



Divinely Blessed & Restored

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Renew Your Passion For Christ©

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“Thus said the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last: and beside me there is no God.” Isaiah 44:6. KJV

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Happy New Years! As we leave 2006 and embrace 2007, I would guess that most of you have made New Years Resolutions!!! I must admit I also engaged in this annual ritual until a few years ago. Instead of *resolutions*, I began to make the end of the year a time to define my *goals* for the upcoming year while reviewing my progress made on the current years goals.

Why did I switch from resolutions to goals? Resolutions seemed so impersonal - statements of a desired end result, while goals seemed to invoke images of action being taken in stages as you progress toward an end result. When I made resolutions, the statements did not come “alive” for me and the majority of the time, I never progressed very far or saw the intended result. I shared that in case you, as me, have not seen much success with your “*New Years Resolutions*”. Perhaps “*goals*” will work for you!!

Regardless of which you employ – resolutions or goals- taking time to thoughtfully evaluate your life; to reflect upon where you were, where you are, and where you wish to be, is invaluable. Without direction, we are just floundering around. To live in a state of confusion is not as God wish us to be. I Corinthians 14:40 tell us: “*Let all things be done decently and in order*”. *KJV* Taking time to evaluate and identify areas we can improve on is a tool to help us live lives that are decent and in order.

What is a life that is in order? A life where the right thing is first. You are probably thinking how is that determined? By its importance. A life that is in order is a life where God is first!! A Christian living a life where God is first is my daily desire so this is always the number one goal on my list.

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Colossians 1:17 tells us the importance of God having first place in our life. “*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” *KJV* When God is first, everything else will fall in place. The widow found that out when she did as Elijah, God’s prophet told her. Elijah told the widow to feed him **first**. Before taking care of herself and her son, she took care of Elijah. Due to her obedience, God did not let the barrel of meal nor oil get empty. (*I Kings 17:13-24*). *KJV* If you make God first, He will bless whatever else you are pursuing.

As Christians, we must have our life in order to ensure that we are fulfilling our purpose in life, which is to fulfill God’s purpose, *to seek out the lost and save souls*. As a servant of the Lord, we must be equipped to use our special abilities, talents and spiritual gifts in ministry for the Lord and having an intimate relationship with God. This relationship will not develop on its own. We must commit to genuine communion with the Lord through prayer and bible study. Just as other relationships in our lives will not flourish without communication and fellowship, our relationship with The Father is no different.

As you develop your resolutions or goals for the New Year, beware - Satan will try to keep you from reaching your goal. Here are some of the ploys you can expect and suggested counter-attacks:

➤ **Procrastination**

To defer action, delay, to put off till another day or time. This creates forgetfulness, loss of interest, and not getting what you need to get done, done.

Counter-attack: Take action now!!! Procrastination is all about self-control.

➤ **Over Extension**

Simply “overbooking”. You filled up every ½ hour slot in your day. This leads to a need to eliminate activities. Make sure it is not the time dedicated to your spiritual care.

Counter-attack: Examine the value of this commitment and why it is important to *place first things first* – GOD.

➤ **Excuses**

To justify, pardon or forgive. It’s easy to justify not remaining on track. Be careful you are not breeding bad habits. One step in the wrong direction can lead to another, and another, and another.....

Counter-attack: Usually there is a reason we are making an excuse that we will justify as valid. Key to achieving goals is self-assessment and this is an ongoing part of the process. If you conduct “goal progress” reviews monthly, you will identify when you are missing the mark and take steps to get back to pursuing the intended result.

➤ Distractions/Entanglements

To lose focus/to get caught up in confusion and complicated situations.

Counter-attack: Recognize Satan's ploy. He is at work in these situations. In the midst of the confusion, progress will not be made toward your goal. You must shake the devil off. Let the devil know you know it is he. *Ephesians 6:12* tells us: "*for we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers against rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*" *KJV* Go to the throne with the problems, the confusion that's going on around you – God is there to help you. *James 4:7* tell us: "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" *KJV*

Now that we are clear what our first goal or resolution should be for 2007, there's a lot of hard work ahead for you to be able to say you achieved your goal or resolution of living a life of order, placing God first. Yes it will take work, but I guarantee you if you obey, submit and give God His rightful place, you will find that He grant favor into your life and you will see each and every "*goal or resolution*" you have listed thereafter attained. Remember, He is the Creator of the universe; He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. **He is Lord!** With credentials like that – you are destined for a blessed 2007!