TURNING THE PAGE
Philippians 3:12-14

When you read a book eventually you are going to have to turn the page of that book. If it is a very interesting book then you going to be very interested in what lies ahead in the next page.

2014 is a great time to turn the page on things you would like to get going on and accomplish in the New Year. It is also a great time to turn the page on some things you should put behind you.

The passage I would like for us to look at today is Philippians 3:12-14. So if you have your Bibles please turn with me to Philippians 3:12-14. Would you stand as we read from God’s Holy Word.

The 1st Observation from this passage comes in the first part of verse 12. The Apostle Paul had a realistic view of himself. He uses the phrase “Not that I have already attained…” The great Apostle Paul who had conquered many spiritual hurdles saw himself as far from perfect. Paul realistic view of himself was actually a mark of spiritual maturity. The closer we get to Christ the more we realize how sinful we are. Beware of people who think they have “arrived” and they are perfect. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

The 2nd Observation from this passage comes in verse 13. The Apostle Paul had a realistic view of his past. “…forgetting those things which are behind..” If Paul focused his whole life on his past, the things he did before he was saved, it would have kept him from doing a great work for the Lord. Who had persecuted Christians in their past? Who dragged Christians out of their homes? Who had arrested Christians? And who was there when a young believer named Stephen was killed? This was Paul’s past
life, but he learned from his past and his life now had been changed by Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.” If we are turn the pages on 2013 then we need to have a realistic view of ourselves. And we need to have a realistic view of our past. But as we look forward to 2014 and turn the pages on 2013 let’s look at some challenges for 2014.

The 1st Challenge is to pursue a great relationship with God? Notice what Proverbs 3:5-6 says. When you trust in the Lord you are leaning (relying) on Him for guidance, for strength, and for help. How much time are you spending in prayer every day? How much time are you spending in Bible Reading? How much time are you spending in coming to church?

The 2nd Challenge is to pursue a great attitude toward others. Notice what Proverbs 17:22 says. Perhaps you can affect your own health by more than diet, nutrition, exercise, and sleep. You can affect it by our attitude toward others. How many like to be around someone has a negative and rotten attitude? Learn to laugh and enjoy life this year and perhaps people may want to be around you.

The 3rd Challenge is to honestly deal with sin in your life this year. Proverbs 28:13 says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Is there some sins in your life that you think is secret? Perhaps you need to think again, because nothing is hidden from the eyes of God. The greatest joy is to confess that sin to God. He already knows we have sinned, but He waits for us to confess it to Him and He will forgive us. Notice what 1 John 1:9 says.
The 4th Challenge is to rise above mediocrity. Mediocrity is being average, but the opposite of mediocrity is excellence. Notice what Proverbs 22:29 says. When you do excellent work don’t be surprised when influential people take notice. How much more when we realize that we working for Jesus! Now let’s take a look at applications for Turning the Page and moving ahead in 2014.

**Turn the Page on a Lukewarm Relationship with Christ.** This is the Christian that continues to dabble in the things of the world and hold on to the pleasures of sin for a season. What does Jesus think about lukewarm Christians? Notice what Revelation 3:16 says.

**Turn the Page on Unforgiveness.** Unforgiveness robs you of the full life God intends for you. When unforgiveness is left unchecked then it festers into bitterness. Someone has said that bitterness is a chain designed to keep you captive, but forgiveness can break that chain and set you free. Notice what Ephesians 4:32 says.

**Turn the Page on a Lingering Sin.** Perhaps you need to change your attitude toward authority. Perhaps you have been bitter toward a friend or relative for years. Or perhaps you have been disobedient toward God. It is time to get things right with others and with God.

**Turn the Page on Mediocrity.** Pursue excellence with your family this year. How about having reading the Bible as a family together? How about praying together as a family? Notice what Joshua 24:15 says

Pursue excellence at work. Trust me, your boss will notice. Pursue excellence at school. Trust me, your teachers will notice. Pursue excellence at church. Trust me, your pastor and most importantly your Lord will notice! So let me close with a story to challenge us all.
A story is told of an elderly carpenter who was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paychecks, but they could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked him if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The elderly carpenter reluctantly said yes, but in time, it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy work and used inferior materials.

When the carpenter finished his work, his boss came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said, “my gift to you.” The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us my friends. We build our lives, a day at a time, perhaps putting less than our very best into the building. Then with a shock, we realize we have to live in the house we have built. So build wisely while you can! Move on to better things. Run the race of life well. Now is your opportunity to win the prize that awaits you. If you don’t know Jesus, then you are not even in the race. Start the race this year by receiving Him as your personal Saviour. And for the rest of us, where are you at spiritually? Do you need to get some things right with someone? Do you need to do better at work? Do you need to better at school? Do you need to do better at church? Now is the perfect time to turn the page on 2013 and live for Jesus in 2014! Let’s stand for a time of invitation.