

“Govern Yourself”
By Brother Kenneth Ray
Sunday, January 15th, 2011

I am planning... No, I am going to have... No, I am having a banner year in 2012. That is my statement. My question for you is, "Are you having a banner year in 2012?" If we are going to have a banner year, personally or as a group, it will take something to achieve this. As I make that statement, some of you are having some ideas of what that something might be. Anyone care to share your thoughts?

Be fruitful.

Keep in the faith.

Volunteer when it hurts.

Surround my self with people who are a positive influence.

Be fervent, not slothful.

Pray more.

Read the Bible more.

Trust in the Lord.

This year will be what we make of it, not what we wish for it to be.

Find ourselves in the middle of doing what God has for us to do.

See souls saved.

All of those thoughts are very good, and I thank you for your input, and for being an active part of service (Don't you hate it when somebody asks for crowd participation and everyone just sits and stares blankly at them?).

The something that it will take, though, is to govern yourself. We need to learn how to govern ourselves. You may say, "That sounds like work." Do you want it or not. You get paid when you go to work, don't you? I'm not going to pay you, that means that you get the good payment. It's also important that you understand who or what you are working for. You should be working for the Lord. Don't work for the pastor, or for the ministry, or for Parrish, because he has (or used to have) an F-150, or for Sonia, because she makes good soup. Those may be good things, but they are not everlasting things.

The first part of that is to govern:

Govern—1. exercise authority over, rule. 2. To influence the action or conduct of.
3. hold in check, restrain.

The second part is yourself.

Yourself—1. a form of you. 2. real you, true, actual self.

Another way of looking at that is 1. This is what I let you see. 2. What I don't let you see; or, flesh and blood vs. the soul. Both of which demand your full attention. You can only feed one, and the other will have to go hungry. The fleshly man wants to desire things that he wants to desire. Then there's your actual person, your core being, your soul, the spiritual man. You could feed one for a while, and then feed the other for awhile, and just be on a spiritual roller coaster, but, do you want this to be a banner year or not?

We cannot righteously govern ourselves by our own will. Oh, you can govern yourself by your own will, but it wouldn't be righteous. In order to be righteous, we have to govern ourselves by Jesus and the Holy Ghost.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,)...

Many times in the Bible, it says, "It is written..." The Word had a name: Jesus Christ. The Word still exists today in written form. We can see what Jesus said and use that as a road map. We have choices, too many choices. Having too many choices is a bad thing. Whenever I go to Avalon, or Go-Jo's, or the Paragon, they have so many choices on their menu; I have a worst time deciding what I want.

Do you remember what Jesus said when He was tempted? "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4). Jesus' Words are with us today in the form of written text—it's called the Bible.

God's not very keen on self-made men. When it comes to self governing, He's not real keen on self-madness.

God's Word is more than a bashing tool. You don't want to get on God's bad side, but there's more to it than that. Of course, some people say that God is all peace, love and joy; that's not true either. Do you ever wonder why there are so many denominations? There's only one Gospel; we're all supposed to be preaching and teaching the same thing. Some people decided that God's Word needed a little help, so we revised—I'm sorry, I mean we made it easier to understand. Of course, in the Bible, there's a little note about what God thinks of that (Revelation 22:18-19). If we don't understand something, who are we supposed to go to? We still have Jesus and the Holy Ghost, and, if you do a little research, you find out that they are the same thing. It's not like Jesus is over here saying one thing, and the Holy Ghost is over there saying something completely different. It's not a political debate; they both speak the same thing.

My own personal convictions are not in the Bible. Jesus said over and over, these are not my works, but my Father's, and, these are not my words, but my Father's. It can't be your point of view. There are a lot of things that I am commanded to do that I wouldn't do otherwise: Love my enemies; Forgive those that spitefully use me; I am commanded to forgive seven times seventy times in a day! Jesus Word tells us that, no matter what they did to me, if that's my brother, I have to reconcile.

