

When the year is new but we are not!

By Bob Young

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Introduction

2018 is here, 2018 is still new. Six full days have passed. Not quite 2%; we have barely started the year, 6/360, about 1/60. The first minute of an hour.

Some have already wrecked their resolutions. We begin a new year but nothing changes except the calendar. We expect something different but we have not prepared ourselves to make anything different. We expect different results by doing the same things. Absurd!

That which will make a difference in your life in 2018 begins on the inside. 2018 is not hopeless. One cannot decide that an hour is wasted because the first minute is poorly used.

The newness we desire in 2018 will not come through changed activities, more of this or less of that, the newness we desire is the newness of internal change, changed hearts, changed minds, a new self. This is a renewal that begins inside.

The Bible word for this is transformation. Many people begin the new year trying to change through conforming. No longer conforming to that, now conforming to this. Conforming is both negative and external, most often centered in avoidance. The Bible word is positive—transformation, positive change that begins on the inside. Rom. 12:1-2.

Not renewed commitments plural, but renewed a commitment singular! This is the direction of my life. This is the direction I want my life to go. This is what I want my life to look like. This is the big picture. Here is a portrait of God's plan for me life. My goal is to move in this direction.

This kind of renewal depends on the renewed strength of the Lord (Isa. 40:31).

This kind of renewal is inward (2 Cor. 4:16).

Let's start with an important OT passage....

Renewed hearts, Ezek. 36: 26-27

___And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ___And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

A new heart, create in me a clean heart, create in me a new heart. A heart transplant.

The same principle is found in the NT we have already read....

Renewed minds, Rom. 12:1-2

But there is another NT passage that is even more appealing, it describes what we want to happen, it is total, complete, entire....

Renewed self, renewed being, how?, Col. 3:9-10

___You have put off the old self with its practices ___ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Renewal in knowledge that develops in us the image of the Creator.

Conclusion

Salvation: Tit 3:5-7, "through washing and renewal." One preposition. It is through BOTH washing and renewal, simultaneous. Washing is regenerative. Newness comes, a new birth. Renewal accompanies regeneration. Renewal is by the Holy Spirit.

___he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ___whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ___so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Some people struggle with newness because they do not let the Holy Spirit function in their lives. They do not use the sword of the Spirit, they are not in touch with the words of the Spirit, they expect guidance by the Spirit without walking according to the Spirit and knowing the ways of the Spirit. Some have never experienced washing and renewal. Some have begun, but do not use each day the renewing resources God provides. Newness is possible—contact me if you would like to study these ideas further.