



## Blessed New Year Resolutions

What are some New Year's resolutions you made this year? It is now Day 3 of the New Year – are you still staying faithful to the resolutions?

Why do so many people make New Year's resolutions? Is it because we see something in our lives we want to improve? We all look at ourselves from time to time, and see things we want to improve. A new year gives us a reason to reflect and strive for a new beginning. So maybe we want to improve our health. Or fix up our finances. Or maybe simply try to become a better person.

Well, as Christians, this type of self-reflection that many do for their New Year's resolutions is something we are called to do on an ongoing basis. We are to constantly do self-evaluations and strive to re-orient our lives back to God, again and again. We fall down and then we get back up. We are constantly taking stock of ourselves, confessing to God, repenting (which ultimately means changing our direction from a self-centered one and reorienting our lives toward God). God gives us a second, third, fifth, tenth and hundredth chance to start anew!

So with this in mind, what would be some good resolutions for us to make as Christians? Here are ten suggestions:

1. Pray every day. Accept a Prayer Rule in your life, and then try to follow that rule every day. Prayer is connecting with God, communing with the Source of life. Say set prayers every morning and evening, but then seek to talk with God throughout the day. Don't let an hour go by where you don't "check in" with God and turn your attention to Him.
2. Do not only prayer, but meditate. This means sitting in silence for 10 or 15 minutes each day, and trying to clear your mind of all clutter, simply sitting in the presence of God. You can do this in front of an icon, or you can sit anyone and close your eyes, reciting the Jesus Prayer – "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy On Me, a Sinner."
3. Strive to fill your mind each day with something that is "true, noble, just, pure, lovely, holy" (Phil 4:8). In other words, take time every day to read Holy Scripture, and other edifying spiritual writings – for five or ten minutes. Fill your mind with words and thoughts that will sanctify you. Meditate on what you read, and try to apply what you read in your life.
4. Take time each day to express gratitude, first towards God and then towards others. Even when you are having a tough day, pause and think of five things for which you can thank God. And make it a point that whenever you are frustrated, you thank God even more!
5. Each day hand over any anger or resentment to God. Don't allow the day to end while holding on to any bitterness. This means that we have to practice forgiveness daily. Take time each day to reflect on your own mistakes, asking God for forgiveness. Then, offer your forgiveness to anyone who may have hurt or offended you.
6. Refuse to let jealousy, covetousness, greed, and envy preoccupy your mind. Thank God for what you have, and "rejoice with those who rejoice"
7. Every day remember how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and then think about how you can humbly serve others. And strive to serve others with joy. Remember that it's a blessing to be able to serve and to give to others.
8. Do some random acts of kindness each day. Better yet, be deliberate in conscious acts of kindness.



Each day think about how you can do something special for the people who cross your paths?

9. Smile, and try to brighten up each person who crosses your path. Say words that will “edify and bring grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29)
10. Keep an eternal perspective on life. Each day remember that some people have tragically died. Remembering death can help us live life better. If we remember that we are but brief sojourners on this earth, and that our ultimate citizenship is in heaven, it changes our perspective on how to live

These are 10 concrete resolutions that each of us can try to do. IF we do each of these every day, they will greatly bless us, as well as bless others. We will become instruments in God’s hands, shining forth His light of love to the world around us!

May the New Year bring happiness to keep you sweet; trials to keep you strong; sorrow to keep you compassionate; hope to sustain you; failure to keep you humble; success to keep you eager; friends to give you comfort; wealth to meet your needs; enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow; and determination to make each day better than the day before.

A happy and blessed new year!