

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## What Do You Have Planned For 2020?

As we begin a new year, the question asked in the title of this short article is appropriate and important. We all are making multiple plans of some sort. Our plans may be a vacation sometime in the year. You may be making plans to undertake a home improvement project. You may be making plans to further your education, look for a better paying job, shop for a new car, enroll in an exercise program, invest in the financial markets or start a small business. Whatever your plans are, you should make your plans on the basis that the Lord's will be done. Remember the words of James who wrote, *“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that”* (Jas. 4:13-15). With the words of James in mind, consider the following things you should have in your plans which are based on the Lord's will.

**1) Plan to attend every assembly of the saints so as to encourage your brethren unto love and good works.** To forsake the assembling of the saints is condemned by scripture, for the Hebrew writer wrote, *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Heb. 10:24-25). Remember, you must be present to properly *“provoke (stir up) unto love and good works.”* To forsake the assembling of the saints is **willful** sin (Heb. 10:26).

**2) Plan to read God's word daily.** Paul urged Timothy to read the scriptures when he wrote, *“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine”* (1 Tim. 4:13). Paul urged the Ephesians saints to read the scriptures (Eph. 3:3-5). You will never gain knowledge of the scriptures without reading the scriptures. There are many benefits to reading the scriptures daily. One of which is, that reading DAILY focuses your mind on spiritual things and equips you to ward off the DAILY temptations the devil sets before you.

**3) Plan to go to God in prayer daily as a minimum, and whenever necessary.** Paul urged the saints in Thessalonica to *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5:13), that is to make prayer a regular part of your daily activities and the Hebrew writer urged brethren to boldly come to God's throne of grace *“to find grace to help in time of need”* (Heb. 4:13-16).

**4) Plan to study and meditated on God's word daily.** Just to read a section of scripture is only one part of doing what is needed to have a better understanding of God's word. “Mine the scriptures,” that is, study to understand the meaning of scripture in its contextual setting, thereby, *“rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). The priests and Levites of Nehemiah's day *“read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading”* (Neh. 8:8). The people were given a clear understanding of the law of God. Through diligent study, one can understand *“what the will of the Lord is”* (Eph. 5:17).

**5) Plan to first apply to yourself what you learned from studying God's word.** If we study and gain knowledge but never apply it to one's self, then we have missed the point. Paul commanded, *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates”* (2 Cor. 13:5)? For a Christian, the standard of examination of any matter should be the scriptures (Col. 3:17). Remember the words of Jesus concerning the matter of judging, *“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the*

*speck from your brother's eye*" (Matt. 7:4-5, NKJV). Practice self-application and correction, or risk being a hypocrite!

**6) Plan to have proper love and regard for your brethren.** How often do you personally thank your brethren who are leaders, teachers, song leaders and preachers of the word? Do you show your appreciation for their efforts? Do you heartily participate in the song service? Do you participate in Bible teaching efforts by getting your lessons and showing interest in the class discussions and sermons? Do you value the work they do by expressing thanks to them? If not, why not? Remember, these brethren need your encouragement as well (1 Thess. 5:11-15).

**7) Plan to share the gospel of Christ with the lost and erring.** You can do this by inviting them to our worship services. By offering them a Bible correspondence course, a tract, a bulletin, or encouraging them to go to our website (Do you visit our website?). You may encourage them to study the Bible with you or try to arrange a home Bible study with them. The persecuted saints of the first century *"...went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). In Galatians 6:10 Paul teaches, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."* The context of this passage concerns the individual responsibility in *spiritual* matters (not physical benevolent matters) to the saving of the souls of men through the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Do you have this in your plans this year?

**8) Plan to be a godly influence and to let your light shine before men.** We are to be, by our example, a light shining in a dark and sinful world (Matt. 5:13-16; 2 Cor. 4:6). Remember, we as Christians are being watched by our heavenly Father and those of the world. Does our character and manner of life glorify God or bring shame and reproach upon Him?

**Conclusion:** Please consider the aforementioned points in your plans for the coming year. Christians do not stumble or stray into heaven. Those who desire to receive the heavenly reward need to heed the words of the apostle Peter who wrote, *"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now 'If the righteous one is scarcely (with difficulty, tgmc) saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator"* (1 Pet. 4:15-19, NJKV). – tgmc ■

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## WHEN GOD BREATHED

John Edwards

**1) MAN WAS GIVEN LIFE.** *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Gen. 2:7). Man is not the product of evolutionary chance, but the result of divine breathing (Job 33:4).

**2) THE HEAVENS WERE MADE.** *"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"* (Psa. 33:6). What power, as God *"spake, and it was done"* (Psa. 33:9)! *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"* (Heb. 11:4).

**3) THE SCRIPTURES WERE GIVEN.** *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim. 3:16). That literally means the Scriptures are God-breathed! As there is life in breath, the words of Scripture are the words of life. Peter said of the Lord, *"thou hast the words of eternal life"* (Jn. 6:68). – *The Terre Haute SPEAKER*, December 1, 2019. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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