

Reconsider Making Futile Resolutions

A Better Way

Kemi Searcy

Now is the time when most people assess where they are and where they want to go next. They create resolutions based on spiritual, physical, emotional, or mental goals they desire. Statistics tell us that only 25% of people will keep to their resolutions after 30 days and only 8% of resolutions are ever completely fulfilled. Yet, we continue to make these doomed promises. Didn't someone once say that to repeatedly do the same failed behavior is insanity?

Instead of insanely focusing on what you don't have, try sanely utilizing your assets to create a better world around you. Replace far-reaching goals with a list of the things you bring to your world, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. Yes, make a list.

First, what are your spiritual assets? There are qualities that enable you to do what is right and good, whether for yourself or for other people. How can you practically use your spiritual assets? You can change the tension in a room by displaying a godly attitude. You can model compassion in your speech when others are riled and spilling out venom. You can just be different in a positive way when negativity seems to be politically correct.. Spiritual assets bring an attitude to bear that promotes community and good will. One family I know determined to meet once a month by way of phone to pray for the members of their family who did not know Jesus as their Savior. Over time, one by one, many of their relatives came to know God's mighty grace as answers to their prayers.

Second, what are your physical assets? These can include your physical body or those material items you have around you. Do you have boundless energy and can make an extra effort to help finish a project for someone who is stuck in the middle of it? This may be for other people at work or for those at home. Perhaps you have a great backyard for gathering and can offer it as a place where the youth ministry could have cookouts over the summer. A physical asset is amplified with use. Look for opportunities to use yours. A church family had a "Blessing Basket" in their home. Each member of the family put at least one item in the basket each month. It could be hand-made craft or food or a slightly used item from their closet. They donated the basket to the church's homeless ministry.

Third, what are your emotional assets? Are you able to identify with a certain type of person and help them through a negative situation? Perhaps you have

the ability to see past surface talk and discern another person's needs. Using an emotional asset does not need to drag you into someone else's problems. You choose the type and amount of support you are going to give. You follow your example in Jesus and do only what you see the Father doing. Underlying your support is a God-given asset to care and love those God has put on the Earth. One of my friends asked God to help her spot someone in the lobby before or after church that needed an emotional boost. She would either invite the person to her home for Sunday dinner or out to a restaurant. The spontaneity was invigorating to many of those she reached out to in this way.

Fourth, what are your mental assets? This has nothing to do with IQ but everything to do with your talents, education, and experience. If you are someone who organizes easily, make two lasagnas instead of one so someone else can have a day off from cooking. If you know how to manage finances easily, you can give tips and goals to your children to train them early in money-management. You may need to lead a small study group on a particular area of capability that many others would love to have. One woman I know held two-day seminars once a year for mothers who were regularly succumbing to feeding their families fast food. She showed them how to make a six-week meal plan that was easy to manage with only one-hour per week prep time, and included shopping lists, recipes, and even tastings for those who attended.

What is so great about these new types of "resolutions" is that they aren't full of must-dos that can overwhelm your weekly schedule. When an opportunity arises to use your assets you take the courage and responsibility to use them well. Every time you put one of your assets into play, you bless others, mature in your faith, and honor the One who says, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" What a great way to spend this next year!