



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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New Year's resolutions: Important, or not so important? Useless? Although it is difficult to determine how many people actually make New Year's resolutions, there are different opinions as to whether or not we should! Perhaps it is best stated, "My resolution is not to make a New Year's resolution!" This month's article is obviously not to send you on a guilt trip either way!

As we start a New Year, let's talk about a resolution that can become a part of our legacy for life, not just for this year. The words were first uttered by Joshua, one of Israel's leaders. He said, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

Amidst all of the influences both good and bad during the twenty-first century, it seems difficult, if not impossible, for us to make such a familial statement. Admittedly, during the days of Joshua, there was no question a man's religious convictions often became the convictions of his family. However, today's influences make this ideal seem to be Mission: Impossible! But what if we resolved to build our families and made this an ongoing commitment every year? Certainly we teach them verbally; we also teach them nonverbally since our actions speak louder than our words. The youth-culture activist Walt Mueller says there are three questions teenagers are asking*:

1. Who am I – or, what makes me different from anyone else?
2. Who are my friends – or, where do I fit in?
3. Where am I going – or, what does my future look like?

David Levinson, who wrote *The Seasons of Man's*

Life, said during midlife, men are asking three questions which are strikingly similar to the questions asked in adolescence:

1. What have I done with my life?
2. What do I really get from and give to my wife, children, friends, community, and myself?
3. What is it I truly want for myself and others?

Although Levinson speaks of the seasons of a man's life, these thoughts are probably echoed by women as well. Perhaps as we get older, the questions get louder and louder.

If we are transparent, there are so many things we would do differently in our families if we were able to start over again. This makes the challenge so much greater to grow our families spiritually. And yes, I know some of you reading this may be single parents who have the tough job of raising your children alone. Others may no longer have children at home, but now have grandchildren. The challenge still applies to you. Even if your children have left home, Ken Canfield says, "... You can continue to use God's Word as a steady connection point when you engage with them in conversation."** Remind them of what God is currently doing in your life. If your children have grown up, don't forget the impact you can have as a grandparent. Who knows — your impact on your grandchildren might even result in their spiritually impacting your children.

Most resolutions are focused on personal growth and personal accomplishments. These are very important; but imagine the satisfaction of building a godly family who will say with great joy, "We will serve the Lord!"

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

*Canfield, Ken, *They Call Me Dad*, Howard Publishing Co., Inc. 2005, pp. 99-100.

**Loc. cit., p.100.

What a Carrot Can Reveal about Your Heart



The results of the recent presidential election shocked many and nearly split our nation in half. Many college students protested. The handle #notmyPresident trended on social media for weeks. At the same time, the business world responded favorably to the election's outcome. Very favorably. In fact, according to *The Daily Signal*, Donald Trump's election sparked the biggest one-month S&P 500 rally in its 93-year existence. The index rose nearly five percent from November 9 to December 9. The Dow Jones Industrial Average

gained nearly seven percent during the same timeframe, its second-largest one-month gain in the first 30 days after a presidential election.

Why the different reactions? Both groups responded according to the way the outcome affected their expectations for the future. The protesters may have felt their social and political expectations would not be met and responded accordingly; the stock market traders may have felt their economic expectations would be met, and responded accordingly. This is a natural conclusion if we examined each group's responses from a strictly secular vantage point.

Pull back another layer and ask members of each group why they had their respective expectations going into the election, and you will quickly see their hearts. I do not say this to say people on either side of the aisle were wrong in their voting selection. Rather, my point is to highlight the fact our expectations for the future reveal much about our hearts in the present.

An Interview with Peter Rabbit

Farmer Joe has the largest carrot garden in the county, while Farmer Jake has the largest cotton crop. If you interviewed Peter Rabbit and asked at which farmer's property he would make his home, he might say, "Farmer Joe's, of course."

You probe a little deeper, and ask, "Why Farmer Joe?"

Do you think Peter Rabbit would say, "Well, I grew up near Farmer Joe's property, and my parents always brought me food from Farmer Joe's garden. Plus, I hear Farmer Joe is kind, friendly, good-looking, and a much better businessman than Farmer Jake"? Probably not. Instead, he would be more likely to answer, "Because I eat Farmer Joe's carrots."

Press Peter Rabbit further and ask why he eats the farmer's carrots, and you would eventually discover carrots — not cotton — make up a large part of his diet. He didn't make his selection because of either farmer's character; he cared mainly about their produce. In other words, he needed carrots, but he didn't need a cotton sweater. The carrots drove his expectations.

This may be a very simplistic illustration, but the fact is we all have a "carrot" which shapes our expectations. Our future ex-

pectations reveal more about this carrot than the actual outcome and our response to it.

The "Carrot" Categories

One of the terms the Bible uses for our "carrots" in life is affections. They are anything upon which we set our minds. Colossians 3:2 admonishes, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Whether our "carrots" for 2017 are political, social, relational, spiritual, physical, health-related, financial, or emotional, they fall into two categories: those driven by love for heavenly things, and those driven . . . [>>>Keep Reading](#)

Happy New Year



Contact Dr. Edwards if you would like to have him as your special guest.

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