

Simple Resolutions That Will Radically Change Your Life

As we enter the new year, everyone you know is talking about their resolutions. We have come to believe that Jan. 1 is the ideal place to make fundamental changes to our lifestyle.

Somehow, we think that a new year will give us the motivation to radically change years and years of bad habits. I don't want to be Debbie Downer here, but one study I read suggests that we will only follow through on about 8 percent of our new year's resolutions. Maybe the improvements that we envision aren't motivating enough.

Or maybe the problem is that we are resolving to change the wrong things.

The typical battery of resolutions is focused on self-improvement: diet, fitness, money, education and so on. While this is certainly noble and good, I'm also going to suggest that our greatest pains and joys in life don't come from within ourselves. They come from our relationships.

So what if you committed to a few radical (but simple) resolutions that have the power to significantly change your most important relationships? What if making those things regular habits in your life moved your marriage or your relationships with your kids to a healthier place? That's when the new year starts looking very good indeed.

So here are some suggestions for all of us, along with a few possible resources to help you. Look them over and choose a few that God might use to change things in your home.

Some Possible Resolutions for Your Marriage:

***Have a weekly date with your spouse.** Put it on the calendar and then follow through. Don't talk about your schedule, the kids, work or money. Press into your spouse's heart.

***Plan a night away without the kids.** Recruit a babysitter you trust, book a nice hotel on Priceline, and then get away to remember why you fell in love in the first place.

***Identify your spouse's love language.** Then try to speak it this year. You can find a helpful quiz about the five love languages online.

***Have sex more often.** Everyone assumes that sex will happen only once the marriage is strong. But maybe God created sex as one of those things that *makes* the marriage strong. (Check out *The Bead Method* if you need help talking about sex.)

Some Possible Resolutions as You Parent:

***Play with your child more.** You work so hard to make sure they are learning, growing and healthy, and that's good. But what your little one needs most is you.

***Be a better listener to your teenager.** Learn to ask questions and then take time to hear them without judgement.

***Work tenaciously to have at least one family dinner every week.** This is getting harder and harder in our world, but it needs to be a priority.

***Schedule some alone time with each of your kids.** This doesn't have to be elaborate. Taking one of your kids with you to Home Depot can be a powerful 60 minutes.

***Get your anger under control.** If your eyes landed on this and you felt even a bit of conviction, you know something needs to change. And it needs to change soon.

Some Possible Resolutions for Your Family:

***Put down your devices.** We all probably spend too much time with our eyes glued to a screen. Commit to love your family enough to be in the moment with them.

***Be more curious about the feelings of your family members.** Don't assume all is well just because they aren't saying anything. Care enough to ask.

***Protect your family.** Make this the year that you finally get a plan to put safeguards on your home from trash on the Internet. (We highly recommend the Circle device for every family.)

***Be more available.** If the craziness of your life schedule doesn't allow you to have any margin for connecting in your family relationships, that's on you. Do something about it.

Hopefully, a few of these resonate with you. And you know that still, small voice that's telling you which ones to consider? It is very likely the voice of God. He wants to help you to make this new year amazing for your most important relationships. It all starts with letting go and letting God do something fresh in you.

So while we are talking about better relationships, remember that your most important relationship is the one you have with the God who loves you. Any work you want to do in your marriage or family will be most effective when you first walk with Him. Take a moment today to acknowledge your need for Him. Ask God to do something big in your life as you make your resolutions this year.

Adapted from , a ministry founded by **Barrett and Jenifer Johnson**. After serving in the local church for 25 years, Barrett and Jenifer launched INFO for Families as a ministry designed to encourage people through speaking, personal coaching and resource development. Barrett served for 15 years in youth ministry before serving for 8 years as the Family Minister at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Atlanta, one of the largest churches in the South. He has degrees from Texas A&M University and Southwestern Seminary, but he and Jenifer have received their best education through the no-holds-barred nature of everyday family life.