

Fresh Start - 2022

Outline:

Background; info on resolutions

Fresh starts

Bible Verses

Bible characters

How about you...

Did 2021 go as you expected? Did you have any expectations?

We all love new starts, fresh starts right!! Get rid of the old and anticipate the new.

Paul said in Philippians 3:12-14, (KJV)

Php 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Php 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I *do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Php 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In the Faith Translation:

12 Not that I have already obtained to the thing which my heart (*finds certainty in and*) hopes for or have already been made perfect (*in my body immortal*), but I follow after (*the faith of Christ*), so that I may lay hold of the (*life and immortality*) which (*God has purposed and promised from the beginning*) for which my heart has also been grabbed hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not consider myself to have (*already*) obtained to (*the resurrection and redemption of my body*): but this one thing I do, forgetting (*the death that once reigned over me and*) those things which are (*now*) behind (*me*), I reach forward to the sure hope (*of the same life that is in Christ Jesus my Lord*) that is before (*me*),

14 I pursue that (*life which my heart has always desired, which is also*) the mark (*that God has fixed His eyes on for my life from the beginning*) and toward the prize He has called me to, with the (*most eloquent speech and the*) highest calling of God in Christ Jesus.

More to come on this verse later...

Lets have a little fun... What are the top ten resolutions every New Years, in general, year after year.... (Family Feud)

1. Exercise more

1. More commercials for exercise gear

1. Here is a verse we can use totally out of context to motivate ourselves!!!

1. **1Co 9:26** For that reason, I don't run just for exercise or box like one throwing aimless punches, **1Co 9:27** but I train like a champion athlete. I subdue my body and get it under my control, so that after preaching the good news to others I myself won't be disqualified. (TPT)

2. Personally some of my favorite exercises - Jump to conclusions, run around in circles, bend over backwards, making mountains out of molehills, climbing the walls and stretching the truth

2. Lose weight -

1. My new years resolution usually starts with wanting to lose between 10 and 3000 pounds!

2. "Last year's resolution was to lose 20 pounds by Christmas. Only 30 pounds to go."

3. Get organized

4. Learn a new skill or hobby

1. Actually love this one! What is a new skill or hobby you would like to learn??

5. Live life to the fullest - can we go back to Philippians 3 a sit with those verses a while!?!

6. Save more money / spend less money

1. I can give you the Dave Ramsey pitch on how many verses are about money in the bible - but are they???

2. Over 2,000 verses on money and finances in the bible. I would say that most are used out of context and improperly!

7. Quit smoking

8. Spend more time with family and friends

9. Travel more

10. Read more

Notice that none of these are spiritual resolutions.

Statistics

Success/Failure rates over the first 6 months

- Of those who make a New Year's resolution, **after 1 week 75% are still successful** in keeping it. (25% have bailed out already!!!)
- After two weeks, the number drops to 71%.
- After 1 month, the number drops again to 64%.
- And after 6 months, 46% of people who make a resolution are still successful in keeping it.

Overall success/failure rates

- According to a 2016 study, of the 41% of Americans who make New Years resolutions, by the end of the year **only 9% feel they are successful** in keeping them.
- An earlier study in 2007 showed that 12% of people who set resolutions are successful even though **52% of the participants were confident of success** at the beginning.

Reasons for failure

- In one 2014 study, 35% of participants who failed their New Year's Resolutions said they had **unrealistic goals**.
- 33% of participants who failed didn't keep track of their progress.
- 23% forgot about their resolutions.
- About one in 10 people who failed said they made **too many resolutions**.

The Most Popular Resolutions

2021 Statistics

- The **most popular resolutions for 2021** were exercising more and improving fitness (50% of participants), losing weight (48%), saving money (44%), and improving diet (39%).
- Of those that made a resolution in 2020, 35% **kept all their resolutions**, 49% kept some of their resolutions, and only 16% **failed at keeping any** of their resolutions.

2020 Statistics

- Only 27% of survey participants **made any resolutions** for 2020.
- Overall, **the most popular resolutions for 2020** are to exercise more (50%), save money (49%), and eat healthier (43%).
- Most participants (64%) kept some of the same resolutions from 2019 and also made some new ones.

Generational Statistics

- **Baby boomers want to lose weight** (53%) but place **less importance on saving money** (39%) compared to the younger generations.
- **Boomers were the least successful** with only 2% sticking to all their resolutions.
- **Millennials are the most confident** in keeping all their resolutions (39%).
- Millennials were also **the most successful generation**, with 12% successfully keeping all their resolutions.
- Gen Z is 4x more concerned with finding love than any other age group.
- Gen Z also **wants to dress better** and improve their style the most.

Generational definitions:

Boomers: 1946 - 1964 (57-75; 71.6M)

Gen X: 1965 - 1976 (41-56; 65.2M)

Millennial (Gen Y): 1977 - 1994/96 (25-40; 72.1M)

Gen Z: 1997 - 2012 (9-24; 68M)

Gen Alpha: 2012 - 2025 (unborn - 9; 48M)

Regional Statistics

- **Losing weight is more important** to those who live in the Midwest than any other US region, while **exercising is more important** for those on the West Coast compared to the rest of the US.
- The southern states find it more important to **drink less alcohol** than any other region, but the Northeast has more people that would like to **stop drinking alcohol completely**.
- The Northeast is almost twice as likely to want to **spend more time volunteering** in the community
- Millennials on the West Coast are the most concerned with **getting a work promotion or raise** in 2020..
- **Urban dwellers** were the most likely to keep all their resolutions (10%) while **rural residents** were the least likely (4%).

