

“Beginnings”
Sunday, January 3, 2010
By Pastor Peter F. Paine

As we start the new year, we need to get into some spiritual habits. How about this one? Every morning when we wake up saying, “God I love you, and thank you for loving me”. What do we have to change in our lives to be who God wants us to be?

Proverbs 16:3

3. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Maybe we have to do what is right simply because it’s right and not because it’s what we feel like doing.

Galatians 5:22-23

22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

How are we doing in these things in our lives? Honestly, it is not just about us. It’s about the relationship we have with God. Every person has to thank God for what He’s done for us even if we don’t feel blessed at any particular moment.

Pastor Paine challenged all of us to begin a better relationship with God. When we see things in our daily lives that don’t reflect God and his love, it’s time to change them. People around us know that we are following Christ because of our actions. They directly reflect God, just like you know an apple tree in a field because it has apples on it, people in our lives know that we are Christians if we have the fruits (or evidence) of God’s spirit in our lives.

Here’s a story that shows what can happen when we slip away from focusing on God’s spiritual fruit in our lives:

Pastor Paine told the congregation that he had reached a point where he was worn out in ministry. He was exhausted at the end of every day and didn’t feel like he was moving forward. During this time, he was wrapping up a mid week service when he realized that the congregation had decided to have cake and coffee for his birthday after service. The only thing he wanted to do was go home and avoid the celebration. When this happened, Pastor Paine started to realize that his reaction to generosity was not at all like Christ. He repented and prayed for his attitude to change.

Sometimes the only thing we can do to change is our attitude is pray. But prayer works!

Hebrews 12:1-2

1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What gets us off track is sin and the weights that we take on. These things pull us off the course that God has for us. What weight and sins in each of our lives keep us from living

the life that pleases God? It doesn't have to be "just the way I am", anymore. God is more than willing to free us from the sins that hold us back from being the obedient and wonderful children that he wants us to be.

What is it in our lives that God is ready for us to get rid of?

Here is a great tool for every Christian: Sometimes, all we need to do is change our focal point. We can't always focus on what is right here right now. There is a bigger picture. If we ever feel disconnected from God, we need to get our focus right. It will bring everything into perspective. Try using this statement "I'm going to Heaven one day". What a great way to bring focus about the end goal in our lives!

Philippians 3:13-15

13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Heaven is there for us to gain. It's not like we are living this life without a purpose for God. And, there's even more good news. We don't have to take our failures with us to Heaven. We don't have to live with them now either if we can learn to focus on the end result.

Take a good look at verse 15. Let God reveal where you are, and then let him help you get where you need to be. That's the best beginning anyone could ask for.