

PREPARATION FOR CHANGE

Philippians 1:1-11

- Paul - *"Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ "* (Philippians 1:3-5)
- **2023 was a great year for our Congregation and our Celebration family.**
- *"This will bring much glory and praise to God."* (Philippians 1:11)
- **2024 should be even greater for active members of the Celebration family.**
- *"I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work."* (Philippians 1:6)
- **To move to greater levels in our personal lives we need to have goals for the important areas of our lives (i.e., financial, physical, relational, spiritual and vocational areas of life).**
- ***What are some "spiritual goals" that would help me accomplish God's purposes and experience God's best in my life in 2024?***

A Spiritual Goal To Pursue In 2024 Would Be:

BECOMING A BETTER <u>DISCIPLE</u> OF THE LORD

- *"I pray that your love will overflow . . . , and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding."* (Philippians 1:9)
- **"Disciple" is the New Testament word for real followers of Jesus - people who are continually growing in their relationship with the Lord and their knowledge of His way and will for their lives.**
- **Becoming a real Disciple of Jesus requires *Showing God's Love*.**
    - *"Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love."* (Ephesians 4:2)
    - **Real "Jesus followers" patiently, gently and continually love others, even when it's difficult to do so.**

    - *"Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions."* (1 John 3:18)
    - **Real "Jesus followers" demonstrate their love for others in tangible ways such as: 1) Praying for them, 2) Encouraging them, 3) Caring for them, 4) Serving them, and 5) Forgiving them.**
    - Jesus – *"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."* (John 13:35)
- **Becoming a real Disciple of Jesus requires *Growing In God's Word*.**
    - *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
    - **Understanding God's Word requires regularly hearing, reading, studying, meditating on and applying God's Word to our lives.**
    - **Participating in *Life Groups* and midweek Discipleship Classes helps us to learn more about the Bible and how to apply it to our lives.**
    - *"Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed."* (Joshua 1:8)
    - **Daily Bible Reading Plans for 2024 can be found at www.celebrationchurch.org/resources.**
- ***What are some steps I can take to become a better Disciple in 2024?***

A Spiritual Goal To Pursue In 2024 Would Be:

BECOMING MORE <u>DISCIPLINED</u> IN OUR LIVES

- *"<u>I want you to understand what really matters</u>, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return."* (Philippians 1:10)
- **"Discipline" is taking the steps we need to take in various areas of our lives so we can experience the best results.**
- "Everyone wants the result of greatness but avoids the work required to get there. It's boring. It's a sacrifice. It's inconvenient. It's a commitment to show up each day, do the work and live the standard. It's a lifestyle of being disciplined.." - Kevin DeShazo
- "Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment." - Jim Rohan
- "Desires don't determine who you become. Disciplines determine who you become." - Craig Groeschel
- "With self-discipline, most anything is possible." - Theodore Roosevelt
- *"Whoever practices discipline is on the way to life."* (Proverbs 10:17)
- **We cannot be a disciple of Jesus without having discipline in our lives.**
- *"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."* (1 Timothy 4:7 NASB).

- **We need to be disciplined in our praying, Bible reading, worship attending, giving, thought life and actions.**
- ***What are some steps I can take to become more disciplined in these areas?***
- **"Fasting" combined with Prayer is a discipline that helps us draw closer to the Lord, hear from the Lord, and develop discipline in our lives.**
    - "Fasting" is abstaining from food, entertainment, preferred indulgences, etc., in order to pray and focus on growing closer to the Lord and discovering and facilitating His will for ourselves and others.
    - "Fasting and Prayer" helps us greatly because it brings: 1) Direction (Ezra 8:21-23, Acts 13:1-3), 2) Purification (Jonah 3:5-10), 3) Revitalization (Joel 2:12-32) 4) Power (Mark 9:14-29) and 5) Victory (Luke 4:1-13) to our lives, and Transformation to others as the Lord answers our prayers.
    - When Christians combine prayer with "fasting," miracles begin to take place in our lives and others' lives.
    - **2024 PRAYER & FASTING EMPHASIS (January 7-20)**

- **IT'S TIME TO CHANGE begins next Sunday (January 14).**
- Paul - *"I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."* (Philippians 1:6)
- **The Lord is working in each of our lives to make us more like Jesus.**
- *"For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son . . ."* (Romans 8:29)
- *"God wants us to grow up to be like Christ."* (Ephesians 4:15 Msg)
- **Becoming "more like Jesus" in 2024 will enable us to live victorious lives.**
- *"I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return."* (Philippians 1:10)
- **Becoming "more like Jesus" in 2024 will enable us to accomplish greater works for the Lord in our lives and church.**
- *"May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.* (Philippians 1:11)
- ***What is the Lord primarily communicating to me through this message?***