

Righteous Resolutions for 2012

January 8, 2012

We are going to make a declaration today; over our church and over our individual lives. We are going to make this declaration on Sunday mornings, and I believe it will take hold.

“We are the Maranatha Fellowship Church. We are one church in many locations. We are a part of the body of Christ. We are an open door that no man can shut. We align with the Word of God as our final authority. We believe greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. We endeavor to be one with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We lift up the name of Jesus! We have the mind of Christ. We desire His will to be done and His kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven. Our law is love, our bond is peace, and our goal is Heaven. We declare no weapon formed against us shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against us in judgment shall be condemned. We are healed by the stripes that were laid on Jesus’ back. We are anointed by the Holy Spirit with power to live a holy life. We proclaim THE BEST IS YET AHEAD for the Maranatha Fellowship Church, in Jesus’ name!”

The new year is a time when people make New Year’s resolutions; and, as I studied, I found out that basically all of them can be placed into three categories. The first category: (1) We make resolutions about *things that make us look better or live longer*; such as losing weight, stopping smoking, eating better, and getting in shape.

The second category: (2) We make resolutions about *things that allow us to have more*; such as saving more money, getting out of debt, and controlling our spending. The third category: (3) We make resolutions about *things that allow us get along with everybody*; such as helping people, prioritizing our time, and spending more time with our families.

I found this interesting. Four out of five New Year’s resolutions are broken by the end of the year, and one-third (33%) are broken before January is finished.

Turn to **Psalm 63:1**. “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” **Verse 2**: “So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory.”

Verse 3: “Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.” God’s lovingkindness has been extended to every one of us. That is why we ought to praise Him!

Verse 4: “Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.” Lifting up our hands is scriptural, and we are to lift up our hands even when we don’t feel like it. **Verse 5**: “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.”

Verse 6: “When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.” Sometimes the Lord wakes us up and starts revealing things to us, starts talking to us. **Verse 7**: “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.” **Verse 8**: “My soul follows close (hard) behind You; Your right hand upholds me.”

As we begin the second week of this new year, I believe we need to make some religious (righteous) resolutions for this coming year. I'm going to suggest a couple spiritual, religious resolutions for all of us to consider making, because I believe they will help us if we will set them as goals; and, with God's help, we can achieve what I believe God is calling us to achieve.

(!) Let us resolve to follow the Lord incessantly. Let us follow the Lord in a manner that is *persistent and relentless*, and in such a way that we won't back up. Incessantly (persistently), we need to follow Jesus this year.

From the King James Version, **Psalm 63:8** says, "My soul followeth hard after thee." We are taught in the church world to go to an altar, and the Lord will forgive us, and He will; then we get up, and that's it. No, no. We have to **follow after Jesus**, and I want to encourage you this year to **follow after Him hard!**

When we resolve to follow the Lord incessantly, it involves **seeking the Lord continually.** **1 Chronicles 16:11** says, "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore (continually)!" I believe we, as a congregation, need to seek Jesus *first and foremost*. We have to love Jesus more than anything and anyone else, even above our families. Jesus Christ has to have first place in our hearts.

Jesus even said in **Luke 9:62**, "No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." When you accepted Jesus into your heart, right then you made Him Savior, Lord, and Master.

You will never possess what you are unwilling to pursue. If you are going to be the best at something, you are going to have to work at it, no matter what it is. You have to dedicate yourself to whatever you go after. That is why people don't want to commit to anything today.

When you are seeking the Lord, you are seeking His will; and, when you are seeking His will, you are seeking His way. In order to find out what His will and His way are, you have to get in His Word. You have to get in God's Word on a daily basis and start saturating your soul with the Word of God. You have to find out what God's will is, what God's way is, and God's will is in His Word!

So many Christians today are ignorant of God's Word. That is why they are blown away with every little wind of doctrine. They don't know what the Word says. Carrying a Bible is awesome, but you have to get the Word of God inside of you. **Matthew 7:7** says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

When Jesus faced Satan face to face, He conquered that enemy with, "It is written!" So if Jesus defeated the enemy by using the Word, so can we! The Word of God, the blood of Jesus, the name of Jesus is what causes the devil to back up.

