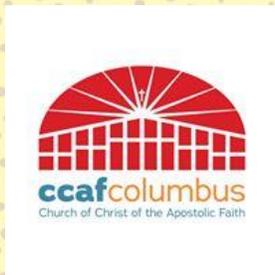


***Sunday School Lesson***  
***Middle School Department***  
***January 3, 2021***

**Join us live for Middle Sunday School Lesson**  
**Teleconference call #: 1(425)436-6319**  
**Pass Code: 7131798**  
**Sunday Morning @ 9:45 am**



**I RESOLVE TO KNOW**



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# Lesson Aim

Our spiritual resolutions must begin with a commitment to know God. In this lesson we will discuss how we begin this process of knowing God through the plan He gave us to experience new life.

## Scriptures

Acts 2:38; Philippians 3:10–11

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# Scriptures

## ***Acts 2:38***

<sup>38</sup>Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

## ***Philippians 3:10-11***

<sup>10</sup> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

<sup>11</sup> If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

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# Discussion

- What is a New Year's resolution?
- Have you ever made New Year's resolutions? Did you keep them?
- Why do you think so many people struggle to keep New Year's resolutions?
- What are some spiritual resolutions we can make?
- What resolutions might a pastor make?
- What spiritual resolutions could you make?

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# *New Year, New Beginnings*

The end of the year is a festive time. It seems every other week, leading up to the end of the year, a holiday event takes place:

- We start with fall festivals in October.
- Then we have Thanksgiving in November.
- Finally, we celebrate Christmas in December.

Each of these events is a time of fun, food, and fellowship as we celebrate all the blessings we have experienced throughout the year.

After these holidays, though, is a very different holiday. This holiday is not as much about looking back as it is about looking ahead. We simply call this holiday New Year's Day.

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# *New Year, New Beginnings* (cont.)



New Year's Day has its own traditions:

- Many churches have a special New Year's Eve service, the night before.
- Some people pray in the new year; others attend New Year's Eve parties.
- Like pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving and eggnog for Christmas, New Year's has its own specific meal traditions.

## My New Year's Resolutions

- *Diet*
- *Exercise*
- *Less Facebook*
- *Quit Smoking*

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# ***New Year, New Beginnings(cont.)***

Probably one of the most recognized New Year's traditions, though, is the creation of New Year's resolutions. **These resolutions are commitments we make as we embrace the new beginnings that come with the new year.**

Resolutions can apply to any area of life.

- A person may resolve to lose a certain amount of weight.
- Someone may resolve to end an unhealthy habit.
- Others may resolve to read a certain number of books, improve their grades at school, or spend less time playing video games.

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# *Fun While It Lasted*

While these new commitments may be made with the best intentions, keeping the commitments typically does not last very long.

As we get into the ebb and flow of the year, we find ourselves in familiar ruts, reverting back to old habits we were trying to correct.

Why is this the case? It is human nature. **We tend to do what is most comfortable.**

Making meaningful changes in our lives takes intense focus. To live out our resolutions, we must be resolved in body, soul, mind, and spirit to seeing them through.

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# *Spiritual Resolutions*

Just as someone may set resolutions toward life goals, we can also set resolutions toward spiritual goals.

**We can take a spiritual inventory of our lives and determine the areas where we need to grow.**

We may see we are doing well in some areas, but perhaps we want to resolve to stay strong in those areas and continue to grow.

As we go through this series, we will discuss four specific New Year's resolutions we can make that will strengthen our relationship with God.

**This week we will look at the first of these areas: resolving to know God.**

# **I RESOLVE TO KNOW**



# *Knowing God*

***Read Philippians 3:10–11.***

Paul expressed a passion to know Jesus.

Like Paul, **we must determine that knowing Jesus is the most important thing we can do in this life.**

Paul indicated that pursuit would involve understanding Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, which is the gospel message.

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# Knowing Jesus by Knowing His Gospel

The gospel message is the most important message in the Bible. Paul stressed elsewhere in Scripture that knowing Jesus Christ and His crucifixion was his highest priority (*I Corinthians 2:2*).

Everything that happened in the Old Testament pointed to the New Testament. Everything that happened in the life of Jesus pointed to the cross. Everything that has happened since then has pointed back at the cross. The cross was the turning point of all human history.

**All people are sinners** (*Romans 3:23*). This means every single one of us has found ourselves at odds with Jesus' holiness.

