



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 73 No. 52 December 29, 2020

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

SECRETARY

Dee Parramore

OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

YOUTUBE.com

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

7 Ways to Accomplish Your Goals in 2021

Hiram Kemp

Time is truly filled with swift transition. It is hard to believe that 2021 is upon us already. With the New Year comes new goals, dreams, and aspirations. Almost half of the United States engages in making yearly resolutions though we all could admit that we struggle to keep them. One writer has said that we can't help but set goals for ourselves—it is how we are wired. Sometimes we make goals as individuals, families, or even as a congregation. It is a good thing to be striving toward something each year, especially things that will make us more like Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:12-14). Do you ever reach the goals that you have set for yourself? Do you find yourself in December forgetting what you purposed to do in January? Do you look back year after year and remember quitting or abandoning your worthy goals in late February or early March? We do not have to give up prematurely or reach the end of the year with our goals incomplete. Let me give a few tips for how we, as Christians, can accomplish the goals we set for ourselves in 2021.

#1: Be Specific

Sometimes we fail to accomplish our goals because we are not sure what we are seeking to achieve. While desiring to pray more is a good idea, that plan is too vague to be a measurable goal that can be accomplished. If you want to read the Bible more, that's great. However, merely saying you want to read the Bible more is hard to gauge from day to day and year to year. Jesus came to the earth to accomplish the will of His Father, and He was often very specific in how this would be done (Matt. 16:21; Luke 19:10). What if you said, "I want to pray a minimum of three times a day and read three chapters of the Bible each day" (Psa. 55:17)? That is something you could keep track of and hold yourself accountable to accomplish. This does not mean our relationship to God can be boiled down to a checklist or that we cannot be flexible as we try to better ourselves. However, if we are not specific in our goal setting, we will probably not be able to know how to track our progress.

#2: Don't Try and Do it Alone

Too many of our plans and desires lack any mention of God and His help. Paul often would tell Christians to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might (Eph. 6:10; Col. 1:11). When we fail to mention the Lord's will in our plans and goals—and it is all about what we plan to accomplish through our scheming, grit, and wisdom—we are likely to fail (Jas. 4:13-17). True success is found in those things which we accomplish through our God. Read Psalm 124 and notice how the psalmist is entirely dependent on the Lord and credits Him for any success enjoyed. The world teaches that if you work hard enough and are smart enough, you can do anything, but should Christians know better? Christians realize that anything we accomplish that is worthy is because God has worked in and through us. This does not mean that we have no responsibility or that we can sit back and let God do all of the work. It does mean, though, that whatever our plans are for 2021 (whether it involves being more evangelistic, improving our prayer life, strengthening our families, taking better care of our bodies, or attending service more faithfully, etc.), we will only go as far as we go with God (Phil. 4:13).

#3: Beware of Overcommitting

Sometimes we fail because we are trying to juggle and balance too many things at once. It may be the case that we are not as good at multitasking as we think. Paul said he was going to strive to do one thing (Phil. 3:13). David likewise had one thing that he desired (Psa. 27:4). Jesus told His disciples to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, and all the things they worried about would be taken care of by

God (Matt. 6:33). We only have so many hours in the day and, though the Bible condemns laziness, it also condemns the person who vows to do more than he or she can actually perform (Eccl. 5:4-5). What if, in 2021, you focused on the few things you want to improve regarding the ministry God has assigned to you and tried to do your best at that (Col. 4:17)? Sometimes we are overcommitted, exhausted, and stretched too thin. I'm not suggesting laziness or apathy, but that we streamline our lives for the Lord. As you have goals and aspirations for 2021, remember that quality is often better than quantity. It will be better to have accomplished 3 or 4 meaningful things rather than having only partially accomplished 25 things (Luke 14:28-30).

