

# @ctivated

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

## **BEGINNING AGAIN**

Start the New Year right

## **8 HOW-TOS OF CHANGE**

It isn't as hard as you think

## **THE RISE TO POWER OF THE ANTICHRIST**

His plan to gain control  
of *you*



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## *Personally speaking*

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One of my favorite true stories makes a great thought for the New Year, when we're all setting new goals and trying to form new habits. It also inspired the motto that appears on the cover of each issue of *Activated*: "Change your life. Change your world."

Perhaps you remember it from David Brandt Berg's article in one of the first issues of *Activated*. It's about a humble shepherd who single-handedly transformed a barren region of southern France by planting nuts as he watched his sheep graze on a different hillside each day. Over 20 or 30 years that one shepherd reforested the entire area, which brought back the wildlife and improved the soil for farming. After that, more people moved to the once nearly deserted region and it became alive and prosperous. The shepherd slowly but surely changed his part of the world.

What turned out to be a great thing was probably the result of a sudden inspiration. How many others, do you suppose, would have brushed off the idea as crazy, impossible, or not their job? Not this shepherd. He believed and put his inspired idea into action.

He had a simple goal and a simple plan. We don't know, but he probably didn't set out to change things on such a grand scale. Good things have a way of growing when we rise to the challenge.

What he did each day wasn't especially difficult, but he stuck with it day after day. Great things are often the result of patient plodding.

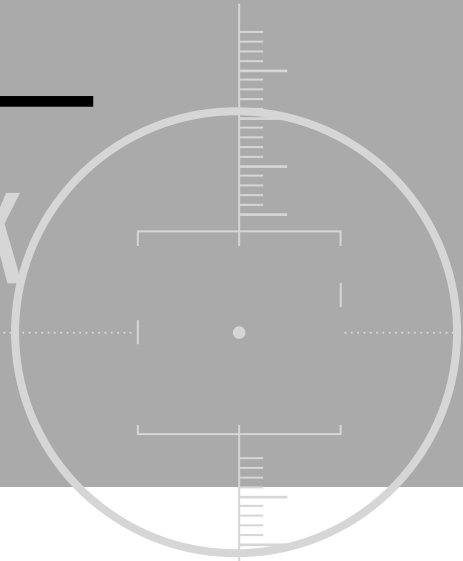
He worked in partnership with God. He did what he could do and trusted God to do the rest.

What crazy impossible idea do you have for the New Year? It may not be as crazy or impossible as you think, if God is in it. Go ahead. Change your life. Change your world.

Keith Phillips  
*Keith Phillips*  
For the *Activated* Family

# HIT YOUR MARK

## HIT YOUR MARK



**W**HEN I WAS IN THE ARMY, we had target practice at the shooting range. Some of the targets were moving, while others appeared for a moment and then disappeared. Many of the other soldiers were in such a hurry to shoot for fear that the target would disappear, that they missed it altogether. They got so excited that they jerked the trigger so quick and hard that it jerked the whole rifle, which caused them to miss the mark, the target.

But I took time to rest my elbow firmly, hold my rifle securely, aim accurately, and squeeze the trigger slowly. I learned to wait until I was sure I could hit the bull's eye, and then fired. I got so good at this that I was rated as a sharpshooter, an expert rifleman with nine out of ten bull's eyes in competition. I was neither hasty nor did I forget to fire altogether. I took reasonable time to aim straight and squeeze, not jerk, the trigger. Squeeze, don't jerk, or you'll miss the mark!

Don't miss the bull's eye of what God wants for you, which is also what He knows will make you happiest in the long run. Don't miss being all God knows you can be or fail to accomplish all He wants you to.

If you feel you aren't hitting the mark in your life or perhaps haven't even found the mark yet, it's not too late. God wants you to succeed in life as badly as you do, so ask Him to show you the bull's eye of His plan for you and He will. It may come in a flash of revelation or He may reveal it over time, but if you ask, He will answer (Matthew 7:7-8).

Then as you keep your sights on the target and your heart and mind and energies all aimed in the right direction, He will help you hit your mark.

—ADAPTED FROM DAVID BRANDT BERG (D.B.B.)

