TITLE: **WE NEED GOD'S HELP IN 1989**
TEXTS: **TOPICAL (COL. 3:14, 3:10-21, 4:2-4, 4:5-6)**

INTRODUCTION: This week I wrote down some things I thought we needed in 1989. I had them in this order: Prayer, Love, Home, Evangelism. Then I noticed that the 4 beginning letters of these words spelled out the word "Help". We definitely need God's help in 1989.

EX. of spiritual oppression sensed in 1988: One preacher in California (Chuck Swindoll) said that never before in all his years of ministry did he face more discouragement (depression) as he did this year.

Another ministry writes: It seems that Satan has opened up on us with all his evil forces--discouragement, sickness, death of co-workers, financial difficulties . . . attacks from within and without . . . Surely we must be living int he last days and the enemy has gone all out to destroy the Lord's work."

What is commitment? It is a promise before God that you will do what you said you will do. It's an obligation--a binding agreement. Our society does not like the word "responsibility." EX of the lack of it today (in marriage, jobs, church, friendships, etc.)

PROPOSITION: MAY GOD HELP EVERYONE OF US TO MAKE 4 VITAL COMMITMENTS FOR 1989

We need **H.E.L.P.!** in the areas of our: 1) Home 2) Evangelism
3) Love & 4) Prayer

I. **H**OME (We need to commit ourselves today to our families) (Col. 3:18-21)

The breakdown of the home is a sign of the end times (II Tim. 3:1-5)

In 1989, we must: perform our roles or carry out our responsibilities toward our families God's way!

Contrary to the world's philosophy in 1989:

1) Wives are to be submissive - not bossy (take your place under his authority)
2) Husbands are to be loving - not bitter (meet her needs rather than letting them turn you off and make you react sharply)

Don't harbor a bad attitude toward your wife because of something she did or did not do. A "root of bitterness in a home can poison the marriage relationship and give Satan a foothold (Heb. 12:15; Eph. 4:31).

Be honest and open with each other. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26) (See Wiersbe, Colossians, p. 126).

3) Children are to be obedient - not rebellious (complete obedience pleases God)

4) Fathers are to inspire our children for God - not discourage them
"Provoke" = to excite, or irritate
"Discouraged" = to lose heart, to quench their youthful flame/zeal; to cause your child to give up; become sullen and depressed (Don't take the wind out of their sails)

Our children are like a tender twig that we want to bend toward a certain direction. The twig "is to be bent with caution, not broken in the efforts of a rude and hasty zeal" (Eadie, p. 262).

Avoid: over-severity, injustice, inconsistency (Laugh with your kids; praise the positive).

Don't ignore your kids. "A survey in one town indicated that fathers spent only 37 seconds a day with their small sons! It is an encouragement for children to know that their parents, as busy as they are, take time--make time--to be with them" (Wiersbe, p. 129).

In 1989, we need to dedicate ourselves to rear our children to live for God! --Teach them, set the right example, encourage them, pray for them --- ILLUS: John H. Starkey was a violent British criminal. He murdered his own wife, then was convicted for the crime and executed. The officials asked General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, to conduct Starkey's funeral. Booth faced as ugly and mean a crowd as he had ever seen in his life, but his first words stopped them and held their attention: "John H. Starkey never had a praying mother!" (Wiersbe, p. 128)

Fathers, we need to say: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" We need to teach our children God's Word (Deut. 6:9)

II. **E**VANGELISM (We need to commit ourselves today to witnessing and discipleship) (Col. 4:5-6)

1) Live consistently while you witness (walk must match talk)

"Walk in wisdom" - put the Bible into practice in your every day life. To

effectively evangelize we need: Life (v. 5) and Lip (v. 6).

"Toward them that are without" - those outside of true Christianity. Those outside the family of God. Jesus (Mk. 4:11) and Paul (I Cor. 5:12-13) made this distinction.

"Walk honestly toward them that are without" (I Th. 4:12); we must have "a good report of them which are without" (I Tim. 3:7).

The unsaved are blind spiritually (II Cor. 4:3-4), but they have a great deal of discernment when it comes to the things of this life (Lk. 16:8). They know hypocrites.

2) Look for opportunities to witness.

"Redeeming the time" (Time is valuable and irreplaceable) "Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

3) Speak the right way when witnessing.

"Grace" - words that graciously give (benefit). The Lord Jesus Christ spoke with grace on his lips. "And all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." (Lk. 4:22).

"Salt" - a. words that preserve life
b. words that make our message palatable
Our witnessing must do what salt does to food. It spices it up; gives it zest. Witness with "an edge of liveliness!" (Knox).

Be excited about the Gospel; don't witness with a depressed mood!

