

## Biblical Resolutions for the New Year

Philippians 3: 7-11

It doesn't seem possible, but once again we are closing out another calendar year and anticipating the arrival of the New Year. Often we reminisce over the events of the past and have mixed emotions about the coming year. No doubt we all have a sense of excitement, as well as, a bit of anxiety regarding the New Year.

The majority of people often consider resolutions when thinking of the coming year. They consider unreached goals, habit changes, and personal challenges. Resolutions in and of themselves are not necessarily a bad thing. We all need to set goals and strive to improve in areas where we are weak or lacking. I fear however, most resolutions will be based solely on personal or material criteria, with few being spiritual in nature. As believers, we need to set some spiritual goals as well. If you have compiled a list of resolutions, I trust some of your desires for the coming year involve your relationship with the Lord and service to Him.

Our text today is not reserved for the start of a New Year, but is certainly bears application for that unique time. Here Paul shares his heart's desire with the Philippian church. We would do well to develop the same passions and share his desires. Let's take a few moments to consider his [desires](#) as we think on: [Biblical Resolutions for the New Year](#).

**I. Paul Speaks of Proper Perspective (7-8)** – Here we discover Paul's clear perspective on life. His life had experienced much change, and he now lives much differently than in the past. Notice:

**A. The Desires of the Flesh (7)** – [But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ](#). He speaks of things his flesh once desired, things he cherished and considered gain. What were these things? Consider [Vv.4-6](#). Paul speaks of the man he was prior to Christ. He had become one of the elite within religious circles. He had set goals as a young man, and as he matured, he checked those goals off one by one. If anyone had reason to boast in personal achievement, Paul did. Religiously he had the right birth, the right heritage, and the right lineage (being of the tribe of Benjamin, known for devotion and respect.) He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. Paul was at the pinnacle of success.

- But as he met Christ in salvation, Paul realized all these were not gain. They were nothing more than empty vanity, an attempt to secure personal righteousness. His focus had been more on fleshly desires than a genuine passion for Christ! What do your resolutions reveal? Are you seeking a more intimate relationship with Christ, or do you desire things that please the flesh. I pray our spiritual aspirations exceed the physical or material ones!

**B. The Denial of the Flesh (7-8a)** – But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. <sup>[8]</sup>

Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:

As Paul sought success as a young man, he was well pleased with his life. He was a rising star among the Pharisees. His zeal had been noticed and rewarded of men. Life was good and Paul was enjoying the ride. All of that changed in a life altering moment on the Damascus road. It was there Paul met Christ in salvation and his whole perspective changed. In fact, his entire being changed. Paul realized all he had sought was futile. The things he cherished most were worthless in obtaining genuine righteousness. He willingly forsook his personal desires to embrace Christ.

- The majority today share similar ambitions and goals. They are much like Paul prior to meeting Christ. Their focus is on obtaining personal wants and desires. They strive for things that please the flesh. I am aware that we have to work and obtain to survive, but the material and physical aspects of life are not of paramount importance. As you consider your goals for the coming year, how many of those will actually matter in eternity. The redeemed in Christ must be willing to count much of our gain as loss. We must recognize what is truly important and put things in a proper perspective. May our desire to please Christ, rather than self, find its rightful place at the top of our resolutions list!

**C. The Deliverance from the Flesh (8b)** – Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: **for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ.** Paul had obtained victory in life. He knew the man he used to be, and he was happy to have suffered the loss of the old man in order to win Christ. His relationship with Christ far exceeded any pleasure his former achievements had brought. Those who knew him likely thought Paul had wasted a grand opportunity, but he knew he had gained all in Christ and counted the former life as nothing when compared to life in Christ.

- This perspective is attainable, but it isn't easy. You must look at life through eyes of faith rather than the filter of the world. Everything must be measured according to our relationship with Christ, keeping eternity in view. You can rise above the desires of the flesh, enjoying victory, but it is only possible through a personal, fulfilled relationship with Christ.

**II. Paul Speaks of a Precious Position (9)** – Paul's position in life had changed greatly, and he well understood it was for the better. His position secured much and offered much. Consider:

**A. His Relationship (8c-9a)** – *that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.* Things were no longer as they were before. At the end of the day he didn't enjoy the praise of men as before or the sense of pride in personal achievement, but he had a new found position, being in Christ! The joy of

salvation and an intimate relationship with Christ exceeded anything Paul had experienced before. Christ was now his passion and desire. Rather than being focused on the approval of men and climbing the social ladder, Paul enjoyed his relationship with Jesus!

- At this time of year many battle depression and discouragement. Often they focus on the failures of the past and add unimaginable pressures for the coming year. There is nothing wrong in seeking success, but the child of God has every reason to rejoice with optimism and anticipation. I have no idea what the New Year will bring. I don't know what success will be mine, but I do know I belong to Christ. Regardless of what the year has in store, I am saved and secure in Christ! If I fall flat on my face, I am still His! That offers a measure of peace and contentment that exceeds the pressures I face in life.

**B. His Righteousness (9b)** – *not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:* Paul rejoiced that he had received the righteousness of Christ. Through faith in Christ, God imputed the righteousness of Jesus to Paul's account. He was accepted of God through faith in Christ.

