**New Year’s Resolutions

Let us then pursue what makes for peace**

**and for mutual upbuilding.**

***(Romans 14:19)***

**My brethren, I do not consider that I have reached the goal;
but this one thing I do know,**

**forgetting those things which are behind,
I strive for those things which are before me;
I press toward the goal to receive the prize of victory
of God's highest calling through Jesus Christ.
*(Philippians 3:13-14)***

**So often when we launch a new beginning in our lives, we start out by setting goals or making resolutions. But I'd like you to start this journey in a different way. I'd like you to begin by acknowledging yourself for what you've already accomplished and, more importantly, who you've become over the last year. A high-quality life starts with a high-quality you! Don't rush into this new year frantically trying to catch up or make up for what you didn't do in the past. This kind of frenetic rushing and hopeless browbeating keeps you tied to the past and feeling bad about yourself. Get a fresh start on this process by being gentle with yourself. Set aside some time to reflect on all you've done right over the last year by considering the following questions:
\* What qualities of character have you strengthened?
\* Have you shared an act of kindness or supported others in some way?
\* What special memories have you created with those you love?
\* What have you achieved or accomplished? *(Cheryl Richardson, in Life Makeovers, p. 9)***

**Your New Year's resolutions are your last year's confessions. *(Fred Smith, Dallas, Texas, businessman and inspirational speaker)***

**New Year’s resolutions don’t work: Millions of Americans will attempt to turn over a new leaf on January 1, pledging to lose weight, spend less money, and quit smoking, said Oliver Burkeman. But despite what the self-help industry might tell you, “radical, across-the-board” changes like New Year’s resolutions rarely work in practice. Willpower, studies have shown, is a “depletable resource.” If you make an overnight change requiring enormous self-discipline, you can quickly use up your stores of willpower, and all your best intentions will fall by the wayside. But “tiny goals, even absurdly tiny ones, can be an effective way to sneak under the radar of your mind.” Exercising for five minutes instead of an hour might sound laughable, but you’re “much less likely to resist it” – and the next day, you can exercise for six. Want a better job? Commit to just two hours a week of networking and investigating opportunities. New Year’s resolutions are based on the fallacy that if only you can find sufficient motivation, you can achieve anything. In reality, motivation is fleeting, and the “biggest barrier to actually getting things done.” Want real change? Take small steps. *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**Soon we will have completed our annual list of good intentions – we’ll have passed resolutions as if were our own Congress, legislating changes in our lives. Most of us become self-critical as soon as we become self-conscious. We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives a second time, not looking for flaws, but for potential. We ought to pore over the past for the good moments, remembering when we felt most at ease, lucky, elated. Maybe, for once, our resolutions ought to include equal time for that radical greeting: Happy New Year. *(Ellen Goodman, in Washington Post Writers Group)***

**27: Percentage of resolution-makers who say exercise is their top priority in the coming year. *(AARP magazine, January / February, 2008)***

**Half the people who start exercising programs quit within six months. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The reason why we cannot keep our good resolutions is that we count too much on ourselves. *(St. John Vianney)***

**Mooch’s New Year’s Resolutions List: “Do less. Oooh – That’s going to be tough!” *(Patrick McDonnell, in Mutts comic strip)***

**A Mother’s New Year’s Resolutions *(Tidbits)*\* When I forget to go to the store, I won’t boil the macaroni necklaces my kids made for me in preschool.
\* When I hear one of my kids wake in the middle of the night, I will run upstairs to supervise before he relieves himself in the sink.
\* I will resist the urge to explain to strangers why my son is wearing winter boots, a bathing suit bottom, and an inside-out and backward pajama top. I will be grateful that he is able to dress himself.
\* I will not tell my children that the Play-Doh dried up just because I don’t**

**feel like cleaning up after them.
\* I will always protect the rights of my children, especially their right to remain silent.
\* I will learn to accept the outbursts and tantrums as a part of life. After all, I promised to love my husband for better or worse.
\* When my husband and I go to a restaurant without the kids, I will not roll up his sleeves or move the knives from his reach. I will not accompany him to the bathroom and remind him to wash his hands with soap.
\* I will pack the kids’ lunch boxes the night before so I don’t throw in a slab of frozen lasagna as they’re running for the bus.
\* When I’m tired of hearing “mommieeeeee!” a thousand times each day, I will resist changing my name to “Please pass the spinach.”
\* I will develop an ability to have a conversation with an adult that doesn’t revolve around labor pains or children’s toilet habits.
\* I will be more flexible about children’s nutritional requirements by counting the ketchup and green crayon as vegetables.
\* When my children beg for a pet, I will buy them each a hutch for the dust bunnies that have multiplied under their beds.
\* I will count how often I repeat the phrase “You’d better listen because I will not repeat myself,” until my kids actually notice that I’ve spoken.
\* I will be a good, fair, and loving parent, giving my children a solid foundation on which to build their lives. After all, they may be responsible for choosing a nursing home for me to live out my final days.**

**If exercise is on your list of New Year’s resolutions, all you have to do is laugh. Laughing uses more muscles at one time than any other activity. In fact, 15 muscles are required just to smile. (Ben Franklin’s Almanac, p. 3)**

**40: Percentage of resolution-makers who succeed on the first try; 17 percent try six times or more before they succeed. *(AARP magazine, January / February, 2008)***

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