*Squeeze,  
don't jerk,  
or you'll  
miss your  
mark!*

# Beginning Again

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG

## The Land of Beginning Again

I wish there were some wonderful  
place  
Called "The Land of Beginning Again,"  
Where all our mistakes  
And all our heartaches  
And all our poor selfish greed,  
Could be dropped  
Like a shabby old coat at the door  
And never put on again.  
I wish we could come on it all  
unawares  
Like the hunter who finds a lost trail,  
And I wish that the one  
Whom our blindness has done  
The greatest injustice of all,  
Could be at the gate  
Like an old friend who waits  
For the comrade he's gladdest to hail.

—LOUISE FLETCHER TARKINGTON



I'M GLAD TO SAY THERE IS SUCH A PLACE as The Land of Beginning Again, and you can find it no matter who you are or what your past has been. You'll find that place in these verses from the Bible:

"This is the message which we have heard from Him [Jesus] and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. . . . If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins"—here is that place where you can drop the shabby old coat of your past life—"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:5,7,9).

That passage, like so many others in the Bible, contains a wonderful promise from your heavenly Father to you, His child who He dearly loves. God has given you "exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

God will back His promises with all of His power and ability, but there are conditions attached to these promises—conditions that you must meet. God sets His own terms, but how blessed you become when you meet God's terms! When you submit to His conditions, the wealth of His blessings and riches come tumbling down on you. These are the keys that unlock the treasure vaults of Heaven: knowing and meeting the conditions attached to each promise.

God not only wills but longs for you to have your every need supplied and the deepest desires of your heart fulfilled. King David wrote in the Psalms, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). But note the condition: "Delight yourself in the Lord." God will give you the desires of your heart—He said so and it *is* so—but the terms must be met. First you delight yourself in Him by loving Him first and foremost and doing your best to please Him, and then He grants your desires.

God's terms aren't hard. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My

burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

So many wonderful things are promised you in the Bible—forgiveness of sin, joy, peace, eternal life—that I couldn't begin to list them all! Those promises are there for you and could change your life completely. But you must meet the conditions, and the first condition is that you come to God and humbly confess that you need His help and forgiveness (1 John 1:9). He can and will forgive anything, but only if you ask Him to.

God's Word says, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Don't be like Emmy the maid who, when the woman she worked for asked her, "Emmy, did you sweep under the rug?" answered, "Yes, ma'am, I sweep *everything* under the rug!"

Things swept under the rug have a way of coming back to haunt us. It doesn't pay to pretend all is well when it's not, but if you will humbly accept God's

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

terms for forgiveness, you've got it! As soon as you confess you are a sinner and turn to Jesus Christ, the Savior, for help, He will come into your life and give you change and freedom like you've never known! "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)—including a new beginning!

—

If you haven't yet experienced God's love and forgiveness, you can right now by sincerely praying a simple prayer like the following:

Thank You, Jesus, for paying the price for my mistakes and wrongs, so I can be forgiven and put my past behind me. Thank You that You cleanse me from all sin—past sin, sin now, and future sin—by faith. I ask You now, dear Jesus, to please come into my heart, forgive me, and give me Your gift of eternal life. Amen. •

# breaking

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

# BAD HABITS

Everyone has weaknesses. That's part of being human and imperfect. When you entertain a habit long enough, it becomes part of your nature—and that's the scary thing about *bad* habits.

**BUT THE GOOD NEWS** is that the Lord can turn those weaknesses into strengths, so what was once a bad habit can be replaced by a good habit.

Besides bad physical habits, there are all kinds of wrong attitudes and behavior that can become habitual and do even more damage to you and others, such as thinking negatively about yourself or your circumstances, being critical of others, being rude or inconsiderate, being unwise or unloving in your speech, getting in a rushed or pressured spirit, or being angry or impatient. There are also bad habits that affect your spiritual life and relationship with the Lord, such as neglecting Him and His Word.

Habits can either take root for good or bad, and if it's for bad, they can become very difficult to change for the better—difficult but definitely not impossible, with the Lord's help.

Jesus is always willing and able to do the impossible. It takes an impossible situation for Him to do a miracle, but He loves to work that way because it causes you to recognize His miracle-working hand.

