

**Will 2023
be better?**

What resolutions have you set?

Setting Resolutions

- Resolution: Plans made that are designed to improve your life.
 - Most are directed toward physical achievements.
 - But what about spiritual resolutions?
 - As you make resolutions for your life, is God included?

Setting Resolutions

- Planning is Biblical
 - God planned – **Romans 8:28,**
Ephesians 3:9-11
- **Proverbs 21:5** – *the plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty...*
- **Proverbs 16:9** – *A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps*
- **Luke 14:28-30** – which of you intending to build a tower...?

Setting Resolutions

- Planning begins with examination
2 Corinthians 13:5
 - Where am I in relation to where I ought to be?
 - Was 2022 a good year spiritually?
 - Did I accomplish my goals?
 - Am I closer to God now than 12 months ago?
 - Am I improving physically? (It can affect me spiritually)

Setting Resolutions

- Why do resolutions fail?
 - It is not uncommon for resolutions to fail after only a few weeks
 - One source gave 2 reasons why we fail to keep our spiritual resolutions.
- **1) Denial.** We are not completely convinced we need to change. We know change is good, but deep down we do not see sin and failure as bad as it really is. **Cf. Acts 2:37**

Setting Resolutions

- Why do resolutions fail?
 - One source gave 2 reasons why we fail to keep our spiritual resolutions.
- 2) **Our heart is not in it** – we are not serious about improving our lives. We know meaningful change will be difficult, slow and possibly painful. We seek simple solutions. BUT nothing worthwhile comes easy. **Cf. Nehemiah 4:6**

Setting Resolutions

- To be successful at reaching goals:
I need to be totally honest with myself
- Even the slightest denial can hinder progress and possibly even derail your efforts.
TRUE change only comes after true conviction.

Setting Resolutions

- To be successful at reaching goals:
I need to change the way I think
 - I need to MAKE UP MY MIND
 - If needed, I am going to change
 - I am going to take whatever steps are needed to accomplish my goals
 - **Romans 12:2** – be transformed by the renewing of your mind

Setting Resolutions

- To be successful at reaching goals:
I need to create a workable plan
 - This is why we need examination first
 - What needs to change?
 - HOW can I achieve that change?
 - Create a “roadmap” to reach that goal. Detailed and attainable steps that will get you to your destination

Setting Resolutions

- To be successful at reaching goals:
I need to create a workable plan
 - Create a **SMART** goal framework
 - > **S**pecific
 - > **M**easurable
 - > **A**chievable
 - > **R**elevant
 - > **T**ime-Bound

Setting Resolutions

- To be successful at reaching goals:
Write down your goals
 - There is something about putting your words in print – it serves as a more permanent reminder
 - Gives you something to revisit from time to time
 - It is also recommended that you journal your progress. IF you are working your plans, this can be a source of encouragement

WHAT do I need to change?

- **Philippians 3:13-14**

Paul had a goal – the “*prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*”

From this text we learn his plan:

- I am not there yet
- I cannot dwell on the past (Where do you begin? Where you are now!)
- I need to reach forward – direction and movement
- I need to PRESS – intense effort, energetic

WHAT do I need to change?

- Are there things I need to stop?
- **Hebrews 12:1** – Lay aside every weight and sin
- **Ephesians 4:22** – put off your former conduct
- **Colossians 3:8**, “*put off all these: anger wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*”

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to stop?

- Are there sins I am struggling with?
1 John 3:9. Am I indifferent toward my sins or think I can deal with it later?
1 Corinthians 15:34 – *awake to righteousness and do not sin.*
Repentance – **Acts 8:22**
- Do I have bad attitudes? Anger, bitterness, indifference, self-loathing, hypercritical of others, etc. **Colossians 3:8**

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to stop?

- Am I struggling with lusts?
1 John 2:16, Psalm 101:3
- Am I mismanaging my time and resources – too much time with worthless or WORTH-LESS things?
Ephesians 5:15-16
- Am I comparing myself to others?
2 Corinthians 10:12

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to start?

- When I stand before God, He is not only going to consider what I did wrong, but also what I did NOT do right.
Failure to obey is just as wrong – **Luke 6:46, James 4:17**
- **Matthew 12:43-35** – parable of the unclean spirit

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to start?

- FIRST, have I obeyed the gospel –
2 Thessalonians 1:8,
Galatians 3:27, Romans 13:14
- Do I read and study my Bible regularly?
- Do I pray as I ought to?
- Am I doing anything to try and reach the lost?
- What am I doing to build up the local church here? **Ephesians 4:16**

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to improve?

- This is where most of us are at. We are Christians and trying to live the Christian life, but we just need to improve!

2 Peter 3:18,

cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

- Is the kingdom of God first? **Matthew 6:33**

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to improve?

- Am I increasing in my knowledge?
1 Peter 2:2, 2 Timothy 2:15
- Do I take time to pray often? **Luke 18:1, Colossians 4:2**
- Am I increasing in good works?
Ephesians 2:10
- How important is the church to me?
**Ephesians 4:16,
1 Corinthians 12:27**

WHAT do I need to change?

Are there things I need to improve?

- Is God pleased with my worship?

John 4:24

Whether leading or participating, am I giving my best?

- Do I need to care about others more?

Cf. Matthew 22:39

**Where are you
headed in 2023?**

The background is a dark, deep blue color, densely populated with numerous small, out-of-focus circular light spots. These spots vary in size and brightness, with a color palette ranging from deep red to bright orange and yellow, creating a bokeh or 'starry night' effect. The overall impression is one of warmth and depth.

Let us pray!