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Gleanings

A Wise New Year's Resolution



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It's that time of year again—time to make new resolutions. Have you done this before? Has it ever worked?

Perhaps you have experienced a modicum of success. Few seem to have profound success at following their New Year's resolutions. If this is true for you, what might be missing? Why can't you follow through? Could it be that you haven't made the right New Year's resolution?

I would like to offer a New Year's resolution worthy of your best efforts and one that God will empower you to fulfill. Interested?

Consider this true story about a man named Billy, who lived in a religious culture. It was in vogue to be a social Christian. People attended church but did not take Christianity seriously. Those whose Christianity was a life-defining worldview were considered fanatics who took their faith too seriously. Most of the people in the culture lived to do their will according to their ways and did not expect God to interfere. They were deistic.

Billy's parents and grandparents shared the culturally accepted view of Christianity and wanted no part of the fanatics. Because of family circumstances, Billy was sent to live with relatives who eagerly welcomed him into their home. Billy became very fond of them. Unbeknownst to Billy's mother and grandfather, the relatives were closet fanatics. When Billy's mother discovered this, she quickly retrieved her twelve-year-old son from their home.

It wasn't long before Billy abandoned the views of the "fanatics" and returned to the worldview of the social Christians. By the time Billy entered college, he was thoroughly pagan in his view of life—doing his will according to his ways. He was a model social Christian.

In college, Billy met a man whose father was a politician. Billy became intrigued by the political world. People noted that Billy's personality and communication skills were ideal for public policy work. Emboldened by their assessment, he was elected to public office soon after graduating from college.

Billy's rise to prominence was rapid. By twenty-five, he was well known, influential, and respected in political circles. He indulged in the customary nefarious practices of many politicians. There were gentlemen's clubs where the political elite gambled, drank, and womanized. And there were abundant resources for a lavish lifestyle. As a social Christian, being a public servant was not about serving the public but about the public serving the "servant."

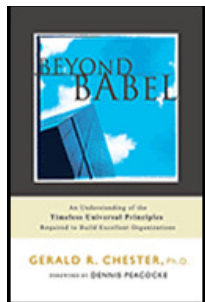
All this changed when a godly man confronted Billy concerning his social Christianity. Over a period of time, the men engaged in discussions about the nature of real Christianity. Billy posed every objection he had to the Bible's authenticity, the reality of Christ, and the existence of God. The godly man adroitly responded to every objection. In time, Billy was convicted of the Bible's authenticity, the reality of Christ, and the existence of God. Confronted with this compelling presentation of truth, Billy made the transition from social Christian to "fanatic." Everything would now have to change.

No longer did Billy participate in the gentlemen's club activities and indulge his sensual pleasures. He became a committed family man. He could no longer use the public to serve him, but rather, if he was to continue as a public servant, he must serve the public. But was he to continue in the role of public servant? Could he glorify God in public life? Was this his calling? He needed help; he needed godly counsel.



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He contacted an old family friend from the days he had spent with his godly relatives. The man knew how corrupt political life was at that time; nevertheless, he could see the call of God on Billy to continue as a public servant. Public policy reform was needed and perhaps Billy was a tool God would use to effect reform. Using the words of Esther 4:14, the man prophetically spoke over Billy that perhaps he, like Esther, had been prepared for “such a time as this.”

Based on this encouragement, Billy accepted the call to be a public servant, but he still needed clarity on his divinely ordained mission in public life. Receiving the revelation of Billy’s specific mission took a few more years. In the process, Billy understood that his call could not be performed based on what he saw in the natural. He understood that physical reality was always undergirded by spiritual reality. Spiritual reality was therefore the root of all natural reality. Hence, to effectively solve problems required spiritual wisdom.

Billy came to understand that his call was to be a public servant in order to effect godly change in the culture, which required divine revelation and empowerment.

Billy committed himself to God’s call on his life. To walk out his calling, he employed several key tools, which are listed below:

Humility: To find and fulfill God’s call requires *a humble heart*. Pride and arrogance are impediments.

Christ: To build the requisite character to fulfill God’s call requires *Christ as the basis for everything*. Christ is the only true foundation for life.

Spiritual parents: In addition to natural parents, *spiritual parents* are essential as role models and are critical to properly understanding life.

Prayer: Spiritual reality undergirds physical reality. Therefore *prayer is vital* to discerning underlying spiritual dynamics and to formulating godly responses to every situation.

The Bible: *Ardent Bible study* is necessary because the Scripture provides the fullest revelation about the will and ways of God.

Holistic biblical worldview: Applying a biblical worldview to life is foundational. Everything in life is to be interpreted based on the truth that God is the Creator of and Lord over all.

Community: No one lives life well by themselves. Support from a *godly community* is essential to understanding reality, drawing the right conclusions, and developing wise action plans.

These requisite tools enabled Billy to find and fulfill his calling.

Billy spent the first one-third of his life in preparation for the rest of his life. The last two-thirds was spent finding and fulfilling his call. What made his life count, what made his life significant, what made his life successful was his obedience to God’s call on his life.

Is there any New Year’s resolution more important than finding and fulfilling God’s purpose for your life? This is a resolution that is worthy of your best efforts. This is a resolution that God will support.

If you agree, then learn from Billy’s example. First, you must accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. Second, you must find the spiritual parents who have been sovereignly placed in your life, submit to them, and expect God to speak to you through them. Third, humbly engage in the key practices of prayer, Bible study, and community. And fourth, live based on a holistic biblical worldview in every area of your life. Empowerment and wisdom to find and fulfill God’s purpose for your life will come by the Holy Spirit through these practices.

If finding your calling becomes your New Year’s resolution, you chose wisely. By following Billy’s example, you can expect God to guide, direct, and empower you through the process. Consequently, you can find and fulfill God’s purpose for your life just as Billy did. This is a New Year’s resolution you can keep—if you are willing to pay the price and trust God in the process.

Happy New Year!

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	<i>Seminar and Simulcast:</i> Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	June 20-21, 2014, in Dallas, TX
	Prior Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Events	Recordings Available
Fulfill Your Life Purpose	<i>Seminar and Simulcast:</i> Business as Mission	April 25, 2014, in Dallas, TX
	Prior Business Transformation Series Seminars/Webinars	Recordings Available