

**Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!**

**Thank you so much for visiting our website! Here is an excerpt of my notes from Pastor A.J.'s sermon, "STAY FOCUSED!"**

**We pray this Message will bless you the way it blessed us! Please come back again next week for more from "LaKesha's Pen" with another inspiring message from our Pastor.**

**Yours in Christ,**

**LaKesha Johnson-Lewis**

## **STAY FOCUSED!**

### **Mark 2:21-22**

You are made up of your past experiences, both failures and successes. Today you may find yourself trapped in your past. You have carried old habits and memories into your today. In the New Year many people make New Year's Resolutions. This is an idea that you will change some old habit to resolve some unwanted outcome in your life. The problem with having a New Year's Resolution is that this requires you using your own strength and abilities. Many people leave out God. In **Romans 12:2**, He tells you to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. This renewal process is done through the Word of God and by prayer. Prayer is simply communicating with God. He wants to hear from you as much as He desires to be heard. God wants you to be encouraged and to stay focused but He also wants you to desire His help with accomplishing change. **Don't continue to do what doesn't work!** You may find yourself turning to old habits because they are comfortable and what you are accustomed to. You may find yourself possibly turning to drinking, shopping, eating or even gambling to satisfy your emotions. Be focused this year and this means you will let God lead all of your plans.

**New Things Require Restructure**

In order to see things begin to change in your life it requires restructuring your life. You must be willing to be an active participant and not a watcher. This means that you will do what God ask you to do and allow Him to be God and do what you can't. Eliminate hollow statements from your vocabulary. These statements lead to disappointing years. Be determined to leave 2017 better than when it began. **Stick with God and His process of change at all cost! Even when it gets hard!** The key to your success this year is found when you are open to hear and do what God says. Saying to yourself this is too hard is just an excuse. Be decisive and make up your mind ahead of time that you will do and live the successful life God wants you to have. Begin with learning the difference between a want versus a need.

In this New Year you will need to change your mind about some things. **James 1:5**, states you should ask God for wisdom. Wisdom comes only from God. It's a knowing of when and how to execute action according to the knowledge and understanding you have gained through God's Word. In 2017 there will be somethings you will have to let go of. It will be vital to your success to start with the time killers. What are you doing with your time? What is God requiring of your time? God can't give you the new thing if you are still hanging on to the old! In 2017 don't trust your feelings; trust God!

### **A Time of Stretching**

God will stretch you in 2017. He will require you to let go and get out of your comfort zone. You will have to decide to stop with the foolishness because foolishness takes you down a longer path to your destination. In **Isaiah 55:8-9**, God says His thoughts are not your thoughts nor are His ways your ways. What God is asking of you this year may not make sense to everyone in your circle. If you think about it too hard it may not make sense to you but stepping out and doing it you have peace. Don't worry about God's methods of doing, just do it as Nike would say.

### **Motives**

Why do you do what you do? Why do you give? Is to get back? Why do you read the Bible? Is it just to become proficient in scripture? Why do you come to church? Do you come out of obligation? No matter what you do the motive should always come from a place of love. Allow God to examine your heart and reveal to you your motives. Then be open and receptive to the changes He asks you to make. **2 Corinthians 5:17** states if anyone be in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things become new. 2017 is going to give you something new. Like in **Romans 2**, you will get a new mindset and with a new mindset comes new and exciting experiences.

Everything that is done during the church service is to strengthen you for the battle. Your praise, your worship, your prayers and the sermon are all spiritual warfare. The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembly of ourselves in **Hebrews 10:25**. Be sure in 2017 you surround yourself with likeminded people. Perceive that God is making changes, see **Isaiah 43:18-19**.

2017 is a new slate with many opportunities if you have not made Jesus Christ the center of your life now is the time to do so. Ask God to come into your heart and forgive you of your sins. If you ask Him to reveal Himself to you He will undoubtedly. Continue to seek Him with your whole heart and He will be found. Perceive and believe that God is doing something great in your life. God will do what He has promised to do! Don't waste this year! Keep your eye on God stay focused because He is focused on you!