

# Resolutions to Keep

By Pastor Jerry Lawson

*\*\*Much of this sermon content was taken from various sermons from SermonCentral\*\**

## Introduction:

A. Yesterday began a new year.

1. A year full of possibility & opportunity.
2. 12 mos/ 52 wks/ 365 days/ 8,760 hrs/ 525,600 min/  
31,536,000 sec.
3. What will you do with all of this time?

*There once was a man who moved into a retirement community to spend the rest of his life there. It wasn't long until he had made a number of friends among the other residents. There was one lady he was especially attracted to, & she was attracted to him, also. So they spent a lot of time together. Finally one evening he proposed, asking her to marry him.*

*The next morning he woke up remembering his proposal, but he couldn't remember her answer. So he went to her and said, "I'm really embarrassed. I proposed to you last night but I can't remember if you said 'Yes' or 'No.'" "Oh, thank goodness!" she replied. "I remembered saying 'Yes' but I couldn't remember who asked me."*

B. Ever feel this way about New Year's resolutions?

1. "I'm really going to change this year!"
2. Later: "Now what was I going to change?"

C. This year I challenge you to join me and the Apostle Paul in his resolution found in Philippians 3.

*Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV*

*13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching*

*forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

## **I. Forget the Past.**

A. Paul said, "I forget what is behind."

*After the children had all been photographed in a local elementary school class, the teacher was trying to persuade the students to purchase a group picture. "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer. That's Michael, he's a doctor.'" A small voice from the back of the class rang out, "And there's the teacher; she's dead!"*

B. We all like to look back at the past.

1. I was given the pocket watch of my great-grandfather this Christmas.
2. I remember with fondness my grandfather & great-grandfather.
3. Looking at old pictures and heirlooms brings back great memories.

C. BUT LIFE MUST GO ON!

1. Some people are stuck in yesterday and cannot function in today's world.
2. There are some things about yesterday that we MUST FORGET!!!

D. Forget the things that paralyze you with guilt & despair.

1. Paul had many regrets having persecuted the church.

*A customer sent an order to a distributor for a large amount of goods totaling a great deal of money. The distributor noticed that the previous bill hadn't been paid. The collections manager left a voice-*

*mail for them: “We can’t ship your new order until you pay for the last one.” The next day he received a fax saying, “Please cancel the order. We can’t wait that long.”*

- Sometimes our bad past hinders our present life.
- There may be some things in your past that you’ve never cleared up or paid for & maybe it’s impossible to do so.
- If so, it’s time to just move on!

## 2. GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU! Who else matters?

### E. Forget the achievements that cause you to pull into “neutral.”

1. Some people are just the opposite.
2. They think they are so advanced that they can just “chill” into eternity.
3. I don’t how many you’ve led to the Lord, how blessed you were in 2004, how well you taught, sung, helped the church last year.....
4. THAT’S THE PAST – FORGET IT!
5. You cannot have the blessings of TOMORROW until you close the door on YESTERDAY!!!

### F. Forget the failures of the past.

1. 8 out of 10 people will not keep New Year’s resolutions beyond a month.
2. If you’ve failed, you’re in good company...
3. Your neighbor, your pastor, Apostle Paul!
4. LEARN THE ART OF FORGETTING!!!

*2 old men were sitting on a park bench. One of the men said, “You know as I get older I can’t remember things the way I used to.” The other man said, “I used to have that problem too until I took this*

*memory course. It's a very simple technique, based on associating words with names, places and events. Now because of that I don't have trouble remembering anything at all." "Really? What's the name of the course?"*

*The old man got a puzzled look on his face, turned white as a sheet, scratched his head, then asked, "What's the flower with the long stem, thorns on it, and red petals?" "A rose?" the other man said. "Yes, thank you!"*

*He turned to his wife and said, "Rose, what was the name of that memory course?"*

- **Sometimes we need to be just like that man!**

G. When you are cultivating corn you have to look forward not behind.

1. The shovels are breaking up the ground, coming very close to the corn.
2. Since the cultivator covers 12 to 24 rows at a time, when you get off center, you can wipe out a big area.
3. Even if he makes a mistake, the farmer cannot afford to look back.
4. **LOOKING BACK WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE!**

## **II. Reach Forward.**

A. "How do I reach forward?"

1. Reaching forward is intentional.
2. It takes a plan.

*Several years ago 4 teenagers were arrested in the parking lot of a large mall in Lakeland, Florida. It was just before Christmas when they attempted to steal an automobile at random. They tried to break*

*in a police van with 3 officers on stakeout! THAT'S NOT GOOD PLANNING. You might even call it stupidity!*

B. Plan: Choose to develop a positive attitude.

*A few years ago a woman committed suicide, leaving behind this note. "I decided that life was just not worth living."*

1. Do you feel that your life is worthwhile?
2. What would it take for you to feel really positive about your life?
  - a. Winning the lottery?
  - b. Marriage all patched up?
  - c. Kids making you proud?
  - d. Promotion at work?
3. If you feel that way, things will probably never align themselves just right for you.

