

You're Not "Giving Up" Anything



By Rob Pue

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In my younger days, I couldn't imagine living in the year 2025. It sounded so futuristic. Still does. But here we all are...and still without the flying cars that Popular Mechanics promised were just around the corner back in 1969. In elementary school, our teacher once gave us an assignment to draw a picture of what the year 2000 would look like. If I recall, mine included big satellite dishes on homes. I have no idea what I thought they'd be used for – they just looked futuristic to me, and I assumed they'd have a very important purpose. Now it seems ridiculous that these have already become outdated technology and were mainly used by consumers to watch television.

Last year was a strange one. As a nation, we learned even more about how we've been lied to for so long regarding so many things, and just how corrupt our government and so-called "justice system" really is. It was a year filled with tension, perhaps purposely imposed upon us by the Regime and the mainstream media. One crisis after another. One scare after another, one impending disaster after another, to keep us all frightened, worried and dependent upon the Almighty State. When will we learn that most of the things we worry about never happen anyway?

And now in 2025, many are hopeful for all that's been wrong,

bad and evil in our country and around the world to be made right – resolved. Many hope and pray for America to be restored. We're all ready for change, ready for real justice and righteousness to reign in our land. But we need to understand that nothing good can come unless the people of God repent and return to Him first. *"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"* (1 Peter 4:17).

Now is the time for us to finally take 2 Chronicles 7:14 seriously. *"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."* Just imagine what this new year would look like if we finally put actions behind those words we quote so often.

It all begins with us, as individuals. Individual members of God's Church. By "Church," I mean the "Ecclesia," the "called out ones." Those who are real, genuine Christ-followers. I certainly am not referring to any specific denomination or any building. I'm talking about us as individuals, as husbands and wives, as families, as true children of God.

It's about this time of year that many people take stock of their lives and through personal introspection, make plans for positive changes. It would help if we also sought the Lord in fervent prayer and study of His Word, to align our will with His. It's precisely because so many *don't* seek the Lord, pray or ask Him what His will is for our lives that so many New Years Resolutions fail within days.

Many begin each new year with lofty, and well-intentioned goals. Among the most common: people desperately want to lose weight, stop smoking, stop drinking, save money, stop wasting time on fruitless endeavors, improve their marriages, be better parents – and some even resolve to read and study the

Bible *daily* in the New Year.

Several years ago, I had a gym membership. I was diligent to make time to exercise daily, and at one point it was common for me to make a point of walking fifteen miles in a day, a few days each week. I'd start off in the gym, then hike some trails, and end the day with more walking on the treadmill at the gym. I coupled this with a change in my eating habits, and since that time I've lost seventy pounds. I cringe now, when I see old photos of myself, morbidly obese. But that change didn't happen overnight. It took work, a change of behavior and taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Many begin the new year with good intentions, but motivation isn't automatic and tends to come and go. And there's nothing "magical" about the calendar rolling over to January 1st. I remember when I had my gym membership, I would avoid the place entirely the first week or so of every new year, because it was always packed with New Years' Resolvers. But 3-5 days into the new year, things were usually back to normal, as those New Years Resolutions of so many fell by the wayside.

So, let's talk about New Year Resolutions for a bit. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines the word "Resolve," as "To confirm; to fix in constancy." And also, "To fix in opinion or purpose; to determine in the mind," and "To be settled in opinion." God's Word says, *"...as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."* And Paul wrote, *"...be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

We may be motivated to make positive changes in our lives on December 31st. In fact, many people assemble their list of resolutions all throughout the previous year and have great intentions to make those changes when the new year arrives. They're motivated. They understand these are good and positive

things. But motivation fluctuates. It doesn't remain a steady, solid rock we can depend on. One day our motivation may be at a peak, the next day not so much, and some days we have no motivation at all.

So, motivation alone is a good thing to get us started on our aspirations, but it's not enough. Some think they just need to have more willpower, but willpower won't get the job done for you either. When it comes to correcting our undesirable behaviors, or even besetting sins, we can be very motivated to do that and start off with great willpower, but eventually we'll always take the path of least resistance.

Willpower requires us to deny ourselves those things we still believe are "precious" in our minds. You can use willpower to deny yourself something *you think you still want* for a little while, but it soon becomes a tremendous burden and source of stress. If you're trying to stop eating junk food, stop smoking or drinking or overcome some other vice – and you still believe in your heart that those things are doing something positive for you – your willpower will give out and the addiction will win every time.

