were the year before. Then, the New Year comes again and there they are, recycling their same old resolutions.

Some Christians even give up setting Spiritual goals for themselves because they get tired of failing. In today's text Paul gives us **Five roadblocks to success.**

Jonathan Edwards wrote in his diary on the first day of the year, "Resolve first, that all men should glorify God and be obedient to God. Resolve second, that if nobody else is obedient, that I will be obedient, by God's grace." With such resolution, can anyone question why God would use Edwards powerfully in the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s?

Today, I believe God is looking for new Jonathan Edwards'. God is looking for people who will be sold out for Christ, willing to resolve to glorify God and be obedient to the call of God on their lives. The problem is Satan knows that God is looking for them too and he plans to do anything and everything he can to prevent them from being successful. He will put up roadblocks in front of those who truly resolve to be sold out for Christ.

Did you make any New Year's resolutions? What were they?

If you made any New Year's resolutions did they include any of the things I had listed in my pastor's pen last Sunday? For those who didn't read your bulletin or read and forgot what your read I'll remind you of the four things I challenged you to make as your resolutions:

1. **Read.** Resolve to read God's daily. Everyone should have been given a 2005 calendar with a daily reading schedule. Don't just look at them; read. Reading God's Word is the only way we can grow to be spiritually strong. Just like resolving to exercise more will make you physically stronger reading God's Word has the same affect. Many Christians struggle in their Christian walk because they are spiritually anemic.
2. **Talk.** Resolve to daily talk to your Father in heaven. When you read His Word God speaks to you, but He wants to hear from you. No relationship will ever grow without communication. Our prayer life is the key to improving our relationship with God. Every morning God stands ready and waiting to hear from you; don't disappoint Him.
3. **Do.** Resolve to find a ministry to get involved in. There is no more fulfilling way to experience God than to be involved in ministering to people in His name. Giving money to a ministry is good and God expects His people to give to help fund ministry. However, giving money is no substitute for giving of your self; your time, your talent to someone else. To give of yourself and to see the look on someone's face when they see that you love them enough to give of yourself with no expectation of return is the most fulfilling experience in life. Being involved in ministry is simply being obedient to God's Word.
4. **Attend.** Resolve this year to be a "*one hundred percent.*" What is a "*one hundred percent?*" A "*one hundred percent*" is a person who strives to be in Church 100% of the services. There was a time in the life of the church when children and adults would receive annual recognition for perfect attendance. As life got more demanding churches moved away from this practice. The problem with this is that as life gets more demanding the one thing we need most is our day in church. Perfect attendance at Sunday service is something all good Christians should

desire to do. We don't desire to be "**one hundred percenters**" because we love the church or like the pastor but because we Love our Lord. Show your love for Christ by resolving to be a "**one hundred percenter.**"

Before we get into the sermon I want to remind everyone that a resolution is nothing more than a desired goal we set. So as I speak to you today when I say resolution I am also talking about goals; Spiritual goals.

In this morning's text, we can gain guidance for choosing our resolution and help in reaching our goal or keeping our resolution for the New Year. We will look at the roadblocks or adversaries that will hinder our progress in reaching our goal or keeping our resolution and how Paul overcame these obstacles.

The first **Roadblock** to reaching your **Resolution or Spiritual goals** is...

I. **ARROGANCE**. V. 12.

- A. Paul put to death this adversary of arrogance by having an honest evaluation of himself.
- B. Arrogance is the attitude of pride or over-confidence.
- C. Maybe your Spiritual Goal is to know Christ more through daily quiet times with God.

The second **Roadblock** to reaching your **Resolution or Spiritual goals** is...

II. **ARRIVAL**. V. 13a.

- A. Paul removed the roadblock of arrival by responding to Christ's expectation, not human expectations.
- B. When we see ourselves as reaching our limit or our finish line, we will stop making progress in our resolution.
- C. What is your Spiritual Goal or resolution?
 - 1) Is God calling you to become a godly husband and godly father in your family?
 - 2) Is God calling you to be a Christian witness at your work?
 - 3) Is God calling you to read your Bible all the way through this year?
 - 4) Is God calling you to prayer? To be a prayer worrier?
 - 5) Is God calling you to be more committed to church attendance?
 - 6) Or maybe God is calling you to begin attending Bible Study or Wednesday night prayer and Bible Study.
- D. Whatever it is don't let Satan have the victory this year.

The third **Roadblock** to reaching your **Resolution or Spiritual goals** is...

