

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

— **December 31, 2017** —

Allen Parr, Guest Speaker

SERMON: A Recipe for Success

TEXT: Hebrews 12:1-2

Central Message:

January represents a time in each of our lives when we are looking forward to the new year in anticipation of what's to come. We set goals that we seldom reach. We make promises and resolve to do things differently so next year can be better than the previous year. At the same time we are looking back and assessing how this past year went.

CONTEXT:

The author of Hebrews, and we don't know exactly who it is, is talking to a group of Hebrews who are experiencing extreme persecution because of their faith in Jesus. Some of them have seen their loved ones killed because of being a Christian (stoned, crucified, hung, sawed into two). As a result, many of them were on the verge of quitting the faith and turning back to Judaism saying, "This isn't worth it! Christianity doesn't work! You follow Jesus and things don't get better; they only get worse!" Maybe you feel that way today. "Lord, I've tried waiting on God to send my mate. I tried to live a celibate life, but I'm still alone!" "Lord I tried to give my 10% to the church, and I'm still broke." "Lord, I'm trying to practice Christian principles in my marriage, and my marriage isn't getting any better." And you're wondering, "Is this worth it?" And you want to give up!

Our text today gives us five things that we need to do so that this time next year will be a proud moment to say we accomplished the goals we set forth to accomplish.

AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

“Knowing God and Making Him Known”

Lesson #1: We all need community – COMMUNITY – v. 1

“Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...”

- We are reminded of people in the past who experienced difficulties, yet they overcame by faith (Heb. 11).
- We still need people today to encourage us and keep us accountable.
- **QUESTION:** Who have you given the right to speak into your life?

Lesson #2: We must lay aside every weight – ELIMINATION – v. 1

“lay aside every weight...”

- A weight is not a sin, but it is something that has the potential to slow you down and hinder you from becoming the man/woman God has called you to be.
- It could be fear of failure, perfectionism, ego, social media, a person you are dating, your pursuit of money, a hobby, etc.
- **APPLICATION:** Write down the things that you know you need to lay aside that are slowing you down.

Lesson #3: We must deal with our sin – INTEGRITY – v. 1

“and the sin that so easily ensnares us...”

- Everyone has a “besetting sin.” We have a weakness that we must address. Here are 4 ways:
 - 1) Admit you have a PROBLEM – It’s not just a struggle or a mistake or slip-up. It’s a problem which means you need help.
 - 2) Believe God can deliver you from it.
 - 3) Deal with the ROOT of the problem rather than the FRUIT – Get to the heart of why you are struggling with this particular sin.
 - 4) Fear God – UNTIL THE PAIN OF YOUR SIN IS GREATER THAN THE PLEASURE YOU GET FROM IT, YOU WILL NEVER CHANGE.

Lesson #4: God has called us to endure – ENDURANCE – v. 2

“and run with endurance the race God has set before us...”

- The Greek word for “endurance” means “to remain under.” It refers to the ability to remain under a difficult pressure that is weighing you down.
- We are to run the race GOD HAS SET BEFORE US – We all have a unique race to run.

- Your RACE and your PACE may be different than mine, but we must ENDURE.

Lesson #5: Keep your eyes on Jesus – FOCUS – v. 2

“looking unto Jesus...”

- Keeping with the imagery of a runner, here are three things that can distract us:
 - 1) Looking in the stands – Represents the world...they are not on the track or even running the same race.
 - 2) Looking at people running around you – Represents comparing ourselves to other Christians.
 - 3) Looking behind us – Not looking at what is before us, and getting stuck in the past.

So, if we are going to experience success in 2018, the recipe is clear:

*We need **COMMUNITY, ELIMINATION, INTEGRITY, ENDURANCE and FOCUS.***