

**WE WILL NEVER
CHANGE THE WORLD
BY GOING TO CHURCH,
WE WILL ONLY
CHANGE THE WORLD
BY BEING THE
CHURCH**

Change.

We have just gone into a new year, resolutions were made & many have been broken already.

- Change is needed.
- Change is possible.
- A new year is a good time to implement change.
- But things won't change because you had more to drink this year or because you shot off more fireworks.
- Things will only change if you change.
- You and I don't change lives, God does & he uses His Word to convict stubborn hearts of sin.

Salvation starts with change.

To live differently we must think differently.

- Repentance = Metanoia (Greek for change of mind)
- Transformation (change) by the renewing of our minds

Romans 12v1-3.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

To act differently we must think differently.

Living by rules imposed on you that are not inward convictions is religion.

- ❑ *Honest Question:* Is the Church radically different from the world? Are we strangers, aliens, pilgrims, or are we conformed to this world?
- ❑ To Change we've first got to be convinced that we need to change and secondly we've got to want to change and lastly we must take action.
 - *II Corinthians 5:17. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation old things have passed away behold all things have become new.*
 - *Ephesians 4:17-19 & 22-32. God doesn't magically wave a wand and our habits change we've got to exercise our free will and put things to death. (i.e.: Strangle / Kill them.)*

Humans are creatures of habit.

- ❖ We tend to act as we acted in the past and like a river running through a canyon, the longer the habit continues the more deeply it becomes ingrained and the harder it is to change this is true of good and bad habits

➤ Christians must:

A) Learn good habits

Bible study

Prayer

Attending church

Teaching others

Giving

B) Eliminate bad habits

Foul language

Uncontrollable temper

Gossip

Lying

Pornography

Motivation for change.

Most of us who are exposed to Gods Word know that there are things in our lives that need to change and yet we come to the beginning of yet another year and we haven't changed.

Perhaps we need to check our foundation.

❑ ***WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE***

❑ ***Honest Question:*** What are you passionate about?

What drives you?

What do you think about?

What do you spend your money on?

What do you spend your time on?

Motivation for change.

TO CHANGE WE MUST BE MOTIVATED. LET US LOOK AT SOME THINGS THAT SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO CHANGE.

❖ LOVE.

- A parent will run in to a burning building to save their child

John 3:16 GOD "so loved" the world that he gave his only son.

Romans 2:4 The Love of GOD leads to repentance.

- If you are having difficulty changing you need to learn to appreciate GOD'S mercy & blessing and love him in return.

Jesus said if you love me you will keep my commandments
John 14:15,21,23 & 24

Motivation for change.

LOVE AND DEDICATION TO GOD IS INDICATED IN OUR GIVING, AND THAT IS NOT ONLY FINANCIAL.

- Macedonians II Cor 8v1-5 & 7 (they first gave themselves to the LORD)
- An unconverted person thinks giving 10% of your salary to GOD is crazy, but once you have given yourself to GOD, giving 10% to Him is just a starting point.
- *Honest Question:* Do you tithe?
- God doesn't drop money in our church bank account

Sadly many professing Christians are described in Haggai 1v4-7 & 9

Motivation for change.

Haggai 1:4-7 & 9.

This is what the LORD Almighty says: These people say, The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD's house. Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin? Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough .

You drink, but never have your fill.

You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.



Motivation for change.

Haggai 1:4-7 & 9 (contd)

This is what the LORD Almighty says: Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured, says the LORD. You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? declares the LORD Almighty. Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains,

on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.



Motivation for change.

God uses discipline to get us to change.

Hebrews 12:7-13.

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

IMITATION OF CHRIST OR A CHRIST-LIKE PERSON WILL BRING CHANGE.

- ❖ The desire to be like someone we admire is another powerful motivation (**Sports hero's inspire people**)
- I Cor 11.1 Paul says "imitate me as I imitate Christ"
- *Honest Question:* Are you imitating Christ or someone Christ-like?

Could you tell someone to imitate you?

- Matt 10:24&25 A disciple seeks to be like his Master

We will all face temptation, even Jesus had to deal with Satan and His own flesh, but there is something very important to bear in mind.

Temptations are like tramps. If you treat them kindly they always come back and they bring their friends with them.

