

## **2015 IS HALF GONE: MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH**

**By Bob Young**

We are at the half-way point of 2015. As a coach helps a team to evaluate the successes and failures of the first half of a ballgame, so also it is a good time for Christians to think about how we have lived the first half of the year. The goal is to make corrections and understand better how to execute in the second half.

Paul reminds us that a part of the half-time review is moving on from the past (Phil. 3:10-14). The past informs our pursuit of excellence, but must not shackle us or hinder us. Paul also urges that we make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:15-16).

The items below are not in any particular order—they represent some of the most important things in life and my goal is work on all of them simultaneously.

First, it is time to review my relationship with God. This is paramount. Am I cultivating a heart of worship? Am I walking closer to my God each day, listening to him, sharing my life with him? Am I developing a heart and spirit of service, sacrifice, and submission? My relationship with God is reflected in how I live my life as I am transformed more and more into his image daily, from glory to glory.

Second, it is time to review my relationship with family—my spouse, my children, my grandchildren, my extended family. Am I actively cultivating these relationships? Am I growing relationally?

Third, it is time to review my relationship with my friends, including my brothers and sisters in Christ. Am I making and nurturing new friendships? Am I growing in my existing friendships and in spiritual fellowship? Friendships die if we do not invest time in nurturing them. We have to be intentional about nurturing relationships and friendships.

Four, it is time to rethink my commitments, my goals and priorities. This is a good time to review the things I wanted to see happen as the year began. If you are like me, some of those things are happening, some are in development, and some are not yet underway. This is a good time to resolve anew to commit to those things that will accomplish the goals and focus on the priorities. This will likely include investing time, resources, energy, and possibly training. I am convinced that investing in study, training, and habit changes is always worth it. It is an integral part of developing priorities and seeing my goals become reality.

Finally, it is time to rethink my spiritual life, my principles and responsibilities. Jesus calls me to pick up towel and basin to serve, to learn how to work hard and enjoy it, to honor the rhythms of work and rest, and to pay careful attention to my stewardship responsibilities to take care of my body, my mind, my spirit, and my stuff (including my finances).

Let me mention two aspects of this task. One, review failures and mistakes and decide not to repeat them. This is Paul's admonition: "forgetting those things that are behind." Evaluate and move on. It may be helpful to make a list of the things that did not work. This often makes it easier not to repeat them. A mistake or failure that you learn from is called "experience." Two, review the things that have succeeded this year and repeat them. Again, making a list of the things that have worked in the realm of relationships, commitments and priorities (business, ministry, and health), and personal spiritual goals, may make it easier to repeat them.