On the other hand, if you become transformed by the renewing of your mind, you don't need willpower. You don't need willpower NOT to do something you have no desire to do. Let me repeat that, because you missed it: *You do not need willpower NOT to do something you have no desire to do.* Let me give you an example. If you struggle with alcohol, and a glass of bleach is set in front of you, you have no desire to drink it. Why? Because you know you don't want it. You know it would be harmful to you, and you choose to live rather than drink poison. So, it doesn't take willpower not to drink it. Well, alcohol is poison too. We weren't meant to consume it.

The source of all addictions is the deception that we've trained our minds to believe we "need" something we've become accustomed to. Those struggling with alcohol likely began as

young people. At first, they hated it. It made them sick, dizzy and probably caused vomiting. But they persisted, perhaps out of peer pressure, or to socialize, or to appear “cool” to their friends. The teenager on his knees, sweating profusely and vomiting into the toilet never envisioned himself drinking the stuff for a lifetime, and depending on it for stress relief or “self-medication.” They never imagined it would take control of them, and they’d struggle with that addiction all their lives. But that’s how it starts, and it’s up to you whether or not it ends, so you can be healthy and strong as God intended, or if you remain a slave to the addiction.

All addictions are the result of “wanting.” Wanting something we’ve trained our brains to think we need, after indulging in it for so many years. We all want to feel good; we all want pleasure rather than pain. We all want to feel connection – to ourselves and others. We want acceptance, validation, assurance, and security. And we all want to be loved. So rather than fuel your New Years Resolution with willpower, when the temptation comes to indulge in more of what you know you no longer want in your life, instead, ask yourself, *“what do I really want?”*

You want strength, courage, vitality, self-respect, a feeling of accomplishment. You want to feel whole, without any voids in your life. When you give up those old habits and addictions, understand, you’re not “giving up” anything – you’re simply returning to the natural state of health, wellness and wholeness God intended for you. You’re returning to the real YOU, before you started this behavior. You’re not losing or giving up anything of value. On the contrary, you’re getting rid of a cruel enemy that’s hijacked your heart and mind and taken you captive in a place you no longer want to be.

It’s the same for those addicted to smoking. Many think they smoke to relieve stress, but as with all addictions, the only

stress it relieves is the stress brought on by the previous dose of the drug. This is why smokers never succeed with Nicotine Replacement Therapy. That, too, is another deception of the devil. It's an ingenious conspiracy between Big Pharma and Big Tobacco. Think about it: how can you get free of the addiction by taking the same drug you're addicted to, just in a different form? It doesn't work. When Satan whispers in your ear that "just one puff won't matter," ask yourself what you really want... the answer is you want to breathe, you want life and freedom. Then take a deep breath of life-giving fresh air, hold it for a few seconds and then exhale. Breathe life rather than poison.

The key is to change your heart and mind and bring your will into alignment with God's will. Because every action begins as a thought in the mind, and that's where the devil goes to tempt us. "A few Doritos won't hurt." "I'm tired today and need a day off. I'll exercise tomorrow." "One drink won't matter. Nobody has to know. I'll quit tomorrow." For most, tomorrow never comes, but instead turns into days, months, and years. And before you know it, a lifetime of good intentions – ending in an early, ugly death.

Mark 14:38, *"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Indeed, the flesh is weak. The carnal man is weak. This is why we must set our sights on spiritual things in order to accomplish those good and righteous things we really want in our lives. It's that old spiritual warfare again. Galatians 5:17, *"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."*

So, plan your resolutions ahead of time – decide in advance how you'll respond to each temptation, and include God in those plans. Why is it we only pray when we've done everything else in our own power and have failed?

Lamentations 3:40, *"Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

What New Years Resolutions do you have? Do you want to lose weight? Stop bringing GMO junk food into the house. Stop eating two big burgers every day for lunch, followed by two king size candy bars and diet soda. Try some healthy chicken and vegetables. Eat clean. You'll soon find your desire for the bad stuff goes, as you take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and your will begins to align with God's will.

This world is filled with temptations. The enemy of our souls wants nothing more than for us to continue believing the lie that we're dependent upon poisons – whether that be a poor diet, or nicotine or alcohol, or pornography or Facebook or whatever. They're all poisons – to our bodies, minds and souls. When you stop indulging what you *think* you need and instead ask yourself honestly, *"what do I really need?"* – and rewire, retrain your mind to return to the real you – as God made you – you'll see you're not giving up anything. Instead, you're ridding yourself of a vicious enemy that wants you sick and dead. So now go – trample Satan and his schemes under your feet. Freedom awaits you, but go with God because you can't do this alone. *"Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you."*

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