DESIRE TO PLEASE THE LORD.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15. *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

I Corinthians 9:25-27 Athletes control their habits win temporary earthly honor Christians have a strong motive "We seek the crown of eternal life"

Lack of motivation is a major reason why people do not change to please GOD.

- They do not have sufficient desire to change, instead they want to please themselves or their friends or family.
- When we determine to please God and realize that serving him is our most important purpose in life, we will find the means to make the necessary changes.

Good sermons don't change people.

Herod enjoy listening to John the Baptist.

Mark 6:17-20.

For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.



Good sermons don't change people.

Herod was a man pleaser.

Mark 6:21-28.

Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you. And he promised her with an oath, Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom. She went out and said to her mother, What shall I ask for? The head of John the Baptist, she answered. At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother.

Miracles don't change people.

The Chief priests did not change and repent when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 12:9-11.

Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

John 9:20-23. (The Parents of the man born blind)

We know he is our son, the parents answered, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself. His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, He is of age; ask him.

Miracles don't change people.

Luke 16:23-31.

In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire. But Abraham replied.....



He answered, Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment. Abraham replied, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them. No, father Abraham, he said, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent. He said to him, If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.

Miracles don't change people.

Revelation 9:20-21.

The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.



Prosperity can change people.

Deuteronomy 6:10-12.

When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant, then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Proverbs 30:7-9.

Two things I ask of you, LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, Who is the LORD? Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.

Things to do that will change us.

Things that will bring change for the better in our lives.

- This time of year we start hearing a lot about New Year's resolutions. Exercise regimens, diet fads and book-reading plans all boast that they will make your life exponentially better in the next year. After a few weeks most people have given up on their resolutions and settled back into their normal routine.
- There's nothing wrong with any of these goals, but think about some other disciplines that will make a difference to eternity, as well as the here and now.
- While spiritual discipline is often overlooked, it is an extremely important part of Jesus' character. Jesus modelled a consistent pattern of spiritual discipline during his earthly ministry, and if Jesus, who is God, had to be disciplined, then how much more should we mere mortals do the same?

1. Sincere prayer will change us and others.

Prayer changes our outlook. When you pray, change is inevitable.

The conditions may not change. The circumstances will probably remain the same. But prayer changes how you respond to crisis.

1 Samuel 12:18-25.

Then Samuel called on the Lord, and that same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the Lord and of Samuel. The people all said to Samuel, Pray to the Lord your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king. Do not be afraid, Samuel replied. You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.

And I will teach you the way that is good and right. But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish.

1. Sincere prayer will change us and others.

James 5:13-18.



Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

2. Fasting will change us and get God's attention .

Fasting

Prior to his public ministry Jesus spent forty days fasting. And of the five disciplines, fasting may be the most challenging of them all.

Joel 1:13-16.

Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God. Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.

Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes joy and gladness from the house of our God?

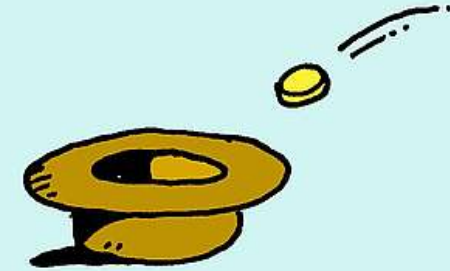
God showed mercy even on the wicked when they fasted, Nineveh and Ahab are examples of this.

The true fast.

Isaiah 58:1-11.

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

POOR PEOPLE OUGHT TO
BE CARED FOR BECAUSE
GOD CARES ABOUT THEM



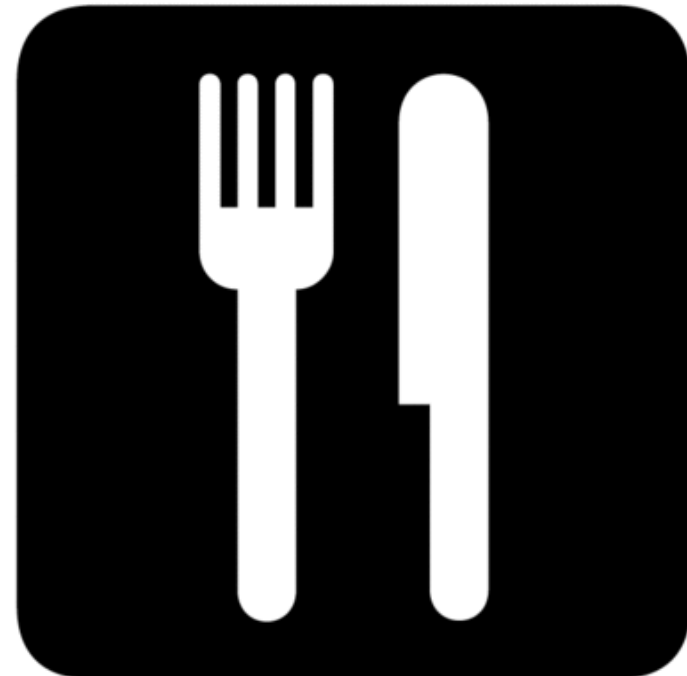
Fasting.