One man said these words about God's will. "God's will: nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else." You cannot get saved then do your own thing. When you get saved, you follow after Jesus from that

day forward. You do what HE says to do. You do HIS bidding, and this applies to EVERY follower of Jesus!

When we resolve to follow the Lord incessantly, this involves **serving the Lord constantly**. We serve the Lord by *consistently* obeying Him. In **John 14:15**, Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep my commandments." How could we say we love Jesus if we are not going to obey?

When we resolve to follow the Lord incessantly, this involves **serving the Lord intensely**. God did not save us so that we could just be spectators. We should serve God with *emotion and enthusiasm*. We do everything else with emotion and enthusiasm.

We should serve Him with our *energy* and with *eagerness*. All of us need to *passionately* serve Jesus, *energetically* serve Jesus. There is nothing like serving the Lord! **Psalm 100:2** says, "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing." We need to serve God with our *time, our talents, and our treasure (our tithe)*.

Joshua is in the land God promised the children of Israel, and in **Joshua 24:15** he said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Getting saved is great, but whom are you going to serve? Then he said, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

It's time the men of the Maranatha Fellowship step up and become priests of their homes. You men have to be the prayer warriors of your homes. You have to pray over your house. You have to pray over your children.

When you are going after God, it involves **submitting to the Lord completely**. When you submit, that means you *trust* Jesus totally, entirely, fully, and utterly in every situation and under all circumstances. That's a learning process, because we can lose our focus when we are in a battle. So we always have to keep our faith focused on Jesus.

If you focus on the situation instead of the Savior, you will become discouraged. If you look at the problem instead of the promise, you will go downhill fast, but we have to look UP and trust Him! AMEN?

James 4:7 says, "Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." By submitting ourselves to God, we're resisting the devil; and when we resist the devil, he has to leave. **Verse 8:** "Draw near (nigh) to God, and He will draw near to you." We draw nigh to God by seeking Him in prayer and in His Word.

I know you can do that at home, but I believe a good place to draw near to God is in church. I believe the altar is a good place to let the enemy know you are submitting to God. There are things in your life you need to submit to God; and through the power of God, as you are submitted to Jesus, by pleading the blood over your situation, God can give you victory. AMEN?

We must learn to deny ourselves. The flesh will always pull us away from God, but we need to let our spirit take over our flesh. We need to let our spirit rise up and quit letting our flesh dictate how we worship. Worship God because He is worthy of worship!

Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren; by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." In the Old Testament, God consumed the sacrifices laid on the altar, but God will never consume anything **you** won't lay on the altar!

It's your reasonable service to *submit* to God entirely, completely, totally, and utterly. Keep pressing, because it's exciting serving God!

Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding." **Verse 6:** "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path." **Psalm 37:23:** "The steps of a good man (or a good woman) are ordered by the Lord, and God delights in his way." Let God guide your footsteps.

Along this pathway of walking with Jesus, one act of obedience will lead to your next opportunity. If you obey, one leading will open up the door to the next leading.

Submitting means surrendering our ways, our will, and our wants to God; but we don't like to surrender. We're independent! But our wants, our will, and our ways will lead us astray. If we want something that is not in God's perfect will for our lives, it could destroy us. What looks good can deceive us. Even Satan can transform himself into an angel of light! Our future depends on the daily habits we form.

(II) Let us resolve to follow the Lord intimately. Resolve to have a *personal* relationship with Jesus. Resolve to have a *passionate* relationship with Jesus. If you love Jesus, you should not be ashamed of it; and not only should you have *private* intimacy with our Lord, you should have *public* intimacy with our Lord.

I don't understand why people talk so much about how proud they are to be a Baptist, a Methodist, or a Catholic. Why not say, "I'm in love with Jesus! Let me tell you about Jesus!" What you are in love with, you will talk about; because, what you love is inside of you.

When you're out somewhere and someone starts talking about their problems, you have an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with them. This year, with all of your heart, get intimate with Jesus, because it's all about Jesus!

Psalm 42:1 [NLT] says: "As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God." In 2012, become passionate for this Man called Jesus. Resolve to follow Him incessantly and intimately!