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I've always liked New Year's. It is a "clean" holiday. That is, the past rolls over like an ancient dream and the future beckons. How will that future be written? What events will my life inscribe upon it? How will outside events impact me? New Year's is a brief time when life almost stands still as you await the future. Since I'm a Christian, it also means I'll be the beneficiary of Godly blessings that as yet I cannot discern nor imagine. But one thing stands true for all: New Year's means life changes.

What do you do on New Year's Eve? I'm a boring kind of guy. I've hardly ever gone out partying like so many. (It's a dangerous night to drive.) Instead, I've usually spent it quietly in contemplation. This has spilled over during my married years, too. So, I cook a memorable meal, usually with a good bottle of wine to accompany it. Then, if you have a fireplace, it's time to sit down and recount the past year with its memories. What did you learn over the past year? How were your personal horizons expanded? How did sadness impact you and how did unexpected happiness fill your soul? Did you meet new people who caused you to step out of your current rut? Were you challenged as a human being—both physically and emotionally? Are you stronger because of it, or weaker?

Then come the proverbial New Year's resolutions. In my case, it goes like this: how can I be a better husband? What do I need to do differently that will cause my congregation members to grow as people and Christians? What issues have I avoided because I believed others weren't ready for them, and has that equation changed? Do I need to better manage my own health? If so, what can I do to improve it? After pondering such thoughts I start mulling around solutions. Those solutions then solidify into resolutions. Following that, they (hopefully) are cemented into actions over the months to follow.

All of you know that the digital age has changed our lives in unimaginable ways. It has also changed how we think, literally. The low-level radiation and electro-magnetic waves of wireless networks, cell phones, modern televisions, microwaves, etc. etc. assault us on a daily basis and researchers are starting to discover that it alters our brain waves so that we "think" differently than people in previous generations. Attention spans are shortened. Memory, both short-term and long-term, are changed. The ability to retain and process information has been altered. Parents, you see it in your children every day, so I don't have to tell you any of this. And children, I know this sounds like "old people talk" but that's because you've never known anything different.

Well, I don't want to become maudlin in this newsletter on New Year's. But I do plead with all of you to set aside time—hours, to sit down and quietly ponder the meaning of your life. I suppose we'd called that a "reboot." God Almighty gave you the gift of life. He gave you the blood ransom of His Son. He did it so that you might live life to its fullest—fulfilled

and enriched in ways too numerous to enumerate. New Year's is a moment in your time when you can take stock of all this. Use it wisely.....