

CONCERNS FOR THE NEW LIFE

"Increasing in Christ"

2 Peter 3:18

Jan 13, 1985

INTRODUCTION

1. At the inception of the New Year, it is good to reconsider opportunities for new beginnings. Not to be performed in and for the flesh, but to the glory of God by the Holy Spirit.
2. The application of mundane principles to eternal issues could be dangerous. However, here is one which results in effective blessing. The formula $RT=D$ is worthy of consideration for spiritual growth. The distance a believer covers is dependent on rate. The time is the same for everyone. We have all the time there is.
3. The distance, spiritually, may well be stated by the term "perfect" (teleios, Greek). Thinking of the coming year, how much distance may be covered in the time available? It all depends on the rate.

1. DEDICATION OF SUBSTANCE Mt. 19:20, 21

This suggests the matter of increased giving. It is erroneous to believe that there is no room for perfection in this area. In this affluent society, no one should feel a pinch here. God's principles are clear (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8, 9; Phil. 4:19). While money is a sore spot, it is evident God is concerned.

2. MASTICATION OF TRUTH Heb. 5:11-14

Here is increased eating. While basic food is not to be ignored, there should be an appetite for solid, adult food. To be full grown (perfect), It is important to dig deep into the Word of God. This in no way militates against ordained called men specially equipped for ministry (cf. gifts in Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 12, 14; Eph. 4).

3. SUPPLICATION FOR SELF/OTHERS Col. 4:12

Increased praying--what a need! The question is not should we pray, but to pray more! Part of the armor described by Paul for the Ephesians included prayer (6:18). Prayer should include one's self and others.

4. RESTRICTION OF TONGUE James 3:2

Delinquency is all around. Sometimes it is right in our own mouths! To accomplish distance in the spiritual life, it is imperative to control one's tongue. Interestingly, the word for "man" is a male. Thus,

a wife can test her husband's distance by his tongue (cf. Prov. 5:1-4).

5. ACTIVATION TO HOLINESS Phil. 3:12-16

Salvation comes by grace through faith. Growth in one's salvation comes by constant pursuit. Three verbs, all present tense, give the key in pursuit: Forget, reach, press. Admittedly, there is no moral perfection in this life. Paul clearly enforces this here (v. 12), but maturity is the goal!

6. MEDITATION OF MIND 1 Cor. 14:20

Right in the middle of a discussion on tongues/prophesy, Paul introduces the subject of perfection. In one's intellectual attainments, Paul pleads for maturity. There is no premium in a claim to ignorance. Mental aptitude is no substitute for the Holy Spirit, but He uses it.

7. REGULATION OF EMOTIONS James 1:3, 4.

Often emotional disturbances are considered. Patience is the achievement of faith. Patience has its own achievement in the arena of suffering (v. 12). Patience is to carry on the work to the end. Why? So one can be perfect in all parts.

CONCLUSION

Greater distance is covered in one's spiritual experience through increased rate of giving, studying, praying, tongue control, pursuit of holiness, input to thinking, and patience. God help us to increase the rate of involvement in these. Amen.