

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY



A FRESH START

For many people, the New Year is a time when they make personal commitments to lose weight, exercise, save more money, spend more time with families, etc.

As Christians, our 'New Year's Resolutions' often include spending more time in the Word, going to church more, spending more time with God, etc. Unfortunately, we Christians are probably no better than the non-Christian world in keeping these resolutions.

Ignoring the fact that we're lying to ourselves when we make these commitments and fail to keep them, we disappoint God when we commit to something and don't follow through. The worst part might be that we know we're probably not going to do it when we say it.

Why not take a completely different approach to the New Year? Rather than make resolutions we won't keep, let's clean out our personal closets and make a fresh start in specific areas of our lives?

Please read the following Scriptures:

1 Peter 2:1-3

Based on this Scripture, we should be like (newborn babies) craving (spiritual milk). In light of verses 1 and 2, what does this mean to you?

Matthew 6:14-15 and Ephesians 5:1-2

Forgiveness is the very foundation of Salvation. Throughout the Bible, we read about how much God loves us and desires to forgive us. We just read that we should imitate God in everything we do. Have you ever been offended by someone? Ever gotten mad? Are you mad at someone right now?

What does God expect us to do when someone offends us or makes us mad? Does it matter what they did or said?

Is there anything that God says "it's ok, I understand why you can't forgive them?"

Ephesians 4:31-32 and Colossians 3:12-15

If you really study this Scripture, you'll find it's a very hard command.

What are we instructed to do first? (Get rid of ALL bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, slander, and all types of evil behavior). Notice it does not say forgive.

Talk about the meaning of all as it relates to bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander.

Talk about the meaning of all as it relates to evil behavior.

Not only are we expected to get rid of these things, we're instructed to do what instead? (Be kind to each other, tenderhearted and forgiving). Now we're told to be forgiving. Can you be forgiving before you actually forgive? (Yes)

Is it possible that God is expecting us to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving to the very same people He is telling us to get rid of all the bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander against? (Yes)

Let's wrap this up. We might not be able to eat less or exercise more in 2018, but we can get a fresh start in our personal relationships.

- How would this impact your relationship with God?
- How would this affect your personal witness and evangelism efforts?
- Can we, should we, apply these same Biblical principles to people groups? (Race, Politics, Denominations, Faiths, etc)?