I Pet. 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear"

Meekness is the opposite of harshness, and fear is the opposite of arrogance (Wiersbe, p. 143).

III. **L**OVE (We need to commit ourselves today to loving our brothers) (Col. 3:14)

"Above all these things" - Cp. I Peter 4:8 - "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Lit. - "Ahead of all . . . have stretched out love"

Paul said love ought to be the supreme characteristic of our lives (I Cor. 13). In Paul's list of the fruits of the spirit, he lists love first, then other virtues follow (Gal. 5:22).

"Above all these things" - above (v. 12) having "bowels of mercies" (a compassionate heart), above kindness (friendly spirit), above humbleness of mind (lowly thinking), above meekness (gentleness), above longsuffering (patience) (v. 13), above enduring people and forgiving them . . . We must have love supremely.

God is not saying that we can do without any of the other virtues. He is just saying that at the top ( ); or built upon the other virtues we must have love.

Paul is using the imagery of "putting off" (v. 8, 9) and "putting on" (v. 10, 12, 14) clothing (apparel).

He is therefore saying: After you have put on the unseen undergarments (v. 12, 13), put on the overcoat of love!

Agape love is seen because it is action! Charity gives. The other virtues (v. 12, 13) are attitudes.

Is the garment of love in your wardrobe?

"Bond of perfectness" - "Bond" = love is that which glues us together in unity (EX: hymn - "Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love . . .")

Perfectness" = love is the cement that glues all the pieces together and thus produces maturity or completeness in our church family. You can measure the spirituality of a church by the love of its members.

Eph. 4:3 - "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"

We are our "brother's keeper!"

Love goes the extra mile; it heals hurts; it keeps you faithfully serving the Lord.

We need to be committed to loving each other (especially this year) because in the last days "because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold."

IV. **P**RAYER (We need to commit ourselves today to continual praying) (Col. 4:2-4)

"Continue" = be devoted to prayer. Persist in prayer, don't quit this!

The greatest need of the hour is prayer!

Unless God works, our lives and labor are vain!

We are going to have to be stubborn and pray whether we feel like it or not.

--Prayer is foolishness to the world
--Prayer is fatigue to the flesh
--Prayer is fought against by the devil

Eph. 6:18 - "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"

I Th. 5:17 - "Pray without ceasing"

Paul prayed this way for the Thessalonians (1:3; 2:13) for Timothy (II Tim. 1:3), for the Romans (Ro. 1:9).

When Peter was imprisoned, "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5).

Be in constant fellowship with God; prayer should be as normal to us as breathing.

"Watch" = be awake; be vigilant. Paul knows the tendencies of the weak flesh to fall asleep. (Cp. Transfiguration & Gethsemane).

There is no power in dull, sleepy praying. "If there is no fire on the altar, the incense will not rise to God (Ps. 141:2). Real praying demands spiritual energy and alertness." (Wiersbe, p. 137).

Jesus said: "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Lk. 18:1)

Beware of being careless or mechanical when you pray. Give your whole mind to it!

"Praying also for us" - NOTE: Prayer is specific--too often our prayers are vague and general. "Lord, bless the missionaries."

Paul was not ashamed to ask his friends to pray for him, even though he was an apostle.

Please pray for your pastor in 1989!

"A door of utterance" = lit. "a door for the word" - open opportunities and capability for preaching.

In U.S.A., we have freedom so far. Pray that people would be more receptive to the Word that is preached. Unless God opens the doors of men's hearts, the Gospel will not penetrate--no matter how well it is presented.

Samuel said: "God forbid that I should sin against God in ceasing to pray for you." (I Sam. 12:23)

"When life knocks you to your knees, that's the best positive in which to pray" (Barrymore)

CONCLUSION: **God's commands never conflict.

I've heard people say, "I can't take time for soul-winning; I need it for my family."

Did God command commitment to both? Does He know how many hours are in a day? Then He knows you can do both.

Our problem is - other priorities (that should not be; we are overbalanced).

TITLE: **WE NEED GOD'S HELP IN 1989**
TEXTS: **TOPICAL (COL. 3:14, 3:18-21, 4:2-4, 4:5-6)**

PROPOSITION: MAY GOD HELP EVERYONE OF US TO MAKE 4 VITAL COMMITMENTS FOR 1989

We need **H.E.L.P.!** in the areas of our: 1) Home 2) Evangelism
3) Love & 4) Prayer

I. **H**OME (We need to commit ourselves today to our families) (Col. 3:18-21)

II. **E**VANGELISM (We need to commit ourselves today to witnessing and discipleship) (Col. 4:5-6)

III. **L**OVE (We need to commit ourselves today to loving our brothers) (Col. 3:14)

IV. **P**RAYER (We need to commit ourselves today to continual praying) (Col. 4:2-4)