III. **AFFECTIONS**. V.13b.

- A. Paul removed the roadblock of affections (plural) by measuring his success in the achievement of one goal.
- B. To have a single affection does not mean that we live unbalanced lives.
 - 1) Just because I am a pastor, does not mean that I only pay attention to the spiritual health of people God entrusts to me and ignore everything else.
 - 2) What **Resolution or Spiritual goals** do you want to accomplish in your lifetime?
- C. **ILL:** A story from that great tenor, Luciano Pavarotti's life might illustrate best what Paul is saying; Pavarotti says, "When I was a boy, my father, a baker, introduced me to the wonders of song." He urged me to work very hard to develop my voice. Arrigo Pola, a professional tenor in my hometown of Modena, Italy, took me as a pupil. I also enrolled in a teachers college. On graduating, I asked my father, 'Shall I be a teacher or a singer?' "'Luciano,' his father replied, 'if you try to sit on two chairs, you will fall between them. For life, you must choose one chair.' Pavarotti says, "I chose one. It took seven years of study and frustration before I made my first professional appearance. It took another seven to reach the Metropolitan Opera. And now I think whether it's laying bricks, writing a book — whatever we choose — we should give ourselves to it. Commitment, that's the key. Choose one chair." (from Guideposts, cited in esermons.com newsletter)

The fourth **Roadblock** to reaching your **Resolution or Spiritual goals** is...

IV. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS** of the past. V.13c.

- A. Paul removed this roadblock of accomplishments of the past by focusing on what God has in store for his future.
 - 1) Unlike the pop psychology notion of listing your past accomplishments in order to gain self-confidence, Paul chose to forget his past accomplishments so that he is not hindered by them.
 - 2) Our past accomplishments generally cause us to stay in the past too long.
 - 3) Our past accomplishments can make us think that we have arrived.
 - 4) Our past accomplishments can lead to arrogance, whereby we put our confidence not in God but in ourselves.
 - 5) And our past accomplishments may not be at all related to what God is calling us to do in the future.
- B. Our past can be a hindrance or a help in moving toward God's purposes for each of us. For some, the past has meant pain and heartache, and grace is required so that we do not let our past dictate our responses to the future. If we allow our past to make us a victim, then we have not entered into the grace that God has for us. If we live on memories of past successes and fail to raise our vision for new things, we again are victims of our past.
 - 1) "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland" (Is. 43:19). Our past should only be viewed for what we can learn from it. We must move forward and avoid viewing the negative or the positive for more than what we can learn. Many have allowed their past to dictate their future. God is always about doing new things in our lives. He gives fresh revelation of His purposes in our lives. Do not live in the past. Do not hold onto bitterness that may hinder God from doing new and exciting things in your life. He turns our wastelands into streams of water to give life, not death.
 - 2) How have you viewed your past? Has it hindered you in some areas of your life? Have you relied on past successes to dictate what you will do in the future? Put aside such thoughts and allow God to do a new thing in your life. Ask Him to help you see the new things He wants to do in and through you today.
 - 3) "When your memories are bigger than your dreams, you're headed for the grave" [Author unknown].
- C. Seek out God's mission for you in 2005 and beyond.
 - 1) Maybe you've not been passionate about the right thing or you were passionate about too many different things.
 - 2) Prioritize with what you know from God's word.
 - 3) If you need someone to help you know what God might be calling you to do you can call me to set up an appointment and I will try and help you evaluate how God has prepared you up to this point to partner with Him in the future.
 - 4) Accomplishments of the past are the chapters of our lives we have already written, not the inspiration to our making progress in our resolution.

The fifth **Roadblock** to reaching your **Resolution or Spiritual goals** is...

V. **APATHY**. V. 4

- A. Paul removed the roadblock of apathy by taking action to move toward the goal God set for him.
 - 1) Paul didn't say, "I will let God give me the prize for which God called me to win."
 - 2) Paul understood his responsibility to actively and aggressively pursue the prize, which is Christ Jesus.
- B. Many Christians are bored, lazy or complacent rather than enthusiastic, passionate and concerned.
 - 1) There are at least two causes of such apathy.
 - 2) your New Year resolution is to maintain a healthy body, a healthy relationship with God, a healthy relationship with family members and others or a healthy income, you can not stand on your past accomplishments and make progress in your resolution.

Conclusion: If you want to make progress in your resolution, beware of your enemies, arrogance, arrival, affections (plural), accomplishments (of the past) and apathy. These enemies will follow us into the New Year, but Paul has shown us how to over them. You can read this passage again as you set your New Year resolution.