That's the wonderful thing about Jesus and His power: He can overcome anything—any sin, any problem, any bad habit, or any negative personality trait. There's nothing too hard for Him; He will deliver you from whatever bad habit you've formed if you put your will on His side and determine to work on it until together you win the victory.

It will take work on your part, but most of all you have to pray for His help. Ask Him not only to do what you *can't* do, but also to show you specifically what you *can* and need to do to get over whatever bad habit is hindering you. You have to believe what He

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side.*

tells you, and then you need to go to work and do what He shows you, because if you don't try, He can't do the miracle.

It's impossible to change through your own human strength, especially if you've allowed the bad habit to go on for years. Longstanding habits can become second nature. They become part of your personality, part of your nature, so you hardly even notice or recognize that they're there.

Or if you do recognize them, they can be a source of terrible discouragement. You begin to think that things can never change, because that's just the way you are. But really you *weren't* that way before you allowed that bad habit to form, so of course you can change it if you're willing to get serious with the Lord and work on it.

For example, people who have had a problem with thinking negatively most of their lives usually find it very difficult to break that habit. Nevertheless, many *have* overcome it through the Lord's power and Word and are now *positive* thinkers with a whole new outlook on life. They've been transformed and no longer have that old negative mindset (Romans 12:2).

So if you've formed some bad habit by repeatedly acting or reacting a certain way, the sooner you ask the Lord to help you, the better. You might think you're beyond hope and there's no use trying, but that's not so. Every time you catch yourself, ask the Lord for help, and make a conscious effort to not give in to your bad habit, you're forming a *good* habit that will eventually take root and grow until it crowds out the bad habit.

If a bad habit has gotten to the

point that you're not sure what to do about it, the first thing you need to do is ask the Lord for His thoughts on it. Ask others too—people you're close to and respect, or someone who has the good quality or habit you hope to replace your bad habit with.

It's also important to look to the Lord for encouragement along the way, because sooner or later you will most likely get discouraged and feel like giving up. Ask Him for some promises to claim—specific ones about how He will help you break that particular bad habit. Keep a record of the specific instructions the Lord gives you, as well as the encouraging promises He gives, so you'll have something to refer to if you don't seem to be making progress or are tempted to quit.

It's much easier to overcome bad habits if you go to work on them as soon as you notice them forming. That's why it's so important to take stock of your life regularly. Get in the good habit of asking the Lord every day or two how you are doing and what things you need to change before they become habits that will be much harder to break.

You have to make a commitment to continue to work on breaking that bad habit until it's gone. And remember, if you want it badly enough and do your part, the Lord will always do His because He loves you and wants you to be happy and free from the problem. Do your part, and He'll do His! •

*It's much easier to overcome bad habits if you go to work on them as soon as you notice them forming.*



# RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT



BY CLAIRE  
NICHOLS

SO MANY TIMES I'VE JUMPED INTO MY CAR—whether in a hurry to be somewhere or on a spontaneous urge to do something—turned on the engine, and pulled out onto the road without so much as a glance at the various gauges, lights, and other indicators on the dashboard in front of me. I could easily have not noticed that the gas tank was near empty, or that the maintenance-needed warning light was on. I know better, but sometimes I'm just too busy to bother.

One evening my husband Darren and I were going out to a movie. By the time we had arranged for a babysitter to watch our son and gotten ourselves ready, we were running late.

"Do you think we'll still make the movie?" I asked my husband through puckered lips, still applying my lipstick.

"Yes," he answered, "but only if we leave this minute."

"Okay! I'm ready," I said, turning back towards the mirror. "I just have one more thing to do."

"I'll be in the car," He replied.

The New Year had just rolled in, and we had made one big new commitment to each other and Jesus: We wanted to grow in our relationship with Him by including Him more in our daily lives. To accomplish this, we had committed to pause before beginning each new activity, either together or separately, to acknowledge Him in our hearts, tell Him what we had planned, and then listen to His "whispers" of guidance so He could better influence our actions. This would have been a perfect situation to apply our New Year's resolution, but ...



*It's just that we're already running late!* I argued with my conscience.

*Come on! It's too soon to fall off the program!* the better part of me chided.

I paused to pray.