- The world has many standards and expectations. Many live their lives bound by pressures to perform and meet expectations. Everybody wants to be accepted and fit in. However, regardless of personal effort, we often fail to win the approval of others. That is never the case with a believer. At the moment of salvation, we are justified in Christ. His holy righteousness is applied to our account. We are viewed as righteous by God because of faith in the Son! Now, that ought to challenge us to live in a way that pleases God, but we need not fear being rejected of Him. Being in Christ promises eternal acceptance.

**C. His Rest (9)** – *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:* Consider the context of all we've discussed. Prior to salvation, Paul was zealous in religion. He worked as hard at personal righteousness and religious advancement as anyone. He exerted great amounts of personal effort to achieve his goals. After salvation Paul realized righteousness was not obtained through works or keeping the law, but through faith in Christ, a relationship with Him. Paul enjoyed rest in Jesus. He no longer saw the need to work in order to be accepted. He was now able to serve with confidence knowing he was acceptable to God through Christ.

- I hope you realize the liberty believers have in Christ. I am not advocating laziness or promoting sin, but we can rest in Jesus. My salvation and eternity are not dependent upon the work I perform in the flesh. I am who I am in Christ! Regardless of the success or challenges of the coming year, I will remain in Christ. There is peace and rest in Him!

**III. Paul Speaks of Provisional Power (10)** – Lastly Paul speaks of power the believer has access to in Christ. He knew the significance of Christ's power in our lives and he wanted to take advantage of every aspect of it. We find Paul desired:

**A. Communion with Christ (10a)** – *That I may know Him...* Paul had met the Lord in salvation, and at this time he was certainly a mature believer, and yet he longed for more. Paul desired to know Jesus more intimately. He wanted to enjoy daily communion and fellowship with Him!

- If you have made any resolutions, this one should be at the top of your list. I rejoice that I have met Christ in salvation. I know Him as my Savior and Lord, but there is a desire in my heart to know more of Him. I long for a closer relationship, daily communion with Him. I promise you, the New Year will be more fulfilling and victorious if you desire to know Jesus!

**B. Sanctification through Christ (10b)** – *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.* Paul had already experienced His resurrection power in salvation. As we are born again, the old man of sin dies and we are resurrected a new creature in Christ. Paul also understood the continual benefit of Jesus' resurrection power. Consider the triumph His resurrection secured. He rose victorious over sin, death, and hell. In essence Jesus conquered all that hinders us. He rose in power over all that sin had defiled. Paul knew the resurrection power of Christ would continue to sanctify him, continually conforming him into the image of Christ.

- I realize the need for resurrection power in the coming year. I battle the flesh and cares of this life. Sin creates conflict within and the power of Jesus is the only source of victory. In the coming year I desire to die to self, being sanctified in Christ through His mighty power!

**C. Identification to Christ (10c)** – *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.* Paul faced adversity for his relationship to Christ. Many sought to kill him for preaching the gospel. He was no longer loved and embraced by the religious. He was willing to identify with Christ and the sufferings such identification produced. Paul recognized his weakness brought power with Christ. **2 Cor.12:9 – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

- I do not enjoy adversity and I can honestly say that I have never prayed for God to send a burden my way. However, I am convinced we need to learn this great truth. We need to be willing to identify with Christ in every circumstance, and if a trial or burden brings us closer to the Lord, we ought to embrace them and rejoice in them. We will never become the Christian we need to

be until we learn to fully depend upon Him. I pray we will embrace every situation as an opportunity to serve the Lord, grow in Him, and glorify Him with our lives!

**D. Submission in Christ** (10d) – [That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;](#) The power Paul speaks of progressively increases. We agree that we ought to seek to know more of Jesus. I am sure we all desire to experience the power of His resurrection that brings victory to our lives. Some might even admit there was benefit to a trial they endured. Here Paul discloses the final aspect of the power available to us. This one will be difficult for most to embrace. Paul literally desired to die unto himself so that he could walk in a way that pleased Christ. He was willing to totally surrender his entire being to the will of God. He knew he had been bought with a price and he offered himself unto the Lord to use as He pleased.

- This is the key to a victorious New Year. We too must be willing to submit our entire being to Jesus, being made conformable to His death. We must be willing to die to ourselves in order to be used of the Lord. We must want what He wants more than what we desire. He must be the absolute object of our affection. Everything else in life must fall behind Christ. Total submission will bring complete victory.

**Conclusion:** Have you considered any New Year's resolutions? If so, are any of them spiritual in nature? We have no way of knowing what the year will bring. In fact, we may not even see it come to pass. If it does, I am sure there will be days of joy and sadness, victory and defeat, unusual days and many ordinary days. One thing is certain, we are not dependent upon mere chance or luck. God has a plan for our lives. The question is: do we want to follow His guidance and receive all He has for us? You can face the New Year with absolute confidence if you will approach it in Christ.

Are there needs in your life today? Are you as close the Lord as you should be? Are you walking daily with Him? Maybe you are contemplating the New Year and you don't enjoy a relationship with Christ. I wouldn't want to face all that uncertainty alone. Jesus stands ready to save if you will respond to Him by faith.