

Devotions

☐ Monday - The Worst Slavery of All.

That one race of men would enslave another is one of the ugly symptoms of a corrupt society, but there is another kind of slavery far worse and it is enslavement to sin. The unsaved man or woman has no moral free will, but is called in Scripture “a slave of sin.” Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34; cf. Rom. 6:20-21). True freedom is found only in Christ, when we see our own sins as more than just random isolated acts, but rather as “an organic network of compulsive attitudes, and behaviors deeply rooted in our alienation from God” (Richard Lovelace). Christian, “confess your sins” daily (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9), “repent [turn around] and return” to Christ (Acts 3:19), for only then are you truly free. Read John 8:31-36

☐ Tuesday - Jesus Junkies.

The beginning of each new year often marks our futile attempts to get the monkey off our back and beat our addictions to such things as smoking, drinking, overeating, sleeping too much, and worse. The dictionary defines addiction as: “The condition of being physically and mentally dependent on a particular substance, thing, or activity and unable to stop without feeling adverse effects.” All addictions are one kind of enslavement to sin or another, “For by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved” (2 Pet. 2:19). And the only way to overcome slavery to sin is to be enslaved to God (Rom. 6:20-22). The drug addict will quit one drug when he finds something stronger, and so the way we must beat our addiction and enslavement to sin is to replace it with something more potent, more powerful, that is Christ. But to get hooked on Jesus Christ one must become a regular “user,” i.e. of the Bible, prayer, Christian fellowship and outreach. And as we find ourselves needing more and more of Christ, growing desperately dependent on Him, always craving more (Psa. 42:1), then, as the song says, “The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” Read Romans 6:1-23

☐ Wednesday - Useless Resolve.

Christian, you cannot change yourself! Jesus already knows that about you, for He has said, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). Your New Year’s resolutions are powerless! They “have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence” (Col. 2:23). So stop promising what you are going to do this new year, and start proclaiming what Christ has already done: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). Read Romans 7:18

☐ Thursday - Have You Died?

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who *died* to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:1-2), “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin, for he who has *died* is freed from sin” (Rom. 6:6-7). The Apostle Paul fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith, and received a victor’s wreath (2 Tim. 4:7-8). What was his secret? “I *die* daily” (1 Cor. 15:31). Read Galatians 5:24; 6:14; Matthew 5:29-30

☐ Friday - Freedom in Christ.

“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. ... Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.’ ... [but] if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:31-36). Read 1 Peter 2:16; Galatians 5:13