



Let Us Consider One Another



Twelve Steps to a Good Year
(Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. Each of our twelve steps to a good year is taken from a sentence in the epistle to the Hebrews beginning with the words, "Let us." The seven successive steps that we've looked at so far are these: (1) Let us fear; (2) Let us be diligent; (3) Let us hold fast our confession; (4) Let us draw near to the throne of grace; (5) Let us press on to maturity; (6) Let us draw near to the most holy place; (7) Let us hold fast our confession without wavering.

Let me repeat my suggestion that as we go through these successive steps you commit them to memory.

Today we're going to look at the eighth step. This is found also, like the two previous steps, in Hebrews 10. In order to get an understanding of the context, we're going to read

verses 24 through 26 from Hebrews 10:

"And let us consider how to stimulate one another through love and good deeds, 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. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin."

Now the English translation that I read says, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." That's a good translation. But in the original Greek, the order is changed. Or rather, the English translation has changed the order of the original Greek, to be more precise. And in the original, the order is this: "Let us consider one another, how to stimulate to love and good deeds." I believe that brings out the real essence of this particular resolution. It is, "let us consider one another." And we're to consider one another from the point of view how we can bring the best out of one another. But the essence of the resolution is: "Let us consider one another."

So many people today are shut up in the prison of self. Their basic problem is self-centeredness. And I have never met a

self-centered person who was truly happy and enjoyed true peace. In fact, the more you concentrate on yourself, the more you worry about yourself, the more you seek to please yourself, the more your problems will increase. There is no solution to your problems in yourself. You've got to be released from that prison of self-centeredness. And here is one scriptural way to be released: Stop worrying about yourself. Stop caring for yourself all the time. Stop fighting for yourself. And instead, start to consider your fellow believers. "Let us consider one another."

In Philippians 2:3-7, Paul sets before us the example of Jesus as one that we need to follow, and I think it's very applicable to this resolution, "Let us consider one another." This is what Paul says in Philippians 2:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

That's the exact opposite of considering one another, is looking out for your own personal interests. The release is to look out for the interests of others, to be more concerned about others than yourself.

And then Paul says here's where we need to follow the example of Jesus. He goes on, Philippians 2:5-7:

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus..."

Remember I said at the beginning of these talks that our attitude determines our approach and our approach determines the outcome. Here's an attitude for the New Year that you need to cultivate: "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

"...although he existed in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant."

The Greek literally is, "a slave." So Jesus, who was Lord of all, emptied Himself of all that and was willing to become a servant, a bondservant, a slave. And that is the attitude that Paul says we need to imitate.

There's a parallel and very beautiful passage in Galatians 5:13-14:

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, [that is, to gratify your own personal and selfish desire] but through love serve one another, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

So the way not to indulge our fleshly nature, not to yield to selfishness, not to become shut up in that prison of self, is: to look outward to others. Through love, serve one another. I believe that's one of the key words that the Holy Spirit is emphasizing to God's people today, learning to serve through love, to serve one another. So many people today will talk about serving the Lord but they never serve their fellow believers. I don't know how much you can really serve the Lord if you're not willing to serve your fellow believers, because the Lord comes to us in the members of His body. And our attitude to the members is really our attitude to the Lord Himself.

In this connection of being willing to serve others, I want to take an example from the apostle Paul, something he wrote to the Corinthian Christians. You need to bear in mind that Paul by background was a very strict, observant, orthodox Jew. He had the qualifications to be a rabbi. He was Pharisee. He had a kind of righteousness which separated itself from other people, regarded other people as on a lower level, and kept himself to himself, and despised others. But when he came to know Jesus, the most wonderful change took place in that nature of Paul. This is what he writes to the Corinthians. Bear in mind those Corinthians were basically the scum of the earth. Paul, in his epistle, says that some of them had been homosexuals, some had been prostitutes, some had been drunkards, some had been revilers, they were just not the best kind of people. Corinth was one of the major seaports of the ancient world, and so often in seaports, that's the kind of people that you tend to meet.

Now listen to this astonishing statement, 2 Corinthians 4:5. Paul says:

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake."

Isn't that an amazing statement? There's this proud Pharisee saying, "We're your slaves for the sake of Jesus." To those people! Notice the three steps. First, dethrone self, "not ourselves." Second, enthrone Christ, "Christ Jesus as Lord." Third, serve others, "we are your bondservants for Jesus' sake." Let me say those three steps again. Dethrone self,

enthroned Christ, serve others. By love, serve others. That's the message, escape from self-centeredness.

Now I want to point out to you in closing this message that serving is a skill we have to acquire. It doesn't just happen, it isn't ours by nature. To take an example of a waiter: a waiter is a man who, in a sense, is called to serve. But a waiter needs to be trained. There is much in the training of a waiter. I can't go into it but I have a friend who used to be a waiter, and he explained to me once all that's involved in being a good waiter. And I saw a marvelous example of the training to serve. So serving doesn't just happen; it's a skill we have to acquire. We have to study others to find out what produces a positive and not a negative response. We're to study others to provoke them to love and good deeds, not to the opposite. So this requires practice, it requires training, it requires discipline.

It also requires the right environment. That's important. You see, after saying, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works," Paul goes on to say, "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." So we have to learn to serve in the right environment, and the right environment is expressed in the words, "our own assembling together." I would say it means this: close, committed, regular fellowship. That's the environment in which we can be trained to serve one another.

Now in the next verse, the writer of Hebrews states the disastrous alternative. He goes on in verse 26, immediately after that warning against forsaking our own assembling together, and he says this:

"For if we go on sinning willfully, after receiving the knowledge of the truth..."

It's no accident that these words follow. What's the implication? The implication is that if we don't stay in the right environment, if we aren't in close, committed, regular fellowship, we'll go back to sinning. The only safe way is to stay in fellowship, learn to serve, learn to consider other people.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back again next week at this same time. Next week I'll be giving the remaining steps to a good year.

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a pen.

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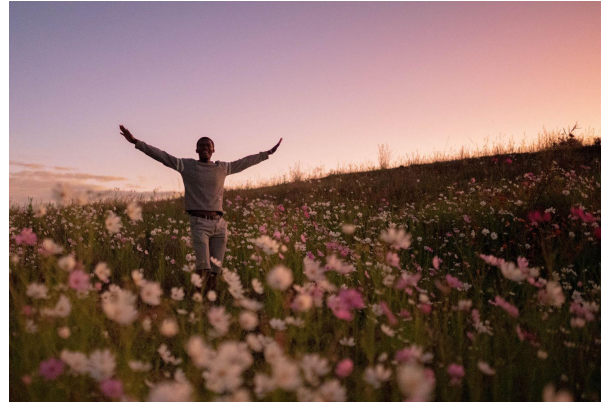
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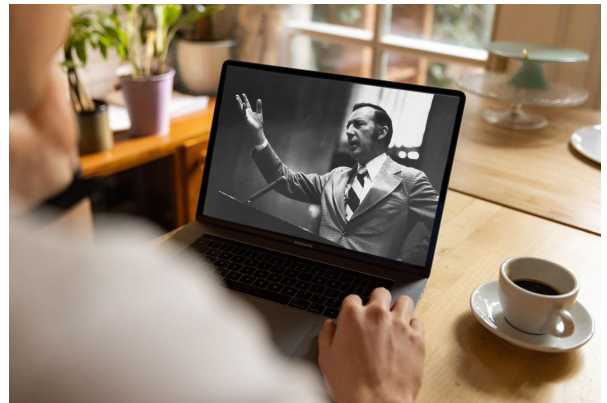
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