Because of our fallen state, we needed a sinless sacrifice. Jesus offered Himself up as our sacrifice, paying the ransom for our punishment (*I Timothy 2:5–6*).

Because Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, we can be born again. Old things pass away and everything is new (*II Corinthians 5:17*).

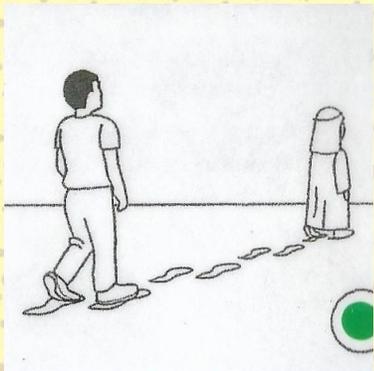
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# *Resolving to Know*

No matter how made up our minds may be, we cannot live righteously on our own. We simply don't have the power to be what we ought to be.

We cannot show Jesus the proper respect He deserves or keep His commandments without embracing the gospel message. As we are made over again, we can begin to make progress in our spiritual walk.



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# *Embracing the Gospel*

The gospel message, as we've already discussed, is Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

- Jesus died on the cross, taking on the punishment for all the sins of the world.
- Jesus was buried, breaking the curse of sin.
- Jesus rose again and because of His ascension, we too can experience that resurrection power.

If we resolve to know Jesus, we must fully embrace the gospel and apply it to our lives through the new-birth experience.

***Read Acts 2:38.***

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# *Repentance*

- Jesus took on our sins and died on the cross.
- He took the weight of humanity's sins upon His shoulders as He hung His head and died.
- Similarly, **to embrace the gospel message, we must die out to sin through repentance.**
- Repentance is saying we are sorry for the things we have done wrong and also making a conscious decision to turn away from those things.

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# Water Baptism

- After Jesus died on the cross, He was buried in a tomb. He took the weight of all the sins in the world to the grave with Him.
- Similarly, when we embrace the gospel message, we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (*Romans 6:4*).
- **Baptism is more than an outward sign of an inward cleansing; baptism is a covenant between us and Jesus.** He takes His name and applies it to our lives.
- When we are baptized, we are fully submerged in the water. This symbolizes Jesus' own burial. When we come out of the water, we are not just wet, but Jesus has washed away all our sins.
- Baptism must be performed in the name of Jesus; every example of baptism in the Book of Acts is in the name of Jesus, and there is no name other than Jesus that saves (*Acts 4:12*).

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# *Spirit Baptism*

- The gospel message includes the eternal truth that Jesus rose again from the grave.
- Many people in the Bible were raised from the dead, but Jesus was different. He is the only one in the Bible who raised Himself from the dead.
- Similarly, once we have died out to sin through repentance, **Jesus desires for us to rise into new life by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
- The Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ living on the inside of us (Colossians 1:27).
- In every example in the Book of Acts where people were filled with the Holy Spirit, the infilling was confirmed when those receiving the Spirit spoke in a language they had never learned before. This is the evidence of the miracle of God's Spirit coming to live inside.

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# *Knowing Him*

When we are filled with God's Spirit, we can know Him in an intimate way.

- His Spirit can speak to us through our conscience, through impressions, or through us hearing His voice.
- As we develop a closeness to Him in prayer, we become more and more sensitive to His direction to guide our lives.
- His Spirit also empowers us to serve and minister to others.

Understanding the gospel is one thing; experiencing it for yourself is another thing altogether.

If you have never repented, been water baptized, or been Spirit baptized, today is your day. Resolve to know Jesus by applying the gospel message to your life.

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# *For the Road . . .*

To know Jesus, we must start with responding to the gospel and being born again; but knowing Jesus doesn't end there. We should continue to grow closer to Him and know Him more. What do you want to know about Jesus?

The gospel story is the most important story in the entire Bible. Everything that happened before Jesus' sacrifice points to it, and everything that has happened since then points back to it. The most important thing we can do, then, is to respond to the gospel and be born again.

There is no experience in the world like the Acts 2:38 experience. If you have had this experience yourself, you know that to be true.

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# *Resolve to Know*

If you have not had the Acts 2:38 experience yourself, ask others that have had the experience. They will tell you it is something everyone needs to embrace.

If you have more questions or you don't understand, get with your teacher, youth pastor, or other spiritual leader in your church and talk it over until all your questions are answered. **If you do not understand it, what is stopping you? Take the step of faith and see what Jesus can do in your life.**



**I RESOLVE TO KNOW**

