



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 27, 2020

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Larry Hill
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Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
~~Worship Service 6 pm~~

Wednesday

Bible Study 7 pm

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Be Patient

This writer's taste buds can almost nearly always generally distinguish instant potatoes from real mashed potatoes. The imposter can be tolerated, but the real is preferred. However, time constraints may make the real a less-real possibility for some meals. There is peeling, cutting, rinsing, boiling, mashing, adding milk, butter, salt and pepper, then more stirring that has to be done in order to make real mashed potatoes. It is a time-consuming process.

Mark's record of Jesus calling the disciples at the Sea of Galilee says, "*Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men*" (**Mark 1:16, 17**). Notice that little bit of additional information that Mark gives: "to become."

Jesus did not promise these men instant discipleship capabilities. He evidently had a lengthy training process in mind for them. Even after three-plus years of instruction and in-the-field training, Jesus could say, "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*" (**John 16:12**). Their "fishing" abilities were still being enhanced.

Some of us who made resolutions to make spiritual improvements in the New Year may already be seeing challenges to those plans. Some may doubt whether they are going to be able to make any progress at all. One of those fishermen mentioned above instructed us to add "*...to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness*" (**2 Peter 1:6**). The word, "patience," means "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance" (Strong's). Brothers and sisters, be patient (persistent) and you will be blessed (**2 Peter 1:8**). Real improvement takes time.

J. Brooks Boyd Jr.

How to Make 2021 Better Than 2020

The time for resolutions is here. If you are among those who like to refocus with the dawning of a new year, here are some ideas.

Assess the Past Year. Self-examination is important and helpful. “Examine yourselves” is the admonition of 2 Corinthians 13:5. In the spirit of that passage, set aside some time to sit down in a quiet place and contemplate your life. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What temptations seem the hardest to fight? Aside from work obligations, how do you spend most of your time? How often do you pray? What are your Bible study habits? How is your Bible class and worship attendance? Are you making time to serve others? Even the most conscientious Christian can find room for improvement.

Develop a Plan. Select the areas that you want to address and create a concrete plan of action. For example, instead of the generic, “I want to do better in my Bible class attendance,” opt for the specific, “Barring matters beyond my control, I will attend every Sunday and Wednesday Bible class in 2018.” To accomplish that goal, create a plan. It might look like this: (1) Go to sleep earlier on Saturday night. (2) Set an alarm early enough on Sunday morning to allow plenty of time to get ready. (3) Regardless of how tired I am on Wednesday evenings; I will go to Bible study. (4) I will study the lessons outside of class so that the class itself will be more meaningful.

Emphasize the Spiritual. There are usually a few improvements that we want to make each year that we would characterize as more physical than spiritual. But some of those matters have a spiritual component, too. Look for it. For example, if you want to get a better handle on your physical health, there are deeper reasons to do that than just being able to fit into your clothes again. Paul asked this rhetorical question, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Your body really belongs to God. We must show ourselves to be good stewards of the Spirit’s temple.

There is no good reason to stay where we are in our current level of Christian maturity. We should always be working toward improvement. If we aren’t, we could find ourselves in a state of apostasy (Heb. 6:1-8). God is blessing us with the opportunity to improve, and he will provide the help if we will make the choice (Phil. 2:12-13).

Eddie Parrish (edited)