#4: Start Immediately

Every track sprinter knows that it is crucial to get out of the starting blocks as quickly as possible. It is hard to make up ground when you begin from behind. Start on the right track and try to maintain it throughout the year. Do not start sluggish, or you may never get around to doing what you have planned (Rom. 12:11). The Bible frequently mentions how short our time is and how this should cause us to live skillfully and wisely (Psa. 39:4, 90:12). I realize that the admonitions in scripture are not about keeping New Year's resolutions, but the principles can still be applied for our benefit. Sometimes we fail because we never get started. Make the most of the time. On January 1st, start the things that you can as you seek to grow in godliness in 2021.

#5: Keep Going, Even When You Don't See Results

We all like to see results, and sometimes we allow our eyes to play tricks on us. The things that truly matter and the eternal differences that are made in the world are rarely accomplished overnight. When making goals, remember to keep going even when all of your efforts seem to be met with minimal or no results. Maybe you are still not seeing any real difference made in life, though you are reading the Bible more, praying regularly, and inviting people to worship. Perhaps you are dieting and exercising, but the scale won't budge. Christians are people of long-distance vision. We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). We cannot despair or give up simply because do not see things change immediately. Jesus worked with His disciples for three years, and throughout the gospel accounts, it seems like very little growth is taking place among them. However, Jesus was persistent, and we must be, too. Do not let disappointing results keep you from enduring. Living by faith means that sometimes we do not live to see all of the results of our labors in this lifetime, and that is perfectly fine because we know this life is not all that there is (Heb. 11:13-16).

#6: Avoid Comparison

Too many people measure their lives by the wrong standard. Comparing ourselves among ourselves is not wise and often leads to either unhealthy self-loathing or arrogance (2 Cor. 10:12). You might want your congregation to grow in evangelism or attendance. You might desire to be more consistent with spending time with your spouse or doing daily devotional as a family.

One of the easiest ways to get discouraged is to keep looking over your shoulder at how someone else does it and allowing them to become the standard for how well or poorly you are performing. Each one of us looks at our "competition" in the face in the mirror every day. We need to try and become more like Jesus and measure ourselves by His life and not the lives of others striving to do the same. Someone has said, "If the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, then spend more time watering your own. Besides, you never know how high their water bill is." Social media often deceives us into thinking our lives are worse than others as we judge our daily lives by the highlight reels of others. Be careful.

There is nothing wrong with being encouraged by the diligence and effectiveness seen in others. Paul used the Macedonians as an example to encourage the Corinthians to follow through with their resolution to give (see 2 Cor. 8). However, remember that while others can inspire us, we must live our own lives and do the best that we can (Rom. 14:12). Furthermore, Christians must remember that we are comrades and not competitors. Do not lose sight of what you are striving to do by comparing yourself to what others are doing (John 21:18-22).

(continued on page 4)

Senior Saints by John McShane

This week I am going to use Proverbs 39:1 as the basis for my message. Proverbs 39:1 reads, "*Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.*" Our government is working on a plan to send some of us some more of our money in the form of a stimulus check. As I write this, they are still arguing about the amount that we will get. This is money that some of us do not really need at this time. In our congregation, some families could use that money at this time. If, and when we do get, whatever our elected officials decide to return this to us, give some thought to passing it on to where it is needed. You can contact the office or one of the Elders, and they can tell you where the money is needed. You can then decide where you want it to go. Keep in mind the following verses from the word of God. Acts 20:35 "*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*" And in Hebrews 13:16 "*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*"

Linda and I also want to wish everyone a happier and BETTER New Year in 2021.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

Bob Pratt	Brenda Mask	Carol Edmonson
Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt	Linda McShane	Wayne Shearer
Adeline Hine	Bernetta Green	Ingrid Stewart
Bill & Carlene Long	Bobby Simpson	Melody Baxter
Ciera Edwards	Brian Smith	Geny Johnson
Kathy Nester	Jim Turner	Margaret Coone
Sharon M. Washington	Annette Phillip	George Davis
Joyce Williams	Ron & Judy Ford	Nikki Williams
Ray Nashick	The Palmer family	
Antoine & Marcella Swain		

(Please update the office of any changes)

The **EXTENDED FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** prayer requests are emailed every week.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West Joyce Burbage Carol Eason
Ellen Shearer Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt

Phone numbers are in the directory. Let's call to let them know we miss them and love them.

