



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



The Key to Lasting Change

Everybody wants it, but few are able to sustain it. I'm referring to the process of change. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines change as the act, process or result of making something different or giving it a different position, course or direction. Many want to change their personal course as they go into a new year. Admitting the truth about where we are is an important first step; but if we want meaningful and long-term change, only solutions consistent with the truth of our condition will work.

Diagnosis Determines Treatment

Let's first consider how to determine our condition. If you were a doctor, how would you treat a patient who complained of chronic headaches? Would you say, "I think we will need to decapitate"? Hopefully not. Would you simply stick a bandage on their head and tell them they had been cured? Not likely. The first "solution" solves one problem — it eliminates the headache — while creating another, irreversible problem. Change would occur, but it would be harmful to the patient. The second solution does nothing to address the root of the problem. As a result, nothing would change.

To properly assess the patient's headache, you would ask leading questions about their condition, conduct an exam and run tests. After considering all of this information, as a good doctor you would then diagnose the problem and provide treatment. Beneficial and long-term change is more likely to occur because the solution addressed the root of their problem.

A 2-for-1 Special

If we desire personal change in the year ahead, we need an accurate diagnosis of the source of our _____ (*fill in the blank: physical, emotional, relational, professional or spiritual*) condition so we will know what changes will produce lasting, positive outcomes. God's Word does both. It not only tells us what we need to change, it changes us.

Regardless of the changes you hope to make in the year ahead, I encourage you to start with God's Word. You will find many secular sources with self-improvement insights, but nothing can match the timeless wisdom of Scripture. It promises an accurate diagnosis and a treatment plan which will ensure real, lasting change in the new year.

- Cam Edwards



Making Your New Year's Resolutions Special

Happy New Year! Welcome to a New Year! Frankly though, it does not look or feel any different than 2022. It was cold on December 31, 2022, and the weather remains cold on January 1, 2023! But our calendar tells us that this is a new year with new challenges and opportunities — and yes, the official start of New Year's resolutions. Although well-intended, such grandiose ideas are often abandoned. About 43% of us are expected to fail before February.

Those who track resolutions find that one of the main causes of failure is that most people simply forget to implement a plan to accomplish their goals, and often the goals are unrealistic.

One young man decided to make his New Year's resolutions special. His objective was to get right with God. His plan consisted of starting regular attendance at his local church. He lived within walking distance, so the plan appeared to be easy enough to implement. The young man also researched several ministries that were extensively involved in spreading the gospel in countries that were under persecution for the cause of Christ. He set up monthly donations from his checking account so that money would automatically be sent to these ministries. He was absolutely sure that, unlike those who had decided to lose weight or to live healthier, his resolution was going to count, his goal would be achieved and, even more important, it was going to please God! His excitement was exceptional.

That is, until we talked. I acknowledged that his resolutions were commendable; but like the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18-30, he lacked the most important thing: He had not accepted Christ as His Savior, and was relying on his good deeds for salvation. He did not understand there was one thing more important to God than all the good things he had committed to do! His works were insufficient for his salvation.

The Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV) I explained to the young man that his New Year's plans were great. However, more than anything else, God wanted him to receive His Son, Jesus Christ, as his Savior through faith. When he did that, he would receive God's salvation. The sin that separated him from God would be for-

given, and God would remember them no more! My young friend's resolutions required work and planning, but he had to learn the work for his salvation had already been done. He only had to accept Christ's free gift.

I share this story not to put resolutions in a negative light. My point is, like so many, he was so busy trying to do good things that he missed Christ in the process.

The same thing can happen to believers when we neglect to invite the Lord to participate in our every action, even in our New Year's resolutions. We may set goals for 2023 and create a plan — and still fall short because we tried to do it in our own strength. Our Heavenly Father wants to be involved in our resolutions. His involvement is what makes our goals and plans special. Whether they are physical or spiritual, He can help us accomplish them! Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

If you are not a follower of Jesus, your resolutions and plans may temporarily succeed on your own. But success without God cannot bring you peace with God. Romans 5:1-2 explains, "Therefore, since we have been justified [declared righteous] by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand." Justification produces peace with God.

I encourage you to make building a relationship with God your first resolution this year. He loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for your sins. After three days in the grave, He rose again. If you place your trust in Him, you will receive eternal life! Someday He will take your soul to Heaven. How much more will He help you with your goals here on Earth? [Put your trust in Him today.](#)

If you are a Christian, I encourage you to invite God into your plans for the new year. It's much easier than trying to make them work out on your own. Take a moment to tell Him about your ambitions for 2023. You will be much more likely to succeed and have a Happy New Year.

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