Surely no one will Question that in lands where food is in plentiful supply there are far more people who are ill through over-indulgence than through under nourishment.

The Edmund Smith papyrus, estimated to be 3700 years old, quotes an Ancient Egyptian doctor as saying: Man eats too much. Thus he only lives on a quarter of what he consumes. The doctors however live on the remaining three-quarters. From an article in Christian Today we have the following quotation from James Morrison:

There are a multitude of diseases which have there origin in fullness, and might have there end in fasting. Without a doubt there are ills that could be cured, or better still prevented, and a better state of general health enjoyed, if fasting coupled with reformed eating habits were practised.

Oblivious of this, man still continues dig his grave with his knife and fork.



3. Reading God's Word and applying it will change us.

Scripture Reading

When we buy electronic gadgets from the store, they often come with a manual that informs us how to get the most out of our purchase.

The manual tells us how to use it, how to protect it, and how to care for it. These manuals are written by manufacturers because they are aware of the gadget's original purpose.

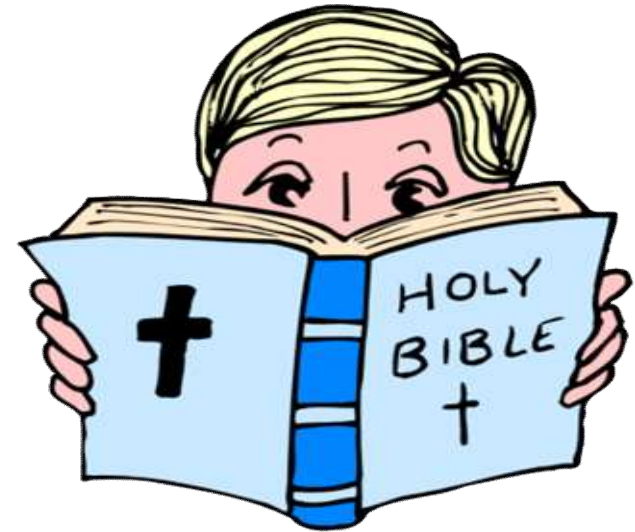
The **Bible** works the same way. The Scriptures are like an operation manual for human life, and God's words help us learn from the lives of others on how to live as he, our Creator, intended. Like the gadget manual, the Bible teaches us how to use, protect, and care for our lives. When we don't read it, we are building a life without having read through the manual. We have a great tool but lack the know-how to enjoy its fullest purpose.



3. Reading God's Word and applying it will change us.

Psalm 119:9-11.

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.



2 Corinthians 3:17-18.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

3. Reading God's Word and applying it will change us.

11 Tim 3v16, 17

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Deuteronomy 8:3.

So he humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:2.

Like Newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.



DIARY OF A BIBLE

JANUARY

A busy month for me. Most of the family decided to read me through this year. They kept me busy for the first two weeks, but they have forgotten me now.

FEBRUARY

Clean up time! I was dusted yesterday and put in my place. My owners did use me for a few minutes last week. They had an argument and were looking up something to prove they were right.

MARCH

I was quite busy for the First of the month. My owner was elected President of the S.C.A. and used me to prepare a speech.

APRIL

Grandpa visited us this month. He kept me on his lap, reading me about one hour every day. He seems to think more of me than some people in my household!

