

Resolutions

(LUK 16:4) I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

- resolve: A determination or resolution. 2. Firmness or steadfastness of purpose. (vb) To determine or decide upon a course of action.
- determine: To direct to some end or conclusion; to come to some conclusion. *refl.* To bring oneself to a decision; to come to the resolve (to do something). *intr.* (for *refl.*) To come to the decision; to resolve definitely (to do something). In early use **to determine with oneself**.
- determination: The act of determining or deciding. The mental action of coming to a decision; the fixing or settling of a purpose; the result of this; a fixed purpose or intention.
- decide: Literally, to cut off and thus to end. Hence, to end; to determine; to terminate.

- I. Resolutions are decisions where one has come to a conclusion to do something or adopt a particular course of action with firmness and steadfastness of purpose.
- A. Resolutions are good IF the conclusions and course of action decided upon are biblical, and they are obviously good any time of the year. **PSA 119:104-106, 112.**
1. A year being the major unit of time in which we often think and function, measure our lives, and being the unit of time concerning which decisions in many areas of life are made, it is understandable that the beginning of a new year would be a time we ponder the past and make resolutions concerning the coming year. **PSA 90:9-10, 15.**
 - a. Do we not speak in terms of good years and bad years? Unfortunately, the bad years are often the more memorable ones. **GEN 41:35, 53; PSA 31:10; 78:33.**
 - b. At this time of the year we often wish others a happy (blessed) new year with the same wish returned.
 - c. The way to approach having a blessed year is to heed the words of Scripture and do them. **LUK 11:27-28; ACT 3:26; JAM 1:25; PSA 119:1-3.**
 2. Good resolutions involve making decisions to cut off and thus to end thoughts and behaviors that are sinful (and/or harmful) and/or adopting behavior that is blessed and biblical. This is the essence of practical Christianity. This is also called *conversion*. The results, in many ways, are a good indicator of our growth (or lack thereof) in godliness.
 - a. convert: To turn or be changed; to undergo a change.
 - b. Bad behavior starts with *thoughts* and then letting your thoughts go where they shouldn't go and eventually acting on them. Good behavior starts with thoughts that **resolve** not to follow an evil path and then bringing your thoughts into conformity with God's word. **JAM 1:13-16; 2CO 10:3-5.**
 - c. Some resolutions involve eliminating bad habits and/or behavior and others involve resolving to add correct behavior that has been neglected or omitted in the past. **PSA 101:1-8.**
 - d. Frequently they are connected and thus some resolutions involve eliminating sinful behavior and replacing it with godly behavior. Note how the Scriptures speak in these terms. **EPH 4:21-32; COL 3:5-14.**
 - e. As your pastor, I am all for you making and keeping good resolutions. In fact, a large portion of my work is to exhort you to do just that and thus help you grow in godliness. **EPH 4:11-13; 1TI 4:6-11.**
 - f. The bottom line is that I cannot make them for you and I cannot keep them

for you. That is a resolution you have to accomplish yourself, with the help of God's grace. **1CO 15:10; PHIL 4:13.**

- B. Have you grown this past year under my ministry or do you find yourself having the same old problems and regrets you had last year and the year before?
1. It is my observation that the same words which make some to grow have little effect on others.
 2. *Recipitur ad modum recipientis* – The reception depends upon the receiver.
 3. **LUK 8:15.**

II. The enemy of good resolutions is *double-mindedness*. Christians are warned against being double-minded or wavering in their faith and thus in their resolve for it will affect ALL their ways. **JAM 1:5-8; LUK 12:29.**