"We can go now," I said as I hopped in the car. "We just need to be careful and keep our eyes open for anything unusual."

"Okaaay . . .," my husband replied, slightly bewildered.

"It's what the Lord told me when I prayed about our trip," I explained.

He remembered our New Year's resolution and nodded.

Seconds later we heard a clunk as we pulled out of our driveway.

"What was that?"

"Don't know."

We were down the block before I noticed a warning light on the dashboard. It was the oil light!

"Honey, why is that light on?" I asked.

"Boy, I don't know! Let's pull over."

The gas station on the corner was well lit. Darren pulled in. He could see oil leaking from the engine, which was beginning to sputter. We had no idea what was wrong and there was no mechanic on duty, so we headed home slowly. By the time we were back in our driveway, the engine was stuttering violently.

The next day we took the car to our mechanic, who explained what had happened. The oil filter had come loose and fallen off. Every bit of oil had drained from the engine. "It's a miracle that your car is still running fine. If you had driven any farther without oil, you would have completely ruined the engine!"

We told him how our New Year's resolution had helped us notice the problem when we did.

"Wow!" he remarked after hearing our story, "That is pretty unusual!"

*Let's pray that "unusual" becomes second*

*nature*, I thought.

We missed our movie that night, but we spared ourselves a huge problem and expense, and the importance of our resolution and the new habits we needed to form in order to keep it were forever impressed in our minds.

Often now when I realize I've raced through an hour, day, or week without pausing to include the Lord in my activities, I think of that little red light on the dashboard of our car.

It might seem strange that Jesus would want or even have time to get involved in such small details of our lives, but He does. He is ready, willing, and able to be involved in each of our lives in a very personal way.

Sad to say, though, sometimes when we do remember and take the time to pray, we already have our own plans and simply want God's blessing. That doesn't work, either. Our plan may be good, but we can end up missing the mark if He has a better plan for us at that time.

I've found that if I specifically ask the Lord what my plan should be, then God can bless and care for me more fully because then His plan can become my plan. The more perfectly I align my agenda with His by listening to and following His signals, whether it's a red, yellow, or green light, the safer and smoother my way will be.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8). "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way'" (Isaiah 30:21). •

CLAIRE NICHOLS IS A FULLTIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY IN THE USA.

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# THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST

OFTEN WHEN I TALK WITH SOMEONE about current events, the conversation turns to the Endtime and the rise to power of the would-be world dictator known as the Antichrist. That's because the news often contains reports of happenings that Jesus said would be signs of His soon return, such as those listed in Matthew chapter 24. We also know that Jesus' return will be immediately preceded by the seven-year rule of the Antichrist; therefore it can't be long before the Antichrist arises.

Two questions that come up frequently are: "Who is the Antichrist?" and, "What is his present agenda?"

Although the Antichrist is probably living now, we don't yet know who he is. The Bible does tell us quite a bit about him, however, so we won't be deceived when he comes to the forefront of the international scene.

At first the Antichrist will appear to be the political superman the world has been waiting for, because he will bring about world peace and economic stability. Most people will see him as a peacemaker and a wise and winsome popular leader. "He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places" (Daniel 11:24 KJV) and "obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21 KJV).

But don't be fooled! Behind this benevolent façade is a sinister goal: world domination. To achieve that end, the Anti-



christ will receive his power directly from the Devil, and in the end will become Devil-possessed—the Devil incarnate (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2–4,7–8).

The Bible also tells us that the Antichrist is not working alone. Just as God works through heavenly forces and His children on earth to accomplish His purposes, the Devil works through his demons and people on earth who are under his control. So even though the Antichrist hasn't yet taken personal

*Two questions that come up frequently are: "Who is the Antichrist?" and, "What is his present agenda?"*

control, there are many indications that the spiritual forces behind him are steadily gaining power and are busy influencing people's thinking and actions in order to further his agenda.

Those who serve the Antichrist, either consciously or unwittingly, are lining things up for the grand entrance of this false savior. Whether it's through economic upheavals, war, ecological disasters brought on by the mishandling of the world's resources, or technological advances, it's all heading in the same direction and furthering the same evil purpose: to cause chaos and the "distress of nations" (Luke 21:25) and set the stage for the Antichrist's takeover.

