

Christian Church of God Magazine

Winter Issue 2015

Hello My Brothers & Sisters & Christ,

Yes, we are family....what a nice ring that has.... we are the family of God and thus brothers and sisters in Christ. It's a comfort knowing that we are here for each other, ready to support and help whenever and how-ever needed.

Our culture has a curious custom tied to ringing in the New Year as man marks time. We call it New Year's Resolu-tions. And indeed it is a good time for reflection and resolution... a good time to evaluate our lives, make resolutions and set goals. So at this season we typically resolve... com-mit to some changes....good changes, such as spending more time with family and friends, living a healthier life style, getting out of debt, enjoying life more, helping others, praying & studying more and getting orga-nized for instance.

Setting goals & anchoring our resolve cannot be done too frequently. As we examine our last year's resolutions & prepare 2015's resolu-tions, too often we just take last year's resolu-tions, change the date & set them up again for another year. The diet that never works, the budget that quickly folds, the patience that explodes in a burst of anger, the treadmill that

becomes a clothes hanger, the prayers that fade and the Bible that gathers dust... these are typical resolutions that last a few months and then go on next year's list again. How many of us become New Year's resolution drop outs?

It's not that we aren't motivated... we are. It's not that we don't want to change... we do.

This custom of examining ourselves and setting goals for improvement through resolutions was embraced and encour-aged by the Apostle Paul. The Pass-over/Lord's Supper season, which marks the true beginning of the year as God marks time is a time of deep spiritual in-trospection and examination as illustrated by Paul's instructions to the Church at Corinth.

1 Cor 11:28 A man ought to examine him-self before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

29 For anyone who eats and drinks with-out recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. (NIV)

And while there are certain things we can con-trol and accomplish on our own, I think this resolution exercise points out an important spiritual principle. What do New Year's resolu-tions and the Temple sacrificial system have

Prayer Requests



" . . . The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; . . . Pray for one another that you may be healed." — James 5:15-16.

Francis Carlson: Has been diagnosed with Chiari Malformation (portion of brain protrudes into spine).

Amber & Dylan Clark: Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy.

Betty Clark: She experiences pulmonary difficulty. After recent hospitalization she has been moved to Vibra Rehab Center.

Jon Clark: Son of Betty, is experiencing health issues including Mersa.

Dan Copenhaver: Betty Clark's brother. He needs gall bladder surgery, but congestive heart surgery is prohibiting doing the surgery.

Vickie Crevoji: Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS.

Elisabeth & Simon Desmond: Health & family issues.

Velvet Green: Suffers from schizophrenia and is responding sporadically to medications.

Harry Gonzales: Diagnosed with Lupus & debilitating arthritis.

Joe Kirkpatrick: Test results showed that the latest bladder tumor is an aggressive cancer and he is undergoing chemotherapy.

Victor Holleman: Vanessa Lawrence's brother was injured in a fall and is paralyzed.

Dollie Meil: She is in Covenant Hospital in Lubbock recovering from pneumonia and complications. Her feeding tube has been removed and she has regained consciousness. Hopefully she will be moved to an extended care facility soon.

Manuel Salazar: He has suffered 2 strokes and an embolism. He is back in his home in Portales but is doing poorly.

Shannon Stephens: Daughter of Darrell & Linda Sehorn, recently diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which is very debilitating.

Celebrations

DECEMBER '14

Birthdays:

Darrell Sehorn	12-17
Arthur Carlson	12-20
Darrell Baker	12-29

Anniversaries:

Teresa & Steve Cryer	12-27
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JANUARY '15

Birthdays:

Helen Kennedy	01-01
Virginia Sellers	01-02
Francis Carlson	01-04

Rudolph Rankin	01-15
Norma Hamilton	01-25
Roy Carlson	01-31
Vanessa Lawrence	01-22

Anniversaries:

Linda & Darrell Sehorn	01-06
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FEBRUARY '15

Birthdays:

Merle Vines	02/08
Candace Sellers	02/13

Anniversaries:

Psalm 133:1-3 (ASV)

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- ¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!
- ² It is like the precious oil upon the head, That ran down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard; That came down upon the skirt of his garments;
- ³ Like the dew of Hermon, That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion: For there Jehovah commanded the blessing, Even life for evermore.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (HCSB)

- ¹ Therefore I, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received,
- ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love,
- ³ diligently **keeping the unity of the Spirit** with the peace that binds [us].

