

Now that we are at the beginning of a new year, *hopefully you have taken the time to evaluate your life*. I know that many people don't necessarily make New Year's Resolutions, but hopefully you have made some decisions about what you would like to change or improve about how you are living your life. This week's lesson will focus on *the things that hold us back* from making progress in our lives.

A Question for Thought:
*Is there something that you want
for your life that you
don't have yet?*

Why don't you have what you want?

So... what are the things that are holding you back from getting what you want?

How can you begin to prepare yourself to get what you want in 2008?

The Things That Hold Us Back

#1 An unwillingness to sacrifice and work hard for what we want...

Luke 19:1-10

- Zacchaeus is seeking a change in his life.
- If we are seeking a change in our life, what lessons can we learn from Zacchaeus and his story?

Learning from Zacchaeus

- Zacchaeus first **recognizes** that he needs to make a positive change in his life. *Until we fully acknowledge that we need to change, progress can not be made in our lives.*
- After he recognizes that he needs to change, Zacchaeus **fully dedicates himself to improving his life.** **Despite the obstacles** that present themselves, Zacchaeus reaches his goal of connecting with Jesus by not giving up even when it is tough. *We, too, must fully be committed to achieving our goals and continue towards them despite the challenges we face.*

The Things That Hold Us Back

#2 We worry too much about the wrong things and we are distracted by the cares of the World.

Luke 10: 28-42

Jesus is at the home of Martha and Mary. Martha was focused on making preparations, rather than listening to the Lord. Mary made the right choice by sitting at the Lord's feet and learning from Him. *Sometimes, we get distracted and worried and we miss something that God has in store for us. Slow down, streamline your life, take time for yourself and try to worry less. Worrying about something has never solved a problem.*

Trying to juggle too much can cause you to drop everything... You might have to let something go...



The Things That Hold Us Back

#3 We don't believe in ourselves

Exodus 3: 7, 10-11 ; Exodus 4: 10-13

- The Lord has given Moses a special assignment. Moses was told to bring the suffering Israelites out of Egypt.
- Moses doesn't believe in his own ability. He nearly allows the fact that he doesn't believe in himself to stop him from fulfilling God's purpose for his life.
- *Often times, we allow the fact that we don't believe in ourselves to stop us from being all that we can be...*

The Things That Hold Us Back

#4 We don't have enough faith in God

Matthew 9: 27-31

- Do you believe that the Lord is able to help you accomplish the things you want for your life?
When we doubt God, we are held back from achieving our goals...
- *According to your faith will it be done to you... If you have little faith, you will have little blessings. If you have BIG faith, you will have BIG blessings.*

The Things That Hold Us Back

#5 People who are close to us...but are not good for us

- *Proverbs 5: 1-14*
- *An adulteress is just one example of having a person close enough who ultimately will do us harm. Can you think of any other examples?*
- *The Lord warns us against keeping bad people around us.*
– I Corinthians 15: 33

The Things That Hold Us Back

#6 An unforgiving spirit...

Matthew 6: 14-15

Matthew 18: 21-22

When we don't forgive others, we are unnecessarily consumed with anger and resentment. This type of attitude stresses us out and holds us back from being all we can be for God. An unforgiving spirit also hurts our relationship with God.

The Things That Hold Us Back

#7 An inability to let go of the past

Phil 3: 10-15

Past mistakes

Past pain

Past failures

Past disappointments

...try to forget them and leave them in the past...you can't change the past, but you can prepare yourself for the future.

The Things That Hold Us Back

#8 *Sin in our lives*

Isaiah 59: 2

- If sin separates us from God, and we need God to achieve our goals...then we must do our best to rid our lives of sin. *If we continue to deliberately live a life of sin we will separate ourselves from God and without Him, we can do nothing.*
- Try your best to minimize the amount of sin in your life this New Year. *Your life will be better and you will feel more closely connected to God.*