

Lesson 5: January 8, 2006: “Making New Year’s Temptation Resolutions”
--Learning how to set goals for dealing with sin

What is the point of making resolutions if they’re just going to be broken anyway? I mean who really keeps their New Year’s resolutions? Have you ever known anyone who has gone a whole year actually doing what they said they would do back in January? These are all criticisms that people make about the whole resolving issue that happens each and every New Year. People decide that something is going to be different and they pledge, usually to themselves, to make some changes in their lifestyle. Personally, I don’t think I can remember one resolution that I actually succeeded at in my entire life. Much less, I don’t think I can remember a resolution that I have made, besides the ones I made for this year. This doesn’t present a very good case for anyone to want to make a New Year’s resolution. I have to admit that it is a difficult thing to do. What makes it so hard to keep, much less to remember to keep, our New Year’s resolutions?

One of the primary problems people have with New Year’s resolutions is that they don’t officially write them down and commit them to memory. This is not the only thing that gets in the way. The bigger problem occurs when a person chooses what their New Year’s resolution will be. If you’re like the average person when it gets to be the Christmas season, you increase your eating habits significantly. This will then bring along the guilt and frustration of a few extra pounds. After this comes the resolution. You want to lose some weight, and since you didn’t finish losing that weight from last year, you want to lose extra this year. So instead of deciding on a reasonable 5 to 10 pounds, you go all out and resolve to lose 30 to 100 pounds. Well, as soon as the food binge subsides and you return to your normal lifestyle, you realize that your weight isn’t as out of control as you thought and your body begins to look like you remember. Now you’ve already forgotten your resolution and will not revisit it again until the next year approaches.

The problem isn’t with losing weight. The problem is with the level of commitment to the goal at hand. When people do what is described above, it is a testimony to their lack of dedication to their desired goal. Whenever anyone resolves to do something they aren’t fully committed to, failure is a sure ending to it. People so often fail at their New Year’s resolutions because they typically make them at a time and place in their life when they are not seriously looking forward into the next year. They’re not thinking about the early mornings or late nights and all the hours of sleep they’ll lose if they read their Bible that much. And is it really worth it?

As you’re considering the resolutions you’ve made for 2006, think about where you are in your spiritual life. Specifically, look at the areas of your spiritual life where you’ve experienced failure over the last year. It is important to resolve to do things that you are actually convinced will make you a better person. Things like wanting to lose weight or being able to bench press more won’t do anything for the quality of person you are, but committing to improve an area of your spiritual life can truly make a difference in the type of person you are. “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things...” 1 Timothy 4:8. Take some time to sit down and seriously evaluate your spirituality over the last year. Now take out a piece of paper and write down a few things you can sacrifice to improve those areas. It takes between 12-14 daily repetitions before something becomes a habit and only takes forgetting 2-3 times to break a habit. Will you be committed to something more than just physical goals this year? Will you resolve to grow in godliness? You’ll find that by doing so you’ll become more capable of dealing with and overcoming the daily temptations that attack you.