- A. double-minded: Having two 'minds'; undecided or wavering in mind.
- B. waver: Of persons, their sentiments, etc.: To exhibit doubt or indecision; to change or vary; to fluctuate or vacillate (between); to falter in resolution or allegiance; to show signs of giving way.
- C. Double-mindedness and lack of resolve is very much a faith issue. Contrast the double-minded man with the man described in **PSA 112:1, 5-8.**
1. establish: To render stable or firm. a. To strengthen by material support. b. To ratify, confirm, validate. c. To confirm, settle (what is weak or wavering); to restore (health) permanently; to give calmness or steadiness (to the mind). d. To calm (anger), to settle (doubts).
 2. stable: Able to remain erect; secure against falling or being overthrown.
 3. Trust in God and in His word strengthens, confirms, settles, restores, gives calmness, steadiness, and settles doubts. The heart that is fixed is strong in faith and resolve. The double-minded heart wavers in faith, doesn't have the strength it needs, and renders one insecure against falling or being overthrown. It doubts something or things God teaches in His word.
 4. Unstable Christians manifest an underlying faith problem and that instability will manifest itself in unsettledness, lack of resolve, doubts, lack of growth, and being easily overthrown.
- D. God implores us to take stock of how long we intend to not make up our minds about what is right. **1KI 18:21.**

III. Consider how to succeed in keeping resolves (which in itself includes an acknowledgement that one needs to change).

- A. Start by remembering and acknowledging who you are in Christ and what God's word teaches His salvation has provided for you. **2PE 1:1-4; PHIL 4:13; COL 3:1-3.**
1. Change your thinking to eliminate thoughts that program you to fail such as, "I don't have the will power to change."
 - a. See **PHIL 2:12-13.**
 - b. As a child of God, you do have the will power to change, you just may not have the "want to."
 2. I have noticed that:
 - a. People find a way to do what they really WANT to do.
 - b. Children can be very obedient when they want something badly enough.
 - c. Husbands and wives can treat each other lovingly and respectfully when they want something badly enough and that is what it takes to get it.
 - d. People can control their tempers when they really want to.

- e. People can overcome their fears when they really want to.
 - f. People can eliminate bad habits when they really want to.
 - g. People CAN CHANGE when they really WANT TO.
 - h. If you don't have the "want to," confess it to God and seek His grace to give it to you. **HEB 4:15-16.**
3. There is some merit in "aversion therapy." Associate thoughts or behavior that are impeding your walk with something repulsive. **PHIL 3:7.**
 4. Avoid thinking in terms of the word "try" as in "I will try" or "I am trying to do better." "Try" in this sense means "to attempt; to make an effort." Trying is necessary and good but the way in which it is commonly used leaves the door wide open to failure as in, "I tried, but I am only human."
 - a. We are more than just "only human." As children of God we are new creatures which *after God are created in righteousness and true holiness.* **EPH 4:24.**
 - b. We have the power of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within us and have been given "...all things that pertain to life and godliness" (**2PE 1:3**).
 - c. We have the assurance that our trials are not bigger than our God's power in us. **1CO 10:13; 1JO 4:4.**
 - d. We also have the warnings against paralysis due to perceived difficulties. **PRO 20:4; 22:13; MAT 25:24-26.**
 - e. "To try" means you will make an attempt. "To resolve" means you are determined to succeed. Just "trying" sets you up for failure. Resolving sets you up for success. It all begins in your mind and heart, which our God ably discerns. **HEB 4:12.**
 - f. Scripture does not encourage us to "try" in this sense. Scripture tells us what to DO, not what to TRY to do. God's word tells us to BE what we are. **PHIL 2:13-15.**
 - g. True resolve says: "I WILL change and DO better, God helping me."
- B. persist: To continue firmly or obstinately in a state, opinion, purpose, or course of action, esp. against opposition, or remonstrance. To continue steadfastly, to stand.
1. **EPH 6:12-13.**
 2. **ROM 2:7** describes children of God as those "...who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality..." Children of God should be characterized by persistence in doing what is right.
 3. Saints will fail in their resolves but a failure or slip is not the same as giving up and going back to your old ways. **PRO 24:16.**
 - a. Resolves can last more than 1-3 months. You may slip up but don't give up!
 - b. Press on. Press toward the mark. **PHIL 3:13-14.**
 4. Calvin Coolidge, the 30th president, made this comment in 1932: "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."
 5. In conclusion, make good resolves and persist in them.
- C. **2TH 2:16-17.**