

THE BROADLANDS BROADCAST

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.



All Things New
by Kevin Gardner

At one time, I was very much into making New Year's resolutions. I would take a little piece of receipt paper (easily accessible, since I worked at a pizza place) and write my resolutions on it. I would tuck that little paper—pepperoni stains and all—into my wallet, and every once in a while, I would look at it to make sure I was staying on track with my goals.

Sometimes, I would succeed at my resolutions. It would be gratifying to pull out that piece of paper and see that there were things I could cross off. But, some goals showed up on my list year after year, and I never seemed to make much progress on them.

This kind of intransigence can be frustrating, and sometimes the weight of failure is crushing. At times when my shortcomings are clearly before me, I find myself lamenting along with Paul, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). The Apostle has been recounting his struggles with sin and with his own stubborn flesh (vv. 15–23). He desires to do what is right, but he fails again and again. Finally, he throws his hands up in despair. I have often felt tempted to do the same thing.

But then Paul says something surprising: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (v. 25). Why does Paul erupt in doxology after

lamenting his condition? Because to ask the question is to answer it: Who will deliver us? God through Christ has already delivered us. While we are still in the flesh, the flesh wars against our hearts made new, but in Christ we have already been delivered.

How do we know we have been delivered? Paul tells us in the next verse: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1). For those who are not in Christ, the stakes in self-improvement can be frighteningly high. If I don't save myself, who will save me? How will I justify myself? But for Christians, there is no need for such angst. Our standing before God is not dependent on self-improvement or eliminating character flaws. We have been delivered; we are not condemned. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But even that is not the end. Through the rest of Romans 8, Paul discusses life in the Spirit, which is characterized by freedom, peace, and righteousness. He laments the state of creation, which groans in anticipation of full and final deliverance. And he praises the Spirit for interceding on our behalf and working in us. And then Paul tells us, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (8:29).

Those whom God delivers through Christ, He also remakes through His Spirit. This is good news. As we live lives dependent on the Spirit, as we fix our eyes on Christ, the Lord is shaping us into the image of the Son. In the midst of one more year of groaning, one more year of failures, one more year of broken resolutions, may we remember that God makes all things new—including us.

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**What sort of New Year's
resolution should a Christian make?**

The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over 3,000 years to the ancient Babylonians. There is just something about the start of a new year that gives us the feeling of a fresh start and a new beginning. In reality, there

is no difference between December 31 and January 1. Nothing mystical occurs at midnight on December 31. The Bible does not speak for or against the concept of New Year's resolutions. However, if a Christian determines to make a New Year's resolution, what kind of resolution should he or she make?

Common New Year's resolutions are commitments to quit smoking, to stop drinking, to manage money more wisely, and to spend more time with family. By far, the most common New Year's resolution is to lose weight, in conjunction with exercising more and eating more healthily. These are all good goals to set. However, 1 Timothy 4:8 instructs us to keep exercise in perspective: "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." The vast majority of New Year's resolutions, even among Christians, are in relation to physical things. This should not be.

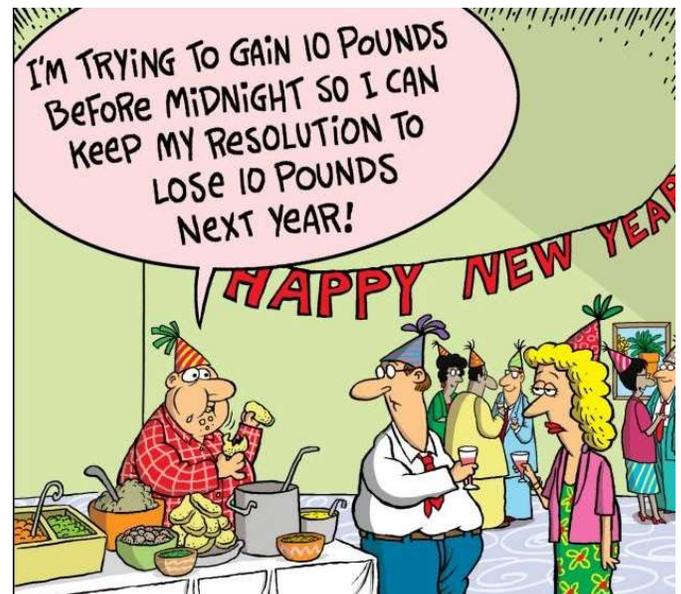
Many Christians make New Year's resolutions to pray more, to read the Bible every day, and to attend church more regularly. These are fantastic goals. However, these New Year's resolutions fail just as often as the non-spiritual resolutions, because there is no power in a New Year's resolution. Resolving to start or stop doing a certain activity has no value unless you have the proper motivation for stopping or starting that activity. For example, why do you want to read the Bible every day? Is it to honor God and grow spiritually, or is it because you have just heard that it is a good thing to do? Why do you want to lose weight? Is it to honor God with your body, or is it for vanity, to honor yourself?

Philippians 4:13 tells us, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." John 15:5 declares, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." If God is the center of your New Year's resolution, it has chance for success, depending on your commitment to it. If it is God's will for something to be fulfilled, He will enable you to fulfill it. If a resolution is not God-honoring and/or is not in agreement with God's Word, we will not receive God's help in fulfilling the resolution.

So, what sort of New Year's resolution should a Christian make? Here are some suggestions: (1) pray to the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5) regarding what resolutions, if any, He would have you make; (2) pray for wisdom as to how to

fulfill the goals God gives you; (3) rely on God's strength to help you; (4) find an accountability partner who will help you and encourage you; (5) don't become discouraged with occasional failures; instead, allow them to motivate you further; (6) don't become proud or vain, but give God the glory. Psalm 37:5-6 says, "Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

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5 Verses for Trusting God in the New Year

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8 NASB). Reflect on these five passages when you need to be encouraged to trust God in the new year.

Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely. Psalm 63:7-8 NLT

I give you thanks, O Lord, with all my heart; . . . I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. Psalm 138:1-2 NLT

Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever. Spread your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy. For you bless the godly, O Lord; you surround them with your shield of love. Psalm 5:11-12 NLT

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5–6 NIV

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Psalm 139:23–24 NLT

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Ten Questions for a New Year

Don Whitney

Even those most faithful to God occasionally need to pause and think about the direction of their lives. It's so easy to bump along from one busy week to another without ever stopping to ponder where we're going and where we should be going.

Once, when the people of God had become careless in their relationship with him, the Lord rebuked them through the prophet Haggai: "Consider your ways!" (Haggai 1:5). He urged them to reflect on some of the things happening to them, and to evaluate their slipshod spirituality in light of what God had told them.

Ten Questions

The beginning of a new year is an ideal time to stop, look up, and get our bearings. A great time for us to "Consider our ways." To that end, here are some questions to ask prayerfully in the presence of God.

1. What's one thing you can do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?

Our enjoyment of God comes primarily through the means of grace he has given us. He has promised to bless us most directly and consistently through means such as his word, prayer, and the church. One specific suggestion I'd offer would be to include some meditation on Scripture along with your daily reading. It's better to read less — if necessary — and yet as the result of meditation remember something, than to read more and remember nothing.

2. What's an impossible prayer you can pray?

There are more than a dozen "but God" statements in Scripture, such as in Romans 5:8, which reads, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners,

Christ died for us." Situations that were humanly impossible were transformed by "but God" (Ephesians 2:1–7). What's a "but God" prayer you can pray for the coming year?

3. What's the most important thing you could do to improve your family life?

If your family doesn't practice family worship, beginning there is the single best recommendation I could make. Just ten minutes a day, simply reading the Bible, praying, and singing together — an event that requires no preparation — is all it takes. My little book titled Family Worship can tell you more.

4. In which spiritual discipline do you most want to make progress this year?

Would it be a personal spiritual discipline (that is, one you practice alone), or an interpersonal spiritual discipline (one you practice with other believers)? Once you decide, determine the next step to take and when you will take it.

5. What's the single biggest time-waster in your life, and how can you redeem the time?

Social media? TV? Video games? Sports? Hobbies? It's easy for any of these (or something else) to take too much of our hearts and time. Is repentance required? Trying to stop, by itself, is probably not the answer. Actively replacing it with something better helps us in "making the best use of the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

6. What's the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?

While we often stress the fact that individual believers are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15), the New Testament actually says seven times to one that the church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23). We mustn't let our frequent emphasis on our personal relationship with Christ minimize the importance of our service to Jesus through his body. How can your church be stronger this year because of you? Serving? Giving? Praying?

7. For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?

Praying frequently and fervently for someone's salvation makes us more sensitive to opportunities to share the

gospel with him or her. Will you commit to praying for at least one person's salvation every day this new year?

8. What's the most important way, by God's grace, you will try to make this year different from last?

Obviously, God's sovereignty rules over all things, and there is nothing we can do about much that he brings into our lives. On the other hand, under his sovereignty he gives us a measure of responsibility over many areas of life. In which of these would you most like to see a change from last year? You may find that your answer to this question is found in one of your answers above. To which of them do you sense the Holy Spirit calling your attention most urgently?

9. What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?

For many, it might be as simple as designating a time exclusively for prayer instead of praying only "on the go" types of prayers. For others, it might be learning the simple, biblical practice of praying the Bible.

10. What single thing can you plan to do this year that will matter most in ten years? In eternity?

Short-term deadlines tend to dominate our attention. Busyness and fatigue often limit our vision to just getting through today. But don't let the tyranny of the urgent distract you from something you're neglecting that would have enormous long-term impact on your soul, your family, or your church.

Consider Your New Year

The value of many of these questions is not in their profundity, but in the simple fact that they bring an issue or commitment into focus. For example, just by making a goal to encourage one person in particular this year is more likely to help you remember to encourage that person than if you hadn't set that goal.

If you've found these questions helpful, you might want to put them someplace — on your phone, computer, calendar, or wherever you put reminders — where you can review them frequently.

I hope this article will help you to "consider your ways," to make plans and goals, and to live this new year with biblical diligence, remembering the principle that "the plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance" (Proverbs 21:5).

But in all things, let's also remember our dependence on our King, who said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

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"THE BEST THING ABOUT THE 'NEW YEAR', JOEY, IS WE CAN ALL JUST START OVER."

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

- Peggy Jantz 6th**
- Carl Friend 6th**
- Willie Westmoreland 7th**
- Jackie Johnson 10th**
- Olin Cole 16th**
- Carl and Kellie Friend 18th**
- Tim and Therese Reeves 20th**
- Noah Chimene 23rd**
- Brian LeDoux 24th**
- Ellie Davis 24th**
- Elta Rae Hauser 26th**
- Tabitha Buford 28th**
- Anna Fontenot 29th**
- David Smith 29th**

Elder/Deacon Schedule

- 01/03 Geoff Lee**
- 01/10 Derrall Cronce**
- 01/17 Justin Fontenot**
- 01/24 Herbert Ragle**
- 01/31 Tim Reeves**

Activities

- LEADERSHIP MEETING—Friday, 01/15 @ 6:00 pm**
- FIFTH SUNDAY—Sunday, 1/31**