New Beginnings!

There is an old holiday song that calls December "the most wonderful time of the year." But I think that title belongs to January, a new year, a time of new beginnings. Our loving Father has very graciously divided life in to smaller pieces of time in which we have new beginnings all the time. A new day, a new week, a new month and now, a new year.

When we are converted to Jesus, a wonderful "new" thing happens, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a **new** creature; the old things passed away; behold, **new** things have come." (2 Cor. 5:17) Every January, "new things" come, a new opportunity, a new lease on life, we often say. Even the secular culture recognizes the opportunity and makes "New Year's Resolutions," – new chances to accomplish new things with new resolve.

But we have a helper on our side, we have Jesus. But, as the old song asks, "What will you do with Jesus?" Often the question is asked of those who don't yet know Him. But we all need to ask ourselves, "What will ***I*** do with Jesus, this year, this January, this week, this day?" What we ***actually*** do with Jesus is not merely determined by our initial salvation, but more clearly what will I do with Him every single day!

If I were to ask, "What will you do with your husband or your wife this week, the answers would be very practical, "Go out to eat, go to a movie, go the mall, work in the garden, wax the car, and just share my life and my heart in general." The same is true of our lives in Christ. When He is truly our Lord, we take Him with us to the movies, to dinner, to the mall, everywhere we go. He is either Lord of all, or not Lord at all!

With the coming of the New Year, God is reminding us that He specializes in renewal – the heart, the soul, the mind, our strength – all those things we use to love Him. This renewal should lend a deeper understanding of Mark 12:30,

> "AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR
> HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,
> AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH."
> (Luke adds, *"and your neighbor as yourself"* - Luke 10:27.)

Wow! We have such a precious opportunity to combine that high calling with the beginning of a new, fresh year – a new resolve – a renewed dedication. No matter how many times we fail or fall (and no matter what time of the year) Jesus will completely forgive, forget, renew and restore.

What a mighty God we have!!!

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