

Seven Resolutions Guaranteed to Improve Your Spiritual Health in 2022

Introduction: Is goal setting Scriptural?

- i. Is there a Scriptural precedent for incremental planning?

James 4:13-17

13 Come now, you who say, " Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, " If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

- ii. God the Father

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Psalms 33:11

*11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart from generation to generation.*

Jeremiah 29:11

11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Philippians 1:6

6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- iii. God the Son: Training of the 12 had a beginning and an end as well as His ministry

Mark 3:14

14 And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,

Matthew 11:1

When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

John 17:4

4 " I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

Acts 4:13

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Matthew 16:21

From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

John 19:30

30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, " It is finished !" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

iv. **God the Holy Spirit**: Recognizes and sanctions plans

Proverbs 15:22

*22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated,
But with many counselors they succeed.*

Proverbs 16:3

*3 Commit your works to the LORD
And your plans will be established.*

Proverbs 16:9 (3:5 & 6)

*9 The mind of man plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.*

Proverbs 21:5

*5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage,
But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.*

2 Timothy 2:2

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

1. Have a daily quiet time alone with God.

Psalms 119:147-148

*147 I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I wait for Your words.*

*148 My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.*

- a. How do mystics (both Christians and Pagans) approach meditation?
 - 1) Is there a verse in the Holy Scriptures which commands us to empty our minds?
 - 2) Is there a verse in the Holy Scriptures which commands us to abandon self-control?
- b. What is the expectation of mystics when they meditate?
- c. What is the danger in this approach?

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Acts 12:7

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands

Verses

2 Corinthians 11:14

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light .

Proverbs 14:12

*12 There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.*

- d. How does this contrast with Christian meditation in Joshua 1:8?

Joshua 1:8

8 " This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

- e. When did King David meet with God?

Psalms 5:3

*3 In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice;
In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.*

- f. While on earth, when did Jesus- God the Son, meet with God the Father?

Mark 1:35

35 In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

- g. What is the value of meeting with God first thing in the morning?

- 1) Why do many churches have staff meetings in the morning?
- 2) Why do many businessmen look at their calendars and check messages in the morning?
- 3) Why do students attend review sessions before the exam and not after?
- 4) Why do supervisors meet with their team in the morning?

During my freshman year of college, I was making many decisions which I thought were very important and life-changing. My major, my dorm, my classes and more. I made one, though, almost on a whim--to start getting up early in the morning to read the Word of God and pray. An upper classman had invited me to do this with him. He called it "A Daily Quiet Time Alone with God." We would pray and ask God to speak to us from His written Word - the Holy Scriptures. Then we would read a chapter in Proverbs. After this, we would ask three questions - From the chapter, what is one thing God would like me To Know, To Be and To Do. We would record these in a notebook. Afterward, we would go and have breakfast together and discuss how God had spoken to us from His Word. The other decisions which I so worried over, prayed over, turned out to be inconsequential, while this one decision--which I made almost as an afterthought--turned out to be one of the most important and life-

changing decisions of my life. For free daily devotional guides on hundreds of topics just follow this link - <https://gciweb.org/english-resources/>

2. Read through the Bible.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20

18 "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.

19 "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel."

- a. To whom is this command addressed?
- b. In light of this, does it even apply to us as Christians today?

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, - John 15:16

A royal Priesthood, Revelation 1:6; 5:10; Luke 8:21

A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- c. When the king took the throne, what was one of his first duties? Why did he not simply go out and buy a Bible?
- d. In whose presence was the king to do this? What does this tell you about God's concern for us to use an accurate copy of the Holy Scripture?

1) Word accurate translations as of 2022

NASB

ESV

- 2) Paraphrases such as the Living Bible are not wrong, they are simply not translations.
- 3) Transliterations such as the New International were not wrong, they were simply an attempt at making Scripture more readable and addressing the nuances of the Greek.
- 4) However the more recent NIV and other translations which are so called "gender neutral" are in reality, "demasculinized".
- 5) Examples: I Corinthians 16:13 modern NIV vs NKJ/NASB/ESV
Original NIV 1 Corinthians 16:13 ***Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.***
Demasculinized NIV ¹³ ***Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong***
NASB 1 Corinthians 16:13 ***Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.***

ESV ¹³ ***Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.***

- 6) Example: Proverbs 31:30 is not gender neutral in NIV

Proverbs 31:30

***30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.***

NIV

even though there is the precedent for this in I Samuel 16:7

1 Samuel 16:7

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

A gender neutral translation would read

***Personality is deceptive and outward appearance fleeting;
But a person who fears the Lord will be praised.***

The feminine gender passages have been left feminine, it is only the masculine passages which have been changed.

