

New Year's Resolutions

Written by Scott Evans

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Before you grab your calendar and begin to look, I am aware that it is a few days after Groundhog's Day and a month or so into the New Year. However, I want to talk with you about my New Year's Resolutions.

For most people, the month of December is a joyous month filled with good times and great memories. That is usually the case for me as well. However, this past year, amidst the joyous celebrations of the Christmas Season, it seems as if December brought a lot of uncertainty and disappointment to my life. Not just one area of life but it seemed as if there were challenges on every front; job, finances, relationships, ministries; challenges abounded everywhere. As New Year's Day was approaching, I had made plans that I was really looking forward to. The day before, those plans were cancelled. In fact, I received the text cancelling those plans moments after the previous article was posted in this space. As I read the text message informing of this, I literally tossed my phone on the floor and said the words, "God, I give up."

And I did! For the next few hours, I went about my plans for New Year's Eve trying not to show my disappointment to my companions for the evening. I got through the evening and went home and dropped into bed. Defeated, discouraged, done with life! While I was by no means suicidal, I had decided that I was going to live my life in my own little world and I was done letting anyone else in it.

I went to sleep but I awoke very early on New Year's Day! As I woke up, I got up and went to the kitchen to get breakfast. As I sat down with my cup of coffee, I began to think about the events of the past month and especially the previous day. I began to pray to God and to tell Him of my plans to give up! While I am certain He heard that prayer, He would have none of that. I opened my eyes, looked at my open Bible and my eyes fell on these verses in the book of Job. *"I know that You can do all things. And that no purpose of Yours will be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have declared that which I do not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not understand."* (Job 42:2-3). The Living Bible puts it this way;

"I know that you can do anything and that no one can stop you. You ask who it is who has so foolishly denied your providence. It is I. I was talking about things I knew nothing about and did not understand, things far too wonderful for me."

Conviction was swift and I immediately got on my knees before God and I asked Him to forgive me for my doubt, my rebellion and stupidity. During this rather long prayer I confessed to God that I do not begin to understand His plans for me or His thoughts for me. During this prayer, I asked the Lord to reveal to me specific things in my life that needed work. He gave me six!

In the past, I have made several New Year's Resolutions. They were usually made haphazardly and in haste on New Year's Eve and they were usually history by mid-January. This was the first time I had ever really involved God in this process through a fervent, heartfelt prayer. I am happy to report that all those resolutions that God revealed to me that day are still very much intact. The very first one was to study God's Word more in depth. I have always read His Word but this was a conviction and a challenge to really delve into the Word and find

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those insights for myself. I knew what I had read about the interpretation of the scriptures but it had been a long time since I, myself, had searched deep into the scriptures to find the truths He had prepared just for me. I have been journaling this process and I have realized that this is the key to all the other resolutions being successful. As I look back on my daily thoughts, it is amazing to see how God is working in my life and instructing me in incredible ways.

You do not have to make this resolution on New Year's. You can make it anytime! I have found that a daily in depth study of God's Word, along with prayer and meditation, will change your life. God loves you and He wants to direct your steps and the Bible, God's Holy Word, is the roadmap for those steps.

During this time, I stumbled into a little verse written by the great poet, Fanny J. Crosby. It was written on January 6, 1899 but it sure spoke to my situation. Crosby wrote:

"God does not give me all I ask, nor answer as I pray;
But, O, my cup is brimming over with blessings day by day
How oft the joy I thought withheld delights my longing eyes,
And so, I thank Him from my heart for what His love denies."

Those problems of December? Oh, some of them are still there. Some of them are gone. Some of them are being worked through even today. However, I have a renewed strength and confidence in Christ. Job said it best, "I don't understand everything He does because his ways are far too wonderful for me." I trust God and His plan and ultimately, that makes everything okay.