

December 30

New Year Resolutions

Reading: Philippians 3:12-21

*"It is God who works in you
both to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Phil 2:13)*

There is hardly anyone who has not made New Year or Birthday or Anniversary decisions anytime in his life. But almost everyone regrets that he has not been able to keep them up. In course of time we conclude that it is not worth making resolutions at all. Little do we realise that such a conclusion is to our disadvantage and it stunts spiritual growth.

"It is God who works in you both to *will* and to *act* according to His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). Therefore in the strict sense none of the desires of God's children for making resolutions is self-generated. The guiding hand of the Father is there behind them. Good resolutions help positive growth. Resolutions are like goals. Decisions help us focus on the aim sharply and avoid distractions.

We are bothered by the fact that we are unable to keep up our resolutions. The accompanying guilt discourages us from attempting again. But we must remember that no failure is final for God's children. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,... Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down" (Psa 37:23,24; Prov 24:16).

Resolutions must not be overambitious. They must be realistic. For example, if you had been by and large prayerless, don't straightaway decide that you would spend at least two full hours each day in solid prayer. Rather, begin with fifteen or thirty minutes. After steadying up at that level, increase the duration step by step. Great things have small beginnings (Zech 4:10).

Don't make too many resolutions at a time either. Instead of taking twelve decisions at the beginning of a year, you can take one at the beginning of each month. Christian life is a walk, not a jump! It's true we can soar on wings like eagles when we wait on the Lord. But eagles don't reach lofty heights instantly (Isa 40:31). A good principle of growth in Christian life is that lengthening must be proportionate to strengthening (Isa 54:2).

Share your resolutions with your prayer partner or spouse. Such accountability is beneficial. But there's no need to make personal resolutions public. Resolutions are not vows. Tell God the desires of your heart and trust Him for His enablement (Psa 37:5). At the end of the year, review your performance and treat yourself with a good dinner or a new dress for your accomplishment (Eccl 9:7,8; 2 Tim 2:6).
