

Vol. 8 No.01, January 3, 2021



East Columbus Bulletin

Times of Services

Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship only

Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Study and Worship Opportunities

Due to COVID concerns, services and classes are limited to Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. Stay alert to possible changes.

News and Notes

- **Home Bound Members:** Mike Butler, Willena Woods.
- **Prayer Requests:** Elbert Logan, Lee Gallop, Doug and Pat Wheeler.
- **Others to Remember:** Wade McCrary, Jim Ratcliff, Jerry Paschall, Elbert Logan, Mike & Marion Butler, Lee Gallop. Willena Woods is at Windsor Place..
- **Sick:** Doug Wheeler is undergoing radiation treatments for lymphatic cancer. Pat Wheeler is receiving treatments for pancreatic cancer. Steve Coburn is hospitalized with a collapsed lung. In addition, we have the following members and family ill with COVID virus: Steve Coburn, Jim Ratcliff, Anne Temple, Kim Solomon, Willena Woods. In the last month many more members have had COVID and recovered but the list is too long for a listing here. We are thankful for those who have recovered and continue to pray for those still battling the virus and its lingering effects.
- **Hospitalized** – Jim Ratcliff and Steve Coburn.
- **Deaths** – Our dear sister and friend Vallie Gallop passed away Tuesday, December 22, due to complications from COVID. Todd McGee, father of David McGee passed away December 29, due to complications from COVID. Frank Butler, father to Mike Butler, passed away on December 9, at his home in Shelbyville, TN. Our hearts go out to the grieving families.
-

Contact Information:

East Columbus church of Christ, 811 Alabama Street, Columbus, MS 39702; Telephone: (662) 328-6227

Website: eastcolumbuschurch.org

Please address comments for bulletin to Ed Williams at 662.323.9502 or glenedwilliams@yahoo.com.

Resolutions

Luke 15:18 *"I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight.'"*

This week in our Jump Starts we are looking both backward over this past year with reflection and looking forward to next year with anticipation. This is the time when many people make resolutions for the new year. Some are personal, such as more exercise, weight loss, more saving money. Some are spiritual, such as reading the Bible more, praying on a regular basis. It is even good for congregations to make resolutions, such as being more dedicated, reaching more people, doing a better job connecting with the young people.

In our verse today, the words of the prodigal, he was making a resolution. This was not based upon the calendar and the end of a year. This was based upon the bottom dropping out of his life. He had left home with a pocket full of money. Now, he was staring at pigs. Everyone had left him. Alone. Down. Hopeless. He resolves to make a change. He resolves to go home. He resolves to confess to his father. His resolution came from the depth of his heart and not the start of a new year. Those can be some of the best resolutions and changes in a life.

Some make yearly resolutions and by the second month they are forgotten and they have accomplished nothing. Sometimes making resolutions is a result of getting caught up with the spirit of others. Everyone around you is making a resolution so you feel guilty if you do not come up with something. But, such a person is not really serious about keeping that resolution.

Here are the components of resolutions that will make a difference in your life:

First, it begins with not being satisfied with the way things are. If a person is content with the way they look, then they won't "resolve" to make any changes. This is true financially as well as spiritually. The greatest motivator for personal change is the bathroom mirror and the monthly bank statement. Those two things are bluntly true. When a person is tired of living the way that they are living then there will be a great incentive to change. This is where we see the prodigal. He was fed up with his life. Low living had not brought the joys that he expected. He was not happy, content, nor wanted to spend another day feeding pigs.

Second, the person must believe that change is possible and within reach. This is where small, tiny goals are very helpful in making and keeping resolutions. If what you want is completely out of reach, then you'll be so discouraged that you will never attempt to change. Baby steps are the key. Just a few pounds. Just a few minutes of exercise. Just a few dollars saved up. It's like a drop in the bucket. At first and for a while, those little drops do not seem like much. But if a person stays with it, before long the bottom of that bucket is covered. Keep with it. Don't quit. In time, the bucket is a third filled. Then half way filled. Then it's at the top. Then the water is spilling over. Drop by drop. Consistently and constantly.

Third, there will always need to be adjustments. Things happen. We call that life. Your schedule will get off schedule. And, that is often the crash of most resolutions. What was started now stops. What began ends. And, back to the old ways we go. We must want the change more than we want to stay the way things are. So, readjust the schedule. Catch up on things. Get back on track.

Fourth, in time you will start to see some positive results. These small victories will encourage you and help you even more. For some, keeping a written record of their goals is a key part of this. If that works, do it. For others, just seeing the results is enough to keep them going and reaching forward for a bigger goal.

That's it! It seems so simple. Now, put these thoughts into spiritual goals. Losing weight, saving money, finishing a degree are all great, but not nearly as great as reaching real spiritual goals in your journey with the Lord.

Here are a few ideas. Think them out and then create your own list. Spiritual resolutions. Spiritual goals.

· Better attendance. As I write this, things are still sketchy in many places. But, before long the threat of the pandemic will lessen. Things will open up again.

Congregations will fire the engines once again and the doors will be open for multiple times during the week to worship. Some haven't done real well here. Some have allowed this pandemic to cool their desire for attending. Make that one of your resolutions. Begin, by attending every worship service that your congregation offers for a month. Every single one. Don't miss one. Then, make your goal a quarter of the year. Now, you might miss a service because you didn't feel well one day. Don't go back to your old ways. Get back in there and keep attending. You'll be amazed at all the other positive things that come from this.

· Better Bible knowledge. This is something we all can work on. Start small. Do you know the books of the Bible in order? If not, start with the N.T. Start with a few at a time. Write them out on a 3x5 card. Keep it with you. Say them as you drive along. Keep adding more and more to the list. You'll get it. For those who know this, work on memorizing how many chapters are in each book. How many chapters are in Genesis? Then Exodus. This will help you find things better in your Bible. From that, bring a pen and notebook to services. Take notes, just like you were in college. Write down things the preacher says. Put notes in your Bible. Underline words. Notice repeated words. From that, start focusing upon when things happened in the life of Christ. Get an understanding of what each book of the Bible is about. Knowing the purpose will help you understand the message more. Dig and dig and lower your net deeper and deeper.

· Better Prayer life. It's easy to get in the habit of praying for the same things over and over. Make a schedule that works for you. On Monday, pray for those in the congregation. On Tuesday, pray for those in your family that are not Christians. On Wednesday, pray for insight and opportunity to help others. On Thursday, pray for young families. On Friday, pray for elders and preachers. On Saturday, pray for yourself. And, on Sunday, use your prayers to thank the Lord. Come up with your own system. Print it out so you won't forget. Better prayers. Deeper prayers. More prayers.

· Better Connection with God's people. It's easy to only see each other when we are in the church building. Make it a goal to contact every family this year. If necessary, start with the names that begin with "A" and work through the congregation. Drop them a card. Give them a call. Do something special for them. When the situation allows, go out to eat or have someone in your home, so you can spend some great time with them. This will enhance your fellowship, worship and love for the congregation.

Resolutions—making them is easy. Keeping them is the key. Put some thought into this and then get busy.