

Victorious in Our New Identity

1st Peter 1

I. Resolutions

A. Definitions.

1. Coming to a firm and determined decision to do something, to behave in a certain manner, to abide by certain principles.
2. Resolve means you formally express what you believe, will, or intend. It is a stand you take, a direction you choose.

B. Some healthy resolutions for the year

1. Begin with small changes.
2. Clean your environment up.
3. Finish what you start.
4. Be on time.
5. Practice self-denial.
6. Take your eyes off yourself and on to others.

C. The likely hood of success in the above is dismal!

D. Don't make goals, change your identity.

1. Identity = the *condition or character as to **who** a person or **what** a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing.*
 - a. Latin: *Essentitus = being* and *Identitum = repeatedly*
2. For the Christian, our identity is in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).
3. Your spiritual identity defines EVERYTHING you do.
4. Another definition: **“the quality or condition of being the same as something else.”**

II. The Christian's identity.

A. You do not own you.

1. We are to be “obedient children” (1 Peter 1:14).
 - a. We are slaves to God our master, He has all authority over us.
 - b. We are His children, He is our Father, He purchased us with a price.

III. The implications of our salvation.

- A. Not only do we not own ourselves but we are aliens.
- B. God “chose you”—another reason you are not your own!
 - 1. But, you came to salvation through obedience.
- C. God chose you because He “knew” something—His foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2).
 - 1. *Foreknowledge*—Not that God simply knew before they existed how they would respond to the gospel so that’s how He determined to choose them or not.
 - 2. Foreknowledge refers to His great prior intimacy for His chosen.
- D. *Sanctification*—Being set apart for God = salvation.
- E. *Sprinkling of His blood*—Exodus 24.
 - 1. God made a blood covenant with Israel and Israel made a blood commitment to be obedient to God.
 - 2. Peter uses this incident to remind Christians that we have a blood covenant with God when we accepted Jesus Christ as our LORD and Savior.

“WE WILL DO IT! WE WILL BE OBEDIENT!”

IV. A new identity in Jesus Christ.

- A. Changes our focus.
- B. Changes our affections.
- C. Changes our values.
- D. Changes our commitments.
- E. Changes our priorities.
- F. Changes our allegiances.

Victorious in Our New Identity

1st Peter 1

Before I get into what I have to say this morning... an explanation and a disclaimer... first... I am departing from my normal form of preaching... expository preaching where we go verse by verse usually through entire books of the Bible... we are going to shelf 1st Corinthians until I speak again in a few weeks... Randy will be sharing from the book of James for the next two weeks.

Second... what I am going to say this morning... I have no one in particular in mind... some of you... many of you? May think I'm speaking to you intentionally and specifically... I AM NOT... What I am going to say this morning is the product of dealing with myself all this week... If I am speaking to anyone... it is myself.

This morning I want to address a topic rather than a specific passage... in that this is New Years day... if you are like me... hesitant to admit any new resolutions but can't help evaluating the last year and wanting to make some positive changes for the new year... it's a natural thing to do... this man-made, theoretical date of the beginning of a new year invades our minds and demands us to evaluate...

Interesting at least to me... but last week I pulled out some messages I preached on or around New Years over the years... they all had at least one thing in common... January 1st 2006 was also on a Sunday... I began my sermon by saying "*Aren't we glad that year has past!*"... 2008 "*That was a tough year, surely next year will be better*"... 2011 *Aren't we all thankful THAT year is gone!*"... and who can forget New Years day 2021... *Next year cannot be any worse than that one!*... Dave gave me an *amen*.

The obvious observation is that every year is tough... every year difficult... and the first of January begs us to stop... look and evaluate... is there anything I can do to improve the next year?

But when it comes to making New Years Resolutions... for many of us... we'd rather not... I think the topic is more volatile the older you are... because the more New Years you've gone through and the more resolutions you made... the more failure you've experienced in keeping them...

Instead of losing the ten pounds you committed yourself to... you gained twenty... instead of making better use of your time by keeping a day planner... you know the story... I've tried them all... I used to use the "*Franklin Day Planner System*"... The planner is amazingly organized... this gigantic notebook... every day you have to fill out twenty pages... you fill out your primary goals... your subprimary goals and your "I hope to do" goals for the day... you list out your priorities... 1-2-3-4-5.... On this page...

