

Thank you...Barrett Hoffman
Speaker for today

“A Great Plan for 2025!”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

December Birthdays

17 Bill Brown 18 Alexis Brown 22 Elizabeth Medina
26 Max Brown 31 Bob Pescador

NOTE: Earlier...inadvertently left out birthday of Max Brown

December Anniversaries

18 Jim & Marie Burruss

January Anniversaries

8 Bob & Debbie Pescador

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Press on toward Jesus throughout the New Year

By Joe Chesser
(Modified to fit the space)

The New Year has arrived and is stretched out before us. The holidays are over (whew!), and most of us are ready to get back to normalcy (whatever that means for you). Back to work. Back to school. Back to normal sleeping. Back to diets. Back to routine. But as we know, making resolutions and commitments sounds great. The difficulty comes in fulfilling these goals.

Sadly, what's true with our physical goals is just as true with our spiritual goals. We want to read our Bibles and pray more than we did in the past. We want to attend more Bible classes and be more involved in church activities than before. But even these awesome spiritual desires sometimes fade into the background and get replaced with inferior life situations.

God knows we struggle with life decisions such as overtime opportunities at work, house and yard repairs, vacations, sports, grandkids, etc. He knows our hearts and how even good things can distract us from better things. He knows what Satan uses to tempt or divert us.

And so, He encourages us to put first things first (Matthew 6.33); to “*press on toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3.12-14), and to “*set our minds on things above, not on the earth*” (Colossians 3.1-2. He also warns us about making excuses regarding following Jesus (Luke 9.57-62); about taking our eyes off Jesus (like Peter did (Matthew 14) and about becoming entangled in the world.

Being committed to Jesus is never presented in Scripture as something easy and carefree, but instead as a battle, as a sacrifice, as a challenge. But it's not a challenge we have to face alone. We are promised help, guidance and comfort from the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.16; Romans 8.26-27). And on top of that we are

promised unimaginable blessings if we die in Christ (Revelation 14.13; 2 Timothy 4.7-8; James 1.12).

What a great time for all of us to renew our commitment to press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! May God bless us and let's not let anyone or anything distract or deter us as we press on toward Jesus in 2025!!!

Come, Take, Learn

By Joe Slater

Can you imagine how frustrated Jesus must have felt when the very people who ought to have recognized and welcomed Him stubbornly refused? Nevertheless, He continued offering salvation to those humble enough to accept it.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

This beautiful invitation has three imperatives. The first is **“Come.”** While He was on earth in the flesh people could physically come to Him, but even then (as now) coming to Jesus required faith and obedience. Those who bore heavy burdens of sin and trials found rest in Him. That is still the case.

Then Jesus said, **“Take.”** Take My yoke upon you. A yoke is an instrument of service such as oxen would wear to pull a plow or cart. Yes, we must serve our Savior. But whereas an ox yoke might gall and chafe the animal's neck or shoulder, Jesus' yoke is “easy” (v. 30). Serving Him brings delight in contrast to the crushing misery of sin.

Finally, Jesus said, **“Learn.”** We cannot know how to serve Him and enjoy rest unless we learn from Him. We learn from what He taught as we read through the gospels. In the same way we learn from what He did as we observe His mercy, His obedience, His power, His faith, His suffering, His anger, His patience (and we can extend that list indefinitely).

Come. Take. Learn. Those three simple steps form a good summary of what discipleship involves. His invitation is for us. Will we accept it?

Something to Think about as this Year Ends and a New Year Begins

“Ten Little Christians”

(A repeat article)

By Larry Pasley

Ten Little Christians standing in line
One disliked the preacher, then there were nine
Nine little Christians stayed up very late
One overslept, then there were eight
Eight little Christians on their way to Heaven
One took the low road and then there were seven
Seven little Christians chirping like chicks
One disliked the music, then there were six
Six little Christians seemed very much alive
but one lost his interest then there was five
Five little Christians pulling for Heaven's Shore
but one stopped to rest, then there were four
Four little Christians each busy as a bee
One got his feelings hurt, then there were three
Three little Christians knew not what to do
One joined the sporty crowd, then there were two
Two little Christians, our rhyme is nearly done
They differed with each other, then there was one

One little Christian can't do much 'tis true
brought his friend to bible study- - then there were two
Two earnest Christians, each won one more
That doubled the number, then there were four
Four sincere Christians worked early and late
Each won another then there were eight
Eight splendid Christians if they doubled as before
In only just ten years, we'd have 1,024.

In this little jingle, there is a lesson true, we belong either to the building or to the wrecking crew! Church decline and growth is determined by many factors. Some of those are referred to in the poem above. Are we part of the building crew or the wrecking crew? If everyone in this congregation was just like me, would the church be growing or declining? May we be sure we are helping to build up the church not tear it down. May God bless us all.