

“New Year – Same Me”
Romans 7:18 & Philippians 4:13

January 7, 2024

Main Idea: Real change in life is possible by embracing the power given by God through authentic faith.

What’s Your New Year’s Resolution?

It’s the time of year when people make resolutions to live better. Sometimes people commit to losing weight. Others commit to improving their finances. Others put effort into their families or job changes that they are compelled towards for one reason or another. Regardless of the nature of the resolution, it seems often the resolutions are inevitably doomed to fade and to fade in short order. Last year, only 22% of people participating in a study about New Year’s resolutions were still on track in February. Many reasons can be pointed to for an explanation, but the truth is, most of us don’t have the capacity to see it through. Of all the reasons, the simplest is that we are broken human beings motivated by our own self-sovereignty. Pursuing our own fitness or family are good, but so are extra sleep and watching the ballgame. Change gets derailed because we naturally seek our own comfort and desires above all else.

So how is real change possible and why should we wait for a particular time of the year to make changes? First, real change is possible through Christ. Before Jesus was crucified, He said that He would leave us an Advocate or Helper (John 15:26). That Helper is the Holy Spirit. The beauty in having help from God is that we get an internal key to unlock understanding of God’s instructions to us and an internal motivator to prioritize things that God finds important.

Now, why should we wait until the new year to make a resolution? Well, we shouldn’t. If you find something appealing about marking this time of year as special for making changes, that is fine, but as followers of Jesus, we should be constantly maturing. As we learn of things we should do or think about differently, we should make those changes right then.

Change is possible because of Christ within us. Without Christ, the “same old me” is all that will remain.

To the Book:

1. **Romans 7:18** – Paul was handling issues of being obedient to the law and explaining how being released from the law is better. It doesn’t give freedom to willfully sin but frees Christ followers from an unsustainable system because of our inability to avoid sin. He started that section of Scripture saying that he was writing as one who knew the law. He had extensively studied it. He knew it forwards and backwards. Despite all of that, he still struggled to do right. This is Paul! God used this man to give us a great deal of Scripture and to spread the message of Christ across the world! If someone of that caliber struggled, how on earth would I assume I have the capacity to determine changes I need to make and stick to them on my own? I don’t. It’s that simple.
2. **Philippians 4:13** – Despite my inability to change on my own, there is hope!!! Hope comes through Christ. When we embrace authentic faith, the Helper is provided to us and lives within us. There is a new power within us to make changes because God’s priorities will be illuminated the more we engage that power. The motivation within us changes and suddenly, everything that was impossible before becomes possible.

Family Night Big idea – Read John 14:16-17

Believers have a helper that non-believers do not have. The Holy Spirit is within us and helps us!

- **Elementary School** – Ask, “How do you feel knowing you have help from God to follow Him?”
- **Middle/ High School** – Ask, “Why do you think change is harder when you are further from God?”

Prayer "Lord, thank you for helping us follow you. We mess up again and again, but you forgive us and help us. Help us embrace Your Spirit and live in ways that honor You. Amen."

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

Velocity: Leave for Ski Trip at noon this Friday!

Gravity: No Gravity Today

Today’s Songs

Running Home.....Cochran & Co

Build My Life.....Pat Barrett

Blessed Assurance.....Third Day

Kenya Correspondence

You can now correspond with the student you sponsored. There is a mailbox in the hallway for your letters, cards, and pictures. Everything needs to be flat and 11x14 or smaller. We will send to Kenya monthly.

Velocity Ski Trip

We leave from the church at noon, this Friday, January 12th.

KidsJAM “Let it Snow” Party

Drop off kids for a “Let it Snow” party on Wednesday, January 17th from 6-7:30pm. A light supper will be served. Sign up at the KidsJAM Check-in Table.

Father/ Daughter Dance

Mark your calendars. The Father/Daughter Dance is February 9th at Pine Needle Plantation. Registration and Ticket Sales start next Sunday. You will be able to register online or at the KidsJAM Sign-In Table.