You put an "A" next to the most important... B-C-D down to "If I have time I'll do this... and if you can't get to one of your priorities you draw an arrow across the line meaning "tomorrow"...

By the time you fill out all the paper work its dinnertime and your entire list has arrows pointing to tomorrow!...and you get to the end of the year... maybe the first three weeks were filled out... then you can see a fading of interest in your day planner... 4062 arrows pointing to “tomorrow”... so much for that resolution...so much for ANY New Years Resolutions... So we don’t want to talk about that.

Well... we’re going to talk about that...I want to give you all new hope in making resolutions... committed to making some changes in your life beginning as soon as today and carrying on past next New Years.

For starters, what is a resolution?... What does it mean for me to *resolve* something? (We can dispense with the “New Year’s” part as merely arbitrary, not necessary.)... This use of the word resolution means ***coming to a firm and determined decision to do something, to behave in a certain manner, to abide by certain principles.*** That sounds decidedly Christian.

In fact... if this idea of resolutions was simply about getting us to more efficient and healthy lives... I wouldn’t be talking on this today... it is much greater than that...Resolutions is not a secular New Years day idea... it is a biblical idea... and there are examples of God’s people making resolutions all over Scripture

“I am Your servant . . . I promise to keep Your words” (Ps 119:124, 119:57)... The apostle Paul spoke of his own work toward his life’s goal in Philippians 3:12-14:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

When you resolve____, it means you formally express what you believe, will, or intend.... It is a stand you take, a direction you choose.... After thought and decision, you commit yourself to take steps along a trajectory which changes the destination of your life.... Put that way, **the entire Christian life might be conceived as a lifelong determination to make and work out “New Creation Every-Day Resolutions.”**

Before I flesh this out scripturally here’s some resolutions to consider for this year... I pulled these out of my reading this week...they are typical resolutions for the most part... at first they may sound extra-biblical...things we might should do but they really don’t have anything to do with our spiritual lives... I will attempt to show you they are in fact linked to our spiritual lives...

These challenged me this week...these are really disciplines to consider putting into your lives...discipline...habits... all are a part of resolution business.

1. Don’t begin with gigantic changes, begin with the small things

Learn to discipline yourself in the little things...A book I read a couple of years ago... a secular book "*Atomic Habits*"... calls this the "*aggregation of marginal gains*"... it's the idea of making many small changes in your life will amount to big changes in your life...

Instead of focusing on losing 30 pounds by Tuesday...focus on changing just one of your bad eating habits... [as I go through these imagine how they could possibly help you in your spiritual walk].

2. Clean your environment up.

Now I'm meddling... One commentator said "*Become discontent with messes in general*"... that was a biblical commentator!... Get rid of stuff!... I don't think most of us realize the negative impact on our lives "too much stuff" has on us!... the stress... the *American Institute of Stress*...that should tell you how big of a problem stress is... there's an institute on it...

Clutter greatly affects our anxiety levels, sleep, and ability to focus. It also makes us less productive, triggering coping and avoidance strategies that make us more likely to snack on junk and watch TV shows (including ones about other people decluttering their lives)....

Do you see ANY spiritual connection here?... Do you think clutter can affect your spiritual life?

3. Finish what you start

Part of what makes up all your clutter are all the unfinished projects you've started!...so many have a real problem with this... it's getting worse in general... the shorter attention spans are becoming... the more likely a big project will remain unfinished...now...let me really irritate some of you...

4. Be on time

Habitual tardiness is selfishness in real time... habitually being late is telling others you do not value their time...which could be translated as not valuing them as a person...not to mention how being on time helps keep your life in order.

5. Practice self-denial

The reason you fill up garages and basements with junk is largely due to lack of self-denial... **do you have as many shopping bags going out of your house as you do coming into your house?**... if not... you're eventually going to suffocate yourself with stuff!

Practice saying "no" to yourself...Don't eat all day...then get a big bowl and fill it with ice cream...pour chocolate over it... whipped cream... toffee bits... put it in front of you and say "NO SELF!"... "I'm in charge"

Do you see any spiritual connection here?...the flesh dictates so much of what we do...the flesh prevents us from being the people God wants us to be... it's the idea of what Paul was getting at in 1st Corinthians 9:27 (By the time we actually get to this chapter in 1st Corinthians you will have it ingrained in you!)... **I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others I myself will not be disqualified...**

The impulses of the flesh will bring you down!

