

Three Simple New Year's Resolutions

Message 05 of the series "Simple Christmas."

I. Resolved: This year I will control my tongue.

"I have resolved that my mouth will not sin." Psalm 17:3 (NIV)

a. I will speak truth.

"So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" because we belong to each other."

Ephesians 4:25 (NLT)

"The LORD hates those who don't keep their word, but he delights in those who do."

Proverbs 12:22 (NLT)

b. I will build others up, not tear them down.

"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." Ephesians 4:29 (NLT)

c. I will mind my own business.

"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (NIV)

Note: Controlling our tongues is vital to our Christian witness.

"If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless." James 1:26 (NLT)

II. Resolved: This year I will control my temper.

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

a. I will overlook small offenses.

"Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs." Proverbs 19:11 (NLT)

b. I will listen more and speak less.

"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires." James 1:19-20 (NLT)

c. I will resolve disagreements quickly.

"And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil." Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)

Note: Controlling our tempers is vital to our Christian witness.

"A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel." Proverbs 15:18 (NIV)

"Short-tempered people do foolish things..." Proverbs 14:17 (NLT)

III. Resolved: This year I will live within my means.

a. I will learn to be content.

"Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:6-10 (NLT)

b. I will develop a financial plan.

"Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty." Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)

"Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success." Proverbs 15:22 (NLT)

c. I will put God first in my finances.

"Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine." Proverbs 3:9-10 (NLT)

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."
Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

Note: Living within our means is vital to our Christian witness.

"Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others." 1 Timothy 6:17-18 (NLT)

IV. The key to successfully keeping resolutions is allowing God's Holy Spirit to fill and control us.

"So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves... Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives." Galatians 5:16, 25 (NLT)

"So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do." 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Review 2017. What were the highlights of the year?
2. Share one resolution you've made for 2018. Why is this important to you?
3. Read Romans 8:5-17 & Galatians 5:16-25. Where are you spiritually as compared to a year ago? Where do you want to be this time next year?
4. Read Psalm 17:3, Ephesians 4:25-29, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, & Proverbs 12:22. What resolutions will you make this year regarding controlling your tongue?
5. While discussing New Year's resolutions over lunch a coworker says that he doesn't make New Year's resolutions. When you ask why he states, "I probably won't follow through on them anyway. So if I don't make any resolutions I won't be lying to myself and I won't have to feel guilty." How do you respond?
6. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10. What does "contentment" mean to you? Why do many people never seem to find it?
7. Read James 1:19-20 & Ephesians 4:26-27. Why do Christians need to control their tempers? Why is uncontrolled anger so dangerous?

Quotations to consider:

"The longer you carry a grudge the heavier it gets." Unknown

"We have employments assigned to us for every circumstance in life. When we are alone, we have our thoughts to watch; in the family, our tempers; and in company, our tongues." Hannah More

"Satan rules all men that are in his kingdom. Some he rules through lust. Some he rules through covetousness. Some he rules through appetite. Some he rules by their temper, but he rules them. And none will ever seek to be delivered until they get their eyes open and see that they have been taken captive." Dwight L. Moody