Even now we can see the powers behind the Antichrist working to bring about a one-world government. One method is globalization, which many people view as a natural course of events. But it's *not* happening naturally; there is a definite plan and powerful forces are behind it. For years the Antichrist's agents in the financial sector have been destabilizing national economies one by one, then allowing them to revive, and in the process taking control behind the scenes. With the economic markets more closely linked through globalization they are now in a position to pull the plug on any or all of them at the same time.

People are reluctant to give up their personal freedoms and countries are reluctant to give up their sovereignty. Before they accept a one-world government, the situation will have to be pretty desperate. That's why, when the time is right, those backing the Antichrist will push the world over the brink into economic collapse.

Then, once the world is in economic

ruin, the Antichrist's agents will call for their superman, the Antichrist, to put a stop to the chaos he and his have staged. They will offer to bail out the world and thus bring about a brief period of world peace and stability.

Many of the initiatives toward a one-world government will be done under the guise of altruism, but in reality those who do the Antichrist's bidding only do what suits their purpose, which is to gain more control. They don't give help without some very tight strings attached, and when the time is right they will pull the strings to usher in their man, the Antichrist.

Although the immediate outlook is pretty grim, it is possible to prepare for what's ahead by staying close to Jesus and studying and following His Word. We can also take heart in knowing that a brighter day is coming when Jesus Christ returns to rescue His children out of the Antichrist's clutches and put an end to his reign.

Are *you* ready for the events of the End-time? If not, the best way to prepare is by diligently studying God's Word and doing what He tells you, both through His written Word and during your times of prayer when He speaks directly to your heart. Then you won't be duped by the Antichrist. Instead, you will follow the true Savior, Jesus Christ, who will lead you straight through the troubled days ahead and on to a wonderful new life with Him in Heaven forever! •

(An upcoming Endtime Insights column explores in more detail how current events and technology are helping to prepare the way for the Antichrist.)

*Even now we can see the powers behind the Antichrist working to bring about a one-world government.*



# BEYOND THE BILLOWS

BY NYX MARTINEZ

## EIGHT HOW-TOS OF CHANGE

**1 Take stock and set goals.** Make a list of the areas you want to change in and what you need to do to change in those areas. Refer to your list daily at first, then as needed until the desired good habits are formed (James 1:23–25).

**2 Find instruction and encouragement in God's Word.** "How can a young man"—or anyone, for that matter—"cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word" (Psalm

119:9). A concordance or Bible study helps such as *Keys to Happier Living*, *Bible Basics*, and *Key Bible Verses* (from Aurora Production's *Discovering Truth* series) make it much easier to find what the Bible has to say about specific topics related to the changes you desire.

**3 Depend on the Lord, not on your own strength or your ability.** Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it

abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. . . . Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:4–5). But the Bible also promises that you can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

**4 Find others who are going the way you want to go and associate with them.** Being around like-minded people provides positive reinforcement and moral support—two important catalysts of change. "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). "As iron

YESTERDAY, THE SEA WAS CALM. You promised yourself that you would sail out into the open waters and that nothing would stop you. Your heart was ready; your courage at its peak. Your hands gripped the vessel's helm and the gentle breeze calmed your spirit. You steered your boat forward.

But today ... today, it seems as though the darkness of last night has prevailed. Rain lashes at your boat. Towering waves roll before you. The fog obstructs your vision so you cannot see beyond your bow. But you don't need to see. You just know that something spurs you onward—the same thing that gave you such peace yesterday. It's that thing called faith, a belief in what you cannot see. It anticipated and rose to this challenge. It tells you that the sun will eventually break through those murky clouds. That knowledge buoys your spirit and guides you. It makes a perfect composition—the sky above, the ocean below, you in the center. You're safe there, with your faith.

Sail on, with your focus not on the storm, but beyond it. There, your destiny awaits you. Today is the tomorrow you dreamed of yesterday. It is stormy, yes, but faith knows no limits, no depths, no boundaries. With strong faith in God, you will be able to weather any storm and sail any sea.

Sail beyond the billows!

NYX MARTINEZ IS A FULLTIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY IN UGANDA.

