

What About New Year's Resolutions?

January 1, 2017

Psychologically, people turn to New Year's resolutions for two reasons:

1. To take back control of a hijacked life.
2. Guilt motivating self-improvement.

According to statistics by Forbes Magazine and U.S News and World Report:

- Only 8% of those who make New Year's resolutions achieve their resolutions.
- 80% of those who fail their New Year's resolution fail by the 2nd week in February.

The exaltation and idolatry of self and self-will:

"What exactly is the resistance that sabotages our lives and our intentions? As complex and multifaceted as the answer to this query may be, one way or another it all boils down to self-discipline. Essentially, you build self-discipline by willfully enduring the transient discomfort of changing who and what you are. You're not born with self-discipline; you acquire it. Like a muscle, you need to develop your self-discipline muscle, one challenge at a time." **Joseph Luciani** ("Dr. Joe"), Clinical Psychologist, author of the international best-selling Self-Coaching series, in-demand speaker and expert, featured frequently in major media.

The truth about self and self-will:

"Self-righteousness....is the largest idol of the human heart - the idol which man loves most and God hates most. Dearly beloved, you will always be going back to this idol. You are always trying to be something in yourself..."

— Robert Murray M'Cheyne, 1813-1843, Minister in the Church of Scotland

"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."

— C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

"Now we cannot...discover our failure to keep God's law except by trying our very hardest (and then failing). Unless we really try, whatever we say there will always be at the back of our minds the idea that if we try harder next time we shall succeed in being completely good...All this trying leads up to the vital moment at which you turn to God and say, "You must do this. I can't." — C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Though there have been many apparent successes and heroes of self-will, it is impossible for self-will and self-discipline to change or correct what is wrong with mankind. Self-will may temporarily modify behavior, but it will never change the heart. That is the delusion and danger of legalism and self-righteousness; that by modifying my behavior, I am improving as a person. Self-will will always inevitably and miserably fail. Worse yet, self-will is the very spirit of Satan and Antichrist, by declaring independence and autonomy from God.

Galatians 3:3-4 NASB

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, **are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

4 **Did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain?**

Romans 7:9-11 NASB

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but **when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;**

10 and this commandment, **which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;**

11 **for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.**

Romans 7:18 NASB

18 **For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.**

John 15:5 NASB

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**"

SURRENDER TO GOD'S AGENDA - ABANDON YOUR OWN

John 5:19-20 NASB

19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "**TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, UNLESS IT IS SOMETHING HE SEES THE FATHER DOING; FOR WHATEVER THE FATHER DOES, THESE THINGS THE SON ALSO DOES IN LIKE MANNER.**"

20 "For the Father loves the Son, and **SHOWS HIM ALL THINGS THAT HE HIMSELF IS DOING;** and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel."

John 5:30 NASB

30 "**I CAN DO NOTHING ON MY OWN INITIATIVE. AS I HEAR, I JUDGE; AND MY JUDGMENT IS JUST, BECAUSE I DO NOT SEEK MY OWN WILL, BUT THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME.**"

Proverbs 16:9 NASB

9 **THE MIND OF MAN PLANS HIS WAY, BUT THE LORD DIRECTS HIS STEPS.**

Proverbs 19:21 NASB

21 **MANY PLANS ARE IN A MAN'S HEART, BUT THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD WILL STAND.**

Proverbs 3:5-7 NASB

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and **DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.**

6 **IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.**

7 **DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES;** fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - MAKE COMMUNION - NOT ACHIEVEMENT - YOUR GOAL

Luke 10:38-42 NASB

38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

39 She had a sister called Mary, **WHO WAS SEATED AT THE LORD'S FEET, LISTENING TO HIS WORD.**

40 **BUT MARTHA WAS DISTRACTED WITH ALL HER PREPARATIONS;** and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "**MARTHA, MARTHA, YOU ARE WORRIED AND BOTHERED ABOUT SO MANY THINGS;**

42 **BUT ONLY ONE THING IS NECESSARY, FOR MARY HAS CHOSEN THE GOOD PART, WHICH SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER.**"

Matthew 6:7 NASB

7 "And when you are praying, DO NOT USE MEANINGLESS REPETITION AS THE GENTILES DO, FOR THEY SUPPOSE THAT THEY WILL BE HEARD FOR THEIR MANY WORDS."

Matthew 7:21-23 NASB

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

22 "**MANY WILL SAY TO ME ON THAT DAY, 'LORD, LORD, DID WE NOT PROPHECY IN YOUR NAME, AND IN YOUR NAME CAST OUT DEMONS, AND IN YOUR NAME PERFORM MANY MIRACLES?'**

23 "**AND THEN I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'**

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 NASB

1 **GUARD YOUR STEPS AS YOU GO TO THE HOUSE OF GOD AND DRAW NEAR TO LISTEN RATHER THAN TO OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF FOOLS; FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW THEY ARE DOING EVIL.**

2 **DO NOT BE HASTY IN WORD OR IMPULSIVE IN THOUGHT TO BRING UP A MATTER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. FOR GOD IS IN HEAVEN AND YOU ARE ON THE EARTH; THEREFORE LET YOUR WORDS BE FEW.**

3 **FOR THE DREAM COMES THROUGH MUCH EFFORT AND THE VOICE OF A FOOL THROUGH MANY WORDS.**

4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

7 **FOR IN MANY DREAMS AND IN MANY WORDS THERE IS EMPTINESS. RATHER, FEAR GOD.**

Psalms 46:7-11 KJV

7 The LORD of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob [is] our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 **BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I [AM] GOD:** I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 **THE LORD OF HOSTS [IS] WITH US; THE GOD OF JACOB [IS] OUR REFUGE. SELAH.**

Psalms 46:10 NASB

10 "**CEASE STRIVING AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD...**

John 6:25-29 NASB

28 Therefore they said to Him, "**WHAT SHALL WE DO, SO THAT WE MAY WORK THE WORKS OF GOD?**"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "**THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD, THAT YOU BELIEVE IN HIM WHOM HE HAS SENT.**"

2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB

18 BUT WE ALL, WITH UNVEILED FACE, BEHOLDING AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY, JUST AS FROM THE LORD, THE SPIRIT.