Inside this issue:

<i>Praise God With Music</i>	5
<i>Chuckles</i>	7
<i>Meditations for New Year</i>	9
<i>Our Magnificent Future</i>	10
<i>Heartbeats</i>	8
<i>Pray for one Another</i>	3
<i>Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today</i>	11

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[CONT. The
FROM Pastor's
PAGE Den
ONE]

4

in common? They don't effect permanent change. We have to keep coming back.

Jesus came to bring permanent change into people's lives, to bring in a new kingdom, a new period of history and a brand new life for anyone who wants it. The sacrificial system could not achieve this. Why not? What was insufficient about the sacrificial system? There were really two issues.

1. Jesus fulfils the Old Covenant

In the long run, no animal sacrifice was ever sufficient to deal with the problem of sin, you had to keep going back. Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all, he bore the punishment of death on behalf of all people for all time so that we can be totally forgiven and freed from death once and for all.

In the Old Testament, when a sin offering was made, it wasn't just the priest and God who made the exchange. A person would place their hands on the animal to acknowledge their sinfulness (their need to change), and then the life of the animal would be offered for their sins. There was always an element of repentance.

The Law that God set before Moses was clear: if the people obeyed they would be blessed in the land, if they disobeyed they would be cursed ... but, as Deuteronomy chapter 30 says, though they had sinned, if they turned to the Lord, in other words, if they repented, he would restore them and have compassion on them and would gather them from exile.

2. Jesus brings in a New Covenant

In other words, where there is repentance, God will forgive and bring about a permanent change of the heart ... so that there's no going back year after year after year. As Jeremiah (31) and Ezekiel (36) prophe-

sied, God was going to create a new covenant, in which he would bring about a permanent change of heart.

Under the Mosaic covenant the people continually sinned and needed constant forgiving. Repentance had become a problem for Israel, not only because they stubbornly wouldn't do it ... but because they didn't even know what to repent of. They were a people, as Isaiah prophesied, living in darkness. Their eyes and ears were shut from knowing the truth.

Repentance was always the necessary requirement for any sacrifice and it remains the way we access the benefits of Jesus' perfect sacrifice. This was John the Baptist's message: Jesus is coming to save you, prepare the way for him by repenting.

Because we are forgiven we can stand before a Holy God, in confidence, without fear. And that means we can do something no one can without Jesus Christ... we can repent of everything. As his light shows us the sin in our lives, we can face it and repent of it.

We don't need to live in darkness, making New Year's resolutions, and never understanding why we can't change, despite our best efforts. He has put his Spirit within us, through which the Lord counsels us and shows us the sin in our heart. The secrets of our heart are disclosed to us.

Today we celebrate the beginning of a new year, but more importantly, celebrate a new covenant that God made with us ... a covenant that does lead to permanent



*The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written
We can help write that story by setting goals. -Melody Beattie*

All together now—
 applause for God! Sing
 songs to the tune of his
 glory, set glory to the
 rhythms of his praise.

-Psalms 66:1-2
 (MSG)

I will praise you, Lord,
 with all my heart; I will tell
 of all the marvelous things
 you have done. I will be

filled with joy because of
 you. I will sing praises to
 your name, O Most High.

-Psalms

9:1-2

(NLT)



FELLOWSHIP

Philippians 2:1-3 (HCSB)

¹ If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any **fellowship** with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

² fulfill my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, sharing the same feelings, focusing on one goal.

³ Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.

