

Cybercolumn for 1/05/04: New Year's Resolutions by Brett Younger_11204

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CYBERCOLUMN New Year's Resolutions

By Brett Younger

New Year's Day is lost on some of us. I never understand the fascination with the descending ball in Times Square. I am too cheap to buy any fireworks more impressive (or more flammable) than a sparkler. Dick Clark is dull. I eat black-eyed peas all year long. Baylor is in a New Year's Day Bowl with the frequency of Halley's Comet.

I am especially tired of New Year's resolutions. The effectiveness of this practice is questionable at best. Most resolutions are completely unreasonable:



"I will never raise my voice again."

"I will read a book every day."

"I will lose a pound a week for the rest of my life."

“I will never make another resolution.”

I am a dismal failure at such resolutions. Diets last until I’m offered a Krispy Kreme or anything edible I faintly desire. No matter how intellectual my reading list, I always end up spending more time with Garrison Keillor than Paul Tillich. The year I resolved to jog was dismal until I stopped jogging (about Jan. 15).

Like any minister, I need to make up religious reasons for my opinions. This is the strongest justification I’ve come up with for my disdain for New Year’s resolutions: The theological problem with resolutions is that they make good behavior the central focus of our hopes for the new year. While good behavior is often the result of the Christian faith, the Christian faith does not begin or end with good behavior, but with grace.

Robert Farrar Capon writes, “Christianity starts by telling you that you have no place left to go because you’re already home free; and no favor to earn because God thinks you’re the greatest thing since sliced bread. All you have to do is explore the crazy mystery of your acceptance.”

My only resolution this year is to live with a sense of God’s grace.

Only by grace will I ever learn to pay attention, recognize the intimations of the divine and sense the presence of God in the everyday. In recognizing grace, I will be grateful for the good gifts I have been given, focus on what I have rather than on what I don’t and appreciate the abundance of my experiences.

Grace leads to creativity, kindness and healing. By grace, I will live with imagination, enthusiasm and passion.

I may even lose 10 pounds.

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