

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

JANUARY 1, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

In **2 COR. 13:5**, Paul instructed the people to perform a spiritual examination on themselves. An examination is a detailed inspection or investigation. Why? To determine their spiritual condition to be sure they were on course with God and following His will for their lives.

Walking as Jesus Walked-1 **JOHN 2:6**

What an aspiration and New Year's resolution to consider. Many make resolutions that don't make it through January 31 –to eat less and exercise more. An easier one would be to eat more and exercise less! The decision to walk even as Jesus walked is a challenging resolution that requires much from the one who resolves to do so.

Paul's Resolution – **PHIL. 3:7-14 MSG**

Paul's self-examination gives us some things to think about that can help us establish and reach our goals.

- 1.) The goal can't be reached in this life. We're running a race that ends when we finish our course and move to heaven.
- 2.) Some things need forgotten.
 - A.) The bad: failures, decisions, sin (confess, forget, and move on).
 - B.) The good: We won't move forward by resting on our laurels, or by basking in the memories of former glories. Olympian winners were given wreathes made of laurel leaves as a symbol of their triumph.
- 3.) Some things must be released.
 - A.) False doctrines (**COL. 2:8**).
 - Philosophies or the wisdom of man.
 - Vain deceit or messages that are slick and trick people.
 - Traditions of men or long-held human beliefs.
 - Rudiments of the world or messages that tickle the ears.
 - B.) Foolish demands (**COL. 2:16-17, 21-23**).
 - True Christianity does not consist in the keeping of external man-made rules, but in a personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ. True spirituality comes from knowing Jesus and allowing Him to live through us.
- 4.) Some things need to be remembered (**PHIL. 3:13-15**).
 - A.) The Prize. There's a goal to reach for that can't be reached in this life. Like an Olympian runner, we stay focused until the race is over and refuse to allow any other goal to interfere with our pursuit.
 - B.) The finished work of Christ offers a death, deposit, and dream (**COL. 3:1-4**). We are dead, we have a new life in Christ, and we will appear with Him in glory.
 - C.) God is for us, with us, in us, upon us, beside us, beneath us, before us, and behind us as our rear guard.

Conclusion:

As Christians, we don't need to make a resolution for the New Year. What we need to do, is to yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Jesus to live through our lives.