

JANUARY 2018
“A Lifelong Quest!”

A new year, an old tradition: Resolutions!

Gonna give up tobacco? Sweat and swear your way to weight loss? We'll kick old habits, kick start new ones and hope by the end of January we are not kicking ourselves for breaking yet another resolution!

Whatever your goal is this year, keep it real by remembering this painful fact: *it is just as hard – if not harder – to unlearn an evil as to learn a good.* Hard to admit, but – the bad habits and self-destructive ways we nurture are things we enjoy!

When you give up that 'evil', that 'bad habit' and it woos you back, you return like a pig to wallowing in the mud! Pigs like their mud and we like our self-destructive ways of life. To unlearn them takes more than a day, a month, or a year of simply resolving to do better.

It also takes more than you! Evil finds an ally within us – “*The good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish,*” (Romans 7:19). Boy do we! We've got major challenges ahead . . .

Luther once said: “*Never to sin again is repentance at its best; and a new life is the best of repentance.*” I love and hate this! I love it because of its truth, because it doesn't offer me a quick fix, an overnight transformation of the self. I hate it because of its truth, because it doesn't offer me a quick fix, an overnight transformation of the self!

There will be times when nothing in life will seem more beautiful, more enticing than to wallow in the mud. But you are also not alone in your struggles! You have family, friends, a church who embrace you as one in the faith. AND a brother in God Himself! He became man, experienced the alluring power of temptation, and never wallowed in that mud! Precisely so He might lift you up when you fall, wash the mud and muck off you, and kick the devil out of the way when he tempts you!

How about skipping New Year's resolutions for life resolutions! Why? Unlearning evil and learning good is a lifelong quest and Jesus walks with you!

A Blessed and Happy New Year to You!

Pastor Bert