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## Being Resolute With Resolutions

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With the New Year now upon us, people all over the globe now have another batch of freshly laid new years' resolutions firmly strapped on their shoulders.

Whether it is losing weight/getting in shape, being a better more loving person, getting out of debt or spending more time with God, we all make these resolutions every year, and an equal number of us always break them.

I purposefully delayed in publishing this article until a few days after the new year because *this* is the time when the resolutions begin to break down... when the zeal of changing for the new year has worn off, and we have all returned to our jobs and the routine of daily life has begun to set in again; this is when the battle to keep the resolutions truly gets underway.

### It is spiritual

Many of you are probably wondering why this is published in the spiritual writings section. The answer is a simple one... It is a spiritual issue. Regardless of what resolutions you make, there is a spiritual battle being fought over the success of such resolutions being carried out. The reason so many people fail to keep their resolutions is two-fold:

- 1) People (as a collective whole) have largely neglected the spiritual side of life and are therefore unprepared to fight any kind of spiritual battle.
- 2) People don't consider this as a spiritual issue and are caught surprised when they fail their resolution.

This is not uncommon and is nothing to be ashamed of. If everyone knew this already than this article would be useless... so let us examine together what role spirituality plays in this new years' resolution battle.

When we first *make the decision* to make a resolution, it is a spiritual choice. It is a brief instance where we take a step back and evaluate our lives to find areas of improvement; this is a characteristic of our spirit. It is our spirit which drives us to change, grow, learn and improve, and without it we would wallow in mediocrity.

Also, when it comes time to carry out our resolutions, it is again our spirit which reminds us of our resolutions and prods us to stick to them, but there is another entity, let's call it our carnal nature, which fights against us. And this is where the battle ensues.

### **Deconstructing the battle**

This is nothing new. In-fact such things have been outlined in the Bible centuries ago:

*“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”* (Galatians 5:17)

So we see here that there is indeed a battle being waged between our spirit and our carnal nature (our flesh).

Take for example the very common resolution of losing weight. In your spirit you really want to keep this resolution, but your flesh wants a doughnut and coffee for breakfast. Which one wins? More often than not, it's the doughnut, and then guilt sets in over this, which leads to more bad eating choices out of guilt.

This is a common cycle regardless of the resolution... Spirit vs. flesh – flesh wins in our weakness, then afterwards guilt leading to a defeated attitude and the hopelessness of the lost battle leading to total surrender.

If this describes you, I have a helpful bit of information that will improve your outlook: We have all been there before! You are not the only one in the world to have ever been caught in the cycle, and there is a way out. Read on...

### **Overcoming carnality**

Since we have now discovered that the battle being fought is a spiritual one, we must fight it on spiritual terms. Traditional physical weapons are not effective here, so we must arm ourselves with spiritual weapons to be victorious. Thankfully this is fairly simple...

The Bible again is our guide as we learn how to wage the spiritual war against our flesh.

*“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* (Galatians 5:16)

Notice in the verse above that the word spirit is capitalized [Spirit]. This means that it is not our spirit that the verse is referring to, but the Holy Spirit (God's Spirit). So “walk by the Spirit” means to follow the commandments plans and direction of God.

So how do we do that? Let us examine it logically. A very common question is “how do we know what God wants?” The answer is simple; God wrote it all down for us in His book the Bible. To know what He wants we must read and study the Bible.

When you begin to do that on a regular basis, you will discover that an amazing thing will happen... as your mind becomes more in tune with God, His Spirit will strengthen your spirit (you remember, it's what reminds you to keep your resolutions) and the voice of your flesh will become weaker and less overwhelming.

Does that sound too simple and too good to be true? I challenge you to give it a try and see for yourself. If you truly spend time reading and studying God's Word and spend time with Him in prayer asking Him to give you wisdom and strength, you will be amazed at what you will be able to accomplish. God and you are an unstoppable team.

### **Conclusion**

What we have learned today has applications and benefits far beyond keeping new years' resolutions. In-fact these principles can be applied to any area of life. However just as the ancient proverb teaches: The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step; so to with the new year now beginning, what better way to start than by keeping our resolutions.

I wish for you all the best that God has for you this new year, may we use it to continue to learn, grow and become stronger for God who has granted us another year.

Rise to the Challenge!

James