

Resolution or Solution: Rooms With A View

Relax, you're safe here. Nobody's gonna ask if you've broken any New Year's resolutions yet. Sure, sure, we know – you just haven't started implementing them. No worries, this year you'll have plenty of time -- 31,536,000 seconds, to be exact.

What pill, what motivator could ever inspire us to stick to our resolutions longer than we trusted this year's Super Bowl zebras?!

Everybody's Achilles resolution is bemoaned by this rhymemeister:

“I spent a fortune on a trampoline,
A stationary bike and a rowing machine
Complete with gadgets to read my pulse,
And gadgets to prove my progress results,
And others to show the miles I've charted
But they left off the gadget to get me started!”

It Was A Very Good Year. Or Was It?

“What kind of year did you have in 2005, 1 to 10?” Pick a number with “10” meaning “’05 was so hot I wanna copy-and-paste it right over ‘06!” And “1” equals “I never want to see those four digits in that sequence again – at least until the Super Bowl comes to Seattle!”

YOUR NUMBER: _____

My friend Tom Shrader hazards a guess that you came up with your number by calibrating at *Star Wars* speed, using metrics like:

- “I had a great year if I made more money than ever.”
- “..... if I got more “stuff” than last year.”
- “..... if I boosted my career or reputation.” And, let's be honest...
- “I had a great year if my friends envied me.”

Hang on to your number; we'll get back to it.

They say if you keep doin' what you've been doin', then you'll keep getting' more of the same. What about 2006 are you hoping for a breakthrough year? Resolutions can be flimsy twigs, doomed to snap off in the first stiff breeze.

Pancakes and Waffles

Long ago Liz and I were given an inventory and planning tool to help us focus our year. Its premise is that all areas of our life can be represented by a 7-room house. As men, we tend to see our lives segmented into compartments, but women “live” in ALL rooms at ONCE! They’re like pancakes; we’re waffles, inside waffle walls.

We’ll take two minutes now while you fill in two of your ‘06 goals for just one of these rooms. Any room -- you can do the rest later.

"Life is a 7-Room House"

1. Family

- a.
- b.

2. Financial

- a.
- b.

3. Personal Growth

- a.
- b.

4. Physical

- a.
- b.

5. Professional

- a.
- b.

6. Social

- a.
- b.

7. Spiritual

- a.

b.

Ironic that the first two letters in “goal” are “GO?” Here’s how to put the GO in your goals, using Bobb Biehl’s “Groups of 3” concept. (DEMONSTRATE)

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Moses prayed to God, “Teach us to make the most of our time, so that we may grow in wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12). The idea is to wake up and take inventory before life’s 2-minute warning blows, *IF* you even get one.

Jesus wants to give us “abundant life,” translated “life beyond measure” (John 10:10). Let’s check out God’s view from each of these rooms.

1. Family

Wise family counsel is stored in Romans ch. 12 and Ephesians chs. 4-6.

How’d life be at your house with the kind of love we **read about in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (p. 855)?**

2. Financial

Jesus’ take on “dead presidents” is not always the talking points on CNBC’s “Mad Money.” **But it’s found in Matthew 6:19-24 (p. 721).**

Our culture toasts status, wealth, comfort, pleasure, security. OK. But is that the definition of “really living?” **Let’s read Matthew 16:24-26 (p. 731).**

3. Personal Growth

God wants us to see life as He does. To do that, we don’t need laser surgery; we need a spiritual lobotomy. **Let’s read Romans 12:1-2 (p. 844).**

Let’s get Paul’s words to the faithful in Philippians 4:4-9 (p. 874).

4. Physical

When we entrust our lives to Christ, our bodies have a new Landlord. **For that news flash, we read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (p. 851).**

5. Professional

Paul writes, “Whatever you do (even sales!), do it all heartily, so that people will see God in your life (1 Corinthians 10:31). God is our *real* Employer, and He deserves our best effort always (Colossians 3:22-25).

6. Social

The challenge for us Type A's is to not run over people en route to our goals. **Help is on the way in Philippians 2:3-5 and 14-16 (p. 873).**

7. Spiritual

Jesus is not necessarily out to promote us into the corner office. He came to earth to give His life *for* us, so that He could put His life *in* us! **Let's get a whiff of this brand of living in Colossians 3:1-17 (p. 876).**

Inspected Your Foundation Lately?

Only when you know how to *die* will you know how to *live*. Ergo, for 2,000 years God's preserved this Book to give us the Manufacturer's tutorial for optimal performance. **Let's read 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (p. 885).**

Jesus taught by using stories like this one in His famous "Sermon on the Mount:"

46 "Why are you so polite with me, always saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'That's right, sir,' but never doing a thing I tell you? 47 These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundation words, words to build a life on.

48 If you work the words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who dug deep and laid the foundation of his house on bedrock. When the river burst its banks and crashed against the house, nothing could shake it; it was built to last. 49 But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a dumb carpenter who built a house but skipped the foundation. When the swollen river came crashing in, it collapsed like a house of cards. It was a total loss" (Luke 6:46-49).

It Was A Very Good Year

After our stroll through these seven rooms, I ask you again: "What kind of a year did you have in 2005?" *This* time base your 1 to 10 on these criteria from Tom Shrader:

- You had a great year if you understood the importance of believing what God says is true of you.

DISCUSSION: By the by, what *does* God say is true of you?

- You had a great year if you understood the brevity of life.
- You had a great year if your spiritual victories (over our enemy Satan's temptations) outnumbered your defeats.

- You had a great year if you muscled up spiritually in God’s Gym.
- You had a great year if you defended the integrity not of *your* faith, but *the* faith. **Let’s see 2 Timothy 4:1-8 (p. 885) and Jude 3-4 (p. 909).**

DISCUSSION: What are some ways we can defend the faith?

- You had a great year if you understood that Jesus is coming back. Three times in the Bible’s last chapter He reminds us, “I’m coming soon!” When, who knows, but it could be today.

So, 1 to 10, in light of these benchmarks, how was your ‘05? YOUR NUMBER: __. Now, how does it compare with your earlier one?

“I Hear You Knockin’”

‘Though religion may insist that salvation is a reward we earn, the Bible says, “NOT!” It’s a gift we accept by faith. God says we’re born as sinners, destined for an after-death date in a place the Bible calls hell, forever banned from God and *all goodness*....unless we let Jesus be our Savior.

Jesus is not a gate-crasher. He comes saying, “If you’ll open your life to Me, I’ll come in and live not *with* but *in* you (Revelation 3:20)!

If you’ve never opened your door, just tell Him now, in the quiet of your thoughts, “Jesus, please come on in. I’ve shut You out long enough. Make Yourself at home in me. You already know that I’m a fixer-upper, but thank You for wiping out *all* my sins, for dying in my place. Here, take the keys to my house. Amen.”

His Deal

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