

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS *that restore*

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Yes, it can be the happiest, most blessed year any of us have had. But if this year is going to be truly happy, we need some **resolutions that restore**—that bring restoration of body, mind, and soul. If you're anything like me though, the human powered resolutions I make are short-lived. This year we need Divine power to carry out life-changing resolutions.

The greatest and most powerful resolution you and I can make is to give a **whole-hearted surrender** of ourselves to Christ. For years I gave God a conditional, selective surrender, fearing the possible results of a full and wholehearted surrender. This fearful reserve left me impotent in Christian confidence and practical daily living. This is the main reason Christianity is so powerless at home and elsewhere.

I have found my greatest joy, fulfillment, and power as a Christian when I am consciously and completely surrendered to the will of God. But I have also found that this experience must be new every day. My prayer is, *"Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me."* Psalm 51:10. I know I need it and I believe I receive it in surrender. I also claim the promise of Ezekiel 36:26, *"A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."* I like that word "cause". That is a strong motivating action on God's part that works along with my cooperation in doing His will in His power!

This decision of wholehearted surrender naturally leads us to another daily resolution which is **"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."** And the promise is *"all these things shall be added unto you"* Matt. 6:33. Even the power to carry out resolutions? Yes! It takes faith to seek God when there are so many pressures that pull upon each one of us. But I have proven over and over that He keeps His promises. As I take time to pray and seek His Word for counsel, He never fails to provide my needs through the day.

It's sad that we should even have a struggle making time for God to give us what we need. But sad or not, it's a reality that seeking first His kingdom takes conscious choices to make time. But if we seek Him first, all these other things in life will come.

Next, let's make a resolution to have **family worship**. This sets the right spiritual tone for the day. It binds the hearts and places a hedge about us to begin and close the day. Whether we read from the Bible, an inspired devotional book, or do a simple felt story for the young children, family worship should be interesting and practical. I like to leave out a word every now and then while reading and wait for someone to fill it in. Discuss simply but personally how what we read applies to us. We enjoy singing as a part of worship. Singing lifts the heart to God and sweetens the home atmosphere. Family worship—a resolution that restores.

Now let's make a resolution for **exercise!** Yes, it's very important. The body, mind, and soul work so closely that one impacts the other. All of us need good cardio for the heart and some of us, including me, need fat burning exercise as well.

Benefits of exercise include increased circulation, better metabolism, more oxygen to the blood, and improved muscle tone and strength (including the heart muscle). It improves mental alertness and outlook while lowering stress, and induces a sound, sweet sleep. I always feel better mentally, physically, and spiritually when I make the choice to be faithful and consistent in exercise, especially when that can be accomplished in the fresh air outside.

Exercise, like time with God, requires a choice and commitment. As time with God brings spiritual vitality to the Christian life, so exercise brings physical and mental vitality to the body.

There is no doubt in my mind how the spiritual and the physical compliment each other. My spiritual strength aids in my choice and commitment to persevere in exercise. My exercise gives me a clearer mind and more of a disposition to serve God and feel good.

The last resolution that I want to encourage you to join me in is that for **com-**

My New Years' Resolutions

Family worship?

Exercise?

Communication?

Signed

munication. Men, we probably need this more than anyone else. Husbands, let's make a commitment to communicate with our wives. I like to do it daily. Misunderstandings are less likely to occur with frequent communication. So make time to communicate. Hebrews 13:16 says, "*To communicate, forget not.*" Let's not forget to communicate with the one that ***we have chosen*** to walk beside us.

If you are a wife reading this, you can encourage your husband to desire to communicate with you. You can make your home restful and yourself inviting and encourage him where you can.

Fathers and mothers, we must make time for positive communication with our young people if we want to see positive results. Let us listen with open ears and open hearts and show our children and youth that we are not too busy for them.

And if you are a youth or child reading this, go to your parents and take them for a walk or show interest in talking with them. Let them into the recesses of your heart and help them learn to communicate with you.

Our happiest year ever will come with wholehearted surrender, seeking first the kingdom of God, then leading the family to Christ in worship, exercising the body, and opening heartfelt communication. Will it take time? Yes! But our time gets filled up anyway, doesn't it? Let's make the best in life our priority, and if we fail, let's not give up, but **get up** and move on again with Christ.

Let this year be filled with joy and happiness in Christ as we experience in the strength of Jesus Christ, ***resolutions that restore!*** ~Tom~