

three times out of four they say, Well now where can I go to study some more! There's a change in attitude in that regard between entering seminary and leaving it. So many think they know so much when they enter. And they know far more when they leave than when they entered, but they are aware of problems, they are aware of situations, they are aware of matters that they were not even aware of before.

I believe a person should appraise at this time of the year and think, Last year was I really getting the value out of the work that I should have? How can I plan in such a way so as to get that value that is there this coming year?

Incidentally that suggests to me this: If that man had such a hard time, such a miserable time working hard, sleepless nights, long days of agony getting through seminary, how much time did he have to spend with his family? I heard of a large seminary recently ~~in which they had in one year 18 divorces among the students.~~ It is easy to understand why that might happen. If men are working so hard to earn a living and to get through and perhaps the wife is working at different hours it is very easy for family life to dis-integrate and that is no way to prepare for the Lord's service!

I believe that probably more people's Christian service is ruined by troubles within the family than by anything else I know of. You meet a very lovely lady and it seems as if it would be heaven itself if you could be married to her, and you have a marriage ceremony, and that is not a tremendous thing you have achieved. That is the beginning of an achievement. You then have an opportunity-- you and she to build your lives together, to learn to know each other, to get to understand each other, to grow together in the Lord.

If you are both too busy in other things, it is easy to grow apart instead of growing together. That is no way to begin a life of Christian service. It is far better to take an extra year if necessary and to be real sure that you have ample time to build a real happy marriage--if you are married as most are nowadays. And to take the time if you have children to really bring those children up in the knowledge of Christ. It takes time.

Let's reappraise what we accomplished last year. Let's think through many different aspects of our lives. And let us look ahead and let us see how we can make this year a better year in every way than the year that is just passed. Let's pray:

Our Father we thank you that you have provided that there should be a time for reappraisal. At new years. It is a natural thing to think of life in segments. And most people make a sharp break. And our God may it not just be a time of celebration, may it not be just a time for changing a number on the calendar but may we each one think how we can make next year better than this year; how we can accomplish more for the Lord next year than we did this year; how we can grow in the knowledge of Christ and increase in the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.