

New Years Revolutions

1 Thessalonians 5:14-23

1Th 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

1Th 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

1Th 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

1Th 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1Th 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.

1Th 5:20 Despise not prophesyings.

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1Th 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

1Th 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many people are making, and will make, New Years Resolutions. That is, they will promise themselves that they will lose weight, stop smoking, go to church or something of that nature.

Webster defines a resolution as: “*a) a resolving, or determining; deciding b) the thing determined upon; decision as to future action; resolve.*”

Now, this sounds good, and it makes people feel better about themselves to make a promise concerning something they plan to do, or something they plan to stop. However, the problem with resolutions is that they tend to be forgotten within just a few days, or weeks, at the most. In truth, what we really need is a revolution!

Webster defines revolution as “*a) a complete or radical change of any kind b) overthrow of a government, form of government, or social system by those governed and usually by forceful means, with another government or system taking its place.*”

To my way of thinking, this is exactly what most Christians need to have happen in their lives. We need to experience a radical change in the way we think and in the way we act. What I am saying is that we need to have a revolution in the body of Christ. Not that we should seek to dethrone Jesus, but that we should seek to put self out of power and yield ourselves to our rightful Lord and King. We need a total overthrow of our lives until they are brought under the absolute Lordship and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. With that in mind, I would like for us to take a few minutes to look at these verses of Scripture and discover some News Years Revolutions.

As Paul writes to the Thessalonians, he tells them in no uncertain terms exactly how the Lord intends for every child of God to live his life. Notice with me some New Years Revolutions that we all need to make today.

I. Revolution in Our Worship

Let's face it, often our worship experience is less than it ought to be. The fault lies not with the Lord, but with those who are involved in the worship. In these verses, Paul gives some practical advise that will breathe new life into dead worship.

A. There Should Be Praise

1Th 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

“Rejoice evermore” literally means to have a praise in our hearts to God at all times. In truth, the modern church is lacking in the praise department. There was time when the people of God were filled with His glory and were not ashamed to express it visibly and vocally. Yet, in our day, we seem petrified when it comes to praising the Lord. Now, whether we ever believe it or not, whether we ever do anything about it or not, it is still God's will for His people to praise Him.

Heb 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

- Praise that pleases God is offered **continually**, so that we are always praising Him.
- Praise that pleases God is a **sacrifice of praise**, in that it may be costly or inconvenient.
- Praise that pleases God is **the fruit of our lips**, more than just thoughts directed towards God. It is spoken out unto the Lord, either in prose or in song. “What proceeds from the lips is regarded as *fruit*, which reveals the character of its source, as the fruit of a tree reveals the nature of the tree.”

Psa 50:23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

There are other verse that teach this same truth, but suffice it to say that the church, and our private lives, ought to be filled with the sounds of His praise.

There are those who say, “Well, that just isn't my style!” If you will think for a minute, you will find many areas where you have changed in your lifetime, this is one where you can as well.

B. There Should Be Prayer

1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

God isn't saying that we are to walk around all the time taking to Him. He is saying that we are to leave the receiver off the hook and be in an attitude of prayer, so that when needs arise throughout the day, we are constantly ready to call on His name whether it be out loud or silently.

The words "without ceasing" refer to a person who has an intermittent cough. He may not be coughing every instant of the day, but there is always that little tingle at the back of his throat. A cough is always a possibility.

Prayer is vitally important to the spiritual life of every Christian. Therefore, we should always be in that place of prayer, for when we are, the Lord will hear us and will answer according to His will.

1Jn 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1Jn 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

C. There Should Be Thanksgiving

1Th 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

God is calling us to be genuinely thankful from our hearts for His blessings in our lives. God has done so much for us that we could never repay Him. The least we can do is to bow our heads before Him and be thankful for His gracious gifts. After all, it is His will for every Christian!