MAY

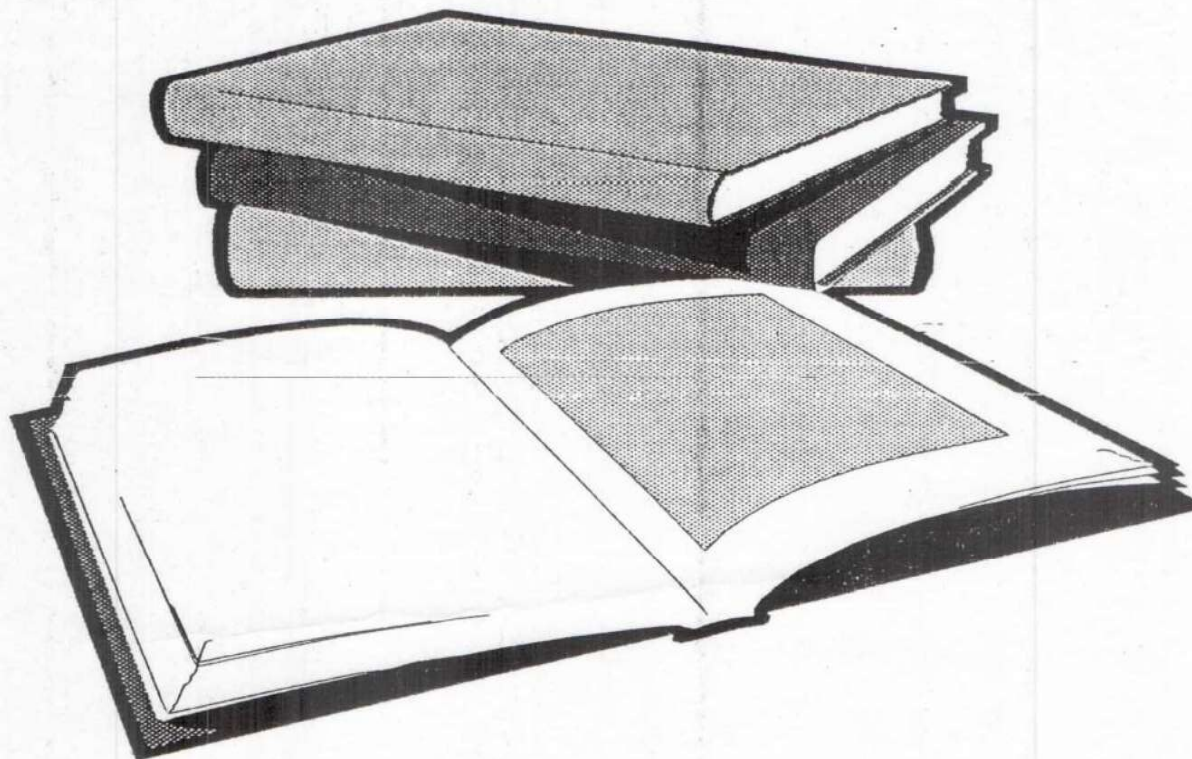
I have developed a few green stains on my pages. I was used as a flower press!

JUNE

I look like a scrapbook! They have stuffed me full of newspaper clippings! One of the girls got married!

JULY

They put me in a suitcase today! I guess we're off on a vacation. I wish I could stay home; I know I'll be closed up in this thing for at least two weeks!



AUGUST

Still in the suitcase

SEPTEMBER

Back home at last. I have a lot of company. Two magazines and four comic books are stacked on top of me. I wish I could be read as much as they are.

OCTOBER

They read me a little bit today. Right now I am sitting on the coffee table. I think the pastor is coming for a visit.

NOVEMBER

Back in my old place. Somebody commented that I look more like a scrapbook than a Bible. I guess I'm not in such great shape.

DECEMBER

With it being Christmas and all, the family has once again decided to spend time reading me. I wonder how long it will last **THIS TIME!**

This story may be amusing, but it is a parable about so many Holy Bibles! People don't know the

3. Reading God's Word and applying it will change us.

James 1:22-25.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.



If we read God's Word and don't obey our hearts harden.

Psalm 1:1-2.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.

True worship.

Worship

Worship is a Christian imperative if we are aiming to be like Christ. It's what Christ says the Father is seeking in **John 4**. When we worship the Lord, we engage him with intention and reverence. When we worship the Lord, we concentrate our lives on the Supreme Being. In an age ripe with idolatry and a compulsive need to place people on the altar of our hearts, where only Christ belongs, worship must be a daily part of our lives. In prayer you can be you. In worship you can forget about you.

