

Put on the new self (Part 1)

Intro: Today is the first day of 2017. As we stand here on the edge of a New Year, it is a good time to reflect on the year that is ending and it is a good time to look forward into the year that is upon us. It is also a good time for God's people to take inventory of their walk with the Lord.

We should take a very close look at where we are in our relationship with Him. We need to examine ourselves and see where we have been, where we are and where the Lord wants us to be. This passage gives us the opportunity and the challenge to do just that.

This past Friday, Sheila and I were occupied in cleaning out our spare bedrooms. This particular room had become cluttered with a lot of things that were no longer needed. Of course, there were a few things in there that just needed to be relocated. And, in the process of our cleanup operation, we uncovered a few things that caused us to take a walk down memory lane.

As we cleaned that room in our house, there were some things that were retained, some things that were released and some things that were remembered. As I read these verses, I find that they challenge God's children to do exactly the same thing. As we look at our lives in the light of these verses, we are challenged to retain some things, to release some things and to remember some things.

I want to open these verses today and share with you the challenges that they contain. I want to show you that God has a plan for your life; that He wants certain things from your life; and that He has the right to demand these things from your life. Notice the challenges contained in these verses as I preach on the thought *An Old Challenge for a New Year*.

1. v. 1-2a SOME THINGS MUST BE RETAINED

(III. As we cleaned our house on Friday, we found several items that were important to us. We did not throw these items away, but we kept them so that they might be of use to us.

In a spiritual sense, Paul is telling us that there are a couple of precious spiritual possessions we would do well to hang on to.)

1. v. 1a An Awareness Of Our Foundation – Paul tells us that we are “*risen with Christ*”. The word “*if*” is not a statement of possibility, it is a declaration of a spiritual reality. Paul is saying, “*Since you are risen with Christ...*”

Paul is discussing our spiritual position!

When Jesus Christ died on Calvary, every person who would ever place their faith in Him also died that day, **Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:1-11**.

In a spiritual sense, we died to the penalty and the power of sin when Jesus died on the cross.

Because I am dead, I do not have worry about being punished for my sins. The price has been paid and I have already died, **Rom. 6:23.**

Because I have died with Christ, I have also been liberated from the power of sin in my life, **Rom. 6:14.**

There is a sense in which every child of God is dead! They are dead to sin, **Col. 2:20.**

In this verse, Paul reminds us that we have also been raised up with Jesus.

When He died, we died. When He rose from the dead, we rose from the dead as well! When He got up, every person who would ever believe in Him got up as well!

We must never forget that we are dead to sin and alive to a new life in Jesus! This knowledge will help us live clean and close for the glory of God.

1. v. 1b-2a An Attention To Our Focus

– Since we have been raised to a new life in Jesus, we are told to “*seek those things which are above*”. The verb “*seek*” is in the Present Tense, Imperative Mode. In other words, we are told to “*continually be seeking those things which are above*”. Verse 2 builds on that thought by telling us to “*set*” our “*affections on things above, not on things on the earth*”. The word “*affections*” refers to the “*mind*”.

We are told here to focus our thoughts on heavenly things not earthly things. We are to set our minds on the things of God and on the things that bring glory to Him. A quick look at some of the verses following this verse give a little insight into what Paul is talking about here. We are to pursue:

- **A deeper knowledge of Jesus, 3:10**
- **A clean, holy life, 3:5-9**
- **Godly virtues, 3:12-17**
- **Holiness in our domestic life, 3:18-21**
- **Holiness in our social life, 3:22-4:1**
- **An effective prayer life – 4:2**
- **A fruitful witness – 4:3-6**

In other words, we are to live like Jesus lived, **1 John 2:6.** We are to live out the fruit of the Spirit on our lives day by day, **Gal. 5:22-23.** We are challenged to live out our lives with genuine spiritual values, and not the values of a fallen world. As we give our attention to these spiritual, heavenly things, we are enabled to live a heavenly, holy, God-honoring life in this world.

We are to allow a heavenly perspective to govern our earthly walk! Every decision, every activity, every plan and purpose is to be considered in the light of eternity. Everything is to be laid out before the Lord and considered not from an earthly, sensual perspective, but from the viewpoint of Heaven. God’s people are called upon to become heavenly minded. This is possible

because of our Lord's presence in Heaven. From His place at the Father's right hand, Jesus makes intercession for us and He gives us all that we need to live for Him in this world, **Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:31-34.**

As we prepare to enter a New Year, may the Lord help us to realize who we are and what we have in Jesus. May that realization change our walk for His glory!