

Habakkuk: “Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:17-18). “I will rejoice” Habakkuk said, and he intended to do it even in the worst of times, even when it *seemed* he had very little to rejoice about.

About 3000 people in Acts 2: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). They heard the sermon Peter preached, they were convicted of their sin, and when they learned what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:38), that's exactly what they did. And that may be exactly what YOU need to do today.

The Prodigal Son: “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you'" (Luke 15:18). And that's exactly what we need to do when we do wrong--go to our Father in humility and openly confess our wrong. Not going to hide it, deny it, or explain it away, not when we know we'll have to answer for it (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Paul: “For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13). It's rare to find that sort of commitment in anyone, but there's no reason why it can't be found in you and me and anyone else who reads this.

Who else could you add to this list?

Written by: Brian Gibson (Plain Word's from Gods Word FB Group)



Committing to the Lord

The Christian life is one of constant self-assessment. The new year provides a good opportunity for disciples of Christ look at our spiritual lives to see what needs to be improved. One area we must evaluate daily is our commitment to the Lord. Are we fully dedicated to taking up our cross and following Jesus (Matthew 16.24)? Proverbs 16.3 says “Commit thy works unto Jehovah, and thy purposes shall be established” (ASV). How can we make sure we are staying committed to Lord each day.

Commit time to Bible study. Our commitment to God starts with being committed to studying God's word daily. “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119.11 ESV). The idea of “storing up” is to reserve, collect, or accumulate something until the right time to use it. Here in Florida “hurricane season” comes around the same time every year. It's important to have the necessary essentials on hand, and ready just in case one comes. The time to “store up” for a hurricane is not the day before it arrives. Our spiritual lives are no different. Bible study is how we “store up” God's word in our hearts and mind. If we are going to commit to God, our minds must be filled with what He expects of us, and how to please Him. Bible study must be a daily commitment so our spiritual pantries always remain full, we can't let them become empty.

Commit time to Prayer. Prayer is the disciples' open line of communication with God. Prayer and Bible study must complement one another. The more time we spend in a study of God's word, the

Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Study / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

www.mariettacoc.com

There are no shortcuts to a stronger faith, only constant exposure to God's word will bring about the desired result (Romans 10:17). As our faith grows, our prayer grows as well. The more our prayer grows, the more we trust in God. Proper prayer focuses on our dependence upon God and takes the emphasis off ourselves. God wants to hear from us. 1 Peter 5:7 says, "casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you." If we want to be more committed to Jehovah, we must be more committed to prayer. If our prayers are in accordance with God's word, there is nothing we can't go to Him in prayer about. As disciples, prayer must fill our lives (Ephesians 6:18).

Commit time to doing things for others. It has been said if you are ever feeling down, the best way to cheer yourself up is by doing something for someone else. It brings us joy to bring someone else joy, the smile, or laugh, the gratitude, is priceless. This concept is rooted in the teaching of Christ who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35 ESV). To be committed to the Lord is to be generous with our time, always looking for opportunities to help others, especially ways to help fellow brethren. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10 ESV). We are to do good works to bring glory to God and to show the light of Christ to other people. To do good for others is to show the love of Christ in us.

Commit to looking forward and not back. Living in the past is dangerous, it can bog us down, cripple us, and prevent us from moving forward. The past is where Satan wants us to live, haunted by our mistakes to the point where we don't want to change, living in complacency. Jesus even said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62 ESV). If we are going to commit to Jesus, there is no looking back, including looking back at our past. We can't walk a straight path while looking behind us. We all have a past, we all have made mistakes, we all have regrets, but we can't do anything about those things now. What we can do is change the future. ...

Paul wrote, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way" (Philippians 3:13b-15a ESV). Disciples are to live today to prepare for the future. Our mindset must be "what can I do today to prepare for eternity."

Written by: Derek Steen

Resolutions for the New Year

Planning to make some resolutions for 2024? If you do, don't just think about this life; think about the one to come (1 Timothy 4:8). And if you need a head start, the resolutions made by these people should provide just that.

Joshua: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). You may not be able to change what everyone else is doing, but you can set the proper course for your own family.

The Israelites: "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey" (Joshua 24:24). "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua" (Joshua 24:31). At least this generation of Israelites did what they said they would do. And that's the important thing about resolutions, right? Make them AND keep them.

Hannah: "If You...will give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life" (1 Sam. 1:11). Children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalms 127:3); it's only proper we "give them back." How terribly ungrateful to be given a child by the Lord, and then refuse to bring that child up in the ways of the Lord.

Psalms (possibly David, but can't be sure): "I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word" (Psalms 119:15-16). Let's see if we can spend more time in His word than we did last year.

Isaiah: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I, send me'" (Isa. 6:8). The Lord's kingdom needs more workers with this kind of resolve. Need someone to visit the sick? "Here am I, send me." Need someone to teach that class? "Here am I, send me." Need someone to teach the lost? "Here am I, send me."

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