

January 5, 2020

I Resolve

Amazingly, the year 2019 has ended, and a new year, and a new decade has begun. Many of us, no doubt, have voiced surprise that the previous year “passed so quickly;” we wonder “where did all that time go,” etc.

Time itself has neither speeded up, or slowed down. There are still 365 days to a year. There are still 60 minutes to an hour, and there are still 24 hours to a day. However, as we get older it generally seems as if time is passing more rapidly. But it is all a matter of perspective, which can vary from person to person. For example, for a baby born on Jan. 1, 2019, the time from that date to Jan. 1, 2020 represents 100 percent of the earthly life he has lived to this point. But to an 80 year old person, it only represents one eightieth of his or her earthly so-journ to date..

However, sober-minded people tend to become more reflective as they view the rapid passing of time, and this is as it should be. The apostle Paul admonished the saints at Ephesus to “*walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil*” (Eph. 5:25-16). We are given **time** that we might prepare for **eternity**, and how we fare in the day of judgment will largely be determined by how we used the time allotted to us while we dwell in our mortal bodies (2 Cor. 5:10). Inasmuch as life is likened to “*a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away*” (Jas.4:14), it is imperative that we (early in life) get our priorities in order. Jesus worded it this way: “*seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Matt. 6:33).

Mindful of the brevity of life, and the length of eternity, it is imperative that we do as God admonished King Hezekiah, namely, to “*set your house in order, for you will die and not live*” (2 Kings 20:1). And setting our spiritual houses “*in order*” demands on our part a strong resolve to correct the things amiss in our lives, and to point ourselves in the direction of heaven. And the ending of the old year and the beginning of a new year prompts sober-minded people to “*examine*” themselves (2 Cor. 13:5), and to sincerely resolve to do better. Consequently, people often make (and even write out) their “new year’s resolutions.” Individually, as it relates to our personal lives, different people make different resolutions. And that is as it ought to be. However, it is my conviction that **every** person should resolve to do the following. Hence, I hope that each one who reads this article will say (and mean it!) that:

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1. To spend at least a little time every day in Bible study and prayer to God. After all, we are commanded to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 3:18), and to “*Pray Without Ceasing*” (I Thess. 5:17).

2. To never let a week pass without talking to someone about the condition of his,

or her, soul. Indeed, the things of God's word which we have been taught should be committed to "*faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:2).

3. To utter these words at least once every day: "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

4. to love my brethren in Christ, even those who may have opposed me or disagreed with what I believe. After all, Jesus said "*By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another,*" John 13:35.

5. To correct any offence I may have committed against my family, my fellow man, my brother in Christ, or the family of God. Remember what Jesus said: "*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift,*" Matt. 5:23-24.

6. To never forsake the assembling of myself together with others of "*like precious faith*" in order to worship God "*in spirit and in truth,*" John 4:24. Remember the Hebrew saints were admonished to "*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching,*" Heb. 10:24-25.

7. To seek "*first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*" Matt. 6:33. Remember this: God will not accept second place in our lives; it is either **first** place or **no** place at all!

8. To **work** as if everything depended on me, to **pray** as if everything depended on God, and to **live** each day as if it were my last. Remember this: Our "*labor is not in vain in the Lord,*" I Cor. 15:58. There is power in prayer, Jas. 5:16. And today could be our last day to live! Cf. Prov. 27:1; Jas. 4:14.

9. To be less concerned about what **people** think of me and more concerned about what **God** thinks of me! After all, God is mindful of even "*the thoughts and intents of the heart,*" Heb. 4:12. We can fool people, but we cannot fool God!

Conclusion: Good resolutions should be made **and kept** — not broken! It is my plea and prayer that each one of us will resolve to carry out the aforementioned resolutions, and then be resolute in carrying them out !

*** — B. Witherington