

LET'S GO AHEAD ANYWAY IN 2005

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Say you're getting ready for a long car trip that you've just got to take. Everything is not exactly perfect...the car is not in the best shape...it's a little old and you don't feel that good yourself. The weather looks bad a few days out, and you're a bit uncertain about the details of what you need to do when you get where you're going. Even the exact destination is a little fuzzy. I've had more than one trip like that...maybe you have too. But you look at your family...maybe co-workers (if it was a business trip) and you hear yourself say, "Well, let's just go anyway."

This is just about the situation we face with the year that began January 1, 2005. We might not be in the best shape and we sure don't know what is ahead for us. But we know we have to go...and with the help of God we will do our best. Life is full of uncertain twists and turns, ups and downs. Let's go ahead, anyway!

A fine passage that helps us see God's Will for us in the coming year is Philippians 3:12-16. We go forward spiritually because we have to...we must face life, grab it, and do our best. And God, with His Word, helps us.

Let's go ahead anyway, even if things are not perfect (3:12-13a). Human beings are works in progress. We are capable of mature, full-grown faithfulness, but not sinless or technical perfection.

Once you realize that you don't have all the answers (surely, you have made that realization, haven't you?), remember that the other fellow is in the same shape you are. In other words, don't expect from others what you can't deliver yourself. This will make your journey through 2005 easier.

People make a mistake when they refuse to go ahead with important spiritual matters, like obeying the gospel, because they have the idea that everything is not "just so". Some are waiting for someone else to obey the gospel with them. Others wait for the "right" time. The individual alone is responsible for the decision to come to God and the right time is always now. And it is the height of foolishness to allow someone else's unfaithfulness to dissuade you from doing what is right.

Let's go ahead anyway, because this is the only way to reach our goal (3:13b-14). Without goals, we accomplish nothing. For goals to be effective three elements must be present: The goal must be *correct*, that is, it must be a right and good thing. There must be *commitment* to the goal. We have to want to accomplish our goal. Folks do what they want to do. And there has to be a discernable *course* to follow in pursuing the goal. What are your goals for this year?

Let's go ahead anyway because of the nature of our goal as a Christian (3:13b-14). Paul wrote of "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is the highest calling of man to be a child of God. That is a state available only in Jesus. It means that we live by God's principles, that we follow the pattern He has left us.

Let's go ahead anyway because it is what God wants us to do (3:15). Mature Christians are interested in doing the Will of God. First century Christians could ascertain God's Will by listening to an apostle or other inspired individual. We have inspired documents left by these folks that serve us as sure and steady guides to God's Will for us (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Let's go ahead anyway because it will keep us together in Christ (3:16). A great benefit to going ahead in this Biblical fashion is that in so doing we will be together. A group of folks all going in the same direction in the same way will of necessity be together.

Let's go ahead together as people of God for 2005.

Bill Isby