

January 2, 2005

Another Year Is Behind Us. What Did You Leave Behind?

Fred Nowell

Is it me, or are these years flying by? It seems as though we celebrate the beginning of a new year and before you know it, another new year is just around the corner. Our years truly do pass us by like the withering grass, the declining shadow and the vapor that appears for such a little time (Job 14:2; Ps 144:4; Jas 4:14).

As we all ponder the passing of the year 2004, let us consider that things that we all left behind. Leaving things behind can be both good and not so good. They can be beneficial for self and others or hindrances. Things that are left behind can prove to be blessings or curses. With each passing year there are those things that we will want to hold always as dear to us, things we will want to change about ourselves, and things we flat out want to forget! Each of us can look back on the previous year and see the things that brought us joy, brought us sadness, and even things that brought us shame and embarrassment.

At the beginning of each new year, many people come up with things that they would like to work on to better their lives, better their health, and a host of other things. Let us, as the church of our Lord, consider the things that we each need to apply to our own lives that will cause the church to be greater this year than the previous year. What kind of things might we put on our list? Here are just a few suggestions:

Commit to gathering with the saints whenever possible. The church has meeting times throughout the week. The attendance for some of these meetings have increased some, but it is still far short from a fair representation of our family. There are also times when the church family gathers for fellowship meals, special events, ladies' class, men's meetings, and even after-service gatherings for food, fellowship, games, and just to get to know each other as we ought to. Let me ask you, do you know the church (family) with which you worship?

Bring others to Christ. As we begin this new year, let us all be committed to bring souls to Christ. We do this by inviting others to come to studies, worship, Gospel meetings, gatherings, etc. We also bring others to Christ by telling them the "good news"

of Jesus Christ ourselves. To study the Bible with another should not bring great fear, but rather great joy. We have many ways by which *we all* can teach others about Jesus and the salvation that is found only in Him (Acts 4:12). We have tapes one can watch, Bible courses one can take, and even many here who are trained and ready to study personally with any who desire to know the Gospel plan of salvation that God has given to all people in His Word. Let me ask you, did you help bring one to Christ last year?

Be active in worship. Few things will bring such joy to your heart like taking an active role in the worship service. This too can be done in many different ways. When we gather for worship, there are things we are commanded to do together. Our worship consists of singing, prayer, teaching or hearing God's word, giving, and taking the Lord's supper. These things are to be both personal as well as congregational worship. If we are not active, that is if our attitude is less than it ought to be, then our personal worship is not done as God commands, for our worship must be "in spirit" as well as in truth (Jn 4:23-24). Christian men can also take part in the worship service by taking an active role in serving as ushers, offering prayers, reading Scripture, serving on the Lord's table, as well as bringing a lesson. Once again, we are blessed to have many who are willing and very able to do what is needed to worship our great and glorious God. Let me ask you, were you active in worship last year?

Knowing how brief our stay upon this earth really is, may we all be about the Lord's business in our attendance, our bringing others to Christ, and our involvement in worship in this new year. May the Lord's church here in York and everywhere continue to work through, work for, and work with one another, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" continuing to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14).

May we all have a safe, prosperous, and godly New Year!