
Spiritual Resolve
New Years Resolutions
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Overview

As we close out the year 2012 and begin the year 2013, it is a time to reflect on where we've been, what we have learned, and where we want to go.

Year after year, we start off with a list of resolutions to better ourselves.

We strive for perfection, but then become let down when we under achieve.

It is rare for most to actually finish out the year with resolutions resolved.

Here are some of top most common resolutions:

1. Drink Less Alcohol
2. Eat Healthy Food
3. Get a Better Education
4. Get a Better Job
5. Get Fit
6. Lose Weight
7. Manage Debt
8. Manage Stress
9. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
10. Save Money
11. Take a Trip
12. Volunteer to Help Others

How many of these sound familiar?

Most of these are good ideas and good to live by, but what often happens is we set ourselves up for goals that are superficial and don't last.

We know we should do these things, but our heart really isn't in it.

Instead, what if we focused on the root of the problems that lead us to these things in the first place? What if we focused on resolutions that not only last throughout the year, but last throughout eternity?

I want to challenge each of us today, to change the way in which we make our New Year's resolutions. Instead of asking ourselves, what do I want to change about my life in 2013, will you instead ask God what His plans are for you in 2013?

If God were to make a resolution for you, what would it be?

Will you be willing to allow Him to make your resolution for 2013?

Paul and God's Resolution

Philippians 3:12-14

Let's look at God's Word for a closer look at how we allow God to set our New Year's Resolutions. Let's look at the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Pressing on Toward the Goal

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Verse 12

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Paul recognizes that he has not perfected a goal.

This goal, however, is not one that Paul set, but one that God set for him. And although this goal has not been completed, he knows it will be, but not in Paul's time, but in God's time.

Paul understood God's plan for his life, which was to begin a work in Him that would some day be completed. Paul did not focus on the timing of this goal as much as he focused on his endurance.

Paul was not going to loose hope. He was going to surrender daily to the Lord's will, knowing that the Lord would complete what He started. All Paul had to do was keep his heart conditioned to the obedience of God's calling and God would do the rest.

Verse 13

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead

Paul recognizes that he has made mistakes. He recognizes that his failures are part of the perfecting that God is doing. He knows that what is not yet perfected, will be perfected according to God's plan.

He recognizes that he doesn't always have to understand God's plan or purpose. He just needed to trust and obey.

Do not loose hope, even Paul got stuck at times.

Paul rests in knowing that his sins were abolished on the cross. His past was not counted against him.

However, as we can see, Paul just stayed close to the Lord and moved forward, knowing that his past was simply a journey to get to the present.

Paul did not dwell on the past. He did not let the past play over and over. He accepted God's grace, grew from his journey, but stayed focused on the present.

Verse 14

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Paul has one goal in mind. His New Year's resolution was not set by himself, but by God.

Paul realized that God's plan and resolution for his life was far greater, far easier to obtain, and longer lasting than any resolution Paul could ever imagine.

Paul set his heart on the goal that God destined for him from the beginning of time.

Paul knows that God holds the timing and the how the journey will unfold.

Proverbs 16:33 [NLT]

We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall.

Conclusion

This year, will you set your resolutions on God's plan or your plan?

Here are some things that will help you on the plan and purpose God has for you.

- (1) Recognize that God does have a plan for you, just as He did for Paul
- (2) Stay in God's Word
- (3) Do not strive for perfection, instead, trust the pefector.
- (4) Spend time each day with the Lord.
- (5) Do not focus on mistakes, but remember that your past is simply a journey to the present.
- (6) Surrender areas of your life that you have not surrendered.