

## January 2021 - New Year's Resolutions

I wonder how you feel about leaving 2020 behind and moving into 2021? Most of us probably feel glad and relieved to leave behind a year that has contained so little of what we would have chosen, and so much of what we would not have chosen. And we look with hope to a new year, and especially to a vaccine or vaccines that will protect our loved ones. And yet my heart sinks every time I hear comments about life 'returning to normal,' since it is life as 'normal' that caused this pandemic and that, scientists tell us, will make the next one inevitable unless we change.

Traditionally New Year, and particularly New Year resolutions are connected with change. If you are like me, New Year resolutions probably help you reconnect with your deepest longings about how you would like the world to be, or what sort of person you would like to be. But if you are like me, New Year resolutions may also remind you of just how difficult it can be to change ourselves, to change our attitudes and behaviours. And I believe, as the popular quote often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi says, that we must 'be the change we wish to see in the world.'

As a small child, I used to make hopelessly ambitious New Year resolutions, that I invariably broke before January was out. Now I still make resolutions but they are an ongoing part of my life as a Christian. Christians talk of 'discipleship' as the process of things we do to try to help us become closer to the person God intends us to be, closer to being the very best person we can be. And the word 'disciple' means essentially 'a learner.' So I try to ensure my life is a continual process of learning more about how I impact the world, and a continual process of doing my part towards moving the world closer to my vision of how I believe God intends the world to be; a world where every living thing flourishes, where every creature lives in harmony with every other, and where no person, and no living creature, suffers fear or pain or exploitation. And yes, I still find it hard to change how I live, but my faith assures me that the effort is worth making, and the end result is worth striving for.

So my prayer for us all this year, is that we will find time to reflect on the change we would like to see in the world, and would find the courage and strength to work towards that better world.

Yours in Christ,

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