

1. As we approach year's end, it is often a time used for taking stock of our lives and our circumstances. We call them "New Year's Resolutions."
  - a. Wikipedia "A **New Year's resolution** is a tradition, most common in the [Western Hemisphere](#) but also found in the [Eastern Hemisphere](#), in which a person resolves to continue good practices, change an undesired trait or behavior, to accomplish a personal goal, or otherwise improve their life."
  - b. Among Americans who are making **New Year's resolutions**, the **most common** ones are exercising more (50%), saving money (49%), eating more healthily (43%), and losing weight (37%)” Here are some others that make the top 10 for 2020. Reduce stress. Get more sleep. Stick to a budget. Travel more. Learn a new skill.
    - i. Seems to be pretty self focused...
    - ii. Contrast with resolution from John H Vincent in 1909 "**A Resolve for Every Morning of the New Year**. I will this day try to live a simple, sincere and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity and self-seeking, cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity and the habit of holy silence, exercising economy in expenditure, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust and a child-like trust in God.
2. The idea of making a resolution... a commitment... is not an unfamiliar one in God's word.
  - a. Israel in the Sinai (Ex 19:3) *"Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. 8 All the people answered together and said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do!**"
  - b. King Josiah discovers the book of the law. 2Ki 22:8ff *"Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, 'I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD... When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes...Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that*

*burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us”*

- i. The response... their “resolution” 2Ki 23:1ff *“ Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2 The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. 3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. **And all the people entered into the covenant.**”*
- c. Peter and the disciples’ “resolution” Matt 26:33ff. *“But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” 34 Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” 35 Peter \*said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” **All the disciples said the same thing too.**”*

### 3. Common “results” of resolutions

- a. New year’s resolutions...bad news. Only 10% are kept for longer than a few months.
- b. Israel in the Sinai. They didn’t even last that long. Ex 32:1ff *“Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” 2 Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” 3 Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.*
- c. Josiah. 2Ki 23:25ff. *Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.”*
  - i. During his kingship, the people remained true to their commitments. After, they did not.

d. Peter and the disciples. Matt 26:56 *“Then all the disciples left Him and fled.”*

Peter’s story we know.

4. We can easily see the importance and need to make commitments...resolutions... and to find success in following through on them. But how do we do that? We find our answer in God’s word and wisdom.

a. Resolution is to be founded on remembrance. A few examples among many...

i. Passover; *“Now this day will be a **memorial** to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. 17 You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a **permanent ordinance**.*

ii. Post exodus Deut 8:1ff *“All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers. 2 You shall **remember** all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 5 Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. 6 Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.”*

iii. Purim; Esther and Mordicai Est 9:20 *“Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, 21 obliging them to celebrate the*

*fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually, 22 because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor...the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually. 28 So these days were to be **remembered and celebrated throughout every generation**, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants."*

- iv. Not only special days. Num 15:38 *"Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. 39 It shall be a tassel for you **to look at and remember** all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, 40 so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God."*
  - v. Communion 1 Cor 11:23ff *"The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this **in remembrance** of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance** of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."*
  - vi. We are to remember ...
    - 1. His love, grace and provision
    - 2. His redemptive works
    - 3. Our great neediness and weakness
    - 4. Our quickness to disobedience and sin
    - 5. His fatherly discipline
- b. Remembrances, though, can become rote...ritual...vain repetition. They can lose their meaning

- i. Disobedient Israel Is 1:10ff. *“Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. 11 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. 12 “When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 “Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. 14 “I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them.”*
- ii. Pharisees Matt 23:27 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. 29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’*
- c. Remembrance must come with reflection...with meditation
  - i. Ps 119:97ff. *“O how I love Your law! **It is my meditation** all the day. 98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. 99 I have more insight than all my teachers, For **Your testimonies are my meditation**. 100 I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. 102 I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me.”*
  - ii. Ps 77:11ff. *“ I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. 12 I will **meditate** on all Your work And **muse** on Your deeds. 13 Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? 14 You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples. 15 You have by Your power redeemed Your people”*

- iii. Col 3:1ff *“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*
- iv. Phil 4:8ff. *“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise,  **dwell on these things.** 9 *The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”**
- d. So, what are the expected results of our remembrance and reflection?
  - i. We expand our understanding and view of God...we see His majesty, His love, His goodness, His grace and mercy, His faithfulness, His patience, His power on our behalf, and His unsurpassable wisdom
  - ii. We expand our understanding of ourselves... that we are quick to stumble and to forget, easily swayed to disobedience, prone to weakness, self focused, and prideful
  - iii. We learn to see rightly...through God’s eyes
  - iv. We develop thankful and humble hearts
  - v. We replace worldly wisdom with heavenly wisdom
  - vi. We can acknowledge our dependency and rest in His sufficiency
  - vii. We find peace and rest for our souls

Beloved, let us purpose to be people of remembrance and reflection...so that we give honor and glory to God and become those who hear “Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Let us pray