**Last Year on Earth Part 4 – Personal Growth**

**GOALS & GUIDELINES:**
**ICEBREAKER:  Someone ought to come up with a solution for…**
**AGREEMENT PRAYER**
**PRAISE**
**EDIFY:**

The Mayan Calendar predicts we all have 323 days left. We aren’t here to argue if the Mayan prediction is correct or incorrect. We want to take this opportunity to contemplate living our last year on earth.

The last 3 weeks we decided every moment is important for growing spiritually and relationally. We have made up our mind that this year would be different; that it would be better! Now we are standing in the month of February and January, like a vapor, is gone. Tonight we are going to talking about personal growth…

We believe everyone can grow. We believe that everyone can have a brighter tomorrow. We believe, with God all things are possible, He will give us the desires of our heart, and He is for us and not against us. NEWSFLASH – God wants us to grow! But not everyone is growing…

**Q-** What are some reasons people aren’t growing?

There is always a reason to NOT GROW. Status quo is always easier. We can always procrastinate or wait for an easier time… but that waiting might be wasting valuable time. Look at Proverbs 20:4 – Because it was cold he wouldn’t plow the field, but he wasted the opportunity to plant for himself what would later become a harvest. This farmer ends up as a hungry beggar… He used the uncomfortable weather as an excuse…

**Q-** What are some excuses people make?

**Q-** Why do we make excuses?

We read the parable in Luke 14 about a great banquet. If you create a feast, you want people to show up. Nothing is worse than throwing a party and no one shows up. Many people were invited but didn’t show up, instead offered excuses.

**Q-** This is a parable, a short symbolic story. So what are the symbols? Who is throwing the Banquet? What is the banquet? (God is throwing the party. The Banquet is all the things God has prepared for us on Earth and in Heaven)

We talk a lot about the great things God has for us. His promises include blessing, healing, strength, peace, joy, love, fulfillment… Can you imagine missing out on those things… We do all the time.

Proverbs 20:4 – He didn’t plow because it was cold… he begged later. We might could say… We didn’t study for the test because we watched TV… we failed the test later. We didn’t apply ourselves at the job… we were passed over for promotion later… or worse – fired later. We fought everyone who tried to hold us accountable and dismissed their advice out of hand… we never changed for the better.

Have you ever made excuses? You were supposed to FILL IN THE BLANK but made an excuse… Sometimes it’s not a big deal… But sometimes it’s a huge deal!! Some of our excuses are killing us. Instead of having a harvest we are beggars.

**Q-** Have you ever tried to help someone, but couldn’t because they didn’t want to change? How did that feel?

I imagine God feels that way about us…

**Q-** What is Fulfillment? {follow up} What is Fulfillment for you personally?

**Internal Q-** God wants you to grow. Are you willing to change? **<Pray>**

**Vision: GOSPEL OF LOVE – This Sunday at RC and Next week at CG! Help spread the word!**

Goals and Guidelines

1. Grow in relationship with each other
2. Grow in relationship with God
3. Grow in number and multiply

 This is a non-denominational meeting where everyone's thoughts, ideas, and opinions are to be respected. Everyone is welcome and we encourage all to share their feelings.

We will not argue or debate!

We place God's Word as the highest authority.

We all share equally in the ownership of this Connect Group*,* therefore we will all participate in hosting meetings from house to house on a weekly basis.

We will be committed to attendance and arriving on time.

When sharing, we follow 3 simple rules...
Stay on subject
Keep it short
Keep all comments appropriate.

We will build confidence and trust with each other and become transparent.

What is said in here stays in here. No gossip!

Last but not least… We will invite others to our Connect Group!

**John 4:13-17 (NKJV)** What is your life? You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

**Proverbs 20:4 (KJV)** The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

**Luke 14:16-20 (NIV)** Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. **17** At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

   **18** “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

   **19** “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

   **20** “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’