- 7) As you can see from these examples the de-masculinization of Scripture is part of a liberal agenda and not part an effort to make the meaning of the Scripture more accurate.
- e. Where was the king to keep his copy of the written Word of God?
- f. What are two practical ways to keep God's Word with you always?

Psalms 119:11

***11 Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.***

- g. What is the king to do with the Word of God on a daily basis?
- h. According to verse 20, what will be the results of this discipline in the life of the king?
- that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen*** (James 1:22-25 who I am)
 - and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left,***
(Psalm 119:105 – where I am going)
 - so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel."*** (II Timothy 2:2; Matthew 28:19&20; Ephesians 6:4 – both spiritual and birth children)

Christian businessman Gene Warr challenged me that, if I wanted to be used by God, I should hear every word that God the Holy Spirit had to say to me every year. He then said, "To do that, you must read through the Bible yearly". It seemed daunting but then he also pointed out to me that to read three Old Testament pages and two New Testament pages each day would do the trick. Most Bibles have about 1,500 pages. Given 352 days in a year, it is a relatively easy thing to do. That was 1970 and it has been my practice ever since. Later I came across the above verse, which explains very distinctly the value of reading the Bible every day.

Take a moment and consider the impact that reading through the Bible every year, on a day-by-day basis, will have on your relationship with God, your character and your family.

3. Make a list of 12 people to whom you will witness - choose one each month with whom you will share Christ and invite to church.

Acts 1:8

"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Here's a nice little trick. Put a notecard on your mirror in the bathroom with these 12 names on it. Next to each name write a month of the year. As you begin and end each day, pray for all 12 but, especially, for the "man of the month." As you pray, ask God to open up your mind as to how to creatively share Christ with that person. God will answer this prayer. All you have to do is "not be ashamed of the Gospel." Remember that what you are doing is sharing the "Gospel" which always ends with the question, "Would you like to pray now to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?"

- a. How is witnessing an important way to spend time with God? When it comes to witnessing, to which member of the Holy Trinity does each of the following passages refer?
 - *John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (II Corinthians 5:20)*
 - *Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me"*
 - *Revelation 22:17 "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." (John 16:14)*
- b. Why do you think most people fail to witness to others?
 - 1) Training: being exhorted and convicted of something without receiving the training nor the materials with which to obey.
 - 2) Wrong Standards/Expectations:

Galatians 6:9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

Matthew 7:13-14" Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (John 15:18-20)

- c. Did Jesus send out His disciples to witness without first training them?

Matthew 4:19

19 And He said to them, " Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Mark 3:14

14 And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,

4. Eat five family dinners each week – four evening and Sunday after church.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

- a. In what ways does the Holy Scripture use the motif of eating together to teach spiritual truths?

1) *Revelation 3:20*

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

2) *Revelation 19:7-9*

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, " Write, ' Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, " These are true words of God."

3) *Psalms 23:5*

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil;

My cup overflows.

4) *Matthew 9:10*

10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

5) *Matthew 26:6-13*

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table. 8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste? 9 "For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor." 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. 11 "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me. 12 "For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. 13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."

6) *John 13:1-3*

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,

7) Matthew 26:26-29

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

- b. If you do not do this as a family, how will it affect your families ability to relate to these passages?
- c. In what ways will regular "sit down" meals help you in your relationship with your wife?
- d. In what ways will regular "sit down" meals aid you raising your children?

1) Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

2) Ephesians 6:4

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

When my son was in high school, his sociology teacher took a poll. He asked, "How many of you have sit-down meals as a family?" (Not seven/week, not four, not two, but simply sometimes) Only my son and the Mormon girl in his class raised their hands. Both proudly gave the number as six times a week. (What a shame that fathers and mothers belonging to a pagan cult place more value on family meals than many leaders in the Church.) As you consider this practice, it may not seem spiritual but, consider for a moment the spiritual importance of meals throughout holy Scripture. In Revelation 3:20 it is a picture of our salvation. In Revelation 19:7-9 it is a picture of Heaven. In Psalm 23:5 it is a picture of God's sovereign protection. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus used meals for both witnessing and for intimate times with His disciples. A few of the very many examples of this may be found in – Matthew 9:10; 26:6 – 13; 26:20 – 25. If this form of fellowship is important to God, then it should be a centerpiece of your family's spiritual traditions.

