

INSTRUCTIONS

-Ryan Parsons-

Matthew 7:24

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

In the past few weeks, I have assembled no small amount of household items. It has been a slow and painstaking process, but it has also been quite educational. I have had some great success in the journey, but more than once, I have had to take things apart and reassemble them the right way. Throughout, I learned two things. First, instructions are essential. Moreover, using the proper instructions is paramount, and taking the time to understand/interpret them is vital. Second, I was reminded I am impatient, stubborn, and prideful. It's true. More than once, I jumped ahead because I thought I knew the next step. Unfortunately, this didn't end well. In addition, I misunderstood some instructions and made up my own, leading to broken pieces (thank goodness there were extras). Sometimes, my pride misinterpreted the guide leading to mistakes that had to be corrected.

Instructions are essential, but not all instructions are created equal. Good instructions are a blessing and, when followed, lead to success. Of course, God knows this and has graciously provided mankind with the instructions to succeed in this spiritual journey we are on. Jesus likens it to building a house (Matthew 7). Paul calls them instructions given "through the Lord Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:2). They are given and to be followed so that there might be a joyful success.

Jeremiah 10:23

I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

Here are some challenging questions to ask ourselves as we step into a New Year:

- Do you know and value the instructions given by the Lord?
- Are you following his ways so that your life might be built the way he designed?
- When your impatience, stubbornness, and pride surface, will you quickly repent and return to God's instructions?

Humanity (which includes you and me) has struggled mightily with trying its way and failing. Let's not follow that method of operation anymore. Today, may we commit ourselves to know God's will perfectly instructed in his word and living it courageously.

Happy New Year!