

Why Your New Year's Resolutions Won't Last

A lot of us made New Year's resolutions for 2020. Here were the top ones:

1. **Actually doing my New Year's resolution.**
2. **Try something new.**
3. **Eat more of my favorite foods.**
4. **Lose weight/diet.**
5. **Go to the gym.**
6. **Be happier/better mental health.**
7. **Be more healthy.**
8. **Be a better person.**
9. **Upgrade my technology.**
10. **Stay motivated.**

We've all heard dreary statistics about how poorly we do at achieving our goals, but it's unlikely we know how bad the numbers actually are. Only about 8% of New Year's resolutions are achieved. In fact, around Jan. 12 is when most people have already given up on their resolution.

That's a pretty measly percentage.

You're more likely to be born left-handed, find two people in your workplace who have the same birthday, talk to someone in America who doesn't know that the sun is a star or breath air pollution from China.

Despite this, the numbers of people who make resolutions didn't go down this year and won't the next. We keep trying, even knowing the likelihood of failure. Somehow, we convince ourselves, this year will be different. We'll set a better goal. We'll make other decisions that set us up for success. We'll try harder.

Recent news articles have already reported that many have given up on their resolution. Even after the onslaught of instructions for how to do better with our resolutions. Everyone offers what they believe are more achievable goals than the typical fare, advice on how to achieve your goals and convoluted explanations for why you're still failing.

These opinions generally range from thought-provoking to outright laughable.

The most common is probably the instruction to share your resolutions with someone else. Have an accountability buddy who will check in on you and celebrate achievements with you.

Others usually fall into the category of being more mindful. Pay attention to one goal at a time, or even one step of the goal, rather than allowing your focus to become fragmented. Organizing your day in a planner is critical, but don't let this stress you out. Be kind to yourself and give yourself compliments.

Make your resolutions smaller and more achievable so you can pat yourself on the back when you do well. Break your resolutions down into 10-step programs. Leave motivational sticky notes for yourself on the bathroom mirror; reapply them all again after you take a shower and find that they've collectively wilted off into the sink.

Park farther away from the store entrance and always, always haul yourself up every miserable flight of stairs. Sanitize your phone more often; after all, they have 10 times more bacteria than a public toilet seat.

Do hydrotherapy. Eat lemons. Buy indoor plants! (I'm not even joking.)

Some news outlets have started advising people to not set New Year's resolutions at all because the rate of failure is so high, despite all the advice swirling around out there.

Instead, they instruct readers to set goals.

If you just thought to yourself—*Wait, that sounds like the same thing as a resolution*—well, you would be ... correct.

Why are we all so desperate to do better, even when we fail over and over again?

Every human on planet earth is born with an infallible sense that they're broken. Whether the sharp, little pieces are visible to others or not, we can feel them stabbing away inside of us, piecing our guts with fear and breaking our hearts.

Our biggest problem is that we often don't know what exactly is damaged.

The Christian answer is often and unfortunately almost glib: "sin." What usually follows is a critique of behavioral problems. You have anger issues, anxiety issues, abuse issues, financial issues, health issues, alcohol issues, porn issues. While all of these and far more are indeed sins, addressing them usually proves to be far more difficult than we anticipate.

Maybe we've already lost that battle multiple times, but we keep going back to the same war zone, hoping this time the outcome will be different.

If we just pray harder, work more, see a counselor, make our 10 steps, have more accountability buddies, then maybe this time we'll finally fix the problem. We'll achieve our resolutions and not keep finding little shards of glass all over the interior of our hearts.

In his podcast, Gary Wilkerson talks about the answer to this frustration and hopelessness that so many of us face when we're caught in the cycle of resolutions and failure. "We're doing all these external fixes, and Jesus came for the

internal and turned things around.”

While many believers are desperate to be free from damaging behavior, they often haven’t dug down to the underlying reason they habitually turn back to a particular sin or why they’re especially vulnerable to certain kinds of spiritual attack.

“When a house is on fire, the firemen don’t point the hoses at the smoke and say, ‘Boy, if we could just get that smoke out,’” Gary explains. “They actually shoot the water through the smoke. Even when they can’t see the flames inside the building, they shoot water through the windows, knowing that’s where the flames are.”

As long as our resolutions remain nothing more than waving the smoke away, the rampant fires in our lives will persist.

The answers to questions for finding solace, peace and joy will ultimately boil down to an acute mistrust in some aspect of God’s nature. We don’t actually believe that He will be present at all times in our lives, that He is good above all else, that He loves us like a devoted Father loves his children, that He has far better plans for our lives than we could ever plan for ourselves.

The answers will not be easy. If they were, we wouldn’t have struggled for so long. What’s more, they can often only be found with the help of prayer and wise, godly community.

Despite every difficulty, though, finding these answers is much more worthwhile than constantly waging war on the symptoms of our deepest pains and fears. “If you get to the heart, your behavior will change,” Gary points out. “That seed planted on the ground will blossom into a different kind of tree, and a good tree bears good fruit.”

What delight comes to the one who follows God’s ways!

He won’t walk in step with the wicked,

nor share the sinner's way,

nor be found sitting in the scorner's seat.

His pleasure and passion is remaining true to the Word of 'I Am,'

meditating day and night in the true revelation of light.

He will be standing firm like a flourishing tree

planted by God's design,

deeply rooted by the brooks of bliss,

bearing fruit in every season of his life (Ps. 1:1-3, TPT).

I would like nothing more than to be known as someone who flourishes and is known for being steady and yet also passionate for God's Word and works. Now that sounds like a worthwhile New Year's resolution and one that can be kept.

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