

More thoughts regarding the start of a new year...

Spiritual Disciplines are a key component in regaining perspective in the race of life. My view of eight of the disciplines with suggested implementation is in a booklet available on my website (www.ronberrus.abwe.org . under *booklets* in *PDF*). The four God-ward disciplines of Word, prayer, fasting and solitude are foundational to gaining and maintaining perspective.

Perspective: one's outlook or viewpoint on a subject. It's not just *what* we see, but *how* we see it. That is, the angle or point of view we are coming from. The old story of the blind men who *saw* an elephant and reported that an elephant is like a rope, or a wall, or a sail or a snake or a treeō having *touched* the tail, side, ear, trunk or leg and came to their certain conclusionsō *all partially correct, yet all completely wrong*. How often we do the same as we %see the elephant+of life and ministry.

Examples of Perspective

David, among the Philistines as he fled from Saul: Is it Satanic victory, or a pointless exile due to a godless enemy or a Divine plan to touch the hearts of hundreds of gentile families and bring them to Yahweh. (Ever heard of Ittai the Gittite from Gath? 2 Sam 15 and 18)

Paul, in a Roman prison: Is it Satanic opposition sidelining a servant, or an open door to reaching a new group with the gospel, or a means to strengthen the courage of fellow believers to bear greater witness of Christ? (Phil 1:12-18)

Jesus, telling the disciples to feed the multitude: Is it asking *the incompetent to do the impossible with the inadequate*, or *is it The Omnipotent about to do the inevitable with the available?* (John 6:5-6)

You, in a difficult place with an imperfect team and a seemingly impossible vision. How do you see it?

Your perspective determines your passion. The only way to maintain a holy passion is to maintain a holy perspective. And the only way to maintain a holy perspective is to live in the presence of God; therefore, we use the disciplines.

Self Check Questions:

What are your goals for practicing the disciplines this year? What, when, where, how, how oftenō

WORD: Bible reading, memorization, meditation, study, journalingō

PRAYER: daily, family, special seasonsō (Adoration, Confession, Intercession, Supplication)

FASTING: weekly, monthly, food, media, etcō

SOLITUDE: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterlyō

While these spiritual disciplines can be practiced legalistically and therefore without effect, yet they were practiced by Jesus and commanded for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount. They are means by which we give ourselves the opportunity to be invaded by God in the secret place of the soul. I hope you will begin, renew or maintain these spiritual disciplines as you launch into 2009.

For further study:

Matthew 4 How did Jesus evidence the practice of these disciplines?

Matthew 5-7 What passages indicate expected practices of the disciplines? How can you begin to implement them in your present circumstances? Just because you can't do everything doesn't mean you can't do something to improve your time with God.

%ord, I sense the need for more time with You. My life is consumed with doing good stuff that needs doing, but it seems I am always either too busy or too tired for much time alone with You. I know when my tank is empty, my spirit is dry and my outlook is negative. Renew me. Remind me that time with You is the fountain from which life and ministry must overflow. Give me a passion and hunger for you like Moses and Paul who longed to know You better, more clearly, and more intimately. Make Your word live in my heart once more. I am amazed at Your desire for my fellowship. Fulfill Your holy purpose to reveal Yourself to me and to transform me in the process. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. A Blessed 2009 be yours...

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.