

What I Need Most in 2015

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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

2Thessalonians 1:1-6

- 1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that **your faith groweth exceedingly**, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;
- 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:
- 5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:
- 6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

It is a fact that we as a Church and we individual Christians as members of this Body are supposed to be here for Jesus and not for ourselves.

I understand that for most people, who are looking for a Church, it is about what they need and what they want and what they like and what they don't like.

The truth is that in the beginning it was like that for all of us.

Before you got saved you were looking for something to fill that big empty hole in your life that you didn't even understand.

You needed Jesus to keep you out of hell. You needed Jesus to take you to heaven. You needed Jesus to start straightening out the giant mess you had made of your life.

You placed your faith in Jesus because of what you needed.

Some of you are here this morning because of what you need. All of us are here this morning to some degree because of what we need.

However: once we are truly saved and then as we grow in faith and as we grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord and as we begin to mature in the Lord we begin to realize that we need Jesus to give us something bigger and more worthwhile to live for than just ourselves and the things we want.

When we move into this level of Christian maturity, it is here in this stage that we can experience the best life has to offer.

It is in this stage of our Christian growth that life becomes worth living like never before!

It is in this stage that we get to experience the power of God in our lives like never before!

We all have, or at least should have, goals for each New Year; things we want to accomplish; things we want to get done.

How many of you have set some specific goals for this New Year?

So, what are our goals as a Church for 2015?

We want to reach more people, right?

Do we want to preach more sermons on how to get what we want out of life so more people can feel good being here?

Do we want to take Baptist off our name so more people can feel comfortable here?

Do we want to preach only the soothing happy stuff instead of the whole counsel of what God's Word has to say so we don't upset anyone?

Maybe we can get more people if I use one of those new Bibles that ‘dumbs down’ the Word so it’s easier to read.

Or maybe; just maybe, we ought to get some of our goals from the Holy Scriptures?

Have you ever gone to the New Testament; particularly to the letters to the Churches; and read some of the goals the Holy Spirit had the writers pen for us?

Here are some examples:

Skip over to **2Thessalonians 2:15-16**

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.

Now read **1Corinthians 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Read **Colossians 2:6-8**

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

- 7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.
- 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Continue with **Colossians 3:12-15**

- 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
- 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.
- 14 And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
- 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

That little gentile Church of the Thessalonians accomplished some amazing things; especially in regard to spreading the gospel... the kinds of things that we ought to be accomplishing right here at Lighthouse.

They accomplished far more than they were, in themselves, able because they had that growing faith Paul mentioned he was so thankful for.

How is your faith today? Has it grown much over this past year?

Faith, of course, is **trust**.

pistis

pis'-tis

From [G3982](#); *persuasion*, that is, *credence*; moral *conviction* (of *religious truth*, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially **reliance upon Christ** for salvation; abstractly *constancy* in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) *truth* itself: - assurance, **belief, believe**, faith, fidelity.

It is the root word of **believe**.

pisteuō

pist-yoo'-o

From [G4102](#); to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, *credit*; by implication to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (**to trust**), **put in trust with**.

What are you relying upon Christ for; what are you depending on Jesus for; what are you trusting Jesus to do...that you were not trusting Him for last year?

If indeed you have trusted Jesus to save you from your sins; what have you trusted Him for since then?

1John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe [do trust] on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe [trust] on the name of the Son of God.

What exactly will it take for you to have a truly growing faith in 2015?