C. But notice Paul's position: In prison, under Roman guard, in chains, near execution...

*Phil 3:12 nkjv*

*I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

1. What's he trying to "lay hold" of?
2. ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS!
3. That's the supreme goal for Paul.

D. If you could ever let that sink in, you'd see your problems much differently.

1. Bad news doesn't affect my standing with Christ.
2. Lay-offs don't disqualify me from heaven.

3. Marriage problems, illness, problems with children...
- E. The world says you are to feel good about yourself by climbing the ladder of success (making \$, winning influence, right circles).
1. The Bible says to rejoice b/c your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

*Frank Peretti said, "It's no wonder that our young people today have poor self images when they go to school & read books that tell them that they are the products of blind chance – that they are just accidents of nature – unplanned, unloved, & unwanted."*

## 2. THAT'S NOT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS!

- F. You are holy, chosen, special people belonging to God.
1. There is a future for you.
  2. REACH FORWARD into tomorrow.
  3. There is a city that has been prepared for you!!!
  4. IT'S REAL! IT'S REAL! IT'S REAL!

*Comedian bob Hope once said, "I do benefits for all religions – I'd hate to blow the hereafter on a technicality."*

- G. Many lump all religions into the same pot: Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam.

*Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn 14:6).*

- THAT'S TRUE & I KNOW HIM!
- I HAVE A FUTURE!!!
- I'M LOOKING AHEAD WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION!

### III. Press On.

*There was an article a few years ago in which a man gave his idea of a perfect world. "In a perfect world you would feel as good at 60 as you did at 17. And you would be as smart at 60 as you thought you were at 17. In a perfect world professional basketball, football & baseball players would be complaining b/c schoolteachers were signing multi-million dollar contracts. In a perfect world potato chips would have calories, but if eaten with dip, the calories would be neutralized. The check in the mail would always be early and always for more than you expected."*

- A. Truth is this is not a perfect world and it never will be.
  - PRESS ON ANYWAYS!!!
- B. After years of wandering in the desert, Israel was so close to the Promised Land (but they didn't now it).
  - 1. God had instructed them to go through Edom's valley, but they refused.
  - 2. They decided to go by Mt. Seir.

*Deut 2:3 NAS*

*3'You have circled this mountain long enough.*

- 3. God said, "PRESS ON!"
- C. Mt. Seir represents a place of past victory.
  - 1. This mountain range overlooked the Red Sea, the place of Israel's greatest victory.
  - 2. Rather than do something new, they decided they would stay with the familiar.
- D. This became a pattern of disobedience with them.

1. If they had just obeyed, they would have enjoyed a land that “flowed with milk and honey”, a land of plenty, of prosperity of great riches.
2. Because of fear they kept dwelling in the past.
3. They just kept circling Mt. Seir over and over again with no direction not knowing that the Promised Land was in their sight!!!

E. You have a choice today → Circle yesterday’s mountain or press on!

1. Mt. Seir was a wilderness place, not their DESTINY.
2. It was okay for a season, but not anymore!

F. God said, “Turn and go Northward.” They said...

1. “We’re tired of manna” → “Take another trip around Seir!”
2. “We didn’t worship like this in Egypt” → Another trip.
3. “We didn’t have to live in tents before” → Another trip.

G. You have those same choices daily – circle the same old mountain or press on:

1. “I’m trying to forgive but she just did me too wrong” → Another trip.
2. “I know it’s a lie but no harm” → Another trip.
3. “I just don’t see the need to give 10%” → Another trip.
4. “It’s just not my ministry gift to witness” → Trip.
5. “I don’t care how excited they are, we’ve never done it like that where I come from” → Another trip.
6. “I’ve been treating my spouse like this for years and it’s working for us...” → Another trip.
7. “I’m ? years old and I’ve made it okay so far, I don’t know why I need to change now.” → Another trip.

## **Conclusion:**

A. I want you to know that God wants you to have better in this life!

*Rom 8:16-17*

*16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

B. Aren't you tired of the same old, same old?

1. There is some GLORY out there for you.
2. It's time for you to receive His best for your life!