## “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

So many people today say, “I’ll believe it when I see it. Seeing is believing.” But that’s not the way faith works. To the Christian, believing is seeing. God wants us to trust Him and believe first of all, and then we’ll see the answer. He puts us through that period of believing and trusting by faith to see if we really love Him and are willing to trust Him. He wants to see if we really have faith. He appreciates our faith to believe what we cannot see.

We can't expect to receive faith from God for a situation when we're looking at ourselves or conditions instead of looking to Him. Man says, “Tie up in port. Don't attempt the impossible—you'll sink!” God says, “Launch out into the deep! Cast forth your nets and I'll give you such a catch of fish that there will not be room enough to hold it.” Man says, “Look at the waves! Look at the condition of your vessel! You can't do it!” God says, “Look at Me. With man it is impossible, but with God nothing is impossible, and all things are possible to those who believe” (Luke 5:4–9; Matthew 14:29–31; Luke 1:37; 18:27).

—D.B.B.

sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

### **5 Ask others to pray for you.**

The Bible tells us to confess our faults one to another and pray for one another (James 5:16), and Jesus Himself promised that if two or more agree on anything in prayer, their heavenly Father will do it for them (Matthew 18:19). There is great power in united prayer.

### **6 Continually thank and praise the Lord for His help.**

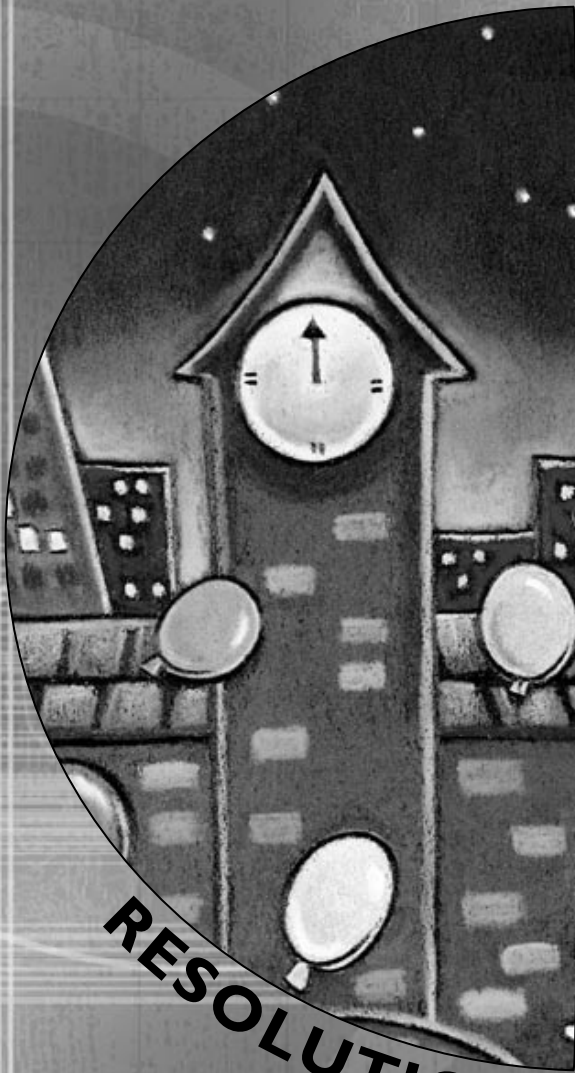
The more you do, the more He

“who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” will want to do for you, so “enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise” (Ephesians 3:20; Psalm 100:4).

### **7 When you fail, ask the Lord to help you keep trying.**

“A righteous man may fall seven times and rise again” (Proverbs 24:16). “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand” (Psalm 37:24).

**8 Keep trusting and believing that you can change, with God's help.** Claim verses that increase your faith in His ability to change you, such as, “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24), “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure,” (Philippians 2:13), “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2), and “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). •



# RESOLUTIONS

BY IAN BACH

This year...

I'll take more time to laugh and smile,  
To feel the wind upon my face,  
To learn true wisdom from a child,  
Give my soul the needed space,  
To live life pure and clear...  
...this year.

This year...

I'll learn to turn off my computer,  
Interact with human beings,  
Spend less time in online stupor,  
More time learning, breathing, seeing  
All that life holds dear...  
...this year.

