

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE
JANUARY 2021

HAPPY

New Year

MAKE 2021 YOUR BEST YEAR YET!

How to Make Real Change in 2021. And How to Make it Stick.

“What do you plan to do differently?”

That was the question the doctor asked me when I was tested for Covid-19 as part of the quarantine protocol in November. It wasn't hard to answer. I had already been thinking about it.

So I'm not bringing up the question because I was surprised that she asked it. I am bringing it up because I was impressed that she asked it.

Because when we are confronted with a situation that needs to change or areas in which we can improve, it is the most important question to ask and to be able to answer: “What do you plan to do differently?”

As a general rule, the launch of a new year motivates us to make changes or foster improvement in our lives. Maybe you want to lose weight, save money, or pay off debt? And there are a multitude of other possibilities. So if that is you, how do you make a plan to change habits and behaviors, especially if those habits have been unhealthy or unwise? Or maybe it is not so much that you need to change bad habits, but rather you want to improve your actions, goals, or outcomes in 2021. How do make real change? And how do you make it stick?

The answer is simple. It doesn't begin with what you do. It begins with what you believe.

For instance, in November we experienced Covid-19 on our staff. That led me to believe we should adjust our precautions, which in turn shaped my actions and decisions going forward. Experience, think, act. It is basic to human nature—something changes the way we think, and that changes the way we behave.

Because what you think and believe almost always dictates your behavior. Not the other way around. So, God provides for us specific principles to help us see what needs to change, make that change, and experience that change as we live for Christ.

Frequently we want circumstances to change and problems to be solved without us having to change anything. I want a different outcome, but I don't want to do anything differently in my own life. In fact, one of the most common barriers to changing habits and behaviors is the belief that we can keep doing things the way we have always done them, and yet, somehow, we will get a different result.



But if the actions we take are clearly not producing the results we need to produce, are not conducive to the outcomes that are good for us, or even contribute to bad habits and results, then we need to ask, “What can I do differently to change the outcome?”

And changing the outcome will begin with the decision to change the way you think about your actions and behaviors. Again, your thoughts tend to dictate your behavior (Rom. 12:1-2).

Real change starts from the inside out. You change your beliefs, and that motivates you to change your behavior. So if you want to see real, genuine change in your habits and behaviors in 2021, here are three things to remember:

IF THE HABIT IS A SIN, BEGIN WITH REPENTANCE.

True change comes in our surrender to Christ. The Bible teaches that repenting of our sin accompanies salvation (Acts 20:21). And then it becomes part of our forward motion in our life in Christ. When God reveals to us that sin is clogging up our communication with Him, and hindering change in our lives, we repent of that sin and leave it behind (Ps. 51:2-3, 10-13). So real change begins with repentance—intentionally turning away from our sin and adopting our new life, consisting of new habits and behaviors.

Prior to salvation, your thoughts were hostile to God (Col 1:21). The term translated “repentance” in the Bible refers first to a change of mind before it refers to a change in our actions. So second--

continued on page 3...

Visit Pastor Bob's Blog:
BOBWEATHERS.NET



....continued from page 2

How to Make Real Change in 2021. And How to Make it Stick.

INTENTIONALLY CULTIVATE A HEALTHY, BIBLICAL THOUGHT LIFE.

Changing your thinking to align with God's and to foster healthier habits is not accidental or automatic. It is a decision to yield your mind to the way God thinks so that He can reshape the way you think about life, sin, and yourself (Phil. 2:5).

Being a disciple of Jesus means living in a community of learners, people like you who seek to follow Christ, and that means habitually feeding and nourishing your new thought life in God's Word so you can produce new behaviors and actions that align with what God wants (2 Tim. 2:15). In addition, that's how you learn to reject what God does not want and recognize false teaching when you hear it (Col. 2:4).

But remember that discipleship is a process, not an event. Renewing and reshaping your thoughts to produce new behaviors and to make you more like Christ will not happen overnight. But it will happen if you are consistently in God's Word and in His presence, yielding to Him for change and renewal (Col. 3:9-10).

Don't underestimate the power of the temptation to resort to old habits and sins (Gal. 5:16-17). But also don't underestimate the impact that your decision to change can have, as well as God's power in your life to overcome those old habits (Gal. 5:1,

24).

This includes rejecting what might not contribute to positive change. That is, just because you can do something doesn't mean that you should (1 Cor. 6:12).

MAKE SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE GOALS FOR CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT.

Once your thought life is geared up to follow Christ more faithfully, you can set new goals and take actions that please Him (Rom. 12:1-2). Make goals that include incremental and measurable steps.

Be sure to provide for small wins and celebrate each one to help motivate you to continue making necessary changes.

If your goals are too small, real change won't happen. But don't try to scale Everest before you've learned to hike. For instance, if you are not reading the Bible daily, set a time to do so, pick a place, then start with short sections that you can be sure to read and digest. Don't try to read Leviticus in one sitting.

So as you come out of 2020, and get ready for 2021, how would you answer this question, "What do you plan to do differently?"

The answer might literally change your life.

Announcements

Pick Up Your 2021 Tithing Envelopes at the Church Office

2020 Contribution Statements Will Be Emailed by Jan 15th

For those who do not have email, the statements will be mailed. Please let us know if you have an updated email or mailing address.

Upcoming Sermon Series

"When There's No Going Back: Why Business as Usual is Not a Plan for the Future" and "Hot Topics of 2020"

Don't Forget to Come by The Office and Pick Up Your Christmas Cards

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
fbcshallotte.org

Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm
Closed Friday

Sunday School—Online
Worship—11:00am



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 318
Shallotte, NC

52 Bible Verses to Memorize Weekly

These scriptures are powerful, inspiring, yet short, easy and simple verses for everyone.
Take time each week to focus on memorizing the weekly verse.

- ☐ **Week 1** – “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” – Psalm 119:105, NIV
- ☐ **Week 2** – “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” - Proverbs 3:5, NIV
- ☐ **Week 3** – “Pray without ceasing.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:17, KJV
- ☐ **Week 4** – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” – 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV
- ☐ **Week 5** – “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.” - 1 Corinthians 16:13, NIV