

# Pastoral Encouragement 1/8/21

## New Year Resolutions 2021

How about you? It seems that most of us pause at the beginning of the new year to reflect on the past year. It is a time of assessment, a time of reflection. It may also be a time of correction, an aspirational time of good intention. What are your thoughts? Did you make a new year resolution?

I did not and I usually do. They have not been terribly serious resolutions and normally not much thought went into them, but they were a part of the process. There was a certain optimism reflected in the sharing with others, a collective covenant that recognized a need to do better this time around. Not so much this year.

Perhaps it is because we did not gather to celebrate the new year in the same way that we have in the past. If anything, we are creatures of habit and tradition. When those things are interrupted, the ripple effect is unpredictable. Some things get lost in the disruption. Maybe that is why I have not heard any of my friends talk about their new year resolutions. Facebook, Twitter and other social media seem quiet too. Strange, but 2020 was a strange year, to say the least.

As I was thinking about this, I googled “resolution” and was scrolling through the results when I saw a familiar name, Jonathan Edwards. As a teenager, he wrote 70 resolutions that would guide him for the rest of his life. In fact, he resolved to read them every week so that they would stay fresh in his mind. Below is a link to those resolutions. In this version, they are subdivided by subject matter, which I found helpful.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-resolutions-of-jonathan-edwards>

In times like these, Edward’s commitment to put pen to paper to record his resolutions, then determine to read them weekly, could be helpful for us. If we are going to resolve to do something, what better model do we have than his?

So let’s do this. Let’s take some time to think, record and resolve to be better people and make this year a better year. Let me add one more aspect to this exercise. Share your resolution(s) with someone and agree to have them hold you accountable.

One last thing, I want to encourage you to make your resolutions with an emphasis on the effect they will have on others wellbeing. We are reminded that JOY comes when our lives are prioritized as follows: Jesus Others You.

I have included a "Balance Sheet of Life" that a friend recently shared. You may have seen this to. It helped me to think about my resolutions in a new way.

Happy New Year

Pastor Terry B.

#### BALANCE SHEET OF LIFE

The most destructive habit.....Worry

The greatest joy.....Giving

The greatest loss.....Loss of Self-respect

The most satisfying work.....Helping Others

The ugliest personality trait.....Selfishness

The greatest "shot in the arm".....Encouragement

The greatest problem to overcome.....Fear

The most effective sleeping pill.....Peace of Mind

The most crippling failure disease.....Excuses

the most powerful force in life.....Love

the most dangerous act.....Gossip

The world's most incredible computer...The brain

The worst thing to be without.....Hope

The deadliest weapon.....The tongue

The two most power-filled words....."I can"

The greatest asset....."Faith"

The most worthless emotion.....Self-pity

The most beautiful attire.....Smile!

The most prized possession.....Integrity

The most powerful channel of communication..Prayer

The most contagious spirit.....Enthusiasm

LIFE ends, when you stop DREAMING. HOPE ends, when you stop BELIEVING. LOVE ends, when you stop CARING. So, please share this BALANCE SHEET OF LIFE.