

8 Ways I Will Worship God Better With My Life in 2017

Heading into a new year, many people, including Christians, boldly make New Year's resolutions and tell themselves, "This is the year I'm going to keep them and make things right with God."

I've done that in the past—and I know many others who have also—only to fall (way) short of our own expectations. For better or worse, I'm through with making New Year's resolutions.

It's time for some real change—covenant change.

Instead of making ridiculously shallow resolutions, I'm going to follow the advice of my good friend, Lee Grady. In Wednesday's *Fire in My Bones* column, Lee posted five ways you can grow spiritually in 2017. His advice? "Quit wandering and determine you will move forward in this new year."

That's exactly what I am going to do, and I am going to be intentional about it. I hope and pray you will too. It's what God wants from us.

Here are eight ways I WILL worship God better with my life in 2017. I pray you can draw strength and motivation from these too:

1. I WILL read and study my Bible more diligently than ever.

Second Timothy 3:16 is self-explanatory, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness." Aren't we all striving for righteousness in Christ?

2. I WILL pray for others much more diligently and trust God that He WILL answer my prayers.

"Pray in the Spirit always

with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18).

3. I WILL surrender my sinful habits to God. Rick Warren once said, "Aren't you tired of being at war with God? (I am, aren't you?) Wave your white flag. Surrender is the ultimate expression of faith." It's as simple as James 4:7, "Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

4. I WILL devote myself more to helping others, especially those in need. I've always been told the best way to get your mind off your own problems is to help others with theirs. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

5. I WILL love my wife as God intended and WILL put her needs before mine. I'm ashamed to say, in the 19 years we've been married, I don't know if I've really done that. "Likewise, you husbands, live considerately with your wives, giving honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they too are also heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

Evaluate your marriage. See what you can improve upon and honor your wife in a godly way every day.

6. I WILL give my children my full attention and be a softer and gentler dad. I don't think "soft" and "gentle" are two adjectives my kids would use to describe me. That is going to change. How about you? How would your kids describe you? "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21).

7. I WILL call my extended family and talk to them more often. Who knows how much time we have left with our loved ones? I'm in Florida, and the rest of my family is in Illinois, so I hardly ever see them. The least I can do is talk with them on

the phone and share my life with them. "Honor your father and your mother, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Deut. 5:16).

8. I WILL refuse to rob God of my time. As my wise publisher, Dr. Steve Greene, wrote recently in his Greenelines column, "The lesson of tithing is to give back to God a portion of what He has given to us. Time is certainly a gift worthy of a tithe." For me, it's as simple as severely cutting down on the time I spend watching football on TV.

What about you? What can you do to honor God with your time?

Determine you will move forward in your relationship with the Lord this year. Make covenant change, not empty resolutions.
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