Here are three things that will help:

I. You must believe (trust) that the Lord wants what is best for you.

A. Do you not believe that God loves you?

1. He says He does!
2. **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
3. He proved that He does!
4. **John 10:11** I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
5. He continues to prove that He does.
6. **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

B. If Jesus loved you enough to save you from the penalty of your sins; does He not love you still?

1. Of course He does!
2. "Oh, but Preacher, you don't know how bad I've failed the Lord."
3. That's right, I don't; but He does...and may I remind you that He did on the very day He saved you.
4. We've all failed God at one time or another and at times continue to do so and God knew it all before the foundation of the world...but His love for us remains unaffected!
5. God even loves us enough to chasten us as a faithful Father.
6. **Hebrews 12:5-7**
- 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
- 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
- 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

II. You must trust God for what He promises He will do.

A. Many Christians do not understand how to go about trusting God.

1. "6, 19, 84, 37, 92; Dear God, please make these the next winning lottery numbers; in Jesus' name, Amen."
2. Does God know what the next winning lottery numbers are?
3. Could God show or tell you what the next winning lottery numbers are?
4. Has God promised you a winning lottery ticket if you ask Him for it? (That would be NO!)
5. Truth is that God loves you far too much to do that to you.

*B. Some things need to be prayed for.
(Remembering, of course, that God's promise to hear our prayers is to Believers only.)*

1. **John 14:13** And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
2. **John 15:7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

3. **1John 5:14** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

4. We should pray for the sick.
5. We should pray for various situations.
6. We should pray for wayward brothers and sisters.
7. We should pray for the lost to be saved.

C. However;

1. The sick one may be being brought to face their sin or some other purpose of God we do not know about.
2. Various situations, like a pending divorce for example, may require a change of heart or behavior that we do not know about.
3. Wayward brothers and sisters may need to go through a process of chastening and repentance before God will allow them back into the fold.
4. God saves lost people because they change their mind and trust Jesus to save them; NOT because we pray for them.
5. We can and should pray however, for God to send them a messenger; to show them His

love and power; to bring about circumstances that cause them to seek Him.

4. We are to pray and then trust God's will to be done; sometimes accepting 'no' or 'not yet' as our answer.

C. Then there are some things need not be prayed for; they are simply to be acted upon.

1. I don't suppose it is ever wrong to pray about anything; you just may get 'no' for your answer.

2. For example, some studies say that the number one prayer request of Christians is for finances.

3. Have you ever read a scripture that tells you to pray for finances?

4. Oh, I know that God says to ask for what you need, but he also says He already knows what we need.

5. If you need finances, it is action, not prayer that is commanded and in order.

a. **Romans 12:11** [Be] Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

b. **2 Corinthians 8:21** Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

c. **Malachi 3:10-11**

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

d. **Luke 6:38** Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

6. If you need to get things right with God, sometimes it is action AND prayer that is in order.

7. **Mark 11:24-26** Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your
 Father which is in heaven forgive your
 trespasses.

7. It is always good to ask God for good things that you may need or want; however to claim or demand that which God has not promised is presumption, not faith.

III. You must commit yourself to fulfill the purpose of our faith.

A. Faith is the conduit; it is what connects us to the promises of God.

1. Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

2. It was not your great faith that saved you; it was the power of God! Your faith is what connected you to it.

3. Your faith can connect you to even greater power yet.

4. Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
 21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

5. But, as you can see, that power is for a purpose.

B. God desires to help you grow your faith; but faith is your part.

1. **John 3:36** He that believeth / on the Son / hath everlasting life:

a. Providing everlasting life is God's part.

b. Jesus the Son certainly did His part.

c. Believing (faith) is your part!

2. If you want God to say yes to the prayers you pray, start asking for things God can get excited about; things that are in His will.

3. If you want God to bless you with more finances; start honoring Him like He commanded you to do and use more of it for His glory.

4. When the day comes that you need healing; and it will come for all of us; will you have used the good health you have now to serve Him for His glory or will you just be making God empty promises that He knows you will not keep?

In Conclusion:

We have a whole world that is dying and going to hell right around us and we are not

doing all we can do to reach them with the gospel.

I understand that we may not ever do truly all we can do; but we each can certainly do more than we did last year!

I may not and no doubt cannot have a perfect faith, but I can have a growing faith.

What does God want you to trust Him for today that you have not trusted Him for up to now?

You may need to start by trusting Him; by placing your faith in Him to save you from your sins.