

More Godly Goals for the New Year

1. **Put on Love**
2. **Live at Peace**
3. **Worship with Thanks**

New Year's Resolutions

- Resolutions? Made decision to make change to life, start something? If so, not alone. Lots: loose pounds, improve diet, exercise more (ads on TV, fitness centers); read more, play instrument more (me), get back to hobby, visit more with family/friends, shore up budget. All kinds.
- Problem (stats): a lot don't follow through! I read: 45% usually make; only 8% successfully achieve.¹ However, good thing: self-examination, see areas need tweaked, think how to make those changes.
- In lesson, some NYR-worthy material here, changes/improvements to life of faith. As Christians, these are goals always want to strive for, not just at beg of year. As read lesson, thought, "These are GG4NY." Then remembered, 4 years ago, NY's day was Sunday; I preached on 1 Thes 3 lesson; theme was GG4NY. Totally diff sermon; can't use same theme. So today in Col 3, we have MORE.

Put on Love

- **Vs. 12a** (what we are – holy, loved, chosen), **vs. 12b-14**. 2 phrases stand out: **"clothe yourselves"** and **"put on love."** Idea here: getting dressed in morning. Unless 3rd shift, most wake up in morning, clean up, get dressed for day. Now that cold, put on layers (sweater over shirt); before leave house, heavy coat, hat, mittens. All these clothes we put on. **"Clothe yourselves,"** then virtues, then **vs. 14**. God has perfect wardrobe for you to wear, wants you to put on every day. Sometimes call robes of righteousness of Christ; yours through baptism; washed clean, given new set of clothes to wear as **vs. 12a**. This lesson elaborates on those clothes, those layers God has prepared for you to wear.
- **Vs. 12b**. Could explore nuances of each, but you understand kind of outfit this looks like. First, see it in Jesus; way Jesus always lived. Second, hear it in Jesus' teachings. I think of Mt 25, sheep/goats; to sheep/believers: **"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."** Believers: when? Don't remember. Jesus: **"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."** I think tangible, concrete example of what means to **"put on love," vs. 12b**. Organic, just happens in different ways as live life. Can't, from pulpit, say top 10 things you can do to be more kind/compassionate. But in your own life situation, HS will lead you to seek out opportunities, act on them. Of course, evil spirit of Satan will try to coerce into ripping these virtues off, throwing into dirty clothes hamper. So God's Word says, here's GG4NY: put on love.
- Another example of love: **vs. 13**. Gets to heart of matter: easy to kind/comp to people you like, don't know; hard for people you know you don't like. Probably people that hurt you. So we hold grudge, long memories. Sometimes feels good to nurse grudge. Very clear: **vs. 13**. Another parable: servant owed master billions; cancelled. Then he refused to cancel relatively small debt owed him (Mt 18). Point is clear: God has forgiven us billions in debt of sin. That mercy is what leads us to forgive. Lot easier said than done. But remember Jesus on cross: "Father, forgive." Or another example: remember this past summer, shooting in Charleston, SC, people came to church, 9 killed. Remember one of most remarkable outcomes of that tragedy: members of church, family members of those shot, offering words of forgiveness to shooter. **Vs. 13-14**. Make it godly goal to put on love, to **vs. 12b**. Consider taking words of this lesson (cutting from bulletin), putting them on mirror in bathroom or on door to clothes closet, so that when you wake up in morning and deciding what going to wear for day, say: I've got diff set of clothes; I'll put on love.

Live at Peace

- Here's another godly goal: live at peace. **Vs. 15**. 2 parts: cause/effect. Cause: peace of Christ ruling in heart. What? Peace we have because of Christ, what he's done. Comes from knowing sins are forgiven; we're children of God; God loves us; promises always to be with us, even in dark times in life; someday be with him in heaven. Peace because of Christ. When rules in heart, effect: **vs. 15b**. So we live at peace with everyone, esp believers. **"Members of one body:"** body of Christ, the church. So, effect of peace from Christ is peace among Christians in Church.
- However, where does Satan try hardest to sow seeds of discord? In church! Here, in church, where peace should be ruling, the devil works hardest to create disharmony, because knows: when church is in disharmony, then peoples' faith is jeopardized. You've seen it: people lose faith, leave church over some petty disagreement, or whatever. Not indicting anyone here at SJB or referencing anything specific; just a reality. When Satan sows seeds of discord here among us, the fallout involves souls.
- So godly goal for new year: **vs. 15**. We are body of Christ; in 2016, let's make it our godly goal to live at peace with each other.

Worship with Thanks

- **Vs. 15c-16**. Passage about public worship; not just private devotional worship/prayer life in home; talking about what happens when body of Christ gathers together to worship Lord at church. **"Message of Christ"** – God's Word. **"Teach, admonish"** – sermons. **"Psalms...Spirit, singing to God"** – singing praises. Also, **"with gratitude in your hearts; be thankful"** – at church, we thank God for blessings, and receive them. So third goal here: worship with thanks.
- Said before: discourages me when so many worship hardly ever. Long list less than once/year. Longer list 2-4 times/year. Plenty of things get in way: rowdy little kids, work schedule. But let's be honest: major factor is indifference. A lot don't think coming to church is that big of deal. So other things rise to level of big deal: sports tournaments, sleeping in, weekend outings. Not saying missing one Sunday/year is sin. But God's Word: **vs. 16a... "richly."** Richly, when comes to worship, must mean often, regularly. **"Let us not give up meeting, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another" (Heb 10:25)**.
- So whether you're person who hasn't come too often, made NYR to come church more regularly in 2016; or, if regular in worship, and make it NYR to encourage fellow church/family members who aren't around very often to come back to church: either way, these are steps toward godly goal of worshipping with thanks.

"Whatever You Do"

- At end, **vs. 17**. Sums it up. **"Whatever you do,"** whatever goals you set for new year, plans make, wherever the Lord leads you in 2016, **"do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus."** Live your life **"as God's chosen...loved,"** as way of saying thank you to God for redeeming you and making you his children, heirs of eternal life. Make that your godly goal for this new year; not just for 2016 but for every year the Lord gives you. Let this Word of God from Col 3 serve as your guide, so that **vs. 17**.

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

ⁱ <http://www.statisticbrain.com/new-years-resolution-statistics/>