

**GOALS FOR MAKING THE NEW YEAR BETTER. EVEN THE BEST****By Robert J. Tamasy**

Don't you like new things? Maybe it is a new shirt or a new dress. Or a new computer, a new smartphone, or a new TV. Or a new house, a new car, or a new job. There is something intriguing that goes with the novelty of having or experiencing something new, a freshness that lifts us from the familiar and mundane.

So, it is not surprising that many of us feel a sense of excitement and wonder as a new calendar year approaches. In one respect, the transition from December 31 to January 1 is simply a matter of time, the passing of a single day. But being able to start afresh with a new calendar, going from 2024 to 2025, can somehow instill feelings of enthusiasm and expectation.

For some who have had a challenging or difficult year, it might be having the ability to declare, "Out with the old – good riddance – and in with the new!" The difference may be only 24 hours, but being able to turn the page, to start anew with a clean slate, can give us hope. For others the past year was a good one. So, they hope for more of the same, building on successes and anticipating further progress.

In either case, how do we handle this newness, this "fresh start"? How do we avoid, just a few days turning into the new year, experiencing just more of the same old things?

For some people this involves an annual practice of making resolutions. The problem with resolutions is they tend to be all or nothing. For example, if someone decides to stop smoking or curtail some unhealthy habit, once they fail to keep that commitment, the resolution is broken. It becomes failure.

I prefer to set goals, measurable and attainable, that I can strive toward during the entire year. For instance, if my desire would be to write a new book, but would not have to be accomplished on January 1, during the first week of the year, or even the initial months. I could work toward that goal and chart my progress. Or I might wish to read the entire Bible in one year. Ideally, I would read it every day, but if I fail to do so from time to time, all is not lost. I can catch up on my reading another time.

Best of all, I have learned that the God we worship and serve is the God of new things. In Genesis, the Bible's first book, we're told He created the heavens and the earth, all living things, and finally, human beings. And He's been actively engaged in making things new ever since. Consider:

**God leaves the past behind.** Many of us struggle with the past – failures, bad memories, unrealized expectations, besetting sins. The Lord offers a fresh start, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19).

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**God offers us a new start.** Rather than wrestling with longtime struggles and sins that plague us, through Jesus Christ we can “restart.” “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

**God can change our motives.** When I realize I have gotten off track, focusing on the wrong things, I like to pause and assess where I am and where I would like to be. Then I pray as King David prayed during a difficult time, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).

© 2024. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard.

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Looking back over the previous 12 months, how would you assess the year that is nearly over? What were some of the best things that happened for you? And what were the worst?
2. If it were in your power, how would you like to change things in the next year? What things might you wish to keep the same or simply build upon?
3. As a new year approaches, how much planning do you do? Are you one that makes resolutions? Or do you write down and adopt specific goals? What in your mind is the difference between resolutions and goals?
4. In planning for and anticipating the new year, what role – if any – does God and your faith in Him play in your preparations? Explain your answer.

### Challenge for This Week

If you are still in the midst of your planning and goal-setting for the new year, it might be helpful to invite the perspective of someone else. Who is a close friend or trusted advisor you can talk with, express your hopes, dreams and expectations, and invite his, her or their feedback on your preparations?

Most of all, determine not to put your goals and plans in “concrete” without praying to God for wisdom and guidance, seeking to understand what He would have you do – and become – over the coming year.

#### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:  
Job 42:2; Psalm 37:3-7; Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:3,9, 19:21, 20:24, 27:1; Matthew 6:33-34

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