Participant Opinion

- Just under half of all survey participants thought that **New Year's resolutions are pointless**.
- And 22% of participants said that making resolutions have helped them improve their lives.

Do we even need a fresh start?

Isa 43:18 Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old.

How do we define a fresh start?

Fresh Start - an opportunity to start over without prejudice

Prejudice =

1. an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.
2. any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favorable or unfavorable.
3. unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, esp. of a hostile nature, regarding a racial, religious, or national group

We can restate fresh start as: An opportunity to start over without any preconceived ideas, thoughts, opinions or attitudes; whether favorable or unfavorable

Synonyms - Clean Slate, Tabula rasa

Clean slate = An opportunity to start fresh despite past mistakes or problems.

Tabula Rasa =
1. a mind not yet affected by experiences, impressions, etc.
2. anything existing undisturbed in its original pure state.

I actually really like this synonym for Fresh Start!! Think about what that says - anything existing in its original pure state!! Hello first Adam! I bet you would love a fresh start, a tabula rasa!!

Secular thoughts about fresh starts:

Every man should be born again on the first day of January. Start with a fresh page. -**Henry Ward Beecher**

Every day I feel is a blessing from God. And I consider it a new beginning. Yeah, everything is beautiful. - **Prince**

Every sunset is a chance to reset. Every daybreak starts with new eyes.

“We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come.” Joseph Campbell

Luk 5:37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskin will perish.

Do you have a particular saying you like to consider at New Years?? Something that speaks to a fresh start??

How about some bible verses on fresh starts?

Is 43:18-19

18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert.

Israel is in exile and captivity when this is being written. God wanted to put their eyes on the new work He would do, so He began with a reminder to **not remember the former things**. If they were stuck in the failure and sin and discouragement of the past, they would never go forward to the new thing God had for them.

Do we also not get mired in our captivity and our wilderness and forget to look to Abba to see what He has for us. He is only always good, He only wants the best for us. But so often the world beats us down and we forget, we look at ourselves and our circumstances instead of looking to Abba. What does He tell us - I will make a way - even in the wilderness, even in the desert!!! Let us look for a tabula rasa - a mind not affected by past mistakes, experiences or impressions, so that we might be available for God's fresh start in our lives!

1 Peter 1:3 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," -

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who (*by His strength alone*) and according to His lovingkindness and abundant mercy has rescued us (*from the dead*) recreating us in Christ again to a sure hope (*of the same life and likeness to be revealed in us*) that lives in immortal flesh and bone (*at the Father's right hand*) by the (*bodily*) resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Here Peter describes the ultimate fresh start. That God, though Jesus has rescued us from the dead and recreated us into His very likeness and life! It is a fresh start, an opportunity to begin anew with no regard for the past.

I think that this is one of those places where the modern church gives lip service to the fresh start but quickly abandons it by returning to the things of the past, to sin consciousness and a life full of striving

and struggles. It fails to become a fresh start and thus, so many resolve to start again, to try harder, to study more, to pray more, to give more and serve more, thinking that that will bring God's life forth in them. It is a lie!

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

This is a fresh start with impact and change that is beyond any resolution to accomplish. This is truly the work of God in a person's life. Removing the old man, the man that lived by his own strength and replacing it with the new man, the man who's belief system says - it has been accomplished, rest in the Father and His goodness to bring forth His life in you!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." -

I love this one as it speaks to our everlasting design and desire for the life of God! Eternity! I think it is our consideration of eternity that drives many of our resolutions! But do we even need resolutions? If we look at John 10:10 and grasp that Jesus has come to give us life abundantly, then why would I need to resolve to get more life??

Nothing in the finite earthly realm which can satisfy the human heart intellectually or practically... This is the nearest he comes to Augustine's maxim: 'You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you.'" (Eaton)

Ephesians 4:22-24

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." -

(TFT) 22 So that you (might) lay down (the burden of establishing your own life) regarding the way you formerly conducted your life, the old man (who was dead and laboring for life), which (way) is corrupt according to the deceitful lust (for life from things that cannot ever

give you the life your heart truly desires but which can only serve you with death and corruption);

23 And (*so that you would*) be renewed in the spirit of your mind (*by the vital principle contained in the faith of Jesus Christ*):

24 And that you would be clothed by (the life of) the new man, who after the likeness of God is created (through the Spirit of faith) incorruptible (free from death and corruption, in the same life and immortality you see in Christ Jesus), the true (life) which He has set apart for you (from the beginning).

Clean slate:

An opportunity to start fresh despite past mistakes or problems. We are given a clean slate. Our past is forgotten and we can start fresh, putting on the new man who finds his strength in the Father, not in his own ways.

Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

(TFT) 13 Brethren, I do not consider myself to have (already) obtained to (the resurrection and redemption of my body): but this one thing I do, forgetting (the death that once reigned over me and) those things which are (now) behind (me), I reach forward to the sure hope (of the same life that is in Christ Jesus my Lord) that is before (me), 14 I pursue that (life which my heart has always desired, which is also) the mark (that God has fixed His eyes on for my life from the beginning) and toward the prize He has called me to, with the (most eloquent speech and the) highest calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We see the same idea of a fresh start here - to forget what lies behind and to press on towards the newness of life in Christ.

It is part of the good news, the gospel - to be able to leave our past behind, with no prejudice, no malice of preconceived ideas or faulty thinking. Such that our lives are new, restored to their former, proper

state, hitting the mark God has predetermined for us. Eternal life. Eternal life in fellowship with Him, sharing His life and His love and His fruit!!!

It may seem like an obvious observation about what a fresh start is all about, but I have been encouraged and captured by the idea that a fresh start comes with no regard for the past - it is without prejudice, there is no consideration for what has already occurred. When we consider the phrase tabula rasa - anything existing undisturbed in its pure original state, I am even more encouraged! What was our original pure state? Walking in the cool of the day with God, sharing in His life and depending on Him for everything. What a great place to be. What a great fresh state!

What are some biblical characters that got a fresh start?

Joseph

Rejected by his brothers, abandoned into a pit, sold into slavery in Egypt, Rises to second in charge, rejects Potiphar's wife's advances and is imprisoned. Reveals the meaning of dreams but is forgotten for years in prison. Reveals pharaoh's dreams and is placed in charge once again. Forgetting the past, he saves his family and they are given the best of Egypt. Joseph's past is overcome with a future that could only come from God.

Noah

Lived in world full of death and darkness, a place where all mankind had turned to their own ways and were striving constantly to find life outside of God. Noah was called blameless and righteous and he walked with God. Why would he need a clean start? A tabula rasa? Well it really was not Noah that needed the fresh start... it was the world around him. And so God provided an opportunity to start over without any prejudice. And He sealed that opportunity with a rainbow!

Job

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil. He was the greatest man among all the peoples of the East. Why would someone the bible described sin those terms need a fresh start?? What happened to Job as his life progressed? In one day, he lost his seven sons and three daughters; he lost all of his animals; he lost all of his servants; all of his possessions were destroyed. In the following weeks, Job loses his health and is tormented by his wife and three friends. He curses his life but not God.

Remember the definition of a fresh start is an opportunity to start over without prejudice. God brings the opportunity to Job once Job has realized that his understanding and knowledge of who God is was wrong. He had not known God as He truly was. Once he came to this understanding, he got his fresh start. Not holding his ignorance against him, God restores Job's life and possessions times 2.

Paul

As Saul Paul describes himself in Philippians 3:4-6

- though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

Looking back, we would certainly say that Saul needed a fresh start! But in the midst of the life he was living at the time, Saul would have never looked for a fresh start. But then....

Act 9:1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

Act 9:2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Act 9:3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

Act 9:4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

Act 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:**

Act 9:6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Act 9:7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

Act 9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

Act 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Paul gets a fresh start - an opportunity to start again without prejudice, without regard for his past, his persecution of Jesus and His followers. The impact of that fresh start has been world shaking!

Lazarus

Dead - Alive

Woman caught in adultery

Naked and unaware of the forgiveness of God - forgiven and free. Her fresh start begins when Jesus tells her to “Go and sin no more.”.

Prodigal son

Selfish, overwhelmed by failure and death, feels abandoned and alone, an orphan with out a father - restored to family, unconditionally loved, accepted in spite of past

Jesus

The sin of the world upon Him, Gave up deity for humanity, misunderstood, despised, tempted, hunted down, broken hearted over mankind's unbelief, sweats blood, tortured, crucified, buried and left for dead.

BUT...

There is a fresh start!

There is a resurrection, ascension to the right hand of the Father, immortal, incorruptible, glorified, eternal life, a human in the Godhead.

Jesus has provided a way for all mankind to get a fresh start, to have eternal life, to be filled with the life of God, to be filled with His fruit.

We have been divorced from the bondage of sin and death

We are free!

How about your fresh start??

So we have now considered a fresh start in the world's terms, in bible verses and bible characters. I would like to have us spend some time and get your thoughts on a fresh start.

Maybe you want to share what God did in giving you a fresh start or in giving someone you know a fresh start. Are resolutions and fresh starts no longer part of your life, or are they? Are there verses or characters we did not talk about that you would like to discuss?? The floor is open.

So we can see that from a secular perspective and from a biblical perspective, getting a fresh start is a good thing. In fact, though I have given up on making resolutions, considering a fresh start from the biblical perspective has brought joy to my heart! I particularly like the synonym for fresh start -

tabula rasa: 1. a mind not yet affected by experiences, impressions, etc
2. anything existing undisturbed in its original pure state.

When it comes down to it - that is what salvation does for us! It brings us back to our undisturbed, original pure state. Back to adam-likeness prior to the fall when he walked in the cool of the day with God.