

Challenge for the New Year

by Greg Gwin

The beginning of a new year provides an excellent opportunity for us to pause, ponder, plan, and prepare for the future. We hope that the new year will especially cause us all to think about our spiritual service to God and how we can improve in the fulfillment of our duties to Him. Let us challenge you in these specific areas:

- **Spend more time in prayer.** Don't allow the day to begin or end without spending time in prayer to God. Throughout the day, stop and petition Him for help and strength. And, by all means, don't just wait for a crisis to develop before you think to pray. *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thess. 5:17).
- **Study your Bible more consistently.** Use one of the available daily Bible reading calendars, or come up with your own plan to read on a regular basis. Don't just rush through a few verses. Instead, really study the text to learn its meaning. Before you end a reading session, think about how you can make application of what you've read in a real and practical way. *"Give attendance to reading . . ."* (1 Tim. 4:13).
- **Attend every Bible study and worship in this New Year.** This, of course, is your duty — but it is also a privilege. **BE HERE!** Make this a high priority. Why would you not want to be present to worship God and study His Word? *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . ."* (Heb. 10:25).
- **Teach the lost.** We all have friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members who are lost in sin. They **NEED** us to share the gospel with them. Make a firm commitment to reach at least one of them with the "good news" this year. If each Christian would bring just one person to the Lord each year, we could soon convert the whole world. Let's do it! *"Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . ."* (Matt. 28:19).
- **Live a pure, godly life.** Nothing else matters if we are not living faithfully for the Lord. Think about this, and let it be manifested in how you talk, where you go, who you associate with, how you dress, etc. Others are looking to you, and evaluating Christianity on the basis of what they see of it in you. *"Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14-16).

In a very real sense, having a "Happy New Year" depends on how well you fulfill your spiritual duties to God. Think!

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