



ALL IN 5

New Year 2016

Focused Living Ministries

"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching (Scripture) and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Acts 2:42

2016 is going to be a great year no matter what happens because we have a **GREAT GOD!** (Jer 10:6; 1 Chron 16:25; 29:11; Ps 47:2, 7; 96:4; 136:4; Neh 1:5; Ezek 36:23; 1 Sam 12:22; Is 55:9; Jer 32:19; Luke 1:49; Phil 2:5-10; Eph 3:20. Col 1:15-20. Hey, look them up!) From God's perspective New Year always begins at the **Cross** and **Resurrection** (Passover: Exodus 12:2 March/April. Acts 1:3; 2:22-36). At the Cross He showed us the greatness of His grace and in the Resurrection the greatness of His power over death as well as in life. **ALL IN** men understand their real need to start the New Year totally committed to receiving and living the truth of His Word (Ezra 7:10; Ps 119:9-18; II Tim 3:16-17) so that they might grow to trust His greatness rather than their own resources. Here are 7 attitudes of the heart that will let the truth of our awesome God transform us into **ALL IN** men in 2016. [Adapted from an article by Matt Smethurst, Gospel Coalition]

1. Approach It Humbly. Through the Scriptures the Creator of the universe has generously revealed Himself to us so that we can know who He is, what He's like, what He demands, and how we may know Him even more. When it comes to knowing our Creator we have 2 options: revelation (He speaks) or speculation (we guess). The Bible is an all-access pass into the revealed mind and will of God. This ought to humble us deeply.

2. Approach It Desperately. Just before his death, Moses challenged the people a final time saying, *"These are not idle words for you—they are your life"* (Deut 32:47). The stakes could not be higher. Your spiritual life is both started and sustained by God's Word (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23)! Even Jesus was desperate for His Father's truth during a time of severe temptation by saying *"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Deut 8:3 Matt. 4:4). Your soul will wither and die without His truth daily. (Check out Ps 63:1-5; 119:20, 31, 131; Jer 15:16).

3. Approach It Studiously. **ALL IN** men are constantly learning about the greatness of God and come to His word with a posture of learning, asking the Author to teach them wonderful things (Ps 119:18)! As His men, we are

to carefully (not carelessly) study those things which are valuable and in which we delight (Ps 111:2; Acts 17:11; Ezra 7:10; II Tim 2:15).

4. Approach It Obediently. On New Year's Eve (the night before He died) Jesus taught that the best way to love Him was to obey His commands in response to His grace (John 14:15; 21, 23, 24, 15:10). The **ALL IN** men of the OT also understood that a great way to love God was to search the Scriptures for ways to obey in response to His love (Ps 119:4-5, 34, 60). What is God's urgent warning when we take His commands lightly (1 John 2:4-5; James 1:22)?

5. Approach It Joyfully. Fathers desire that their kids obey with joyful hearts of **delight** rather than with begrudging compliance out of **duty**. Authentic obedience is motivated by and flows from love and joy (John 14:15; 15:11; Ps 1:2; 40:8; Jer 15:16). Reading the Bible feels like a duty at times. But **ALL IN** men live by their wills, not just their feelings. When that moment arrives... press on... press through. Ask for help. Plead for joy. It's a prayer the Father loves to answer. (I Tim 4:6-10; I Co 9:23-27)

6. Approach It Expectantly. The Bible is a book of unparalleled power because its Author is God Himself. His word can melt the coldest soul (Jer. 23:29), soften the hardest heart (Mark 3:5; 16:14) and change lives (Acts 9:1-17). The Bible is God's love letter to you (Rom 15:4)! So rip it open and devour it just as you would a love letter from your beautiful bride whom you haven't seen in a month! Expect comfort (Ps 119:50), strength (Ps 119:28), guidance (Ps 119:105), hope (Rom 15:4), assurance (1 John 5:13), and transformation (John 17:17) along with a ton of encouragement.

7. Approach It Frequently. Here's a New Year challenge. Would you be willing to eat only **after** you have consumed a portion of God's Word? Read as often as you feed! (Jer 15:16; Deut 4:1-4; John 6:35, 48, 51). Are you willing to be **FAT** (**F**aithful. **A**vailable. **T**eachable). Would you lose weight or gain it! Stop starving and start growing! (Ps 119:147-48, 97; Col 3:16).

ASSIGNMENT Look up and study the verses on this sheet writing out a New Years prayer getting your heart ready for growth. Be prepared to hand them in at the next Forum in a self addressed envelope (a stamp would be appreciated) and we will mail them to you in February/March for accountability!



TAG TEAM DISCUSSION What is your New Year plan to approach your Creator God daily through the truth of His Word? With which of these 'approaches' do you most struggle? Excel?