



Men's Ministry Newsletter

Loving God Loving Others Making Disciples

The Gospel Changes the "Try Harder" Mentality.

It's that time of year again—New Year's resolution time, that is. Just as soon as we finish packing up the lights and de-cluttering our houses from all the Christmas cheer, we've moved on to our next task: setting goals.

As we reflect on 2017, many of us naturally look for areas of improvement and ask the question: *What could be better?* Realistically, what we're asking ourselves is this: *What about me could be better?*

In light of these questions, roughly 40% of Americans break out their journals and resolve each January to improve themselves once and for all.

Unfortunately, after all the goal setting is said and done, only about 9% of Americans self-described as "successful" with the follow through. You know those gyms that everyone joined on January 1st? Americans made promises, but few of them were actually kept.

As Christians, we too fall into a similar trap this time of year. Many of us make resolutions that look similar to those mentioned above but with other faith-oriented commitments added in. Maybe we aim to be more generous, less worrisome, or more joyful in the Lord. Maybe we plan to read our Bibles every day or become more prayerful. Our intentions, while good and often righteous in motivation, don't always pave the way to a successful out-

come. Like the rest of America, we start out strong but soon find ourselves struggling to stay committed.

If we as believers hope to make long-lasting, life-giving changes, we need to find ways to keep our word and stick with our goals long past January 2nd.

Looking at the stories of brave biblical leaders like Moses, Deborah, and Paul, it's evident that a little hustle can come in handy over the course of one's spiritual journey.

Moses certainly could have thrown up his hands in defeat the ninth time that Pharaoh refused to free the Israelite people. Deborah could have cowered at the sight of Sisera's 900 iron chariots on the battlefield. Paul could have given up on his ministry over the course of the days he spent in prison for preaching God's word.

They could, but thankfully they *didn't*.

These men and women were courageous and their inner resolve no doubt played a part in their ability to follow through on the tasks placed before them by God. But if we think for one second that somehow Moses parted the Red Sea through his own effort and sheer will-power alone, we're kidding ourselves.

Paul too could have 'tried and tried again' until he was blue in the face, but without help from external forces of a God-sized magnitude, his ministry

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would have gone nowhere.

Likewise, this New Year's, if we find ourselves thinking that our own strength is sufficient to carry us to places of greater faith in God or dependency on him, we're sorely confused. Our attempts, as followers of Christ, to grow in faith and ministry are valuable—but, ultimately, they serve to reveal our much greater need for His intervention. Regardless of the spiritual feats of greatness we're attempting to accomplish in 2018, we must do so *in* Christ and *with* the gifting of his strength—apart from him, we can do nothing.

What does the Bible mean for me?

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus condemned the religionists who studied the Old Testament but never got around to applying its message. He concluded His sermon with the story of two builders—saying, “Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and **does them**, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock...But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and **does not do them**, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand” (Matthew 7:24, 26, emphasis added). What was the difference?

Both heard the words of Jesus. But one put the truth into practice while the other nodded politely and continued his life as usual.

The lesson: It's not enough to be students of the Bible. We must be disciples of the Lord—determined to put His Word into practice, whatever the cost.

When we study the Bible, then, whether in a group or on our own, we should always consider what it says, what it means, and what it means for us. To

help you, here are some questions to pose to every passage you study in the Bible:

1. Is there a commandment here I need to **put into practice**?
2. Is there a promise I need to **claim**?
3. Is there an attitude I need to **adopt**?
4. Is there a prayer I need to **echo**?
5. Is there a habit I should **begin**?
6. Is there a behavior I must **change**?
7. Is there a sin to **for-sake**?
8. How can I **be more Jesus-like** because of my study of these verses?

When you ask yourself these questions while studying the Bible, the Lord will show you the answers.

Taken from David Jeremiah

Last Thoughts

I'm Looking forward to a year filled with the Love of God.

- Our first Breakfast of the new year is Jan. 20th 6 am.
- Men's Camp the end of May.
- Men's Conference in June

Many more opportunities to Serve and be served.

For even the Son of man came not to be Served, but to Serve, and give His life a ransom for many.

Mk. 10:45

This year may we be more Faithful to God.

2 Tim. Says, "the things we have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to Faithful Men, who will be able to teach others also."

Men's Ministry Leader: Ed

Please call or email with any sickness or areas of help that may be needed.

“Do You Want to Be Whole?”

Let's take a closer look at the words of Jesus when He asked, “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6). The word “well” in that question is the Greek word *hugios*. This word literally translates as “whole.” So Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to be whole?”

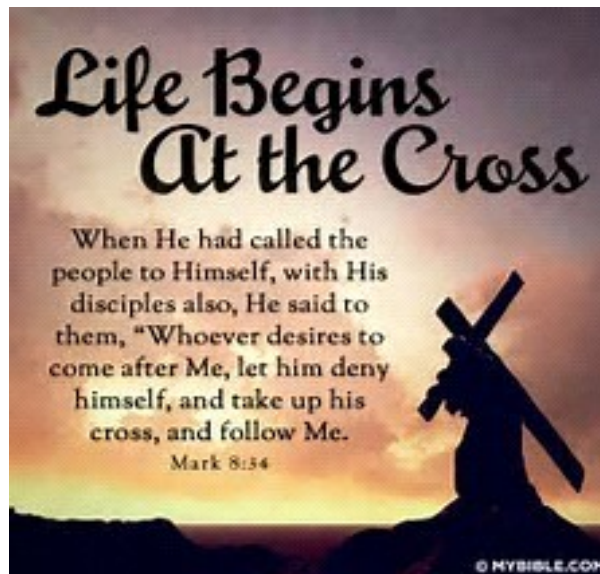
As we approach the New Year, let's pause and say yes to Jesus, yes to entering into His story, and yes to His question *Do you want to be whole?* Because that is what He is offering us right in the beginning of the New Year — wholeness in Him.

Think about that question. Do you want to be whole? Do we want to experience the whole, better, abundant life that God created for us?

The truth, however, is that Jesus' grace is sufficient. In Jesus, we can have peace, and we can overcome being a victim of our current circumstances.

The question is not, “Do you know how to become whole?”

Thankfully, the question is simply, “Do you want to be whole?”



God doesn't have Twitter but we still follow Him.

Transforming Hearts to Love God and Love People



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