

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN! OBEY!

Have you ever noticed how fitness centers are packed with people in January and February, but three to six months later the attendance has dwindled and the exercise stations look so lonely? What happened? Were the goals set at the beginning of the year accomplishedweight loss achieved, muscle strength and endurance developed, improved flexibility attained?

Now, think about your spiritual life. It's been six months since you embarked on a new year. Are there character qualities that God wanted to build into your life, tasks He wanted you to accomplish, or relationships He wanted you to develop at the beginning of the year that are not being realized? If your progress has been minimal, maybe the following interruptions have caused delays:

- **busyness of life has dictated your schedule** (*Hosea 10:12*)
- **urgent items have taken priority over the most important ones** (*Luke 10:41*)
- **goals were pursued in your own strength, rather than seeking God's enablement** (*Psalms 28:7*)
- **goals set in January are not the goals God has purposed for you in July** (*Proverbs 16:9*)

The enemy, Satan, who is described in the Scriptures as the tempter (*Matthew 4:3*), the deceiver (*Revelation 12:9*), the accuser (*Zechariah 3:1*), the destroyer (*Revelation 9:11*), and the murderer (*John 8:44*) opposes all believers. He sets hurdles in our path and sends us confusing messages to lead us away from a close relationship with Christ and prevent us from fulfilling His desires in our lives. Satan's present nature is the result of his past rebellion (*Isaiah 14:12-15 & Ezekiel 28:14-17*).

We can learn from King David who often spent time alone with God offering up praise and thanksgiving to Him. David listened as God revealed truth and offered insights for him to incorporate into his life. Because of what David learned from God, he was able to set his course, make the necessary mid-course corrections, and achieve what God had planned for him (*Psalms 16:7,11*). We have an advantage when compared to David because God has given us His Word to instruct us (*Psalms 119:105*), and put His Spirit in our hearts to empower us to accomplish what He desires (*1 Corinthians 3:16*).

So, I encourage you to:

STOP! Stop and spend some time alone with God as you begin the second half of 2012 (*Jeremiah 29:12*).

LOOK! Look to the Lord and ask Him to evaluate your progress in accomplishing the goals you believe He has set out for you in the various areas of your life (*Psalms 32:8*).

LISTEN! Listen, as you quiet your heart for His still, small, voice (*Isaiah 28:23*). He will guide you in becoming all He would have you be and doing all He would have you do (*Proverbs 16:3*).

OBEY! Obey Him and bring glory to His name (*1 Samuel 15:22*).

Knowing God gives meaning to our lives. Obeying God gives purpose to our lives.

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