

# Reverse Resolutions

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January 1 has been described as “every man’s birthday.” On one hand, it’s just another day used to mark time. On the other, there is a newness about it, a sense of beginning again. Because of that, this time of year is known for making resolutions.

While it is a good thing to make some decisions toward progress, the problem is usually in the keeping of the resolutions. According to a study by the University of Scranton, 45% of our fellow Americans usually make New Year’s Resolutions. But only 8% follow through and keep them.

But that’s not what the word means. Resolution or resolve means to “make up your mind, decide firmly, determine.” It is used to describe how Barnabas “encouraged them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord” (Acts 10:23). Nothing halfway or half-hearted there.

Consider these “reverse resolutions.” Since the regular kind are so poorly kept, perhaps we will be more successful with these. Maybe we can reverse the trend and follow through.

**Eat more.** Everyone is trying to cut back and cut out. Let’s eat more. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:16). The word “hunger” means “to desire strongly” and is the same word to describe Jesus’ condition after 40 days of fasting in the wilderness (Matt. 4:2). In such hunger, food would be all we could think about. That should be how we crave the word of God.

Peter said we should desire the word like newborn babes do their milk (1 Pet. 2:1-2). When we have that kind of longing for God’s word, it will help us in every area of life. We will be “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath” (Jam. 1:19). We will “be anxious for nothing” (Phil. 4:6). This kind of food truly satisfies.

**Spend more.** Everyone is saving and storing. Let’s spend. “The bad news is time flies, the good news is you’re the pilot” (Mike Altshuler).

Spend more time praying. Jesus told a parable in Luke 18:1 to “show that at all times they ought to pray and not lose heart.” “Pray without ceasing” (1Thess. 5:17) indicates that our communication with God is continual and ongoing. What would it look like if you compared the time you spent praying with the time you spent talking, texting, and tweeting?

Spend more time encouraging. Joseph was called Barnabas by the apostles, which means, “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36). Have you ever thought about what

nickname you might have in the kingdom?

Spend more time on other people. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). At the end of the year, you may have vacation days or sick days called "use them or lose them." We must see our opportunities the same way.

**Watch more.** Everyone wants to watch less television or become less attached to technology. Let's switch channels and watch more. The Scriptures speak of our responsibility to be watchful.

Watch more for the devil. "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). The reason we make resolutions in the first place is because we give in to our enemy too often. We cannot afford to underestimate him. He wants us to fail.

Watch more for lost souls. In this area especially, we need a better savings plan. The Son of Man came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The mission of our Master should be ours as well.

Watch more for the weak and wayward. Sometimes it will be those in the family of God who need saving (James 5:19-20). When we come together to worship, look around and see who has made it a habit to forsake our assembling together. This work is to be done "in the spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1).

Watch more for the Lord's return. "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12). That means we have our eyes pointed in the right direction, with joyful expectation.

Do you know the best way to keep a New Year's resolution? "Make it something you really want." The usual ones may lead to a happy and healthy 2020. But these reverse resolutions will make you stronger spiritually and lead to life eternal.