

# New Beginnings:

## *A Biblical Guide to your Fresh Start in the New Year*

2025! Can you believe it? I remember hearing that song "Party Like It's 1999" as a kid and thinking 1999 was a million miles away. Now, suddenly, it's 2025.

### **The Promise of a New Beginning**

Do you know what I like about a new year? If we allow it to be this way, we get a clean slate. It's as if you can take an eraser to the blackboard, erase everything you've done and everywhere you've been, and start from scratch.

### **Scripture's Call to Press Forward**

That's what today's message is about - starting a new year from scratch. Take your Bible and turn to Philippians chapter three, verses 12-14:

*"Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

### ***The Power of One Thing***

Paul says in our text, "One thing I do" - a phrase repeated throughout scripture. In Psalm 27:4, the psalmist cried, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek." In Mark 10:21, Jesus told a self-righteous young man, "one thing you lack." In Luke 10:42, the Lord admonished busy Martha, "one thing is needful." The once-blind man in John 9:25 declared, "One thing I know: I was once blind, but now I see."

### **Breaking Free from Yesterday**

Too many of us are like Martha - worried and troubled about many things. But Jesus revealed that the secret of progress is to concentrate on one thing. The best thing you can do to guarantee success in life is to forget the past and stop looking at where you've been. Start looking at where you can be.

## **Learning from Failure**

Don't park by yesterday's accomplishments. You may have been salesman of the year last year, but this is a new season. And don't camp by yesterday's failures, either. You messed up in 2024? Who didn't? Let's not sit there whining and beating ourselves over the head with the past.

This morning's theme is forgetting, but here's one thing to remember: it's impossible to succeed without experiencing failure. A person who has never failed is a person who has never accomplished anything. Falling down doesn't make you a failure - staying down does.

## **The Athletic Mindset**

Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead." Think of it like sports - you may have fumbled or thrown an interception a few plays ago. But this is a new set of downs! The goal is ahead, and you're moving with your teammates in that direction. You can't worry about what happened in the first or second quarter. You're in the third quarter now, and you're going to make a difference.

Professional athletes can overcome mistakes quickly and do better on the next play. They don't go to the bench whining or throwing a pity party. They focus on improvement. The greatest victories and most glorious miracles aren't behind you - they're ahead. Until you deal with your past, you can't move into your future.

## **God's Perspective on the Past**

From a biblical perspective, "to forget" doesn't mean you don't remember. It means no longer being influenced or affected by something. When God promises, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," He's not developing a convenient bad memory. He's saying, "I will no longer hold their sins against them." That's grace!

## **The Joseph Principle**

We cannot change the past - not even God can do that. But He can help us change its meaning. Look at Joseph in Genesis 45. When he revealed himself to

his brothers, who had sold him into slavery, he held no grudge. Yes, he had been abused and mistreated, but Joseph saw the past from God's perspective. He told them, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

## **Breaking the Chains of Regret**

Are you paralyzed by a pitiful past? When you look back, is there a dark chapter that leaves you haunted by shame? Too many Christians are shackled by regrets and negative memories. They want to run the race, but instead of looking forward, they keep looking back. That's like driving while staring in your rearview mirror - dangerous and counterproductive.

Remember: God never consults your past to determine your future. If He could forgive and use Moses, King David, and Paul - who all had horrible memories of past failures - He can certainly do the same for you. Let God's forgiveness flow until you can stand and say, "I forgive myself."

## **Dealing with Unresolved Issues**

Don't let unresolved issues simmer beneath the surface. They're like elephants in the room that everyone sees but no one addresses. These issues never truly go away - they just go underground and smolder. Nothing is fully resolved, whether it's family conflicts, past hurts, or old grievances until both parties agree to let it go, forgive each other, and commit it to the Lord.

## **The Call to Church Growth**

As we enter 2025, I want us to be the greatest church - not out of pride, but because we take God's Word, apply it, and believe it. I don't want a house filled with unresolved issues that stymie our growth. Let's lay everything before God and each other, offer forgiveness, and move ahead as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:31-32, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

## **Moving Forward in 2025**

If I were to suggest a theme for the new year, it would be this: Let go and let's grow. What we become a year from today depends on our hearts, minds, and commitment to the goal God has set before us. I'm not focused on having a big church - I want God to grow big people. As God grows big people, the church will take care of itself.

## **The Challenge**

So I ask you: what kind of load are you planning to cart into your future this year? What's in your wagon? Empty it out. Clean slate. New day. Great year. Faithful God. Let's go into a full-court press - all of us giving 100%, keeping our eyes on the prize ahead, not looking back. The goal isn't behind us - it's ahead. Let's be the people of God that He wants us to be.