Thankfulness is the opposite of complaining. The Israelites had more to be thankful for than any people of their time, yet they were guilty of doing the most complaining. For 40 years they wandered around the desert and griped and complained about what they were having to go through, when all the while, they were there through their own doings. You might not be happy about your situation, but at least be thankful that there is a God in Heaven who loves you, cares for you; a God who lifts you, sustains you, and is a ready help in time of trouble.

D. There Should Be Yieldedness to the Spirit of God

1Th 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.

Quench = “*To extinguish or to stifle.*” As Christians, we are often guilty of stifling the Holy Spirit! He will move on our hearts to witness, to give, to go to someone, to do something for Him, whatever it may be. Too often, our response is to ignore Him and to say no until we extinguish that little flame in our hearts that He tried to ignite. When the Spirit of God is moving on our souls, our duty is to obey and to do so immediately.

Sometimes this will manifest itself in a service. Or, others will experience an almost overpowering urge to praise the Lord. Whatever the Spirit is trying to do, do not block His efforts.

As we stand here on the brink of 2022, let us resolve that we will listen to the call of the Spirit and that we will respond to Him when He speaks and that we will never be guilty of holding back on the Lord in our worship of God!

E. There Should Be Openness to the Word of God

1Th 5:20 Despise not prophesyings.

The word Despise = “*To make of no account.*” What Paul is referring to is those people who are guilty of hearing the Word of God preached, and then simply ignore the message. Thereby making it of no effect in their lives. God's Word is not a buffet! We are not permitted to take what we wish and leave the rest. We are challenged in the Bible to do more than simply hear the Word.

Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Jas 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

Jas 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Jas 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Never be guilty of picking and choosing only that which you want from the Word!

As 2022 approaches, we need to take a hard look at how we worship the Lord. If any of these areas are lacking in your life, then they need to be made right this morning. You need a revolution!

II. A Revolution in Our Walk

A. There Should Be Compassion Toward All Men

1Th 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

Not every Christian is as mature as other may be. As a result, there are always those who are around us that are weak in their faith. In this verse, Paul gives us some insight in how we should react to and deal with those who may be at a different stage of spiritual development than others.

1. Warn The Unruly –

This refers to those who are "out of their rank." These people are those who refuse to march in line with the Lord. There must be rules, and there are. The Bible is our rule book! Our duty as Christians is to help those who have trouble marching according to the Lord's drumbeat. When we see a brother walking out of formation, we are to love him and do our best to warn him and to help him get back in line.

Rom 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Rom 15:2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

This is a simple, yet challenging call to simply put our neighbor first. The idea isn't really bearing *with*, but bearing *up* the weaker brother - supporting him with your superior strength. This goes against the whole attitude of our times, which counsels people to "look out for number 1" and despises those who live lives of real sacrifice for the sake of others. Yet, undeniably Paul points out that the way to true happiness and fulfillment in life is to get your eyes off of yourself, start building up others, and in return you will find yourself built up.

Going back to verse 14 of our text, it says that we should:

2. Comfort The Feebleminded –

This expression has nothing to do with some mental problem. The word feebleminded actually means fainthearted.

The **fainthearted** are those who, literally, are *small-souled*. By nature or experience they tend to be timid and lack courage. It refers to those who are weak in the faith. Those who seem to be blown off course by everything that comes along. These are the quitters in the family of God. It seems that everything that comes along causes them to fall by the wayside. They are always looking on the down side of life and as a result, they are easily influenced to give in and to give up. These people need comfort - in the sense of assisting strength - to be brought to them. Our duty is to encourage these folk to be strong in the Lord. To learn to look to Jesus rather than circumstances. Hebrews 12:2 says that we should look:

Heb 12:2 ... unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Our Lord was thinking about the fainthearted as well as the spiritual Olympian when he endured the cross. We were the joy that was set before Him. Iron sharpens iron my friends. We who are stronger and more mature need to come along side and strengthen the younger and weaker in the faith. We also need to:

3. Support The Weak –

This is speaking about those who allow the least little thing to make them mad, or cause them to quit. When we deal with this type of person, we are to be quick to encourage them and to point them back to the right pathway. Our job is to help strengthen their faith! The word "Support" literally means to hold onto, or to cleave to. Paul is telling us not to let them fall!

