

How to Make New Year's Resolutions During a Pandemic

Message 04 in the series "The Weary World Rejoices"

1. We need to take stock of where we are.

"Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves." 2 Corinthians 13:5a (NLT)

"Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us." Romans 12:3b (NLT)

- This past year, where did I succeed, grow, or mature?
- This past year, where did I fail, take a step backward, or act immaturely?

a. Crises and celebrations are magnifiers that reveal things about us.

"If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!" Proverbs 24:10 (NIV)

"Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised." Proverbs 27:21 (NLT)

b. God uses ALL of our circumstances for our good and His glory.

"...we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world." 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

2. We need to seek wise counsel.

a. We need counsel from people who will tell us the truth even if it hurts.

"Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; *let him rebuke me*--it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it." Psalm 141:5a (NIV)

"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid." Proverbs 12:1 (NIV)

b. We need counsel from people who will encourage us.

"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,..." 1 Thessalonians 3:2 (NIV)

"So encourage each other and build each other up..." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

c. We need counsel from people who know what we don't know.

"Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding." Proverbs 4:5-7 (NIV)

3. We need to spend time in prayer.

a. We need to ask God to show us what needs to change in our lives.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

"And if anyone longs to be wise, ask God for wisdom and he will give it! He won't see your lack of wisdom as an opportunity to scold you over your failures but he will overwhelm your failures with his generous grace." James 1:5 (TPT)

b. We need to surrender to whatever God wants to do in our lives.

“I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’” Luke 1:38a (NIV)

“But Moses said, ‘Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.’” Exodus 4:13 (NIV)

c. We need to ask God for help.

“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. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NLT)

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