

Today's Message: "Resolutions or ~~Re~~Solutions"

Message Study Guide

Introduction

Making resolutions for the New Year is nothing new. In fact, the practice goes back to 153 B.C. when Janus, a mythical king of early Rome was placed at the head of the calendar with two faces. With one looking back and one looking to the future, he literally became the ancient symbol for resolutions.

The New Year has not always started on January 1. Even today, it is only the beginning of a new year for cultures that use a 365 day a year calendar. January 1 became the official beginning of the New Year in 46 A.D. under Julius Caesar. The Romans named the first month of the year, January after Janus, the god of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances.

New Year's is the oldest of the ancient holidays. The Babylonians celebrated the beginning of the new year more than 4000 years ago every March 25, although they had no official calendar. This celebration lasted for eleven days.

Although the holiday clearly has its roots in heathen practices, Christians have throughout history not only celebrated it, but many of them used the concept of "resolutions" to their spiritual advantage. The great theologian Jonathan Edwards was one such man. He penned a series of papers that became known as the 70 resolutions to live by. They remain in wide circulation today.

Discussion Points

A resolution is a commitment that an individual makes to a project or the reforming of a habit, often a lifestyle change that is generally interpreted as advantageous. A solution is a commitment made by an individual to correct past problems or difficulties by offering practical ways to insure that remedies are properly applied.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever made a New Year's resolution that actually lasted all year? Why do you think you were so successful?
2. Have you ever made a New Year's resolution that did not last? Why do you think it failed?
3. While most people believe they will be successful in making resolutions, why do you think more than 88% of all resolutions fail within the first month?
4. Make a list of your top five spiritual resolutions for the coming year.

Think About It

Since most people fail in applying resolutions, consider adding these to your resolve: (1) Be specific (2) Be realistic (3) Include a way to measure your success (4) Be flexible (5) Use an accountability partner

Do Something About It!

Don't just resolve to do things at the beginning of a new year. Always be willing to start over immediately. This especially holds true for spiritual goals and resolves to live by.

Be Willing To Change

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

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