- 5. Faithfully attend church – taking notes on the sermon and then discuss them over lunch with your family.

Hebrews 10:24-25 "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

- a. What are reasons people will not attend church services on any given Sunday?
- b. Which of these reasons will also be applied to work on Monday?

Every Sunday, every member of your family sitting together in church, listening and taking notes. Every member of the family, every Sunday, enjoying a Sunday meal together and then afterwards discussing the sermon from their notes. Most evangelical parents put far more emphasis and priority on school attendance, scholastic activities and sports than they do on church attendance. Then they wonder why, when their children go off to college, they do not attend church. Some para-church parents repeat the false and empty refrain "we go to church all week and need a day off Sunday." They, too, are surprised at the indifference of their children to spiritual things. Again, some pastors are too busy on Sunday to attend to their family's spiritual needs and wonder why their children resent the church for stealing their father. No matter your position – layman, para-church minister or pastoral staff--make this commitment to the spiritual care of your family.

6. Adopt a missionary – pray daily, communicate weekly, give monthly
3 John 7-8 "For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the .."
 - a. What is the reason given by God the Holy Spirit in 3John 1:8 for financially supporting missionaries?
 - b. In Matthew 6:20 – 21 what are the two spiritual benefits of supporting missionaries financially?
 - c. Can our prayers really effect the lives of those who minister on foreign fields?
2 Corinthians 1:10-11
11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.
 - d. What are your standards for the missionaries you support?
 - 1) Jesus – not Jesus and, but Jesus only
 - a) The name of Jesus
 - b) The Holy Trinity
 - c) "Jesus and..."
 - 2) The Church –
 - a) It is either church planting or para-church but not para-nothing
 - b) **Denominational, Non-denominational**, Inter-Denominational, Ecumenical, Faith Based.
 - 3) The Word of God
 - a) The doctrinal statement

- b) The doctrinal practice – Holy Spirit, Women teach or exercise authority over men, drunkenness (marijuana),
- 4) Morality
 - a) Honesty in Visa applications
 - b) Paying bribes
 - c) Honesty at customs
- 5) Stewardship
 - a) Financial
 - b) Health
 - c) Family
 - d) Donors - communication

At your family sit-down dinners, pray for your missionary. Each week send a text, email or letter to your missionary. Each month make a financial contribution to your missionary, either by check or automatic bank transfer. When our children were in the home, I would write mission agencies and let them know that, if they had a missionary traveling through town or making a visit to our area, they could count on a place to stay. All my children were impacted by these visits and it is no wonder that, because of the faithful practice of #6, that they have all served on the mission field at one time or another in their adult lives.

- 7. Forgive and restore relationships with any member of your immediate or extended family with whom you are estranged.

Matthew 5:23-25

23 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."

Matthew 6:12 *"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."*

Malachi 4:6

6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

- a. Is there a difference between deciding to treat a relative in a civil manner and restoring the relationship?
- b. Is there a difference between rebuking/telling off a relative who has offended you and seeking to restore the relationship?
- c. There is most definitely a difference in Holy Scriptures between "trust" and "forgiveness". We are commanded to forgive, but we do not have to blindly allow an abusive relative access to ourselves or our family.

If any family member has a right to be bitter and refuse to reconcile for the hurts received, it is Jesus. As your Brother (Matthew 12:50), He had to suffer for your sins – He was the innocent child of God but He had to pay for your sins that you might enter the family of God. If any

family member has a right to refuse to forgive, it is your Heavenly Father for what His innocent Son suffered because of you. If God the Son and God the Father can suffer, reconcile, forgive, forget and even bless, then who are you to not restore relationships with your earthly family member? If they refuse to reconcile or to forgive, that is up to them, but do not let this year go by without seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with any family member with whom you are alienated.

It will be a simple thing to print this out and systematically apply these seven resolutions to your life in 2020.

(If you do not like my applications/resolutions, then meditate on the passages and come up with seven of your own.)

Luke 11:28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."