

## **Here is where we are going this morning.**

1. Define where we are
2. 4 keys to making the right kinds of resolutions
3. Specific resolutions that honor God – by looking at Colossians Chapter 3

### Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

### Define where we are

**Worship:** We come to worship every several weeks (statistically you are considered a regular attender if you attend 3 out of 8 weeks).

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Prayer:** We pray when we think about it or as a last resort. Prayer meetings or prayer groups are the lowest attended of any event at the church. Do we pray with our children, with our families?

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**Bible:** We read our Bible infrequently or not at all. 60% of all Americans who read the Bible at all say it has changed their life. Yet only 20% of regular church goers read the Bible daily.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the servant of God<sup>[a]</sup> may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Accountability:** We prioritize time with friends to have fun, but don't spend time with people who challenge us spiritually, who hold us accountable to living for God, who support and pray for us when things are tough. A small percentage of us are involved in a Bible study or small group....because we don't have time to fit it into our schedule.

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

**Giving:** Statistics vary but the average Christian gives 2.5% of their income to church. Somewhere between 5 and 20 % of Christians tithe. People making \$20,000 a year are 8x more likely to give than those making \$75,000 a year.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

In Malachi God says to bring all the tithe into the storehouse.

### **Overall Commitment**

Because we are so overcommitted at work, with recreational & leisure activities, with our family activities, etc. we are only marginally committed to the things of God, to the church and to personal spiritual disciplines. When our schedule becomes unmanageable and something has to go, it is usually something spiritual.

Psalm 63: 1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;  
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land  
where there is no water.

Research from the University of Scranton found that just 8% of people will achieve their New Year's resolutions

1. You're treating a marathon like a sprint.
2. Too much thinking, not enough doing.
3. You're in too much of a hurry.
4. You don't enjoy the process.
5. You don't track your progress.
6. You have no social support.
- 7 You know your what but not your why.

If we look back at the list of most common resolutions they are all very self- focused.

### **Four Specific Keys to Making the Right Kinds of Resolutions**

In 1722-23, **Jonathan Edwards** was 19 years old. He wrote his 70 resolutions. He knew his weaknesses so these resolutions were written to help him to establish priorities and principles in his life so that he could live his life in a way that glorified God.

His preface reads:

*Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake.*

### **Resolve Sensibly**

“Being sensible,” We must be sensible, reasonable, in making resolutions. Our resolutions should be made after prayer and reading the Bible. When we fail our resolutions, we are the less likely to make new ones in the future. So make them wisely.

### **Resolve Dependently**

“I am unable to do anything without God's help,” We need to get to the point that we know that every resolution must be made with dependence on God.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Him (meaning Christ) who gives me strength.

### **Resolve Humbly**

“I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions.”

We must embrace humility and acknowledge that if we are going to be successful in keeping our resolutions, it is because of God's grace.

## **Resolve for Christ's Sake**

“So far as they are agreeable to His will for Christ's sake.” The making of resolutions is not just goal setting so that we might live happier or better lives. The goal of our resolutions should be to glorify God

Psalm 115:1 Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

## **Specific Resolutions That Honor God**

### **1. Resolve to live with eternity in mind.** Colossians 3: 1-4

Before you can live this way, you must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Making a decision to begin that relationship is the most important decision or resolution you could make.

Isaiah 53:6, Romans 6:23, 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

“How do I live for God?” We need to set our hearts and minds on the things that are above. We need to look at things from God's eternal perspective, not our earthly perspective. That perspective will change the way we live.

### **2. Resolve to kill sin and pursue holiness.** Colossians 3:5-11

We need to identify areas of sin in our life and commit them to God.

In order to overcome sin we must pursue holiness. As we get rid of things we must add things in their place.

Colossians 3:12-14

Peace is the result of living this way (Colossians 3:15)

### **3. Resolve to be thankful.** Colossians 3:15

### **4. Resolve to read and meditate on the Scriptures.** Colossians 3:16

*Let the message (or word) of Christ dwell in you richly*

Resolve to read your Bible every day.

### **5. Resolve to commit to being in accountable relationships.** Colossians 3:16

*...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...*

### **6. Resolve to worship God through song.** Colossians 3:16

*...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

We can worship in many way besides music and singing. However we are commanded is scripture to sing to the Lord.

### **7. Resolve to aim for the glory of Christ.** Colossians 3: 17

This might be the hardest resolution of them all. Our old self wants to continually take over.

Jesus prayed “not my will but thine be done.” If Jesus need to pray that prayer, we need to pray it every day.

**Psalms 131:2** My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth”

Again the words of the Apostle Paul: But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.