

Happy New Year! Although any time is a great time to establish good habits and priorities, the start of a new calendar year seems to be the occasion many people use to make resolutions about doing something new or better or different and/or quitting something old or unhealthy or stagnant. Joe Vitale once wrote, “A goal should scare you a little, and excite you a lot!” I like what Joe wrote. I want to share some worthy goals for you to pursue over the course of the next year or twenty:

- **Study your Bible every day.** Study being something a bit deeper than reading your Bible every day although there is certainly great value in daily Bible reading. Study is about digging deeper, mulling, questioning, making notes, ruminating, and responding. Always start your Bible study time with this simple prayer: “Father, teach me truth by your Holy Spirit.” Two questions you need to answer every time you study your Bible: “What is God saying to me in this verse or these verses?” and “How do I respond to and/or put into practice what God is speaking to me today?”
- **Have meaningful conversations w/God every day.** Think of prayer as equal parts talking and listening. Listening is definitely the most challenging aspect of prayer. Sitting quietly in the presence of God...focusing your heart and mind on His holy presence...allowing His Holy Spirit to examine your heart and mind and motives...these disciplines have to be developed, practiced. Think of conversations with God as being less about delivering a “To Do” list and more about receiving a “To Be” list.
- **Harmonize your finances & your faith.** Begin financially supporting the ministry of your church by honoring God’s instructions about tithing. God asks His children to offer a tithe (tenth) as an expression of love, trust, faith in God, and in support of the Body of Christ. Charles Spurgeon once said, “Give as you love, and measure your love by your gift.” There is a supernatural dynamic that is engaged when a person starts honoring God with their tithe. Harmonizing finances & faith is also about living simply and beneath your means, reducing personal debt, and responding generously to needs.
- **Intentionally share the story of Jesus with unsaved people in your circle of relationships.** Who do you know, see every day, and call by name that would spend eternity in hell if their earthly life ended today? Have you shared the story of Jesus with that person? Are you praying for that person that their heart will be receptive to the story of Jesus? Sure, he or she might initially reject the Gospel; but our calling is to plant the seeds of the Gospel. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring a person to repentance.
- **Become actively involved in your local church.** God’s design is that followers of Jesus share life with other followers of Jesus in a community of believers called “church” in the Bible. Attending church is good; actively pursuing relationships while serving in and through the church is best. Your God given gifts and talents strengthen the church when you engage in church life; your own life is enriched by other believers as you build relationships in church. Hint: You may need to declutter your schedule if you are “too busy” to pursue church involvement beyond Sunday morning attendance.

In the words of William Carey, I pray that FBC will “Expect great things from God; and that we attempt great things for God” in this New Year.

Grace & peace, love you. PK