

Giving The New Year A Kick Start

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I. Introductory Remarks.

Isaiah 42:9 *Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."*

Here we are once again – at the beginning of a New Year – a time for re-evaluations and a season of new beginnings

How many times in life have we started a new year without realizing the goals we had set before us or even taken the time to evaluate why those goals weren't made?

We cannot live on yesterday's blessings nor should we dwell on yesterday's failures and disappointments.

This is a time to forget the past and move forward into the present and the future.

Philippians 3:13-14 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Many people all over the world are in the process of making New Year's resolutions, of which many of them will never come to pass.

For us as Bible believing Christians this is an opportunity to look back over the past year to see if we were able to make all of the desired changes we set out to do.

- The beginning of a New Year can be a season of new beginnings for us.
- It's a time to look ahead with a sense of anticipation and excitement towards the new things God wants to do in our lives.
- It is a season of setting new goals and putting into effect those things you have been putting off doing.
- It can be a day of new beginnings for each one of us.

In the Lord every day should be a day of new beginnings, but we can look to this season as a time to reflect and re-evaluate where we are and where we are going in God.

2 Corinthians 4:16b *Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

I believe God wants to create a sense of newness in each one of our lives.

I believe it is always God's desire that we be filled with a sense of newness and freshness of what He desires and wants to do in our lives. He desires greatly for us to be filled with a renewed sense of purpose and destiny. This is what is really needed before we can give ourselves a good kickstart.

Isaiah 43:18-19 *“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

Over the years I have had a lot of realized goals and a lot of failures and unrealized goals as well.

The beautiful thing about being a Christian and knowing the Lord is that we don't have to live our lives in guilt and condemnation for our failures and un-achieved goals.

We get to wipe the slate clean and start over. God doesn't hold our past against us as long as we sincerely repent and continually press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. We are a new creation in Christ every day of our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

II. How Newness And Fresh Revelation Come.

1. Newness Comes By Letting Go Of The Past.

No matter how miserably we failed in life or in our Christianity, God's desire is for

us to receive His forgiveness and move forward.

Psalms 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

Hanging on and dwelling on the past is like air moving through a dirty filter. Even though something new and fresh enters into the filter it comes out dirty and tainted because of the filth it must flow through.

Take Jonah for example. Jonah's sulking disappointment came from a failure of imagination, a failure of heart. He had no idea what God was doing – the largeness of his love and mercy and salvation.

He had reduced his vocation to his own performance--he was in the right place, doing the right thing--but he interpreted everything through his Jonah ideas, his Jonah desires. – *Eugene Peterson, Leadership, Vol. 14, no. 1.*

Many times, we too, are in the right place at the right time, but because we are focused on self we miss out on the new things God wants to do through us and for us.

Our own ideas and desires get in the way and we totally miss what God is trying to say and do.

One of God's principles concerning new things is to forget the past and not to walk in condemnation and guilt, but rather to walk in the freedom and the liberty of His forgiveness.

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

If He has forgotten about our past sins, failures, and defeats, we must also forget and get on with the new things He desires to do in our lives.

2. Newness Comes By Hungering & Thirsting For It.

Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

Personal Testimony: Why I moved to Alaska to attend Bible College Had an extreme hunger and thirst for God s word and His purpose in my life. As a result I was filled with an overwhelming sense of newness.

3. Newness Comes By Allowing God To Renew Our Spirits.

Get in touch with what God wants to do in your life, rather than what you want.

David prayed for God to create a new heart and renew a right or steadfast spirit with in him. This should be our heart attitude.

Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

God can only create a sense of newness when we yield ourselves to Him with an open and contrite heart.

Don't be to attached to your identity – God wants to continually change your identity as you are more and more conformed into His image. I'm convinced that one of the reasons many people do not change as much as they would like to is because they are unwilling to let go of their identity – an identity that is wrapped up in the sins of the past.

The cry of our hearts should be for God to continually create a new heart within us and to continually renew our spirit in Him. As we do this it will put us in the proper position for God to speak and create new things in our lives.

- It takes a restored and renewed vision to move forward in God.
- This means spending time with God, so that He can renew and strengthen our lives.
- Having the Holy Spirit reveal new things comes from waiting on God and allowing Him to speak to our spirits.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Learn to wait on God with the expectation of new revelation and understanding of

what His desire towards you is. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

III. Four Ways To Kick Start Your New Year

1. Rely on the Holy Spirit to Help You and Equip You.

Colossians 1:29 *To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

Mightily – dunamis, doo'-nam-is; miraculous power--a miracle itself)--ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty.

The major reason unbelievers have a hard time fulfilling their new year's resolutions is because they are doing it with their own strength.

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

As Christians, God has given to us the Holy Spirit and all things that pertain unto life and life and godliness.

Therefore a new hope comes with new challenges and goals, because all the promises of God are yea and amen!

2. Build on Past Successes and Learn From Past Failures.

Great accomplishments are often attempted but only occasionally reached. Those who reach them are usually those who missed many times before. Failures are only temporary tests to prepare us for permanent triumphs.
Charles R. Swindall

Philippians 3:16 *Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

We all have failures in our lives. It's what we do with them and how we respond to them that makes the difference.

The way we deal with failure can determine how we sustain motivation.

It has been said that a successful person fails two out of every five times, while the unsuccessful person fails three out of five times. Not a whole lot of difference.

We need to look at how much we missed the mark and then make the necessary adjustments that will help us to make the mark more perfectly in the coming year.

- **We should think of a goal as a target.**

The bull's eye is 100. Concentric rings are 80, 60, 40, and 20. You should aim for 100, but sometimes you may only hit 80 or even 20. But if you don't aim for 100, you will hit zero every time.

Someone said, "I would rather attempt to do something great for God and fail, than to do nothing and succeed."

After Eisenhower won the Republican nomination for President from Robert Taft in 1952, a reporter asked Taft about his goals.

He said, "My great goal was to become President of the United States in 1953." The reporter smirked. "Well, you didn't make it, did you?" He said, "No, but I became senator from Ohio!"

3. Set New Goals.

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no vision or revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.*

Without vision and direction you will cast off all restraint and not fulfill those areas of change that the Lord wants to bring into your lives.

- **What are your goals for the coming year?**

I encourage you to think about what your goals are for the coming year and the write them down.

- Make a list of areas you want victory in during this coming year.
- Make a list of areas you want to be more diligent in.

- Make a list of new areas and experiences you want to come into.
- Make a list of new areas in which you want to commit yourself to or recommit yourself to.
- Make a list of what God wants to do in your family.
- Become accountable to someone in the areas you are looking for change and newness.

Philemon 1:6 *The sharing of your faith becomes effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus.*

4. Expect The Holy Spirit To Bring Forth New Beginnings.

We should have a great expectation in our hearts that new things and new seasons are going to break forth in our lives because this is God's desire towards us. It's just a matter of us agreeing with God's will and purpose for our lives.

Philippians 1:6 He who has already been doing a good work in you is going to keep on doing it until Jesus returns (Ken's translation)