

“Four Resolutions”

January 1st, 2017

INTRODUCTION

As we enter a new year, many of us will be thinking about resolutions. We generally aim our resolutions at overcoming bad habits or establishing good ones. The definition of a resolution is a promise to “loosen” ourselves from anything that keeps us from accomplishing them. And so we will consider four resolutions made in the Bible. Perhaps you will want to include these resolutions on your list this year.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

How long do you normally keep your New Year’s resolutions?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

RESOLVE TO INQUIRE OF THE LORD

Q1. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-3, 6-12; Psalm 141:8; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Chapter 20 of 2 Chronicles finds King Jehoshaphat in a desperate situation. What was the threat that caused him to resolve to seek the Lord? How did he seek God and whom did he involve? If you were facing a desperate situation, whom would you ask to join you in seeking God?

Read Jehoshaphat’s prayer in 2 Chronicles 20:6-12. How would you summarize the first half of his prayer? As he concludes praying in verse 12, Jehoshaphat admits first his own inability to handle the problem he faces. In light of this admission what action does the king commit to? Paul similarly faced overwhelming circumstances, but what did he realize was the purpose in the midst of his trouble? (2 Corinthians 1:9)

RESOLVE THAT YOUR MOUTH WILL NOT SIN

Q2. Read Psalm 17:3; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 6:19; Jeremiah 28:16; Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 3:8-9; Proverbs 26:18-19

In Psalm 17 David prays to God and in verse 3 resolves (purposes) not to sin with his mouth. Our mouths can be the source of many types of sin. Read through the verses above and identify the type of sin that the mouth is capable of causing. If you, like David, are resolved not to sin with your mouth, what are some preventative measures you can take so that you don’t find yourself falling into these sins?

RESOLVE NOT TO DEFILE YOURSELF

Q3. Read Daniel 1:5, 8; Mark 7:21-23; James 1:27

When Daniel was taken captive to Babylon, he was being prepared to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. But Daniel asked to be excused from eating the king’s food, because he didn’t want to eat anything God considered unclean (Daniel 1:8). He chose to be faithful to obey God’s commands so he would not defile himself. What are some of the ways Jesus suggests that a man might be defiled in Mark 7:21-22? Although Daniel resisted physical defilement and Jesus references both moral and ethical defilements, what role does the heart play in all instances? James warns us also about being corrupted by the world. What are some things you need to guard your heart from?

RESOLVE TO KNOW CHRIST

Q4 Read 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, 2:2; Philippians 3:8; John 17:3

In his first letter to a contentious church at Corinth, Paul indicates that he chose not to display his vast knowledge, nor debate with their Greek philosophers. What was the only thing he was resolved to know among them? How did he explain this choice in verses 22-24? It is easy to feel compelled to debate unbelievers based on our knowledge of scripture, but it is our personal knowledge of Jesus and His sacrifice for our salvation that is at the heart of the gospel message. How did Paul express the value of knowing Christ in Philippians 3:8? To what did Jesus equate knowing God in John 17:3? What is one thing you can share with someone about your relationship with Jesus that would bring hope?

Wrap-Up

If you are determined to start some good habits (or break bad ones) in 2017, consider adding these to your list. In all of your decisions, inquire of the Lord for His direction. Exercise restraint before you speak. Don’t allow impulse, assumption or natural inclination to result in words that can damage relationships or do harm to others. Determine in your heart to obey God and avoid defilement. Most importantly, resolve to strengthen your relationship and know Christ more deeply than ever before.

Memory Verse

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
1 Corinthians 2:2 NIV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more notes) _____

Challenge: *If you make a resolution this year, ask a friend to hold you accountable, and check in with them weekly.*

Q1

2 Chronicles 20:1-3 NIV - 1 After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat. 2 Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). 3 Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:6-12 in your Bible

Psalms 141:8 NIV - 8 But my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign LORD; in you I take refuge--do not give me over to death.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV - 8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

Q2

Psalms 17:3 ESV - 3 You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night, you have tested me, and you will find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

Proverbs 12:18 ESV - 18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 6:19 ESV - 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Jeremiah 28:16 ESV - 16 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the LORD.'

Romans 16:17-18 ESV - 17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. 18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

Ephesians 5:4 ESV - 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:8-9 ESV - 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Proverbs 26:18-19 ESV - 18 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death 19 is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!"

Q3

Daniel 1:5, 8 NKJV - 5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of [that time] they might serve before the king. ... 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Mark 7:21-23 ESV - 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

James 1:27 ESV - 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Q4

1 Corinthians 2:2 NIV - 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 ESV - 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Philippians 3:8 ESV - 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

John 17:3 ESV - 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Prayer Notes cont.
