

Resolutions That Matter

A “resolution” is something you are determined to do to improve something about yourself. Common areas of resolution include: Losing weight, exercising, spending more time with family, learning a new skill, getting a different job, being more careful with money, etc. However, while it is good to look for ways to improve your life in physical ways, you must recognize that these all only have a temporary benefit. In contrast, resolving to improve and grow your relationship with God is the only resolution that will have an impact beyond the few short years you live on this earth (1 Timothy 4:6-10)! Specifically, let’s consider some resolutions that matter.

1) Resolve to get right with God. You must evaluate yourself to see if you are in a right relationship with God or not (2 Corinthians 13:5). If you are not, you must see this as the most significant problem you face in your life and diligently search for God’s solution through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23; Acts 17:10-12). As you examine your life according to the teachings of God’s word, there are a few possible conclusions you may reach. First, you may find that you have never obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:40-41). Second, you may find that you had once obeyed the gospel but abandoned Jesus to return to sin (Galatians 5:4). Third, you may find that you thought you were in a right relationship with God but have not actually obeyed Him (Matthew 7:21-23). Regardless, you must search the Scriptures diligently to find God’s solution and do whatever He requires to get right with Him (2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2)!

2) Resolve to grow your faith. Your journey of faith is not a one-time resolution; but a journey of growth – much like the growth people experience physically (2 Peter 3:18). For

example, when you believe and obey the gospel of Christ, you are born again (John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:22-25). At this point you are a spiritual baby in Christ who depends on the milk (first principles) of the word of God (Hebrews 5:13). However, you are expected to grow up into your salvation (Hebrews 5:14; 1 Peter 2:2-3), progressing spiritually from being a little child, to a young adult, to a parent who is able to help others in their faiths (1 John 2:12-14). Yet, this process of growth takes resolving that you will establish habits and practices that will help you grow in your faith every day. These include diligent Bible study, prayer, assembling with other Christians, connecting to a spiritual mentor, pushing beyond your comfort zones, etc.

3) Resolve to be more like Christ. A disciple of Christ strives to be like Jesus in all aspects of his/her life (Luke 6:40; 1 Corinthians 11:1). Although this work is never done, as you grow in your faith to become more spiritually mature, this will necessarily involve your life looking increasingly more like Jesus’s life (2 Peter 1:3-11). God has provided everything that is needed for you to grow into maturity that is measured by Christ’s fullness (Ephesians 4:11-13)! As you examine your life, therefore, you need to consider the areas in which your life is failing to reflect the maturity that is measured by Christ’s fullness and resolve to imitate Christ in these areas through studying and obeying what you can read in the gospel (Colossians 1:27-28). Every day, you must resolve to make Jesus your standard and aim to grow in your holiness, spiritual character, service, love, compassion, and all that you see reflected in Jesus’s life.

4) Resolve to share the gospel with others. God has entrusted His soul-saving gospel message into the hands of His people (Matthew

28:19-20; Romans 10:13-15). Therefore, these are then expected to join Jesus in His mission of saving souls and making disciples throughout this world (Matthew 4:19). In fact, there is no greater contribution you can possibly make to other people in this world than sharing the gospel's message of salvation through Jesus Christ so they can have the opportunity to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:24-26). To do this will require that you be prepared to give an answer to others concerning the hope that you have in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:14-16). Every day, you must resolve to look for the opportunities to impact the people around you with the gospel and have the boldness and love to say and do whatever helps them come to the Lord (Colossians 4:2-6).

5) Resolve to remain true to the Lord.

The devil will do what he can to attack you so that you do not actually keep these resolutions to live for God and impact others with the gospel of Christ. Thankfully, God warns about this so you can take the proper steps to be prepared for his attacks and respond appropriately (1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:10-18). It is not a matter of *if* the devil will attack your faith and resolutions to follow Christ, but *when* he will do so, *how often* he will do so, and *how severe* the attacks will be. Because of this, you must resolve to be faithful no matter what temptations and trials you face during your life (Acts 11:21-26; Revelation 2:9-11)! In fact, you must embrace going through many hardships as a necessary experience to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21-22).

When your life on this earth is over, many of your resolutions will not have mattered in significant ways. Yet, whether you had resolved to live for Christ will (Luke 12:16-21)! Therefore, look carefully at your life and evaluate whether you have firmly resolved each of these that *will* make a difference for your soul and the souls of

Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?