

Where Change Starts

This isn't the typical post about New Year's resolutions. At least, I don't think it is. I actually hesitate to write about this because the topic can be so overdone. But I am because I hope this perspective adds value to your thoughts.

The posts I've read are about what people are going to do this year. More of this and less of that. I get it. In fact, according to a survey by *Money* magazine, the most popular New Year's Resolutions for 2016 are:

- Enjoy life to the fullest
- Live a healthier lifestyle
- Lose weight
- Save more, spend less
- Spend more time with family and friends
- Pay down debt

But, let me ask you. Have you made similar declarations that didn't last? You might have been very sincere. Determined even. You might have tried to get ready by having more of this or less of that in your house.

Resolutions often don't work. Setting goals won't change us. Change changes us.

And it's a certain kind of change that's essential.

I am determined to stick with my Bible reading plan this year. My pastor has asked us to read through the New Testament together. In order to stick with my plan, I've spent some time the last few days thinking about why I haven't in the past. This is critically important thinking because beliefs drive behavior.

I'm not proud of these excuses, and maybe you can relate, but these made my list: I've read these passages before. I know

enough of the Bible. I'm already reading Scripture as I pray through the Bible and read two devotional books. I've got to get going this morning, but I'll read it tonight. (Sadly, way too many "tonights" in 2015 came and went.)

For me to stick to my plans I must not allow my past behaviors to rule. I have to bathe in the reality that my relationship with Christ is my most important relationship and the Word of God keeps me rooted and aware of more and more that He wants for me. God's Word reminds me of His love, His forgiveness, His power, His plans, His righteousness ... His everything!

I know God's Word is His love letter and life letter to me, and my behaviors need to line up with that. I'm done with a casual skimming based on false beliefs that I know it well enough. This year the belief that I want more from God and more of God will drive my behavior.

My beliefs are now these: Even though I've read these passages before, the Word of God is alive, so I will read expecting new insights. I have read the Bible, but I can always learn more. Even though I read other Scripture, I will honor my pastor and church and read according to that plan. Nothing is more important than my time spent with God. He is worth prioritizing morning and night.

Have you thought of things you want to do differently this year? I encourage you to wrestle with the beliefs that have gotten you into the situation you're in. Choosing to change those will ultimately result in a lasting change of behavior.

Beliefs have to change for behavioral changes to become the new go-to behavior. Make your list.

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