

Determining To Grow In The New Year

In [Reformed Baptist Fellowship](#) on Tuesday, December 28, 2010 at 12:08 pm

When I was a boy I was introduced to the world of Marvel comics by two of my older brothers. These comics not only contained the stories of the super heroes but page after page of advertising designed to excite the interest of young boys. I was promised that I could have x-ray vision and become a master of karate and even build a submarine!

The one ad that stands out above all others was the one by Charles Atlas, the body builder. The ad was about transformation. Here was a skinny guy getting sand kicked in his face at the beach and who decides that he is going to send way to Mr. Atlas to learn how to transform his body. He 'gambles the stamp' and receives the information. By following the simple steps he is transformed into a muscular man who can stand up for himself and win back his girl.

The idea behind the ad was simple: if you will commit yourself to a certain pattern of life, you will have results. You do not have to be a victim of circumstance, you do not have to stay a weakling. If you will only eat right and exercise, you would be shocked by how changed your physique could be. Generally speaking this is true. If you diet and exercise this year, your physical condition will improve. But it will require more than a desire to change. It will require activity. It will require perseverance. Most boys seeing the ad by Mr. Atlas would say that they wanted to look like that, but how many were willing to do what it takes to accomplish that goal?

The same holds true for the Christian life. It is possible for you to become a stronger, more muscular Christian. It is possible for you to grow this year in both grace and in knowledge. It is possible this coming year for you to walk more closely with God, to enjoy his comforts, and to grow in holiness.

God has provided means for our growth. Those means are freely available for every believer, certainly every believer in the Western world. The problem that most professing believers face is not one of ignorance, but rather of desire and felt need.

Do I want to do these things? Do I need to do these things? I want the results (being a strong Christian) but do I want the results badly enough to do what I need to do to have the results? Allow seven words of exhortation for the coming year.

1. Commit yourself to the daily intake of God's word

-Read or listen to the Bible daily

-Meditate

-The blessed man meditates upon God's word.

-Memorize

-Hide God's word in your heart.

2. Commit yourself to the stated meetings of the church

Every single meeting of the church for instruction, worship, and prayer is designed to bring glory to God and to bring help to you on the pilgrim pathway. By willfully absenting yourselves from those meetings you are denying yourself crucial nutrition for your soul.

3. Commit yourself to mortifying sins

Is there some nagging issue in your life, some place of disquiet in your soul, some thing which saps your strength and your assurance, the lingering issue of concern regarding your soul, some sin which easily ensnares you? When will it be dealt with? Shall sin have dominion over you? Has God placed the resources at hand—prayer and the word and the Spirit to aid you in overcoming it? Does he desire victory? Will he provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it?

4. Commit yourself to hospitality

1 Peter 4:9⁹ *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*

Hospitality generally speaking refers to showing love to strangers—taking in the traveler, but here it is expressed within the church. Every member in the church has something to offer you and you have something to offer every member. Can you receive or give these benefits on the Lord's Day and at prayer meeting only?

5. Commit yourself to dealing with unnecessary distractions

We all have distractions in our lives. Our jobs and daily human needs, our commitments to family, etc. But are there things that fill our time and our affections which detract from the great issues of life?

6. Commit yourself to study (read a good biography, find a good book on a doctrinal subject)

I have found few things more helpful and challenging than the reading of a good biography. When I say good—I am referring to a worthy subject, a well written treatment and what I will call realism—not fawning praise, not the presentation of perfection, but real progress of real pilgrims

7. Enjoy the rich benefits of a sanctified Lord's Day

Here is a day, by divine design, to aid us in delighting in God. Here is a day designed to be for us a foretaste of heaven. A declension in our commitment to its benefits will not promote heavenly ends.

May God help us to grow strong in the coming year!

Jim Savastio, Pastor

[Reformed Baptist Church of Louisville](#)