

Good morning and Happy New Year,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Philippians 3:12-15 – Larger reading: Philippians 3:1-14

*“It’s not that I have already reached this goal or have already been perfected, but I pursue it, so that I may grab hold of it because Christ grabbed hold of me for just this purpose. Brothers and sisters, I myself don’t think I’ve reached it, but I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me. The goal I pursue is the prize of God’s upward call in Christ Jesus. So all of us who are spiritually mature should think this way, and if anyone thinks differently, God will reveal it to him or her.”*

**STORY:**

Here is Jonathan Edwards’ list of resolutions for the New Year:

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humble entreat Him, by His grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake. [I will] remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.

Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence.

Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general.

Resolved, Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.

Resolved, Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

Resolved, Never to do anything out of revenge.

Resolved, Never to speak evil of any one, so that it shall tend to his dishonour, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.

Resolved, To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

Resolved, Never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession which I cannot hope God will accept.

Resolved, To ask myself, at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better.

Resolved, Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

Resolved, After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them; what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

Resolved, Always to do that which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak.

### **REFLECTIONS:**

Well, Happy New Year! And I trust that it will be for you and yours. The time honored tradition of making resolutions has arrived. So will you? Some do, some don't ... for a variety of reasons. I kind of like the little boy cartoon character in Born Loser calls them, "Revolutions". I kind of like his thinking because these Resolutions are meant to drastically changing our lives. After posting T.D. Jakes remarks yesterday I kind of adopted the "Let It Go" concept for 2021. We'll see how it goes.

The list by Jonathan Edwards is an interesting list and causes me to pause. Chuck Swindoll partially adopts portions of this list in one of his books as his resolves for the New Year. Regardless which approach we take – the more formal list, i.e. Jonathan Edwards, or the more simplified version, i.e. T.D. Jakes concept, nevertheless it is a good and healthy practice to take a long look at one's life and see where a "revolution" should/needs to take place.

It can be a serious approach, as illustrated above, or with a little humor as one man shared with me, "I resolved some years back to give up drinking because I discovered that I always had an allergic reaction when I drank ... I would breakout with a bad case of handcuffs." Or, as one individual shared in her Facebook posting, "I gave up New Year's resolutions for Lent!"

I find it interesting that we are much quicker to see how the other person should change their lives instead of understanding those areas within our own that should/need to change. And then there are those times that we become "hot and heavy" on making some changes only to pull away, fall off, cool to the idea of making the changes long lasting. Most of the time these deal with our relationship with God and our commitment to start taking serious that relationship. As a pastoral counselor I've witnessed it more than once as individuals resolve to walk in a more committed relationship with God and/or even think about moving in the direction of doing something in ministry only to allow those ideas to cool off for the lack of discipline.

May this year be different both for you and me! May our personal spiritual revolution begin!

**QUOTE:**

*“Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.” ~ Thomas a’Kempis*

**PRAYER:**

Make me after your will Creator God. “Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.” Amen

***Holy Communion will be celebrated this Sunday. If you will be participating from your home please have your juice and bread ready so that you share the moment with us.***