

RESOLUTIONS

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December 30 & 31, 2017

Introduction:

Resolve to _____.

Acts 2:42-47

Resolve to live in light of our experience _____.

Resolve to live, love, and share Christ

Acts 4:18-20

Resolve to live our lives, to the very end, for that which has

So what?

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BEYOND THE MESSAGE

DATE: January 1-5, 2018
MESSAGE: Resolutions

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FOR THIS WEEK

Studies have shown that over 90% of New Year's resolutions are not kept, yet the tradition continues. Let's look at what the Bible has to say about resolutions worth making and keeping.

MONDAY

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Where and when did the disciples see Jesus (verses 16 & 17)?

What did they do when they saw Him?

This passage records Jesus' final words issuing His last instructions to His followers.

What claim did Jesus make in verse 18, and what other passages can you find that confirm the authority of Jesus? If Jesus has this much authority, what role should He play in our goal-setting process?

What commission did Jesus give the disciples to fulfill (verse 19)?

What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Is it time in your spiritual journey to take this next step?

Study the other accounts of this commission and summarize what Jesus taught that people must do to be saved and become His disciples.

What should baptized people be taught to do, and what does this teach regarding the importance of obedience to God? How should this affect the New Year's resolutions you make this year?

TUESDAY

Read Acts 2:42-47.

What did the early believers do after becoming Christ-followers (verse 42)?

Going Deeper: Find a passage elsewhere about each of these acts.

We see that these young believers found a deep sense of unity and joy in being together. Their priority was meeting the needs of others and maintaining closeness. Their resulting behavior became the perfect demonstration of

love in action.

How did the disciples show care for one another (verses 43-47)?

In what ways were they willing to sacrifice for one other?

Do you see the need of someone around you that you can meet in a tangible way?

WED

Reread Acts 2:42-47. Having a right heart-attitude will enable us to mirror this same kind of love in action. Read Philippians 2:1-4 and reflect on what you can do to be like these first century Christ-followers.

Where did the disciples break bread (verse 46)? To what does this refer? Proof? What role does sharing meals play in Christian fellowship? Why is it important?

How were people added to the number from then on (verse 47)? How do people become members of Jesus' church?

Can we effectively follow Christ apart from Christian community?

How do the verses in Hebrews 10:23-25 echo for us the sentiment of the early church in Acts 2?

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you evaluate your involvement with Christian community. Are you part of a small group? Are you serving in a ministry? What is God asking you to do? What step will you take this week?

THURSDAY

Read Acts 4. What characteristics did the rulers observe in Peter and John (verse 13)? What does this teach us about the importance of being with Jesus?

In what sense were Peter and John "uneducated and untrained"?

What should we learn about the education we need to tell others about Jesus?

Peter's bold impassioned plea failed to soften the hard hearts of the religious leaders who marveled at the confidence of these uneducated, untrained men.

What ultimately stood out to the religious council as they watched and listened?

Jesus Himself produced the same wonder among the Jews who heard Him teach in the temple. Though He too was uneducated, "the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority" (Matthew 7:28-29). Jesus' response to their wonder was "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (John 7:16).

Do others recognize you as having been with Jesus? How?

The disciples' experience was personal—they saw Him, heard Him, and touched Him. We cannot spend time with Him in the physical sense, but we can spend time with Him by meditating on His Word, listening to Him speak, sensing His leading by the Holy Spirit, and understanding Him as we follow in obedience. The reward for our submission to Him is a greater revelation of Himself!

FRIDAY

Reread Acts 4:13-22. Why could the Jewish rulers not speak against the miracle done by the apostles (verses 14-16)? How does this differ from modern "miracles"?

What did they decide about the apostles? What charge did they give them (verses 17 & 18)?

The council had a difficult decision to make; a miracle had taken place and all in Jerusalem knew about it. How could they further silence Peter and John to contain it? Perhaps intimidation would work. So in order that this teaching would not spread any further, they commanded them not speak to others in Jesus' name (verses 17 & 21).

Peter and John did not hesitate to answer. How did they respond (verses 19-20)?

Peter and John refused to obey the orders of the Sanhedrin but they did not argue with them; rather, they treated them with respect, explaining that they simply could not stop speaking. Like the Apostle Paul who wrote, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16, they too were compelled to speak by a higher authority.

When is it all right to not obey those representing the government?

Peter taught that Christ-followers are to obey the government authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17). The reaction of Peter and John to the Sanhedrin, however, establishes the limits of that obedience. They would obey as long as it did not cause them to disobey their sovereign Lord. The only instance when it is acceptable to disobey is when God's commands conflict with those of the government.

What can we learn about the importance of sharing the good news about Jesus?

What lessons can we learn about the attitude we should have when we are persecuted or opposed for doing God's will?

Have you had to pay a cost for your submission to Christ? How did it impact you?

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you evaluate the following. How well are you:

- Loving Christ?
- Living for Christ?
- Sharing Christ?

What is God asking you to do? What steps will you take this week?