

The
Faith Script
CPFI Serving Christ and the World Through Pharmacy

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*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NRSV)*

[Prayer Wall](#)

Beginning Anew: Making Everyday a New Year with God

So as we begin 2017, many of us will make New Year's resolutions as we begin the year with hope, promise, and a "clean slate". I can remember growing up as a child that my mother would always make New Year's resolutions, so I guess that's why as an adult that I do the same. My list this year includes: respond to emails within 24 hours, break up larger projects into smaller ones, go to bed by at least 12 MN (that may seem late to you but that's hard for a night owl like myself), decrease snacks in between meals, exercise 45 minutes daily. Sound familiar? I'm already tired and overwhelmed just thinking about these and maybe you can relate! So will I be successful? Perhaps I will, at least for the first week or so, but then maybe not so much as the year progresses. In fact according to research, at least 45% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, but only about 8% are successful in following through to reach their goals.

Interestingly, the history of New Year's resolutions shows that this practice has been going on for over 4000 years. Ancient Babylonians were believed to be the first to begin this practice in March each year as crops were planted during the festival of Akitu when a new king was crowned or reigning king honored. These resolutions or promises during Akitu were to the pagan gods to pay debts and return any objects they had borrowed. If these promises were kept, favor would be bestowed on the people for the year by their gods. But if these resolutions were not kept, then the Babylonians would fall out of favor with their gods. I don't know about you, but for me, that would not go well based on my track record for not keeping New Year's resolutions. But, thanks be to our God for His grace! For as Christians, we are told in Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV), "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

The history of New Year's resolutions also has Christian roots. Early Christians traditionally would reflect on their past sins and resolve to do better on the first day of the New Year. In 1740 John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, developed the "Covenant Renewal Service", also known as "Watch Night Services." These services were held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day and included readings from the Bible, hymn singing, praying, and making resolutions. These services are still practiced by some Christian denominations. Unfortunately, the practice of making New Year's resolutions has become so popular in the modern world that it has become much more secular.

So perhaps we should reframe how we approach our New Year's resolutions. On the one hand, I think we could all agree that it's good to set New Year's resolutions as it gives us something to look forward to and strive to achieve. There is something inherently good and productive about setting goals. But perhaps, we put too much pressure on ourselves and set goals that are too lofty and unreasonable to ever achieve. Perhaps we make our New Year's resolutions too focused on *ourselves* instead of on

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God and others and make them overly complicated. And so perhaps our simple yet God-focused New Year's resolutions for 2017 for Christian pharmacists could be to *draw closer to God*, or to be the *light in the darkness* spreading the good news of Christ to others, or *be more like Jesus*. The details and particulars can be filled in as we go throughout the year, but to approach this with intentionality and faith is key. And the good thing is that we don't have to wait for the New Year to make these resolutions, for God's time is so much different than our time. He wants to have a relationship with us and have His good news shared today, tomorrow, this year, always.

So as to my aforementioned 2017 New Year's resolutions, perhaps I could reframe them to the following: respond to emails within 24 hours to show others the love of Christ and that they are important to me and God; break up larger projects into smaller ones so that I can fulfill my earthly duties and make more time to spend with God; go to bed by at least 12MN so that I have the energy to serve God and others; decrease snacks in between meals and exercise 45 minutes daily remembering that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God...therefore glorify God in your body" 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NSRV). With God as my focus and motivation, I trust that I will be successful.

Happy 2017 to CPFI! Let's make everyday a New Year and keep God first in our lives. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16 (NRSV). Thanks be to God who gives us this victory through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Mark S. Johnson, Pharm.D., BCPS
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