

## **Living Before the Face of God**

Ps Craig Mobey

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The very act of setting a new year resolution is also a statement that there is something in your life that must change or be done differently. It means that you are dissatisfied with something and are resolving to do something else from a future point in time.

Truth be told though, by now many people would have broken their new year resolutions.

How would the awareness that all of 2022 will be lived before the face of God affect your making and keeping new year resolutions?

### **Scripture Readings (NIV)**

Hebrews 4:13-16, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Luke 8:17, “For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.”

Jeremiah 23:24, “Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.”

### **Introduction**

Overeating? Done in the presence of God.

Unhealthy things? Done in the presence of God.

Wasting money? Done in the presence of God.

Drunkness? Done in the presence of God.

Adultery? Done in the presence of God.

Rebellion? Done in the presence of God.

To live in the presence of God is to understand that whatever we are doing and wherever we are doing it, we are doing it in the sight of God. God is omnipresent. There is no place so remote that we can escape Him.

To be aware of the presence of God is also to be aware of His sovereignty. To be aware of God's sovereignty is recognizing that there is no higher goal than honouring and bringing glory to God in all that we do.

This awareness must reflect in our new year resolutions.

### **Body**

Any resolution that is not God centred is centred on someone or something else. Not only will your resolution speak of your priorities, but it will also speak of your integrity.

When a resolution is broken, it is usually – and I emphasize *usually* because there are some things outside of our control – resolutions are usually broken because something was never a priority to keep, but instead, something that actually belonged on a wish list, in which case the resolutions was really something to be hoped for, instead of worked for.

When a resolution centres on God, it asks for integrity because it results in a life of wholeness that finds unity and structure in the majesty of God. On the other hand, a fragmented life leads to contradictions, conflict, confusion, and chaos.

If you look at your life, what do you see? What do you experience?

Some Christians live two lives: (1) religious and (2) non-religious. Perhaps, before continuing, we can remind ourselves of what religion is; why religion is desirable. One definition says that religion is to believe in and worship God. The definition I like the most is: to order your life according to what you believe. In a sense, religion is the meeting point of belief and action.

In this light, I don't think that a Christian can lead a non-religious life:

- When we are at work, God is present.
- When we worship, God is present.

- When we celebrate, God is present.
- When we sin, God is present.
- When we get hurt, God is present.
- When we cry, God is present.

What might be absent is our continuous awareness of the presence of God.

Life is lived before the face of God whether we are aware of His presence or not. Your whole life is open before God; there is no hiding place or something that can be done in secret. God cannot look the other way when we busy ourselves with something we should not be doing.

Although He is looking at us, He is also always calling us toward repentance.

A Christian's resolution demands integrity because our lives are lived in the presence of God by principle, not convenience; by humility, not defiance; under the guidance of conscience, ethics, morality, and values that is held captive by the Word of God.

We also need to talk about the concept of time and our resolutions, in other words, waiting for or setting a future date from which we aim to do things differently. Here is the thing:

- We set a resolution because we are dissatisfied, and something must change.
- But not right now.
- Therefore, in saying "I am dissatisfied, and something must change at a future moment" you are also saying "this thing I am dissatisfied with is at the same time, acceptable."
- The truth of the matter is that if something is unacceptable in a life lived in the presence of God, then it must change immediately and not at a future point in time.
- To say "I just want to do this or that and then I will change" or "I will do it differently from next month" speaks of your priorities because you are going to inevitably first do those things that are most important to you.

We need to take one step back and reflect on the difference that Christ has made in our lives. As Christians, we have been declared righteous in Christ and ours is to grow in Him. This

calls for studying the Word and obedience to the Word. We desire to do what pleases God because we are grateful for what He has done; we are redeemed. Our obedience to God is not because we are trying to earn our place in heaven. Our obedience to God is because we love God and we are grateful that Christ did what we could not do and because of this, we have a place in heaven.

So, we have established that if we are going to make a new year resolution, it should be:

1. God centred.
2. Without delay.

As a Christian, we should have a singled minded desire to live our lives in His presence and with His blessing.

Growth in holiness is essential to what it means to live the Christian life. The Bible describes the Christian life in many ways, for example:

- Romans 6:14 makes it clear that grace dominates and fuels Christian living.
- Hebrews 12:1–2 describes the Christian life as a race. We are in it to finish it through Christ.
- In Ephesians 6:12, Paul tells us that to be a Christian is to fight against the spiritual powers of the devil. There is going to be resistance. Expect it. But know that the victory is God's not yours. Yours is to be found Him.

## **Conclusion**

The Reformers came up with a concept to describe Christian living under which we can incorporate the many ways Scripture describes the Christian life. They said that the purpose of the Christian life is to live *Coram Deo*, which means, “before the face of God.” This means that we live our lives ever conscious that we do so under God's watchful gaze. We live life before the face of God.

We cannot be half-hearted disciples of Jesus. When it comes to following Him, we must be “all in.” Yes, we will sin and may at times fall into periods of spiritual apathy, we are called to be true disciples of Christ that persevere through these times and press on in full commitment to Christ.

If you want to make a resolution, or if you have already failed at a resolution, don't wait. There is nothing magical about 1 January or any other day. But if you do decide to make a resolution, let it be God focussed and therefore, God honouring.

Let us ask the Lord today to strengthen your and my resolve to follow Him and commit ourselves once more to being His disciple.

Amen.