

WHY BE ORDINARY?

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February 19, 2017

Philippians 3:7-16

1. How many people do you know who are extraordinary (extra-ordinary) in a positive sense-they are distinctive, different, above average when compared to those around them?
2. What does it take to be viewed as a Christian in America?
3. The answer to that question is a sad one because it doesn't take much to be viewed as a Christian in America beyond professing to be one.
4. Jesus taught that His followers should be:
 - a. Salt and light. Matthew 5:13-16
"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world."
NOTE: Our lives should be a work in progress. Proverbs 4:18
"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines even brighter until the full day."
 - b. Gatherers. Luke 11:23
"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters."
5. The enemies of God are not the problem in America today; the problem is those who profess to be His friends.
6. Paul was extraordinary because:
 - a. When he met Jesus his values were turned upside-down. 8
 - b. The goal of his life changed completely. 10-11
 - c. He kept on pressing on. 12-14
7. What impact has Jesus had on your life?
8. What impact is Jesus having on your life?
9. Think about what characterizes the lives of many Christians today.
 - a. Prayer is not a priority in their lives.
 - b. Reading and studying God's Word is inconsistent at best.
 - c. They are not growing in the grace of giving.
 - d. They are not purposely fulfilling God's purpose for their lives.
 - e. They are not deliberately seeking to make disciples.
10. Every Christian can be extraordinary if they genuinely want to be.
11. Jesus said, "I came that they (my sheep) may have life, and have it abundantly."
John 10:10
Abundantly defined: perissos
Superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality);
11. Let me suggest some goals that all of us should embrace for 2017.
NOTE: **Our motivation must be love for Christ and a desire to glorify God.**

I. Pray more specifically and intelligently.

- A. The Bible teaches that we are to pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
NOTE: This is in agreement with the teaching of Jesus who taught that “at all times (we) ought to pray and not to lose heart.” Luke 18:1
- B. The Bible tells us how to pray, what to pray about, and who to pray for.
- C. The Bible is filled with examples of how people prayed and what happened when they prayed. (Start by reading Paul’s recorded prayers and John 17)
- D. The Bible is filled with promises related to prayer.
- E. Becoming a true prayer-warrior does not just happen.

II. Study more diligently.

- A. Learn your way around your Bible by:
 - 1. Memorizing the books of the Bible.
 - 2. Getting a good study Bible or Bible handbook to help introduce you to each book in the Bible.
 - 3. Become like the Berean’s in Acts 17:11.
“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so (the things that Paul was preaching).”
- B. Read the Bible through devotionally, and become a student of God’s Word.
 - 1. Ask God to speak to you as your read, and rely on the Holy Spirit to give you insight and understanding.
 - 2. Take the time to read every book in the Bible this year.
 - 3. Keep a journal and record questions, answers to questions, thoughts that come to you as your read, and things that God says to you.

III. Give more sacrificially.

- A. Note Paul’s words to the Corinthians found in 2 Corinthians 8:7
“But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.”
- B. He wanted them to abound in the grace of giving.
- C. Our giving to the cause of Christ should be sacrificial since He sacrificed everything for us.
- D. Our giving to the cause of Christ should be sacrificial because the needs are so great.

IV. Live more purposefully.

- A. Live your life for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31
“Whether, then, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- B. Do only what you can do in Jesus’ name. Col 3:17
“**Whatever you do in word or deed**, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

C. Do all you do for the Lord. Col 3:23-24

“**Whatever you do**, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

D. Rely on the Holy Spirit to empower and to give direction to your life.

V. Go more deliberately.

A. Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples.”

B. What are you deliberately doing to obey that clear command?

NOTE: We should be pointedly praying for specific lost people, constantly preparing so that we will be able to share the Gospel clearly, and purposefully living so that our lives will lend credibility to our words.

C. How might things be different at this time next year if each of us positively impacted the life of one lost person for Christ between now and this time next year?

D. We must view life from the perspective of God and His purposes and not our comfort and plans.

NOTE: Consider Paul and Silas’ response to being beaten, jailed, and having their feet fastened in stocks in the city of Philippi. Acts 16:25-34

APPLICATION

1. Sadly, most professing Christians are content to be ordinary-to meet the artificial standards set by the average church in America.

2. Jesus did not die on the cross, rise again, and ascend to God’s right hand so that you and I can be comfortable, complacent and ordinary.

3. Why be ordinary when we can be extra-ordinary followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

4. A final thought. The Christian life is meant to be a shared experience; Christ within and our brothers and sister in Christ without.

5. This world is not a friend to those who are walking the Narrow Way on their way to Heaven, so we need to love and care about each other.

6. Two passages come to mind.

a. John 15:17-20

“**This I command you, that you love one another.** 18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

b. Hebrews 10:23-25

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”