



Community Group Discussion Guide

New Years' Resolutions – Weekend of January 5-6

I. Starter Questions:

- Do you make New Year's resolutions? What do your resolutions tend to revolve around? Bodily fitness and health? Organization and self discipline? Work? Play? Something else?
- In your past what was your most successful resolution that you followed through on or completed?
- What is it about the New Year that causes us to set these goals?
- Why do we often have trouble keeping them?

II. Discussion of Scripture:

In his first letter in the New Testament, the apostle Peter referred to his fellow believers as exiles and sojourners. As believers awaiting the return of Jesus Christ, our king, we are citizens of another country living as sojourners in this world. Because of this, it is often easy for us to place our focus on this world as opposed to our King. That is not to say that all pursuits are bad or that the things that we are focusing on are sinful in themselves. Staying healthy, being self disciplined, making a living, and enjoying God's creation are good things. However, if we make them our primary focus they can become an idol and ultimately become a detriment to us. Here are some passages in God's Word that might help us evaluate where our focus is, and give us a reason for placing our eyes on Christ our king.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-11 (ESV)

⁹So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹**Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.**

For Discussion:

1. At first glance, the book of Ecclesiastes can come across as a downer. Yet, it is a valuable book, rich in wisdom. It is said that a smart man learns from his mistakes but a wise man learns from the mistakes of others. King Solomon was the king of Israel at its peak. He was wealthy and wise. He tried and tasted everything that the world has to offer and came to the conclusion above. It would benefit us to take his words to heart.

2. After trying everything that the world had to offer (“under the sun”), what did Solomon conclude (other interpretations replace the word vanity with – futility, meaningless, smoke)?
3. What is Solomon’s ultimate conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14? Read Matthew 6:31-34. How do Jesus’ words support or explain this conclusion further?

Matthew 16:24-26 (ESV)

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life^[a] will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.** ²⁶ **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?** Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Revelation 21:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “**Behold, I am making all things new.**” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. **To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.**”

For Discussion:

1. A common paraphrase for Matt 16:24-26 is “die a little to live a lot”. How does Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection paint a picture for the Truth he was teaching in this passage?
2. In light of the above verses, is it more valuable to pursue what this world has to offer, or pursue what Christ has to offer? Why?

1 Timothy 4:7-10 (ESV)

⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself for godliness;** ⁸ **for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.** ⁹ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive,^[a] because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Philippians 3:4-14 (ESV)

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the

law, [c]blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I **count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but **I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.** ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. **But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,** ¹⁴ **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

For Discussion:

1. Do the above verses give us guidance on worthwhile goals that we can set as believers and children of God?
2. What might those goals look like?
3. It has proven difficult for us to follow through on resolutions in our lives, thus, the urge to renew them annually. How are God's power, mercy, and grace important ingredients in regards to the goals we set?

Paul Tripp gives us some great questions for reflection as we head into the new year.

1. What were some of your highlights from 2018?
2. What were some of your low points in 2018?
3. What did God reveal to you about himself and about your heart in the high moments of 2018?
4. What did God reveal to you about himself and about your heart in the low moments of 2018?
5. How can you learn from these moments in 2018, and how can you make little commitments for the New Year?

III. Responding in Prayer:

Read Exodus 33:12-19. Like Moses, let's ask the Lord to show us His ways and His glory that we may know not just His ways, but KNOW HIM. Pray that he will renew a zeal for Him in us individually and in our church corporately. Pray that we will be excited to witness to others about Him. Pray that our worship time at Henderson Hills will be just that... time to worship and focus on Him. Pray that He'll do great things in us, in our community, and with our missions in 2019.

Pray for that one person who you would love the Lord to bring to salvation in 2019. Name them to your CG and pray for them daily this week. Ask the Lord to use you to shine the light of Christ in their lives in this coming week, as the Lord opens doors.