

## RESOLVING TO GROW

As a new year begins, it is an American tradition to make resolutions. These resolutions oftentimes are kept on the outset; but as time passes, it is also a tradition to forget about them. Usually these goals revolve around areas of our lives where we need to make improvements. As members of the Lord's body, are there areas where we need to improve? Certainly, but we need to resolve to improve in these areas, not just because it is a tradition, but also because it is a part of our Christian duty. Second Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The word "grace" carries with it the idea of kindness or goodwill, so it is necessary for Christians to increase their goodwill and their knowledge of spiritual things. Other passages, such as Hebrews 6:1, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 1:5-10, encourage us to grow spiritually. So in what ways can you and I be better Christians?

**We can resolve to read our Bibles daily.** This is an area where Christians often fall short. God's Word helps us in many ways, but two in particular are delivering us from temptation and saving our souls. Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." When temptation's darkness comes, when God's Word is in our heart, we will have a light to guide us away from the temptation. God promised us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 to provide "a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." That way of escape is the Bible. Not only is it a way of escape, but the Bible can also save our souls. James 1:21 says, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and the superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." If you went down the steps of salvation, you would have baptism, confession, repentance, belief, and at the very bottom, hearing. Hearing the word of God is fundamental to our salvation. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The source of our faith is not a feeling, urge, godly

guess nor a leap in the dark; but it is hearing God's Word and obeying it. If our faith is going to increase, we need to spend time with the source of that faith, the Bible.

**We can resolve to pray regularly.** Another area that we often struggle with is prayer. Why should we pray often? Well, first, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to: "Pray without ceasing." We often do not understand how powerful prayer can be, but Elijah certainly understood. In James 5:17-18, we find that, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Because he prayed earnestly and without doubting, he could confidently tell Ahab in 1 Kings 18:41, "There is a sound of abundance of rain." We can have that same confidence when we ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15).

**We can resolve to visit the less fortunate.** Certainly, this is another problematic area of our Christian lives. We have a responsibility "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27). It is not that we are not able to help them, but it is that we are not willing to help them. The heart of the matter is our hearts. What am I going to do with my spare time? Am I willing to serve others and look after their needs; or am I going to look for things that please me? We need to consider these questions and the way our Lord lived his life. He helped the sick and fed the hungry, and we should do the same if we want to have the compassion that Christ had. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." (1 Peter 3:8.)

**We can resolve to be more mission minded.** Another one of our pitfalls is personal evangelism. How many people do we meet on a daily basis that have never heard the Gospel of Christ preached? Whose fault is that? Everyone has a responsibility to hear and obey the Gospel, but members of the Lord's body have an obligation to reach out and teach others.

When we go out into the world, does the gospel go with us, or do we leave that at home or in the church building? The early church "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4), and we should do the same. Knowing that the world is going to hell, do we really love our neighbors when we shut them out of the kingdom by never attempting to help them see their sad condition? We must do better in this area of our Christian walk.

**We can resolve to be pure.** Paul told the young preacher, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22). Our failing to be pure is possibly the greatest hindrance to the church's growth. If we are like everybody else in that we are not pure, why will the world want to be added to a body like that? When we go along with sin and treat it as "no big deal," we fail to treat sin the way we ought to treat it. Romans 12:9 says, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." We need to get the impurities out of our lives. Those impurities include dances, going to bars, going to filthy movies, watching filthy television, engaging in social drinking, telling and listening to dirty jokes; and the list just goes on and on and on. We need to get serious about sin and its consequences. When those who are outside the body of Christ watch us, they need to see a people who are peculiar in that they "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:9-11).

In conclusion, these are just some areas in which all of us certainly can improve. Let's all resolve to do better this coming year and for the rest of our lives. Ephesians 4:22-24 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

**Donnie Vick from *The Informer***

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## ILL

**Sunday:** Adams family, Lindsey Brown, Chris Edwards, Parish family. **Wednesday:** Chris Edwards. Bob Adams was released from OMC but is still experiencing pain and difficulty eating. Gary Cole's uncle of Enid, OK is very ill at this time. Wilba Hopkins will have cataract surgery on Tuesday, January 2, 2007.

**Those battling cancer:** Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these, as well as: Janice Carter, Lynda Cole, Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## OUT OF TOWN

Jeremy Keifer is in Oklahoma over the holiday break. The Brown's are in Texas visiting relatives this weekend. The Nelsons are in Texas visiting relatives. The Thrasher's are in Aurora, MO visiting relatives. Ed and Verna Hanson left Saturday, December 30 for their winter stay in Florida.

## GUEST SPEAKER

Brother Jim O'Connor will be speaking at our AM and PM services this Sunday, December 31. We are thankful to have Jim and Judy with us at this time.

## LADIES CLASS

The Ladies Class will resume on January 3, 2007.

## POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held following our AM worship on Sunday, January 7.

## ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 49; Sunday PM, 42; Wednesday PM, 35.

## Those To Serve

December 31, 2006

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole**

### MORNING WORSHIP

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson**  
**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... John Carter**  
**PRESIDE..... Gary Cole**  
**ASSIST.....David Parish**  
**ASSIST.....Allen Scott**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... John Dodson**

### EVENING WORSHIP

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Ken Greer**  
**CLOSING PRAYER.....Steve Brown**  
**LORD'S SUPPER..... Gary Cole**

**WEDNESDAY Jan. 3rd**

**SONG LEADER..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**INVITATION ..... Joel Nelson**

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Sunday

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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