

1 Resolutions

- The Culture of Self-Improvement

2 New Year's Resolution

- Each year millions of people use the beginning of the year to make pledges of self-improvement.
- Romans – 153 B.C. (Beginning of the Year, January 1st.)
- Day in which they honored their god Janus.
- God of doorways, gates, beginnings and ends.

3 What is a Resolution?

- A New Year's Resolution is a commitment that an individual makes to a project or a habit, often a lifestyle change that is generally interpreted as advantageous.

4 New Year's Resolutions

5 Popular Resolutions

- Weight Loss/Get in Shape
- Stick to a budget
- Debt reduction
- More quality time with family/friends
- Find a spouse
- Quit smoking
- Get a better job
- Learn a new skill/hobby
- Volunteer or Serve People
- Get more organized

6 Success Rates

- 40 to 45 percent keep their New Year's Resolution.
- For how long?
 - past the first week: 75%
 - past two weeks: 71%
 - after one month: 63%
 - after six months: 46%

7 Resolution Keeping

- Person who makes a resolution is 10 times more likely to attain their goal.
- Only 4% of non-resolvers were able to maintain their behavior change.
- Persistence is the key to life change.
 - Only 40% of people succeed the first time.
 - 17% finally succeed after 6 attempts.

8 Tips

- Have a strong commitment to change. Last-minute and unreflective resolutions tend to be broken. (Luke 14:28)
- Set up coping strategies to deal with setbacks that challenge resolutions.
- Keep track of progress in a journal or through conversations with friends.
- Replace old behavior with new behavior.

9 God's Activity

- In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 3:1-2 NIV)
- From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17 NIV)
- They went out and preached that people should repent. (Mark 6:12 NIV)
- Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 NIV)

10 God's Activity

- For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-4 NIV)

11 Life Through the Spirit

- Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:12–14 NIV)
- For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15 NIV)

12 Issues

- So what is living or walking in the Spirit?
 - God has written His law on our hearts.
 - So when we listen to our hearts and the Holy Spirit convicts us of wrong doing and we take steps to correct that behavior we are walking in the Spirit.
 - When our conscience bothers us and we make things right we are walking in the Spirit and please the Lord.
 - However, if we harden our hearts and make excuses for our behavior, we not only lose our ability to hear God’s voice but lose our peace and confidence that God hears our prayers.

13 Spiritual Resolutions

- What is God’s Spirit saying to you this year?
 - If we can’t hear his voice, we may need to get into His Word and allow it to not only build our faith but also plow up those hard places in our heart.
 - Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

14 Making Resolutions

- Understand . . .
 - Resolution is a formal promise to yourself.
 - They ought to be reasonable and measurable.
 - Those who make resolutions are 10 times more likely to succeed than those who don’t.
 - Almost half of those who make resolutions succeed the first time.
 - Those who are persistent eventually succeed.
 - God has promised to give us strength and honor our faith and commitment.

15 Resolutions 2008

- What is God laying on your heart to change in 2008?