



No More Excuses

Adapted from “New Me” series by Rod Loy.

New Year’s Day – a fascinating holiday full of food, football, and family time. We celebrate the coming of a New Year. Really, for some people it’s more a celebration of a bad year ending. If the year ending was a difficult year, you look forward to change in next. If the year ending was a good year for you, you have plans for next to be even better. After all, it’s a **New Year – a chance for a new start, a new beginning.**

On New Year’s Eve, millions of Americans will make their list of New Year’s resolutions. A New Year’s resolution is a vow to change, improve, or grow in a specific area of life. The New Year is a great chance to change – to become something new. As the year ends, we begin to think about how we could make our lives better. That last couple of days before the New Year we contemplate which resolutions we should make... in hopes that we can actually stick with them.

The website Inc. recently asked 2,000 people about their New Year’s resolutions and came up with their Top 10 List:

1. Diet or eat healthier
2. Exercise more
3. Lose weight
4. Save more and spend less
5. Learn a new skill or hobby
6. Quit smoking
7. Read more
8. Find another job
9. Drink less alcohol
10. Spend more time with family and friends

Of the 60% of us that make New Year’s resolutions, less than 1 out of 10 people will follow through. Women tend to make resolutions about health, while men make resolutions about career and drinking less. Sadly, over half of us will fail with our resolution before the end of January.¹

¹ Scott Winters, “Top 10 New Year’s Resolutions for 2017,” January 1, 2017, <http://www.scottwintersblog.com/top-10-new-years-resolutions/> (accessed July 20, 2017).

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COURAGE

C1: Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution? What was your resolution? Describe your experience.

C2: In your life, have you ever thought, "All the things I want to do, I end up not doing. All the things I don't want to do, I end up doing?"

- Why do you think that is?
- Why do you think you cannot?
- What is it that keeps you from moving forward?
- What is it that keeps you from growing and becoming a new person?
- Why do you keep giving up?
- Why does it seem like every year it is the same old me?

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer the following.

Romans 7:15–8:1 (ESV)

- From your understanding, what is the question Paul is asking from these verses?

- From your understanding, what is the answer Paul gives to his question?

S2: When you rationalize in your mind: “I want to do what is right, but I do not do it,” welcome to the human race. That is called your sin nature. We all have that nature. Read and answer the following.

Proverbs 22:13 (ESV)

- What can you glean from this verse in regard to why you do not change?

- Write out the excuses you have used as to why you do not change. What pattern do you see in your life?

S3: Three words that will change your life – Do It Now. There will never be an ideal circumstance to start on that change, to begin that growth, to work on that development. Do it now. Do not wait to begin. Read and answer the following.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (ESV)

Proverbs 14:22 (ESV)

Proverbs 21:5 (ESV)

- Read these verses in three different translations. What can you take away from this verse in regard to the excuse of “I will wait until tomorrow before I change?”

- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being not high and 4 being very high, rate yourself on your procrastination level. Write out a plan to improve.

- Make and follow a ninety-day calendar for
 - time every day for God.
 - time every day for your family.
 - time to get healthy.

ENDURANCE

E1: Some people use the excuse, “I cannot change by myself,” or “I am all alone in this. I want to do it. I really do. But, I just cannot do it by myself.” Read and answer the following.

Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)

Psalms 1:1–3 (ESV)

2 Peter 3:17 (ESV)

- From this verse, what do you glean about growth?
- Why do you believe people do not like accountability?
- Write an accountability plan to follow for ninety days

E2: The fear of failure asks, “What if this does not work?” Many people have not taken the risk of breaking through their comfort zones because of the fear of failure. The possibility of failing can make us afraid of being embarrassed in front of others. So, to keep safe from failure, we simply do not try, we quit. But, failure is not falling down, it is staying down. Read and answer the following.

Proverbs 24:16 (ESV)

Proverbs 24:10 (ESV)

- From this verse, what can you glean about failing?
- How can you overcome the fear of failure?

- Describe a time when you failed. What lessons did you learn?

E3: When change happens one of the things that may surprise you is the pain that accompanies the change. Maybe you have thought, “I did not plan on the pain. I did not expect it to be this hard to accomplish. This is just too difficult for me to accomplish.”

Read and answer the following.

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

Zechariah 4:6 (ESV)

Isaiah 43:18 (ESV)

- What do you glean from these verses about God’s plan for your life?
- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very high and 4 being not very high, rate yourself on how well you trust God with every aspect of your life. Write out a plan to improve your trust in God.

E4: Develop a plan to discuss with other men God’s plan for growth and maturity. Find three men to have a conversation with over the next thirty days regarding growth and maturity.