

Why Make a Resolution?

Here's the truth.

Most people who make New Year's resolutions don't keep them past the first month.

Common things like weight loss, getting out of debt, traveling more, drink less, stop smoking and so on are high on most people's lists. But we also make resolutions such as "I'm going to read through my Bible this year" or "I'm gonna spend an hour a day in prayer!" only to find ourselves miserably failing after day three. We set goals for ourselves because we genuinely want to do things different. We want to be better people in the new year. Most of the time, however, we fail. We stop. We give up.

After a few years of doing that, though, you start to wonder what the point is. Why should I even make a resolution if I know I'm probably not going to keep it? Maybe it's just better to not try at all. Maybe you should make a resolution not to make any resolutions this year.

Don't. You probably won't keep your resolution, but make it anyway.

I know this may seem obvious when you read it, so bear with me, but you can only succeed in the things that you actually try at. Really. You can't win at a game you don't play.

I don't chide my kids for making a mistake when they are trying. I know each failure teaches them a lesson that will ultimately lead to success. I only get frustrated with my kids when I see them refuse even to try.

So it's 2016. You want to have a more consistent prayer life? Then go for it. If you fail, that's OK. Just pick up where you left off. If you fail again, well, no big deal. Start again.

You want to read your Bible more? Go for it. If it's still collecting dust after another week, don't give up just blow the dust off and get back to it. You want to lose weight, get out of debt, drink less, stop smoking? Do it! Then when you find yourself falling off the wagon, just get back up and try again.

This is the verse I cling to when it comes to things such as this.

"For a just man falls seven times and rises up again" (Prov. 24:16).

They rise again. And again. And again.

Stop measuring yourself by the amount of times you have fallen. Just get up again. Maybe you want to be full of hope this year, but you got into a fight with your spouse and already gave in to despair after day one. Well, get up again. You can be that person of hope this year.

Maybe you wanted to cut back on how much TV you have been watching this year, but you already gave in and binge watched an entire season of *Gilmore Girls* while eating an entire tub of ice cream. Well, get up and try again tomorrow.

Maybe you really wanted to commit time to pray for your family, job or whatever this year, but after a few days, you realize you haven't even prayed once. Listen, life gets in the way, I get it. So, tomorrow, try again. You can have the prayer life you want if you don't focus on how many times you haven't prayed and just do what you can to make it happen today.

I made some resolutions this year. I don't expect to keep them perfectly, but I do want to be committed to getting back up if I happen to stumble in them. I want to be constantly reminded that my success isn't in my ability to get it right but in

God's grace that is available daily.

Thank God for God. Thank God for His grace.

So my encouragement to you as you begin this year is to go for it. Dream big and make big resolutions. Don't settle for a life half lived this year. Go get the life that you want. And if you find yourself falling over, failing, fearful and frightfully fraudulent, don't give it a second thought. Just get up and try again.

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