When Jesus resists Satan's offer to bow down and worship him, what he shows us is the heart of a true worshipper. Worship is more than affection; it is the acknowledgment of God's invaluable worth and a commitment to express that worth by placing him above all else. Worship reveals where our allegiances lie.

Service.

Service is another activity not often seen as a spiritual discipline.

But if we are to live like Christ, then service cannot be seen as an optional exercise. Service is a regular practice. It is not only something Christians do to give back to society; it is also the heartbeat and pulse of our call to discipleship. There is no way we can accurately represent Jesus without emulating his commitment to serve others. Our willingness to serve is an indication that we are maturing in spiritual virtues. It's easy to read a book on humility; it is much more difficult to actually live with humility. Service is a tool that God uses to teach us virtues that can't be learned from textbooks but only in the school of experience. The beginning of a new year offers a great opportunity for us to recommit ourselves to our walk with Christ. Like physical exercise or diets, these disciplines will take effort and intentionality, but they will greatly enhance your spiritual life and make a difference for the kingdom!



Things to do that will change us.

- 1. Do you pray?**
- 2. Do you fast?**
- 3. Do you read the word of God?**
- 4. Do you worship?**
- 5. Do you serve God by serving others?**

Romans 12:1-2.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will

Another Resolution? (David Brickner)

The front gate is slightly ajar, hanging loosely on one hinge. Weeds all but cover a rusted rake. The steps to the front porch are strewn with greasy parts from a dismantled power mower. The sign on the door reads Bullock's Professional Lawn and Garden Service." You need a gardener but you shake your head as you walk by. You're not about to hire these guys! Unfortunately, that is the spiritual reality for many unbelievers as they observe Christians. We claim to follow the living God, but often our hearts are overgrown with sin, cynicism and complacency. Unsaved people may look at some of us and say, "Why would I ever want to be like them?"

- We want people to believe in Jesus and be like Him, to see His truth demonstrated in our lives.



Another Resolution? (David Brickner)

- It is easy, natural to slacken our fervour and spiritual dedication. That is why we need opportunities to renew our lives, to strengthen our commitments, to make a fresh start. We can do this any time, but certain junctures seem almost to call for it. That is why I am thankful for the New Year.
- I appreciate the opportunity to make resolutions and to renew commitments, whether they are commitments to read through the Bible in a year, to work a little harder at Scripture memory, or (dare I say it?) to be more consistent with a healthy diet and exercise.
- Truthfully, the more I try to live a life holy unto the Lord, the more I realize I simply don't have the strength to do it. Only God's strength can renew and change me.
- So why not "let go and let God"? Why make any resolutions, any preparations, if we are powerless apart from God? Because God hates complacency, He doesn't want us satisfied with ourselves as we are, He's told us that in His word.

Another Resolution? (David Brickner)

What is the opposite of complacency?

- That striving to be more, do more for Him. When we look for ways to strengthen and renew our commitment, all the while counting on His enabling power, we counter the complacency that can so easily creep into our lives.
- Shortly before the recent convocation we had, someone asked me, "What are you going to do to ensure that spiritual renewal and consecration will happen during this time?" I thought about it a minute and realized there wasn't much I could do but pray, show up, and believe that God would show up, too. I'm not saying we didn't plan. Many people planned like crazy. But our plans are never what make things happen. They just demonstrate our willingness to "show up" as prepared as we know how to be. I was glad for the planning and glad for things God did that we never could have planned.

Another Resolution? (David Brickner)

Maybe you have stopped planning New Year's resolutions because, like the rest of us, you have broken so many in the past.

- Let's not give up! Even if we sometimes fail in our resolve, failure still beats complacency. God doesn't seem to get annoyed with us for failing to live up to our resolutions. Whenever we fall He is ready to pick us up again. As long as we know our resolutions don't have the power to actually resolve anything, they can be useful. They keep us from being satisfied with the status quo. They help us look to God for the grace to submit to His Spirit.
- God wants us to be satisfied with Him, but not with ourselves. Whom we decide to be satisfied with will make all the difference in our lives. When people see us, will they be met with the spiritual unkemptness of complacency? Or will they see God's work in progress?
- May God give us grace to reach out to Him for help, and then to reach into ourselves and make room for Him to change us.

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