



## Anti-Resolutions

### **P**review

This lesson offers challenges for the New Year.

### **P**raise

It's a new year, a new beginning. The transition gives us a chance to look back and thank God for all He has done, but also to surrender to God so He can guide us into the future. Take a moment to reflect on the possibilities of the New Year.

### **P**arable

What normally comes with the New Year? (Resolutions) Typically, resolutions are things you change instantly to make yourself a better person, whether it's eating better, getting better grades, or spending more time with family. What's the strangest resolution you've ever heard? What resolutions have you made and broken?

### **P**resent

Whether we like it or not, time hurls us forward. Almost too abruptly the New Year arrives only a week after Christmas. How do you view the coming year? Do you look forward to fresh possibilities and renewed potential? Or do you cling to the "same old, same old" of the year coming to an end?

Resolutions may be good things, but the lack of success with them lies in the general concept. Resolutions often involve overnight change to achieve them. And if you don't follow through, you've failed one time so it's just easier to drop it until the next New Year. Right?

The reality is, we don't change overnight. We can't alter every aspect of our lives in one swoop and become a better person and a better Christian. It takes time to work toward where we need to go. The challenge today is to set some realistic goals for your age and stage of life and then be willing to take steps out of your comfort zone to work toward them.

Here are some realistic goals to consider.



## Spiritual Goals

**Read John 15:5.** Spiritual growth doesn't just happen. Decide to devote some time and energy to jump-starting spiritual growth. The main challenge in this is every day you take a step closer to Jesus. Every step is a challenge. But every victory is worth it!

1. Read the Bible every day. Even if you've already acquired the habit, consider reading more to study and grow. Read the Bible Through guides are available from a number of sources, including the UPCI's BREAD program online.
2. Get involved in a structured Bible study like this one. If your church doesn't offer group Bible studies, check to see if studies are offered in your community at Christian bookstores or other churches.
3. Decide to share Jesus with others with boldness. Make witnessing a priority.

## Mental Goals

**Read Proverbs 1:5.** Challenge yourself by learning or trying something new. It's important to stretch yourself to constantly grow mentally.

1. Do in-depth library or Internet research on a particular subject – a country, a religion, or historical event. Take notes on what you've learned.
2. ACTUALLY TRY IN SCHOOL. Don't just do enough to get by. Every class is designed to help you in the future, but it's up to you to find a way to stay motivated. Do whatever you have to do to stay engaged in learning. Remember, God really does want you to be full of knowledge. **Read Hosea 4:6.**

## Emotional/Relational Goals

**Read Ephesians 4:29-32.** Often we need to work on emotional issues or strained relationships, but we continually avoid doing so because of the difficulties involved. Working in these areas of our lives can get awkward sometimes, but maintaining good interpersonal relationships is vital to the success of our personal walk with God. Here are some ideas for goals in this area.

1. Forgiveness – Decide to extend the gift of forgiveness for an old hurt. Forgiveness heals broken relationships, and you'll gain a new sense of freedom because you no longer carry a grudge.
2. Patience – Practice patience in areas where you are historically impatient.



3. Anger management – Make a conscious decision to control your anger and determine its sources.

## **P**practice

Goals are better and more realistic than New Year’s resolutions. What goals are you considering as a result of this lesson? The best way to set goals is to ask God; He will let you know which areas of your life need improvement.

## **P**ray

Jesus, thank You for this opportunity to learn from Your Word. Help us to set goals for the New Year—goals that will engage us and help us to grow spiritually, mentally, and relationally. You have been so faithful, we just want You to know we love You. Bless us today in Jesus’ name.

## **P**lus

Today, set three goals for the New Year. Share your goals with an accountability partner and work on them together. This will help you be faithful to finish stronger than you started!