4. Be Patient Toward All Men –

Patient = "*Long-hearted*" We are being reminded that not every Christian matures at the same rate. We are to exercise extreme patience with those in the church so that we do not allow the little problems that are bound to arise throw us off course, or bring discord into the fellowship. We are to walk in patience with our fellow believers! We must never be guilty of giving up on each other!

As we face this new year, let us resolve that we will act and react in love towards one another. That we will do nothing out of spite. Let us resolve that we will allow [James 1:19](#) to be a reality in our lives.

Jas 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

In other words, act mature and don't be childlike in your dealings one with another. How is this even remotely possible? Look at verse 15:

1Th 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

The answer lies in [verse 15](#). If we will do what this verse says, then we will have no problem living our [verse 14](#). Verse 15 tells us that:

B. There Should Be Forgiveness Toward All Men

Regardless of what someone may do to you, say about to or act toward you, your response is always to be one of forgiveness. We are never to render evil for evil. If someone needs to be taken down a notch or two, that isn't your place, it is the Lord's.

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Total, unconditional forgiveness is God's will for every believer –

Luk 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Luk 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Verse 3 is where we miss it! Instead of going and dealing with the problem, we allow it to fester and to grow into a terrible sore spot in our lives. Sometimes the person offending you has no idea that he has done it. Others know exactly what they have done, and given the chance will gladly do it again. Either way, deal with the problem; either way forgive. God's will is forgiveness, regardless of the wrong! Not only should there be forgiveness toward all men:

C. There Should Be Discernment Toward All Things

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Paul tells us that we are to "Prove all things." This means that we are to scrutinize them and put them to the test. We are to see how they line up against the Word of God. Every activity, every action, every desire, every goal, every plan, everything in life is to be laid alongside the plumb line of the Word of God. If it doesn't square with this Book, then it isn't right no matter how you and I feel about it!

As we approach this new year, we need to have these 3 traits active in our lives. We need Compassion, Forgiveness, and Discernment. As we purposely begin to put these traits in place, there will be a noticeable difference in our walk, and there will be power in our lives. We will be displaying the characteristics of Christlikeness in our lives. God help us to do these things every day.

Finally there needs to be:

III. A Revolution in Our Witness

1Th 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

In this verse, we are challenged to "hold ourselves back from anything that even has the hint of the evil one about it!" Too often, God's children cannot be discerned from the devil's children because there isn't any difference in the way they live their lives. This is not the way it is supposed to be! We are to be so different from the world that it is obvious to whom we belong.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore, we are called upon in this verse to live a totally pure life, both internally and externally. This is the goal that we should be striving to reach every day. And I also know that this is easier said than done. We all have a desire to do this, but the majority of the time are not able. It is achievable, but that is a sermon for another time, and will be the focus of Sunday school this coming year. What we do need to remember though, is that we are the only Bible that many people will ever see.

2Co 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

Our lives are open letters to the world. When men see us and the way we live our lives they are reading what we have to say about God. A Christian who lives in wickedness and ungodliness, one who allows sin to exist in his life is telling the world that Jesus makes no difference at all in the way we live. On the other hand, a Christian who is radically different from the world around Him shines like a beacon in the

night. Men are drawn to his life like bugs to a lantern. His is a vibrant and vital testimony! Our lives are to be good testimonies for Jesus.

1Pe 2:9 ... ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

We need to make up our minds this morning that we will do everything we can possibly do to be shining lights for the glory of God this next year. This world needs to hear about Jesus, and we are the ones with the message of salvation, therefore let's strive to live the truth we claim to believe and make a difference for the glory of God!

I don't know about you, but I sense the need for a real revolution in my spiritual life this morning. If you sense the same need, I challenge you to respond to the Lord and get ready to serve Him in this upcoming new year. God help us to get in line with Jesus and to do His will to the best of our abilities. Are you in need of a New Year's Revolution?