

**NEW YEAR
MAKING GODLY RESOLUTIONS
JAMES 4:13-17**

Introduction

Christmas is now behind us...2018 is almost behind us...and a brand spanking New Year looms just a few short days ahead of us...and no doubt many are wondering and pondering in their minds such questions such as:

What will this New Year (2019) bring our way?

Will it be a year known for its joy or sadness?

Will it be a year of personal prosperity or poverty?

Will it be a year of sickness or health?

For believers, we wonder will this be the year that Jesus comes back?

We could list other things but the bottom line is—folks want to know

...will this be a good year or one that they'd rather forget!

The answer to those questions none of us can know!

James 4:13-14 "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

We can make plans about our future, but NONE of us knows what the future holds! The best that we can do is to make sure we know the One Who holds our tomorrows and put Him in His proper place in our lives as LORD of our lives!

James 4:15 "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Many folks, no doubt, will approach this New Year with **optimistic hope for it to be a better year than 2018!** There is nothing wrong with as long as we realize that **our trust is in to be in the LORD because our times are in His hands!**

Psalms 62:5-8 "5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. 7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. 8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah."

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In preparation for a New Year, hopefully many believers will **take inventory of their life—evaluating this past year of their life and then resolve to be better by the LORD's good grace and help!**

Pollsters tell us that most New Year's Resolutions wind up being tossed aside or forgotten shortly after the New Year begins. For example, I heard a story of a couple that decided to join together in a diet for a whole year. About ten weeks in, someone knowing of their resolution asked the man, "*How's it going with the diet? How much have you two lost?*" The man replied, "*Well, so far we've lost ten weeks!*" "*We wanted to lose 20lbs and after 10 weeks we've only got 30lbs to go!*"

That sounds like the Holiday Diet Plan to me! Amen?

It's sad to say, but that is usually the way most resolutions end up.

Now when it comes to our **resolve in spiritual things**, we'd like to think that our **spiritual resolve** is better, but the reality is that for many it is not!

We find that we are not much different than the Israelites Whom God redeemed from the bondage in Egypt! One of their main problems is that **they were short on RESOLVE when it came to doing what they said they would do for the LORD! And the reason they were short on RESOLVE is because their DEPENDANCE was on their FLESH rather than being on the LORD!**

But listen, it doesn't have to be that way and we don't have to wait until the New Year to make **resolutions!** In fact, **whenever we fail we should put the failure behind us and move ahead more resolute than ever before!** As Christians, the LORD wants us to live **purposeful, meaningful, determined** lives for Him! **That is what resolutions and being resolute should be all about!**

We can only make proper spiritual resolutions with the LORD's help! And we can only keep those spiritual resolutions we make with the LORD's help! As we approach a New Year, let's think about MAKING GODLY RESOLUTIONS!

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I. GODLY RESOLUTIONS CAN BE IN THE FORM OF MAKING PURPOSEFUL CHOICES IN OUR LIVES!

A. Example – Joshua’s Determining To Choose To Serve The LORD! (Joshua 24:1-15)

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Every Christian individual and every family needs to resolve for their home that they will serve the LORD!

B. Example – Daniel’s Purposing Not To Defile Himself!

For Daniel life changed in a drastic way! (Daniel 1:1ff)

1. A War! (Besieged!)
2. A Move! (Taken into Captivity!)
3. A Grooming! (The learning and tongue of the Chaldeans along with a new diet!)

Daniel 1:8—"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

We too should be like Daniel in that we, with God’s help, **purpose to live lives that are undefiled before the LORD!**

C. Example – Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego’s Firm Resolve Not To Bow To Nebuchadnezzar’s Idols, Even If It Meant Death. (Daniel 3:14-18)

1. We should be like them in that we **resolve** to put the one true God first and worship Him only!

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2. We should **resolve** to not bow to the demands of this world, our flesh or the Devil!
3. We should **resolve** to not look for this world’s acceptance but only for our LORD’s acceptance!
4. We should **resolve** not to be driven by the fear of men, but that which pleases the LORD!
2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

A RESOLUTION CAN BE IN THE FORM OF MAKING PURPOSEFUL CHOICES IN OUR LIVES!

II. A RESOLUTION CAN BE IN THE FORM OF VOWING A VOW TO GOD IN OUR LIVES!

A. Example – Jacob’s Vow. (Genesis 28:20-22; 35:1-7)

Jacob vowed to tithe and to recognize the house of God. We should follow his example and **resolve to be faithful in the attendance at the house of God and to give God the tithe.**

B. Example – Hannah’s Vow. (1 Samuel 1:9-11; 27-28)

Every mother and father should prayerfully consider dedicating their children to God. **Parents should want to raise their children to be servants of God used by God for His highest purposes!**

But there is something important to remember about vowing vows:

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5—"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

A RESOLUTION CAN BE IN THE FORM OF US MAKING PURPOSEFUL CHOICES...OR VOWING A VOW TO GOD!

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III. A RESOLUTION CAN BE IN THE FORM OF BEING MORE DETERMINED IN SOME ASPECT OF OUR FAITH!

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

“Jesus First”

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Arise and Go...”

Joshua 1:2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

“Be strong and very courageous...”

Joshua 1:7-8 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

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IV. I think you can get the picture!
A RESOLUTION CAN BE IN THE FORM OF PRESSING FORWARD IN A RIGHT DIRECTION!

Example – A Remnant (42360 of the congregation not including servants and singers per *Ezra 2:64-65*) (*Ezra 1:1-6*)

Example – Haggai, Zechariah, Zerubbabel and Jeshua (*Ezra 5:1-2, 5; 6:14-16*)

Example – Ezra the Scribe (*Ezra 7:6-10*)

Example – Nehemiah (*Nehemiah 1:3-11; 2:1-8*)

Example – Paul (*Philippians 3:12-16*)

Conclusion

The Bible also records some failures in the lives of those who made some resolutions. Peter, for instance, resolved, in *Matthew 26:33*–“...*Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*” **He had good intentions, but he tried to carry out his resolution in the power of the flesh.**

He failed, **just as we all have failed at times.** But, with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ (*John 21*), **Peter put that failure behind him and moved forward for His resurrected LORD and became a mighty tool in the book of Acts for His LORD!**

We too may sometimes fail, but we are not to quit! We are to get back where we need to be and go on for God! God can and will forgive our failures! But He still calls us to service for Him!

As we have entered 2019 now let each of us make the **personal spiritual resolutions** that God would have us to make by putting our failures behind us and making a new start with the Lord!

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We fail Him in so many ways:

By our **neglect of Him and His Word**, by our **prayerlessness** and **lack of faith**, by our **coldness of heart**, by our **worldly mindedness**, by **failing to live in the power of His Holy Spirit**.

But let's put the past behind us and press forward as God gives us each new day this year! Let's trust God to give us a great year in 2019. Let's honor Him with our lives and serve Him as we never have before.