

Greg Laurie: I Don't Want to Be Under the Power of Anyone but Jesus

A lot of people believe in making New Year's resolutions, but personally, I believe in resolution. Every one of us should have resolution in our lives, because true resolve can't be broken.

We need a goal; we need an objective; we need something to aspire to. Here are the words of the apostle Paul after years of walking with God:

"I do not consider myself to have 'arrived,' spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal—my reward the honor of being called by God in Christ" (Phil. 3:12–14, PHILLIPS).

When I was 21, I thought I had come so far. And in many ways, I had, because it was only a few years before that I was living in complete darkness, without God in my life, without any knowledge of the Bible.

But now I realize I have so far to go. I realize I have a lot to change.

The Good Dissatisfaction

"I do not consider myself to have 'arrived,' spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect." Paul recognized this about himself, and I hope we see this in ourselves as well. I hope we all realize that we are but a work in progress, that

we have a long way to go spiritually. If the apostle Paul saw that, then certainly we need to see that, because this truly was a man of God.

Not only did the great apostle realize he had a long way to go, but he also realized that he could not live in the past: "I leave the past behind." We cannot be controlled by past mistakes or live in past victories.

So if you have blown it in the past year—even if you've blown it this year—learn from it. Make changes in your behavior, in your habit patterns and in your choices that would cause you not go to down that road again. Learn from your mistakes.

At the same time, don't live in past victories. If God did something wonderful in your life this past year, that is glorious. Be thankful for that. But now a new year is before you with many new opportunities.

Daily Vigilance

Press on for what God has for you. That is what Paul was doing: "With hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal." The original language of this verse includes the word *agonizo*, from which we get our English word "agony." This reminds us that our lives are a walk of faith. There are challenges, difficulties and obstacles that we will face. As the expression goes, "No pain, no gain." Paul was straining to move forward.

By the way, these words were not given to a spiritually elite group of Christians. They were not given to pastors or only to those who are called in the ministry. They are given to every follower of Jesus Christ. Every believer is called to press on.

You see, often it is the little things that bring us down—not the outright sins. Sure, we get to those in time. But it is the little things that ultimately lead to the big things. It

is the gray areas that ultimately lead us to those black-and-white areas. That is why we have to look at these things carefully and ask ourselves a few questions:

–Does it build me up spiritually?

–Does it bring me under its power?

–Do I have an uneasy conscience about it?

As the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, “You say, ‘I am allowed to do anything’—but not everything is good for you. And even though ‘I am allowed to do anything,’ I must not become a slave to anything” (1 Cor. 6:12, NLT).

I don’t want to be under the power of anyone or anything but Jesus Christ. So ask yourself these questions about the things you think you have the freedom to do.

Resolve Keeps You Going

In the life of every Christian, there will come a temptation to compromise, to back off, to not take a stand for what is right, to not say what is true. We are all going to be faced with this temptation in one way, shape or form.

You never will be temptation-proof any more than you will be bulletproof. But at the same time, if you are walking closely with God, sin will not have the impact it had on you before. To what you are going to yield yourself and to whom you are going to yield yourself is your choice.

Crisis does not make character; it exhibits it. Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.

Do you have that character? Are you compromising in your life as a Christian? Are you doing what is right, even in the little things? Because if you don’t deal with compromise in the little things, then it will lead to the big things.

That is why it is a good time at the beginning of the new year to have some resolution—not a bunch of silly resolutions that you make and can't keep, but resolution. Purpose. Direction.

Here's what I've found: The way you turn your head is the way your body will go. In other words, the direction we look determines the path we take.

So, let me ask you: Are you setting your vision on Jesus Christ this year? {eoa}

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