This year ...

I will resolve to write that letter  
That I have too long neglected,  
Make an aching heart feel better,  
Cheer a friend who feels dejected,  
Bring someone some cheer...  
...this year.

This year...

I'll not be hijacked by my deadlines,  
Or imprisoned by ambitions.  
Or let dismal, gloomy headlines  
Dictate my heart's disposition.  
I'll choose faith, not fear...  
...this year.

This year...

I'll see the struggling flower beneath  
The hard, frosty exterior  
Of one who lets frustration seethe  
Because they feel inferior.  
I'll try to draw them near...  
...this year.

This year...

No high and mighty resolutions  
Fit for presidents and kings.  
I'll start a quiet revolution,  
Seek these simple loving things  
Above wealth or career...  
...this year.

IAN BACH IS A FULLTIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST.



## START WITH YOURSELF

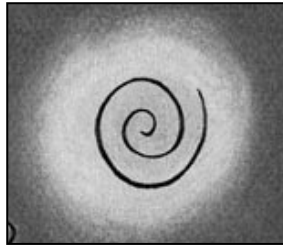
When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world.

As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country. But it, too, seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.

And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realized: If I had only changed *myself* first, then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN



## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Dear Jesus, I can't thank You enough for the wonderful miracle that You've done for me. I was nothing before You found me, yet You loved me enough to put Your arms around me and pull me from the dirt and mire of the world. You changed my life! You cleansed me with Your love and words, and gave me something to live for, Someone to love and be loved by, and something to strive for. Thank You for taking me, unworthy as I am, and calling me Your friend. For this I love and adore You.

## FEEDING READING

### MOTIVATION

*God's love should be our main motivation in all we do.*

- 1 Corinthians 13:13
- 1 Corinthians 16:14
- 2 Corinthians 5:14a
- 1 John 4:8

*Our love for the Lord should motivate us to want to please Him.*

- Matthew 22:37–38
- Deuteronomy 10:12
- 1 Chronicles 29:17
- Job 23:12
- John 14:15,21a

*Next to our love for God, our motivation should be unselfish love for others.*

- Mark 12:31
- John 15:13
- 1 Corinthians 10:33
- 1 John 4:20–21

*God can transform our carnal natures so we have godly motivation.*

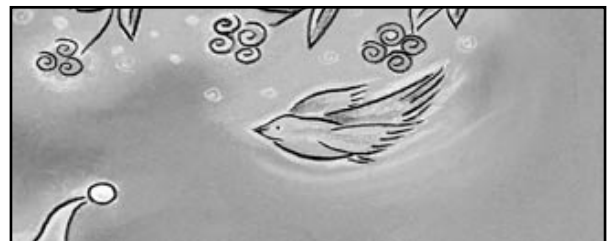
- Ezekiel 11:19–20
- Romans 7:18–25a
- Romans 12:1–3
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Hebrews 10:22–24

*God's Word fuels godly motivation.*

- Joshua 1:8
- Psalms 1:2–3
- Psalms 40:8
- Psalms 119:101
- Luke 8:15
- John 8:31–32

*The heavenly vision helps keep us motivated and moving in the right direction.*

- Proverbs 29:18
- Matthew 13:45–46
- Philippians 3:13–14
- Hebrews 12:1–2
- Hebrews 12:28



## Start anew, start today.

Life is all about the little decisions you make every day. Decisions of the past have had their effect, but every new day can be a new start. No matter what has happened up till now, you have a chance to make the right decisions today.

Don't waste time reliving the pain of past mistakes and wrong decisions. That only saps your power to do what you can do today. You can't change the past, but the future is what you make it, starting right now, so take full advantage of the present.

Learn from past mistakes and put them behind you today. Forgive those who have wronged you and ask forgiveness from those you have wronged. That probably won't be easy, but don't put it off; do it today. Look to Me and My Word for fresh courage and hope, starting today. Dream new dreams today. Set new goals today. Spend your time on things that truly count today. Love your family today. Be a friend today. Do things better, starting today.

With My help, your future can be filled with wonderful accomplishment and fulfillment that will more than make up for past disappointments—and it all starts today.

*FROM JESUS WITH LOVE*

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