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## Newness In God

I particularly enjoy new beginnings. I'm the type of person who loves starting new adventures and projects. The idea of having a blank slate to work with and growing something out of nothing just excites me. The trouble begins however, when things don't go exactly as I planned (as they're sure to do) and for some reason, my efforts get frustrated. Now I enjoy a challenge as much as the next person, but sometimes things just get a little too tangled for my pain threshold.

Over the years I worked hard at becoming disciplined and trying to finish well what I started. Then one day, on a certain project, I realized it was simply gridlocked. For various reasons and mix of circumstances, things had simply deteriorated beyond my control. In my own power I had no way out of the circumstance. At that point I was faced with the very humbling fact that I was about to fail. For a "type A" person that is very driven, that is about the worst thing that can happen to you. After frustration had run its course, denial set in. After denial, anger bubbled up, then blame and resentment. Those emotions were a recipe for disaster. In looking to my own power my project failed. Finally resentment turned to regret and over time the memory of that failure settled into the back of my mind. Subconsciously, even if in a small way, it haunted every new step I took.

As I grew older, I inevitably experienced more failures. Relationships, bad purchasing decisions, bad habits, more failed ventures – they all built up subconsciously until I started to look at life a little differently. I became jaded, my spark of enthusiasm was doused and a level of cynicism set in. It wasn't obvious on the surface but it was there. I figured that was just life and I had to live with it. But restlessly, I found myself wishing I could simply wipe the slate clean and have a brand new start. That's when it finally dawned on me that the Bible may have an answer. I began searching the Word of God for the concept of starting over and what I discovered blew my mind. God is a God of newness.

Let's think about that for a second. God is a God of newness. God is not old. He is ancient but He is not old (Daniel 7:9). There is a difference. God is all about regeneration. Since before our ancestors, Adam and Eve, sinned, God had a plan to wipe the slate clean for us (Ephesians 1:3-7). As you're probably already thinking, the new birth in Jesus is the finest example of regeneration (John 3:1-16). The Lord literally says He makes us a brand new being when we give our lives to Him. But it doesn't stop there. Even after we give our lives to Christ, burdens can creep in and become a part of our life again. The Lord wants to remove our burdens so we can live in freedom (Matthew 11:28-30). The following few scriptures illustrate so beautifully the hope that is in God for every circumstance in our lives. God's power is regenerative for everything and anything you need.

*"Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Cor 5:16-17*

I love this passage of scripture because it demonstrates how completely the Lord renews us when we are in Him. Notice when I was trying to accomplish my goals in my own ability, it usually ended up in frustration. In the scripture above it says "...old things have passed away". The Lord can remove all of our past failures, scars, wounds, hang-ups... in fact anything that isn't in line with God's plan for us, can and will be removed when we choose to make Him our priority.

*"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4*

After we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior the adventure doesn't end there. In fact it's only just begun. As we grow in faith, and overcome trials we could never face before we get stronger and stronger in Him. Life simply becomes more successful. The Holy Spirit guides you and your heart simply makes the right decisions because your priorities are aligned correctly. This is walking in the newness of life. Old habits, weaknesses, relationships - anything that hinders us from having a fulfilled life in God is behind us. Each day can be a new, refreshing adventure.

*"But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."* **Romans 7:6**

There it is in black and white. You have been delivered from what another passage of scripture calls "the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:10-14). The law (also referred to as the letter) was necessary to teach us what God's will is, but it's impossible to keep the law in our own abilities. When Jesus ascended to Heaven He sent us a Helper. That's the Holy Spirit! He's our friend. He's our comforter. In fact, the Holy Spirit is the source of dunamis – God's regenerative power. The Holy Spirit will help you consistently walk in God's will and achieve success in every area of your life. Since the Holy Spirit can now fill you with His power, you don't have to struggle in your own strength and abilities. In fact, since the Lord makes all things new for you, it doesn't matter where you've come from, where you've been or what you've done, even as recent as a minute ago. It only matters where you're going.

*"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* **Philippians 3:12-14**

As we begin a new year, I encourage you to meditate on how God is a God of newness. Put off those old things that you know are hindering you. Make time to read the Word of God and pray. You'll see how your mind is renewed and each day will become more and more successful. God is a God of newness! Let Him give you a fresh start.

May the God of peace be with you this week and throughout the coming year!

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