

**Intro:** It's the time of the year people make New Years Resolutions. They come in all kinds of shapes and sizes!

~ Weight loss                      ~ Better health                      ~ Financial order                      ~ Relationship                      ~ Job

Today I want to throw my hat in the Resolution Ring, but my focus is a little different. Talk about Spiritual Improvement  
If we are honest with ourselves, most of us would admit that we aren't where we WANT to be spiritually. But, many times, we don't know what to do about it! Just like the resolution of losing weight we make a good start...but life kills it!

Today I want to look with you at some of the BEST advice you will ever get from anyone on how to improve spiritual life.

Philippians 3:12-14 Pg 832

Accelerating Your Spiritual Life in 2019

1. Develop A Holy Dissatisfaction With Where You Are Spiritually. Vs 13

The first step is to be dissatisfied with where you are. As long as you are happy, and see no need for change, you won't change  
So, where does that come from?

~Take a realistic spiritual inventory of your life: Vs 13

Vs 13: Do not consider: Lit = *to take an inventory; to count, number and add up to get an accurate record!*

Paul says, when I look at my life realistically, I can see some gaps! Vs 12

1. Not Obtained: Lit = *I don't have in my possession the end result*

2. Made perfect: Lit = *maturity, not perfection I haven't reached spiritual maturity*

When I look at where I am I realize...I'm not there yet. My goal is to be like Jesus: Take hold of what taken hold for  
If Paul says that...then I would submit to you...we should feel that way as well!

~Think about yourself accurately: Rom 12:3

Not too much: Don't see yourself as more than you are Sinner saved by grace

Not too little: Don't think of yourself as less than you are! Child of God gifted and empowered by Him

~Goal: To close the gap between positional and practical righteousness

Position righteousness: How God sees you: Eph 2:4-10

Practical righteousness: How we see ourselves Eph 4:25-31

Here is what Paul is saying. If we are honest, we recognize the difference between where we ARE and where we SHOULD be!  
We are this combination of some good, some bad and a lot of confused. Some days we are loving God and walking with Him  
moment by moment, and other days we are struggling to walk with Him at all!

When we acknowledge that...don't deny it...We have taken the first step toward spiritual growth. I'm not happy where I am!  
Once we know what that gap looks like...THEN we can start to work on closing it!!!!

2. Pick A Single Area Of Spiritual Life To Focus On Improving. Vs 13

Paul said here...this ONE THING I DO! One of the mistakes we often make is trying to do too much.

Read my bible through this year, Attend worship every week, Join a small group, Serve in ministry, Give 10% offering...

And we launch...and somewhere in the first 90 days we crash and burn! It's just too much

**Illus:** It is like what happens to the lion when the lion tamer uses the chair.

Lion can't focus on 4 points...So he is immobilized!

Same thing happens to us. We try to do too much spiritually...We quickly get immobilized! Throw in towel and quit

There is a LOT of power in One Thing! Mentioned often in Bible

~Rich Young Ruler: *One thing you lack*

~Martha: *Many things you can do...One thing is needful*

~Blindman: *Who is Jesus? Not sure...One thing I know!*

~Psalmist: *One thing I desire of the Lord...that I will seek after*

- You have to invest in your "One Thing" in 2019 Not just overall...Be Like Jesus! But one that is clearly defined  
Pick one area that is spiritually significant and say, This Year  
*Overestimate what we can do in short term, Underestimate Long*

3. Pursue Your "One Thing" With Humility and Passion. Vs 13-14

There are a couple very important principles you have to come to grips with as you start pursuing spiritual growth.

- Balance: Doesn't happen "automatically" This one thing I Do! *I do it...with God's help!*  
*God doesn't do it w/o your effort*  
*We don't accomplish it without God's power!*  
Paul says in Gal: Don't start in spirit and finish in flesh  
Spiritual growth is spiritually developed. But we participate!

- **Humility:**

1. By Finding forgiveness	1Jn 1:9	<u>Forgetting what lies behind</u>
2. By Redefining meaning	Joseph:	If we confess our sin, God is faithful and Just
3. By breaking power of past	Paul	You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good

*We break the power of the past by living for the future*  
 What could have slowed him down (murderer) motivated inspired  
 Instead of bringing death where he went...brought life!!!  
 Instead of LIMITING us...We allow PAST to LAUNCH us!

Applic: God, How can you heal this, use this, and turn this BAD into GOOD?

You never waste a hurt...so God, today, I'm going to give you my past...Find Forgiveness, Redefine, Break

- **Effort:** Straining toward...I press on!  
 Here is the reality. It costs us something to go forward spiritually!  
 ~Straining: Lit = *to stretch oneself like at the finish line*  
 ~Press:: Lit = *to run after, like a hunter pursuing game in the forest!*  
 We must invest time, energy and effort to go forward spiritually  
 Images of Paul: Soldier, Builder, Athlete: All hard work

**CONCL:**

I'm planning and expecting 2019 to be the best year ever at RTBC!

I am excited about what God is going to do in our church...and in YOU

2019 is going to be the year of Overflow!

All of next year we are going to be looking at the kind of spiritual life Jesus INTENDED us to have!

As we get ready for that...I want to apply what we just looked at, so you can determine where to focus...

I want to help you find your "One Thing"

Jesus said in John 10:10 *"I have come that you might have life, and have it overflowing in you!"*

If that is going to happen for us we need to have three different elements at work in our spiritual life.

Which is the area of your spiritual life that is lacking the most? It's ok if there is more than one...just focus on one!

Pick the Lowest...and in 2019 I'm going to help you accelerate your spiritual growth and close gap between ARE/SHOULD

Involves three things: Head, Heart, Hands All have to be there...can't leave anything out!

- Learn from Jesus      Spiritual Knowledge/Content      Find Jesus in your bible...and learn about Him  
*Every study done says spiritual growth directly related to Bible engagement*  
 Read through the bible or NT in a year      email me: dgray@rtbc.org  
 Join a small group...study word      Jan 13<sup>th</sup> Next Steps
- Love Like Jesus      Spiritual Heart/Emotion      Engage in self-less service  
 Jn 13:1 *"Having loved them he showed them the full extent of his love"*  
 If you are going to love like Jesus...serving other people!  
 Coffee Bar      Bookstore  
 Tech Ministry      Riva Kids
- Live Like Jesus      Spiritual Action/Service      I must be about my Fathers business Don't do anything...  
 Tyler Heights      Food Pantry  
 Mission Trip  
 Availability prayer!

As we get ready to launch into a New Year...finish this one off right

- Forgive: Come and ask it...Come and offer it
- Redefine: God...show me the grace...show me the good
- Break Power: God...Use this to Launch me...not to LIMIT me