6. Take your eyes off yourself and on to others.

This is close to self-denial because when you take your eyes off of yourself and you consider someone or others before you consider yourself... you are denying the self in the best way... Take a break from yourself and help others... what a relief that will be...

Ok... We could go on and on... we could spend much time on all those and more... the question though is... *Who cares?... why do I need to be more self-disciplined?... we're just going to die eventually anyway... what does it matter in the long run?...* another big question is... *"I've tried to do all those things....those have been my New Years resolutions over the years... I keep failing..."*

Two best sellers over the last three/four years... best selling self-help books in the realm of changing habits from getting rid of bad habits to making healthy good habits is 1. I've already mentioned it "*Atomic Habits*" and 2. "*The Power of Habit*"...

I pulled them both out this week and skimmed through them again... both secular...non-spiritual books... but both of them basically say the same thing... *you want to put those disciplines in your life?... you want to get rid of your bad habits and replace them with new habits?...if you sit down and make a list of life changing goals... and then set out to do them...overwhelmingly the chances are you will fail.*

Make a list of resolutions for the New Year and start trying to do them you will most likely fail...Forbes magazine did a survey finding that 91% of all people who made resolutions failed completely in achieving them... they may be generous in their statistic.

So...let's all go home!

Here's what the conclusions in the books made... If you want to be successful in changing habits...becoming more disciplined... **don't change your goals...change your identity**...change your identity... One dictionary defines identity as *the condition or character as to **who** a person or **what** a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing...*

In other words... identity is who a person is... the word "identity" comes from two Latin words...*Essentitus* = being and *Identitum* = repeatedly.....literally... identity means "repeated beingness"...

So what you repeatedly do in your life defines your identity.... So it goes that if you want to change your behavior.... You must change your identity.... Quit being goal oriented and begin changing WHO you are... the goal is not to read a book... the goal is to become a reader... the goal is not to run a marathon but to become a runner.

This is so true... it is what the Bible has been trying to drill into our thick anti-resolution heads...

So... Let's dive deep into what truly matters... your spiritual identity... we tend to separate our spiritual identity from our day to day identity as if they are two different things... I propose that for the Christian... your spiritual identity is YOUR IDENTITY.... I **propose that your spiritual identity defines EVERYTHING you do**... this is what the secular books cannot grasp... this is where they fall short... your identity in Christ is everything!

This may sound like a stretch but I sincerely believe if you fully recognize your identity in Jesus Christ... you center your life in this identity... you will be driven to rid yourself of your messy environment... you will desire to be healthy... you will want to improve your body to function optimally...

You will want to respect other's time by being on time... you will live life denying the self ...it won't be an occasional habit... it will become a passion!... to say it negatively... you will remain in your mess unless you embrace the full identity in Jesus Christ....

Our identity in Christ is first and foremost one of newness... We are new creations in Christ ...2 Corinthians 5:17... **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come....**in other words... if you are in Christ... you have a new identity.... The problem is we don't fully embrace it!...some of you are thinking right now... where's my new identity I don't see it!

Our new identity in Christ should be recognizable both to ourselves and to others... If we are "in Christ," that should be evident, just as being "in the world" is equally evident. ...A further definition of identity is "**the quality or condition of being the same as something or someone else.**"

As in "I identify with that person"... In the case of our identity in Christ, our lives should indicate that we are the same as Christ. The name "Christian" means literally "followers of Christ....it is Christ we identify with."

Let's dive deeper for a few minutes... There are many places we could turn to but let's go to 1st Peter... 1st Peter chapter 1....I want to bring out a principle or two that make for a self-disciplined believer in Jesus Christ.... One who has their full identity in Jesus Christ.... Here's a vital principle:

1. You do not own you.

This is to the Christian... but I would go further and say NOBODY owns themselves... but the Christian needs to realize who does own them... and it is NOT themselves... this goes smack in the face to the world we live in...

Not only does the world tell you, you are your own... it tells you, you are in total control over your lives...*don't ever let ANYONE tell you or define who you have to be... what you are...* even if it defies biology and all the sciences... YOU ARE WHO AND WHAT YOU WANT TO BE... YOU OWN YOU.... Then the Bible comes along and says.... NO... YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN... YOU ARE NOT IN CHARGE OF YOU... IN FACT... YOU REALLY HAVE LITTLE CONTROL OVER ANYTHING!