I'm a southern man. I like sweet tea, and it's a coke, no matter what kind of coke you're talking about ("Sonia, do you want a coke?" "Yeah." "What kind of coke do you want?" "Pepsi." "Okay.") We take things slow. When I govern my life, my personal view is not what affects. I don't see eye-to-eye with all of you, and I don't mean because I'm short. Am I the only one here with siblings? Do you always get along with your siblings? No? but you always love them, right? In the body, in the church family, it's similar.

Part II—Try the spirits to see if they are of God.

Look in God's Word and see if these two things match; are we comparing apples to apples? If they don't match, then it's not of God. If my soul is troubled, then who can I go to? Ashley, how long have you been baptized? about a year. So, if I'm trying to get away with something, I might ask Ashley, and she might not know any better, but if she goes to the Word, then I can't get away with anything. I know a guy at work, any time you say something to him, like if the supervisor tells him to do something, then he always asks, "Where's the regulation?"

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits...

Don't just trust people. If somebody says, "Trust me, I've been in this church for so many years..." trust them even less. You should probably trust **me** less, because you trust me because of my position. Don't go around saying, "Brother Kenneth said this..." I didn't share anything with you; I've just read God's Word to you. God taught you this, I was just the tool He used.

Matthew 16:6 ...Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees...

To put that in context, the disciples had forgotten to bring bread, and Jesus said, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They thought He was talking about bread, and he asked them, don't you remember when I fed all those people? Why would you think I was talking about bread? Then he explained.

Matthew 16:12 ...not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine...

Leaven—(G2219) Ferment (as if boiling up), to boil, be agitated.

Beware of agitators. Avoid dividers. Have you ever come across somebody that as soon as you say something to them, they data dump—tell you everything you could ever possible want to know about that subject—but you can't tell them anything. Are you one of those people that, as soon as you walk into a room, everybody starts to leave? If so, then maybe you have a contrary spirit. If you take the attitude that, "I've studied, and I've shown myself approved," well, the Sadducees had that, where are they now? Stay away from it or pray for it to improve. Everybody needs prayer; prayer is a powerful tool. Satan tempted Christ, and Jesus said, "It is written..."

In John 4:22-23, Jesus said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." You can't be distant. This isn't a game show. Life doesn't end here; this life is just a precursor, and how well you self-govern here will determine your reward in the life to come.

Determine which Gospel you'll teach and live by.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:21 He that hath My commandments and keepeth them ... manifest Myself to him.

Manifest—to exhibit (in person) or disclose (by words)—Appear, declare (plainly), inform, manifest, shew, signify.

He will exhibit Himself to you in person. He will inform you. If you're teaching another gospel, you won't get that. It says in the Bible, "This is a hard saying." (John 6:60) Where you are, it deals with you. God's Word is giving you instructions this morning.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice...

Stop trying to start your own church within this church. If you want to open up your home for Bible Study, that's fine, but if you want to preach, then start your own church, but don't try to take people from this church. God gave this flock to me. I didn't ask Him for it.

I'm having a banner year, and I don't care what you think about it. I care about God's opinion. Talk about approval ratings—they killed Jesus. It doesn't really matter what any of us think; it matters what God thinks. Do you trust God? How many times have you worried about something, and then, when it was over, you look back at it and say, "I was worried about that?"

To wrap up: Every man is going to be rewarded according to his own works. I'm going to answer for what I do, church.

Joshua 24:15 ...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

I have to decide day by day to serve God. I didn't say it was easy; I said it was possible.

Isaiah 40:29-30 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

But those who will govern yourselves by having yourselves given by Jesus (God's Word) and the Holy Ghost (the Comforter) shall the Lord renew strength, and you will mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

I am thankful to be here with you; not before you, but with you. We are not divided. Aleks and I work together; we dress the same Monday through Friday. He's a pipefitter; I'm an electrician. You may have different responsibilities than someone else, but we're all equal in God's eyes.

Have your banner year.