

Starting Anew with a Clean Slate

New Year's Day is here. For many people, January 1 is when many people make resolutions about things in their lives that they know need changing. Typically, resolutions are goals for the new year and have often been tried before without sustained success. We do our best, but we are human. It is easy to retreat to our old selves at the first sign of adversity.

Change is not turning over a new leaf but turning towards a new life.

Turning towards a new life is a much deeper approach than merely treating the symptoms, such as cutting out sweets or excesses in our lives. A deeper approach requires more than will power. We need God to help us with the commitment to change. The Bible tells us He can make us a new creation.

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17, HCSB). Then, when you encounter challenges and roadblocks, you can draw upon God's strength to overcome them. The Bible tells us, "but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).



Change is a process, not a destination. It is human nature to expect instant results. Change is a journey, with the destination beyond the horizon. We need God to guide us in the new direction. We know He will stick with us as long as we listen to Him. *"I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).*

Change is letting go. Let go of the old way and trust God to give you strength and wisdom. You can't leave the old path behind if you are still holding onto it. Put every minute of every day in Jesus' hands. Start and end your day in prayer, asking for the Lord's help. Throughout your day, make yourself accountable to Jesus so you don't slip back into the old way of living. *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isaiah 43:18-19).* The new way is a wilderness for you. You need Jesus to guide you. Let go and trust Him.

Let your fresh start be a lifestyle transformation. It is not just trying harder and expecting different results. We have tried that. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).* Jesus came to earth to change the world. He can certainly change yours.

Questions: With the help of God, what needs to change in your life? How will you start on the journey?

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord. Please help us as we seek a better way of life. We need this at New Year's or when we commit ourselves to a change in our lives. Please give us the wisdom to know what needs to change and rely on Your strength to overcome the obstacles and be successful in our new pursuits. Let us be new through You. Amen.