

Reset *Victory is Assured*

For five generations, our official family card game has been Liverpool Rummy. (It is a big deal -- we have kept a record of wins dating back to 2006.) Liverpool Rummy involves seven hands. The first hand takes “two books” to go down and then try to play as many cards as possible. When a person “goes out,” everyone counts the points left in their hand. The second hand is a “book and a run,” followed by “two runs,” “three books,” and so forth. The object is to have the lowest number of points against you at the end of the seven hands. Over the Christmas vacation, our elementary-age granddaughters learned the game with their parents and then spent New Year's night at our house. They were glad to play Liverpool Rummy with us. As luck would have it (or perhaps inexperienced shuffling), I quickly went out on three of the first four hands. After four hands, I only had 10 points against me, while one granddaughter had 220 and the other had a whopping 415 points. It was a lead that would be tough to beat in the final three hands. Before we dealt the fifth hand, I announced that we reset the score to 0 points for all three of us. In effect, it was a new game and everyone had a chance to win. Belle and Abbie approached the final three hands with new vigor and a chance to win.

	Belle	Abbie	Grandpa
①	30	80	0
②	115	85	0
	<u>145</u>	<u>165</u>	<u>0</u>
③	75	100	0
	<u>220</u>	<u>265</u>	<u>0</u>
④	0	150	10
	<u>220</u>	<u>415</u>	<u>10</u>
⑤	0	0	0

We tend to think that New Year's Day is the only “reset” we get. Many people make resolutions on how the New Year will be different. On January 1, they start the year with a new exuberance to reach their goals. We don't have to wait for New Years for a fresh start. God allows a reset every time we repent of sins and ask for His forgiveness. We can leave the communion rail knowing that “we are free.” The slate is wiped clean. The Bible tells us, “*I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*” (Isaiah 43:25). The full forgiveness of sins restores our relationship with God. What does it take for that restart and for God to not remember your sins? *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9).

There is no limit to God's mercies for believers. Each day provides a new opportunity because God is faithful and merciful to those who are faithful to Him. “*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*” (Lamentations 3:22-23)

So, who won the card game? We all did! All believers win because we are all forgiven of our sins and start fresh again. Followers of Jesus are going to win because they will achieve eternal life.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father. Your mercies and forgiveness for us never end as long as we believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. We believe and thank you for the reset you constantly offer to us, so we can live in freedom. Amen.