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Evelyn Wyatt is in palliative care. Let's cover Chuck and his family in prayer, support, and love during this difficult time.

Ingrid Stewart is enduring complications from a medication she was taking.

Annette Phillip is having kidney problems. She did not have a stroke as previously thought.

Ketecia Palmer has covid. **AJ Palmer** has been running a fever.

Jeff Pratt (Bob & Bea's son) is having major surgery on Thursday in Corpus Christi, TX

Sherri Mitchel (Terri Brunson's twin sister) has been diagnosed with epilepsy. The Brunson are requesting prayers for the whole family.

--- Mark Your Calendar ---

Florida School of Preaching 46th Annual Lectureship

God-Breathed Scripture

January 18-21, 2021

Make plans to join us for this important study of God's word! Learn the truth and why it matters!

Broadcast Live at fsop.net

Thank you

There is a note from **Virginia Walker** on the bulletin board.

PRAYER LIST

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

January

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

Song Leader/prayer Vince Daugherty
Devo David Anderson
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

Sunday, January 3, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"New Things in the New Year"
2 Corinthians 5:17

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"Maintaining Reverence for God"
Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both services) D. Anderson
Greeters Fife
Song/prayer before class Kyle Bingle
Announcements David Anderson
A.M. Song Leader David Williams
Scripture reading/Prayer Rick Kenyon
Lord's Table Alex Parramore
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Bingle
P.M. Song Leader David Williams
Scripture reading/Prayer Nigel St. Bernard
Lord's Table Alex Parramore
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Ian Enamorado
Devo Terrance Dindy, Jr.
Closing Prayer Allen Grimes

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

To side with caution, we are still requiring masks to be worn upon entering the building as we have since July 2.

We will continue live-streaming the services on YouTube as we have since March 22.

Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Dec. 13	\$20,853.00
Dec. 20	\$9,707.50
Dec. 27	\$6,390.00
Contribution Average	\$7,460.74

Here is a book of the Bible without the Lord mentioned at all. It's all about His people and how He took care of them. This book is great because sometimes (most of the time) we don't see or hear or feel that God is doing anything for us. We don't have miracles or God talking to us or anything like we read about in the Bible. This book is "everyday life" with problems of a harassing boss, racism, sexism, and government issues. The lesson here is that the Lord will take care of His people, in this case, the Jews. However, He still wants to take care of His people today. *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."* 1 Peter 5:6-7

He will also "take care" of His enemies. *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."* Romans 12:19.

How great it is to be His people!!

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

(continued from page 2)

#7: Keep the Big Picture in View

The goal of the Christian life is to glorify God and then to go to be with him forever when this life is over (Isa. 43:7; Phil. 1:21-23). The goals that are the most worthwhile are those that help us to do those things. Remember that souls are the most important as we attempt to reconcile our friends and neighbors to God (2 Cor. 5:20). Many of our goals are self-oriented, but Christianity is a religion of service. Make sure that you have others in mind in 2021. Jesus is the greatest human being ever to live. Jesus did not live the longest life, have the most money, enjoy the best education, or live in the most advanced society. What made Jesus great? He was a servant (Mark 10:44-45). We will be great to the degree that we follow in His footsteps. The world is about self-promotion. Jesus emphasized self-denial. Remember, the main goal of Christianity is to lose ourselves in God and in glorifying Him. Crucify yourself in 2021, and keep the main thing at the forefront of your mind.

I hope you made goals for 2021. Goals can be accomplished as we lean on the Lord and give Him all the glory for everything that is done (1 Cor. 15:10). I hope 2021 is a great year for you to live it for Him!



www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



**South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1807 South Florida Avenue

Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

**THEREFORE, IF ANYONE
IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW
CREATION; OLD THINGS
HAVE PASSED AWAY;
BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE
BECOME NEW.**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17