



**A Spiritual Encouragement Message
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Empty Chatter

By Andrew Lemus

It's not how you start but how you finish. How many of us set a new year's resolution and find ourselves still focused, committed, and striving to fulfill it? Was it reading more of your Bible, attending more Bible studies, getting back to a regular routine of going to services, prayer, working on that body God gave you, adjusting what you do with your time, stopping a bad habit, or something else? How is it going? Often times we as people and Christians set out to accomplish a goal, with the intent to complete it, only to find ourselves falling short. Why is it that we falter when we set goals for ourselves to accomplish? What is it that caused you to not persevere?

One thing we do know, there is nothing new under the sun. The struggle of setting goals and then falling short is something we have seen mankind do since the beginning. I imagine Adam and Eve told themselves and each other that they wouldn't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When David was anointed as king, I doubt he thought he would find himself falling short of an unblemished reign by committing adultery and murder. Over and over again, we see men and women falling short of the goals they set before them.

In the New Testament we find Paul the Apostle, confident in the character, zeal, and determination of Timothy, charging him to fulfill some remarkable tasks in Ephesus. Among other things, one of the more pressing issues was silencing certain people that were getting caught up in promoting strange doctrines (1Tim. 1:3). As a result of their strange doctrine members of the Lord's church were getting swept up in all kinds of speculation and the bodies pursuit of godliness was being impeded (1Tim. 1:4). It seems that even Timothy got caught up in all of this worldly and empty chatter, and the work he was left to accomplish in Ephesus was impeded too (2Tim. 2:16). Simply put, strange doctrines were distracting the church and Timothy from reaching their goal and Timothy was to command these false teachers to stop.

There are many obstacles and challenges that pop up in front of us that can cause us to not fulfill goals that we or God has set for our lives. One of the greatest obstacles we can face is, unfortunately, other people. Like a steady diet of candy, soda, and other junk food will make you unhealthy, so a steady stream of unsound doctrine filled with strange, dark, and worldly teachings can inhibit us from conforming to godliness. Like the saints in Ephesus and Timothy, we might find



ourselves consumed by the worldly and empty chatter of this world, distracted, and obstructed from striving towards our goal of godliness.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. 2Timothy 3:15-17a

I hope we are all striving to keep those goals we set for 2021, whatever they may be. So you might have gotten knocked off track, here is a little note to get back to it! More importantly though, I want all of us to really take to heart the proclivity of men to not reach objectives set before them and be most mindful of those objectives set before us by God and the obstacles that might hinder us from reaching them. These are most important (Mark 8:34-38). Specifically, there is plenty of worldly and empty chatter, strange doctrines, and myths coming out of the mouths of men that can consume you and encumber your faith. The solution to the problem is the same one Paul gave Timothy, command those in the church that participate and propagate them to stop, give no attention to it, avoid it, and consume those doctrines that are sound, healthy, and divine (1Tim. 1:3-4, 2Tim. 1:13, 2:16).