And for the Christian... not only are you not free... you are a slave!...a bondsman... a servant of God in Christ.... That's where we must begin and realize... look what Peter has to say:

Read 1st Peter 1:14

Peter is writing to a specific people in one sense... these are Jewish Christians..... so the way Peter speaks to them is in a way a Jew would understand... these are Jews who have come to Christ... they have their new identity in Christ.... And because of that... they've been rejected by the world...persecuted by those in the world.

They no longer live in their land.... Since they embraced Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.... Everyone around them have disowned them... have nothing to do with them...They live as exiles in a world that is no longer theirs.... They are no longer "free".... They are slaves.... Not to the world... but to Christ... that's part of their new identity...

What Peter is writing here also has application to all Christians... in that day, in our day and for those in the future... Peter calls them... and us **obedient children**....interesting...

Obedient family members... this really is an rich description of those in Christ... **obedient children**... slaves to God... He is the master...He has all authority over us... but we also are His children....a Father/child relationship.

Read verses 14-15 (again)

See something about our new identity?... be holy in all your conduct.... In everything you do be **set apart** for God... do what is pleasing to God... why do this?.... because you are His... you are not your own... look at verse 18

Read verses 18-19

You are not your own because you were purchased with a price!.... so 1. ***We are children to the Father that has complete authority over us*** and 2. ***We're slaves of a master who paid the greatest price possible to purchase us***... His own blood.

You can't go through life as a mess if you fully realize those two facts about you... self-discipline... changing your habits from bad to good begin by understanding you are not your own.... You were bought with a price... now we can understand 1st Corinthians 6:19 better:

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

My body is a temple?... the place where God resides?.... would that reality if fully comprehended change what I do?.... what I allow myself to indulge in?... even to the point of what I eat?...drink?... think?.... participate in?.... I have a responsibility to be responsible?

I think the real problem with most Christians is that they never look at their Christian life like this... for the most part we've bought into the idea that we are our own... Being a Christian is a part of many other aspects of one's life...

Our job as Christians is to manage all those aspects of our lives so that they are in balance...we compartmentalize... we need some church...maybe a Bible study... help out in AWANA that's good for our children...but I have my career... my marriage over here... my recreation... time for maintenance... a little exercise every day....

Most of us don't much think about the implications of our profession of faith when we became "Christians"... Peter helps us... go back to verse 1... not only are we NOT our own... but there are...

2. The implications of our salvation

Peter addresses the Christian Jews... and in extension us...

Read verse 1

Not only do we not own ourselves... but we are aliens... we are exiles of this world... all believers in Christ are aliens in this land... Peter says of the exiles that they are "chosen"...

They are "chosen"

Read verse 2

Of course we can get into the deep end here... many have a hard time understanding that God chooses His people... hard to get around scripture though... God in His sovereignty chooses who will be His children... if you are in Christ, God chose you...

On the other hand... when you came to your salvation... it was an act of obedience on your part... In Luke 13 Jesus said "*Unless you repent you will perish*"...so in Mark 1:15 says "**repent and believe in the Gospel**"..... you did and you were saved...

Romans 10:9 says **if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved**....and you did... you confessed that you believed in your heart who Jesus is..... and you were saved...

God had to choose you in order for you to be saved.... And You HAD to choose Him in order for you to be saved... how all that works is a mystery we cannot comprehend fully...

So Peter says here in verse 1... Christians are those "**chosen**" by God **according to His foreknowledge**...some people think this means **that God simply knew before they existed how they would respond to the gospel so that's how He determined to choose them or not**... God didn't influence them in anyway or have any say.... He just knew how they would land.

That's a wrong understanding of "foreknowledge"... the word "knowledge" means more than knowing something in the Bible... especially when it comes to God's knowing something or someone...

Amos 3:2 God says "**Israel only have I known**"...this doesn't mean God didn't know the other nations and people other than Israel...it means that God had an "intimate" relationship with Israel and not the other nations...."known" means intimacy.

Remember last week in the Christmas story?... Matthew 1:25 says after Joseph finds out Mary is pregnant says Joseph did not “know” her.... of course he knew her!... not knowing her meant he had not been intimate with her....hard to make a baby without that intimacy!... so knowledge here refers to intimacy....a predetermined intimacy in the knowledge of the Lord.

According to the foreknowledge refers to God having a foreknown intimate relationship with those He had chosen....then it says **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to the obedience of Christ...**

Sanctification here to be set apart for God... takes place the moment of salvation... being sanctified means the moment of your salvation... you are set apart for who?.... yourself?...no... you were set apart for Him!