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Verse 1. The "therefore" implies that he is here expanding on the exhortation ([Php 1:27](#)), "In one Spirit, with one mind (*soul*)."
 He urges *four influencing motives* in this verse, to inculcate the four Christian duties corresponding respectively to them ([Php 2:2](#)). "That ye be *like-minded*, having the same *love*, of *one accord*, of one mind" [see Ps. 133, pg. 3];

(1) "If there be (with you) *any consolation in Christ*," that is, any *consolation of which Christ is the source*, leading you to wish *to console me* in my afflictions borne for Christ's sake, ye owe it to me to grant my request "that ye be like-minded" :

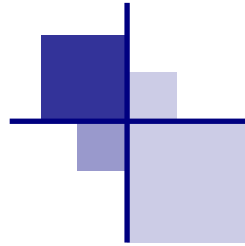
(2) "If there be any comfort of (that is, flowing from) love," the adjunct of "consolation in Christ";

(3) "If any fellowship of (communion together as Christians, flowing from joint participation in) the Spirit" ([2Cor 13:14](#)). As *Pagans* meant literally those who were of one village, and *drank of one fountain*, how much greater is the union which conjoins those who drink of the same Spirit! ([1Cor 12:4, 13](#)):

(4) "If any bowels (tender emotions) and mercies (compassions)," the adjuncts of "fellowship of the Spirit." The opposites of the two pairs, into which the four fall, are reprobated, [Php 2:3, 4](#).

— J-F-B, A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.
~ Prov 17:22 (NLT)



"Loved the sermon. Hated casual Sunday."



Guard your heart more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it. ~Proverbs 4:23 (GW)

The power of fellowship. It began, I believe, with the Father and the Son by and through the Spirit. And do we not see it continuing in the Garden with the first of mankind?

As associations and friendships were developed in the world some of them developed into enriching fellowships, especially in the Church. "13 But it is you, a man who is my peer, my companion and good friend!

14 We used to have **close fellowship**; we walked with the crowd into the house of God" (Ps. 55:13-14, HCSB). Yet, in that very special relationship, we often interfere with the Spirit of God. We have to be reminded to make an effort to maintain this fellowship:

"1 Therefore I, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, 3 diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds [us]" (Ephesians 4:1-3, HCSB).

This vital fellowship is part and parcel to our Christian life in the Church: "9 Faithful is the God by whom you were called into **fellowship** with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9, MontgomeryNT); "42 The disciples were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer" (Acts 2:42, GW).

This fellowship of the Spirit is exclusive to the Christian. It is vital for our individual survival and happiness. Thus it is imperative that we guard it. It provides

- ◆ Cohesiveness
- ◆ Solidarity
- ◆ Mutual encouragement
- ◆ Mutual strength
- ◆ Spiritual growth

E. Stanley Jones urges us to employ the following principles in order to get along with people:

1. You must not try to dominate or use the group.
2. Cultivate the power to put yourself in the other person's place.
3. Determine to conduct no secret criticism of one another.
4. Don't look for perfection in people; look on others not as they are, but as they can be.
5. Determine to settle differences as they arise—don't let them get cold.
6. Refuse to look for slights.
7. Don't allow yourself to become petty.
8. Look for privileges of service rather than for your rights.
9. Don't try to do people good—instead, love them.
10. Often decide with the group against yourself. Expect the best from others.
11. If there is any basic injustice in the group's relationships, deal with it; don't just advise patience.
12. Help others to help themselves—don't smother them.
13. Keep your power of laughter.
14. Don't try to have fellowship—work together for great ends, and fellowship will follow.



Meditations for a New Year Charles Spurgeon

- Go with your neighbor as far as good conscience will go with you, but part company where the shoe of conscience begins to pinch your foot. {see Psalm 1:1}
- If one door shall be shut, God will open another; if the peas do not yield well, the beans may; if one hen leaves her eggs, another will bring all her brood; there's a bright side to all things, and a good God everywhere. {see Romans 8:28}
- Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties. {see Isaiah 43:2-3}
- We never wake up in the morning but we want strength for the day, and we never go to bed at night without needing grace to cover the sins of the past.
- I often feel grateful to God that I have undergone fearful depression. I know the borders of despair and the horrible brink of that gulf of darkness into which my feet have almost gone. But hundreds of times I have been able to give a helpful grip to brethren and sisters who have come into the same condition.
- The devil entangles the youthful with beauty, the miser with gold, the ambitious with power, the learned with false doctrine. [Each] has his peculiarly adapted temptations. {see 1 Corinthians 10:13}
- Nothing is simpler than faith, and nothing more sublime. Faith is simple from the human side; it is a childlike trust. But it is sublime from the divine side, since it grasps the Invisible, and has power with the Omnipotent. {see Matthew 17:20}

“ . . . whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with

the **magnificent future** God has planned for us.” Romans 8:18 (Phillips NT)

Our Magnificent Future

1 Corinthians 3:21-23, “All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” (1 Cor 3:21-23, NIV)

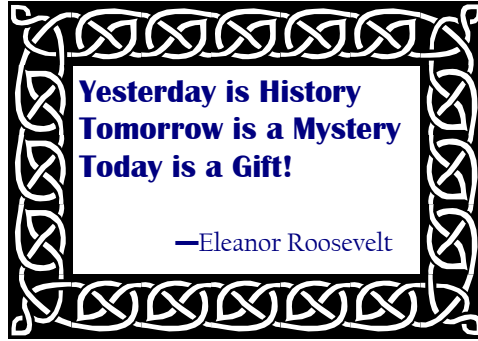
This passage would make good sense to ancient readers. Even Paul and Apollos are given to them by God; why follow just Paul or Apollos, when they should follow the God who gives everything? God's people would take possession of the world to come (Zech. 8:12; Romans 4:13); at present they are heirs of the world and children of the God who rules it. Stoic and Cynic philosophers often praised “having nothing.”

Purposeful living is illusive to millions of people in the world. The dual clouds of skepticism and cynicism hang over their heads — much like Solomon of old: “Again I observed all the oppression that takes place in our world. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and the victims are helpless. So I concluded that the dead are better off than the living. And most fortunate of all are those who were never born. For they have never seen all the evil that is done in our world.” (Eccl 4:1-3, NLT)

But God's revelation to man is that He has a plan that is eternal: “For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we will share his treasures—for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. 19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for **that future day** when God will reveal who his children really are.” (Romans 8:16-19, NLT)

“ . . . Everything belongs to you: . . . the whole world and life and death; the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”

~1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (NLT)



Exhortations to Undertake No Affairs of Life Without Constant Regard to the Will and Providence of God (James 4:11-17)

Our lips must be governed by the law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. Christians are brethren. And to break God's commands, is to speak evil of them, and to judge them, as if they laid too great a restraint upon us. We have the law of God, which is a rule to all; let us not presume to set up our own notions and opinions as a rule to those about us, and let us be careful that we be not condemned of the Lord. "Go to now," is a call to any one to consider his conduct as being wrong. How apt worldly and contriving men are to leave God out of their plans! How vain it is to look for any thing good without God's blessing and guidance! The frailty, shortness, and uncertainty of life, ought to check the vanity and presumptuous confidence of all projects for futurity. We can fix the hour and minute of the sun's rising and setting to-morrow, but we cannot fix the certain time of a vapor being scattered. So short, unreal, and fading is human life, and all the prosperity or enjoyment that attends it; though bliss or woe for ever must be according to our conduct during this fleeting moment. We are always to depend on the will of God. Our times are not in our own hands, but at the disposal of God. Our heads may be filled with cares and contrivances for ourselves, or our families, or our friends; but Providence often throws our plans into confusion. All we design, and all we do, should be with submissive dependence on God. It is foolish, and it is hurtful, to boast of worldly things and aspiring projects; it will bring great disappointment, and will prove destruction in the end. Omissions are sins which will be brought into judgment, as well as commissions. He that does not the good he knows should be done, as well as he who does the evil he knows should not be done, will be condemned. Oh that we were as careful not to omit prayer, and not to neglect to meditate and examine our consciences, as we are not to commit gross outward vices against light! ~ Matthew Henry

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