

New Year's Resolutions

Many people make resolutions, promises, to do or not do things, accomplish something in a different way, or improve in some way. Quite often, the resolutions are things that the scriptures teach. A major definition of the word resolution expresses the difference between what is and what it should be. A change of course resolves an error in a ship's direction. Adding more of one or two colors resolves a difference in paint color from the sample. And an error in one's life is resolved by a change in habit, lifestyle, or attitude. A change in lifestyle, habits, attitude, desires, and beliefs are required to resolve one to coincide with the image given in scripture. In each case, what is wrong resolves into what is correct.

When someone hears the gospel of Christ and belief takes root, changes begin to appear. A desire to know more about God, Jesus, who is "made both Lord and Christ," and the gospel presented in the New Testament letters, cause a thirst for Bible study. As knowledge increases, modification to behavior resolves worldly ways to spiritual ways. Over time, things that were a temptation, no longer have an appeal to the senses. And over a lifetime, an individual grows into a mature child of God.

There are many books written to encourage us to make resolutions to save money for the future, exercise more, lose weight, work harder, develop a new skill, and many more self-centered objectives. However, do any of these resolutions result in lasting changes? In 2012, preacher and blogger Ken Weliever asked, *"How many of your New Year's Resolutions have survived the first week of 2012? Are you still on your diet? Exercise program? Are you texting less? Are you controlling spending? Listening more? Reading the Bible and praying daily?" The answer from the vast majority is "no."*

So what can we do to bring about lasting changes in our lives? The scriptures are full of statements of resolve from God-fearing men and women. Just a few possible examples are:

- Resolve to fear God, serve Him, and obey Him (Joshua 24:14; Joshua 24:24).
- Resolve to listen and learn from the Master Teacher (Luke 10:39-42; Matthew 17:5).
- Resolve to submit humbly to the mighty hand of God (1 Peter 5:6).
- Resolve to allow the creator to shape and use you for His good works (Ephesians 2:10).
- Resolve to stop worrying over things you cannot change (1 Peter 5:7; Matthew 6:25).
- Resolve to keep in contact with God through prayer (Matthew 26:41).
- Resolve to pray for those who might harm you (Luke 6:28).
- Resolve to let your love grow stronger each day and spread to all people everywhere (Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10).
- Resolve to let the light of Christ shine from you to the world (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:9).
- Resolve to encourage the brethren at home and abroad (1 Corinthians 4:16-17; 16:10-11).
- Resolve to press onward to maturity in understanding the will and desires of God (Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 5:12-14).
- Resolve to do whatever is necessary to enter through the narrow gate into eternal life (Matthew 7:13-14).

As we make plans for the future, we must remember that we are just passing through this time. We do not know how long we will be here or where we will be tomorrow. Our job may cause us to move. Accidents may cause injury or even death. The only security we can depend on is the promises of our Lord and Savior. So let us make resolutions to go with Him and hold on to our anchor in heaven.

Paul said, *"We always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).