Put it together... God chose you... before you were in existence He was intimate with you... and He saved you from the penalty of sin... through the work of the Holy Spirit.... WHY?.... WHY?.... **so that you may be obedient to Christ!**

Have you ever stopped and thought that in your salvation... you’re to be obedient to Christ?... Most people think... *I’m saved and it’s for me... I get to go to heaven!*... How many of you last night as you were laboring through your resolutions wrote down “Be obedient to Christ”?...

We don’t really think that way!... and finally... this is amazing...most do not know the context of what Peter says here... **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to the obedience of Jesus Christ AND THE SPRINKING OF HIS BLOOD:**

Our thoughts immediately go to the cross... but if that were the case this sprinkling of His blood should be right after election and just before sanctification... that’s the *order salutis*... the order of salvation, right?.... election...the sprinkling of His blood.... Sanctification...glorification.

Actually this is referring to something the Jews Peter was speaking to would have immediately understood... It goes back to Exodus 24 to the time of Moses... Moses had come down from Mt Sinai with the Laws of God... not just the Ten Commandments... but all of the ordinances that will be written down making up the first five books of the Bible...

He gets all that from God then goes down to his people, Israel and tells them all the laws and ordinances that God gave him...no small list!.... and what did the people say?

Read Exodus 24:3

We will do it all!... I think this all took place January 1st and Israel was making their resolutions... **WE’LL KEEP ALL YOUR LAWS AND ORDINANCES GOD!**....then Moses sits down and writes down everything...

Read verses 4-5

They apparently brought in many, many bulls and killed them... and drained out the blood...

Read verse 6

The blood sprinkled on the alter represented God's covenant with His people...covenants in the Old Testament were always sealed with blood... and remember what God covenants... He follows through with.... So half the blood is sprinkled on the alter.... Then Moses reads all that he just wrote....all the laws and ordinances that make up the Pentateuch. To the people...

Read verse 7

“WE WILL DO IT!... WE WILL BE OBEDIENT!.... must still be early January 1st because they haven't messed up their resolutions yet!... *we will do everything you tell us to do God!*...

Read verse 8

And the way it worked was God will keep His covenant...sealed by the blood sprinkled on the alter... and the people were to keep their side of the covenant...which was sealed by the sprinkling of blood on themselves... and if they did keep their covenant... God blessed them...and if they didn't.... and they didn't!... God would and did punish them...

So Peter takes this picture from Exodus... to show us and all Christians that when you came to Christ... you entered into a covenant relationship... through His blood on the cross.... Jesus in a sense entered into a covenant with all who would come to Him...

That covenant resulted in our salvation... our sanctification... our being saved from the penalty of sin... and we became a child of God... and what Peter is trying to show us is that what Jesus did on the cross is His part of the covenant...

On that day when we acknowledged Jesus as our Lord and Savior... we entered into that covenant... His blood sprinkled on us so to speak... and we are to keep our part of the promise.... *Yes Jesus we will do it!*

What did we promise?.... to make Him our LORD and Savior.... OUR LORD.... Again... I think most Christians think our relationship with Jesus... our covenant with Him is all about what He did for us..... we forget our part of that relationship and that is to make Him our LORD!

At least in your speech you've placed yourself under the authority and in obedience of Jesus Christ!... He is now our identity!... we are His!.... He is our Master... He is our Lord... do you think possibly... if you truly grasp this... it just might change your next year?

You know... just because we are no longer under the old covenant... doesn't mean that God has changed His ways... He still blesses those who are obedient to His word... and He chastens those who are not.....God keeps His word perfectly!

Want to change your habits?... want to be more self-disciplined this next year?... want to quit doing harmful things to yourself?.... want to have less stress this next year?... all of that begins when you truly understand who owns you.... And begin to be obedient to your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our identity in Christ.... Removing our identity on anything else especially ourselves...

- . A new identity in Jesus Christ.
 - A. Changes our focus.
 - B. Changes our affections.
 - C. Changes our values.
 - D. Changes our commitments.
 - E. Changes our priorities.
 - F. Changes our allegiances.

It makes us more...

Trustworthy
loyal
helpful
friendly
courteous
kind
obedient
cheerful
thrifty
brave
clean
reverent

Read 1 Peter 1:13-19