

HALFTIME: What Adjustments Do You Need to Make?

By Bob Young

We are at the half-way point of another year. What happens at halftime? As a coach helps a team 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. Is it time to make some adjustments? 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). While the past informs how we pursue excellence in the future, it must not shackle us or hinder us. Paul 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 (2 Cor. 3:16-18). Am I serious about living the transformed life? (Romans 12:1-2).

Second, it is time to review my relationships.

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? Do I need to cite the many verses about home, family, marriages?

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.

It is time to review my relationships with others, especially with those outside the church. Where are the opportunities that God is giving to share the gospel? Where are open and receptive hearts? For whom am I praying, that the gospel will be accepted? Am I doing everything possible to be a disciple-maker? (Matt. 28:18-20).

Third, it is time to review the dynamics and priorities of my life.

It is time to rethink my commitments and my goals. 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.

It is time to rethink the guiding principles of my spiritual life. Jesus calls me to pick up towel and basin to serve (John 13; Mark 8-10), to learn how to work hard and enjoy it (Ecclesiastes; Col. 3:17), and to honor the rhythms of rest and work. Let me mention two things necessary to evaluating the principles of my life. One, review failures and mistakes and make a commitment 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 so far 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.

Fourth, it is time to rethink my responsibilities.

As I think about my commitments and my goals, I recognize that I need to “up” my commitment to those things that will accomplish the goals. I need to refocus on priorities (Matt. 6:33). I must pay careful attention to my stewardship responsibilities to take care of my body, my mind, my spirit, and my stuff (including my finances). One way to think about my responsibilities is to think about my stewardship. What has God placed in my hand? What has God made available to me?

I think of my “self,” my “stuff,” and my situation. I am responsible for how I use resources. It is not only a matter of giving to God his portion; I must think carefully about how I use what remains. I must be a good steward of my mind and my body, using them to God’s glory. I must be a good steward of my “stuff,” asking how my Master would use the resources that He has placed in my hands. I must be aware of spiritual realities and the opportunities God gives to serve and to glorify his name in all that I am, have, and do.

It is time to get out there and “get in the game.” It is time to move forward in faith.