

Continued from Page Three, "Striving For That Which Is Better"

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Being a Christian is not for the lazy. It is not for the one satisfied to stay in the "pig sty"! Being a Christian is for those ready and willing to make the effort to live by a higher standard. It is for those who are willing to live by what God says, and not what the world says (I Pet. 4:11). It is for those who are spiritually minded, and not worldly or carnally-minded (Rom. 8:6). It is for those

striving for that which is better!

What about you, dear one? Where do you find yourself? Why not make your life right today before it is too late? Let us help you get started on that road that leads to everlasting life (Matt. 7:13-14)! When you do what the Lord says, and strive for that which is better, God will bless (Eph. 1:3), and you can look forward to a home in Heaven one day! Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

**Are You Heaven Bound?**  
By David J. Riggs

It matters not what else you do in life, if you miss heaven you have been a complete failure. You might gather about you great riches and fame and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you are not ready for heaven you have been a miserable failure. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you receive heaven, your life has been a marvelous success.

You can't afford to miss heaven for if you miss it, you miss all. It is the place of eternal rest (Heb. 4:9-11) where pain, sickness, and death will not be known (Rev. 21:4). It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away (1 Pet. 1:4). It is that city built by the living God (Heb. 11:10).

to the will of God (Matt. 7:21). Let His Word guide you (2 Tim. 3:15) and let no one beguile you or your reward (Col. 2:18). Overcome temptations (James 1:12) and suffer for His cause with rejoicing (Matt. 5:11-12). If you do these things, heaven will be yours someday for the God of heaven who cannot lie has promised it.

I quote a few words from some of our songs: "I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, where the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade." "I am bound for the promised land, promised land, I am bound for the promised land; O who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land." "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've now less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

Credit: http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs ♦

You don't have to miss heaven. Humbly submit yourself

**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

**About the Hillcrest church of Christ**

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

**How to Contact Us**

Telephone: (920)499-5677  
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



**Our Address**

1621 Hillcrest Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54313

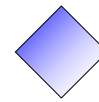


**Schedule of Assembly**

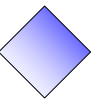
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



# The Voice of Truth



January 1, 2012

**Biblical New Year Resolutions**  
By Jimmy Pettigrew

Another year passes and we are made aware of our most precious, fragile gift: time. Benjamin Franklin wrote "Dost thou love life? Then waste not time, for that is the stuff that life is made of." Our use of time determines success or failure. Surely it is fitting that we make some Biblical new year's resolutions to direct us into the future. Let us look at the word "resolutions" for this article.

good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). Brethren, God has a right to expect godly living, cheerful giving, Bible reading, praying, loving and faithful attendance of worship services from His soldiers. After all we volunteered! We need to say as Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

**1. Let us resolve to stay in the (R) Race (Hebrews 12:1).** In this race, we must be able to take it and not give up. Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run ..." (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). We need to get rid of everything that would slow us down or hold us back, or detour us from running the race of our Christian life. Stay in the race!

**4. Let us resolve to keep our (O) Obligations to God (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; Matthew 22:37).** We, as God's children have the obligation, duty, we promised the Lord that we will ever be faithful in all His duties as a part of the bride, the church. We promise to love the Lord, the church, to keep the commandments of the Lord, to walk in all His ways and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart. May I implore you to live true to your word being a Christian!

**2. Let us resolve to stop making (E) Excuses (Luke 14:16 ff).** A common practice among men is that of excuse-making for their failure to do their duty. Many in the churches take lightly the command to come together for worshipping God. So they make plans as these three did in (Luke 14:16 ff), and use excuses why couldn't assemble with the saints (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 10:25). The Master was angry with the three, and all who would lightly consider His generous offer. Stop making excuses, and do your best!

**5. Let us resolve to be united in (L) Love (Ephesians 5:1-2; John 13:34-35).** John commands Christians to love one another (1 John 3:11; 4:7, 16). The lack of such love causes grievous harm to the growth and welfare of the body of Christ (Galatians 5:15). If there is one thing that all men know about the teaching of Christ, they know that He emphasized love (John 13:35). How do we know that we truly love the brethren? John says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2).

**3. Let us resolve to be good (S) Soldiers for Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).** This army is made up of all volunteers. Our enlistment began when by faith (Hebrews 11:6) we repented (Luke 13:3) of our sins, confessed (Matthew 10:32-33) the name of our Commander in Chief (Hebrews 2:10) and was buried into Him for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:27). As a result, one is in subjection to God's will, a member of the spiritual army of God. As soldiers in the Lord's army we need to "Fight the

**6. Let us resolve to be (U) unselfish (2 Corinthians 5:15).** Who had died for all, deserves all glory! Christians are bought or redeemed for the Lord's own possession (Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19). One of the most difficult things in life is denying self, and living apart from selfish desires and ambitions, but to be a disciple of Christ it must be done (Matthew 16:24-25). We "no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2). "Let no man seek his own" (1 Corinthians 10:24). The love of Christ constrains us to leave self!

Continued on Page Two

**In This Issue...**

Pages 1 to 2 - Biblical New Year Resolutions  
Pages 2 to 4 - "Striving For That Which Is Better"

Page 4 - Are You Heaven Bound?  
Page 4 - What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Continued from Page One, "Biblical New Year Resolutions"

**7. Let us resolve to use our (T) Talents (Matthew 25:14-30).** God requires that we use our talents and not only use them, but to use them faithfully. Woe to the brother or sister that shirks their responsibility, for their eternal destiny hangs in the balance. Use them or lose them!

**8. Let us resolve to keep our saving (I) Influence (Philippians 1:27).** The conversation (manner of life) of the Christian be as cometh the Gospel. The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ. The conduct of the Christian should adorn the doctrine of God (**Titus 2:10**). Adorn means to beautify. The life of a faithful Christian reveals the beauty of God's will and way. There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life. Show the world what a Christian is (**Matthew 5:13-16**)!

**9. Let us resolve to be (O) Orderly.** Orderly means a soldier assigned to perform services. We are soldiers in the Lord's army, and we need to be doers, not hearers only (**James 1:22**). It is absolutely essential that we, being followers of Jesus, emulate His example in doing the will of our heavenly Father (**John 4:24**). God pronounces a blessing upon all those who both hear and do His will (**Revelation 22:14**).

## "Striving For That Which Is Better"

By Jarrod Jacobs

It is sad to see people who have become satisfied and complacent with their life the way it is, from the physical as well as the spiritual aspects! Some have the attitude that if they reach a certain point equal to, or perhaps just above the "Jones'," then they are happy. Unfortunately, there is a growing element in our society that presses for everyone to be the "same," and cries "foul" if anyone seems to have a more enjoyable life than others.

Those who become Christians are to strive for that which is better. The fact that they wish to become a Christian shows that they want to improve their lives. They want to leave their relationship with sin and Satan (**Eph. 2:12**) and enjoy a relationship with God (**II Jn. 9**). They believe that Jesus is the Son of God (**Jn. 8:24**), they repent of their sins (**Lk. 13:3**), they confess their faith in Christ (**Matt. 10:32**), and are baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 22:16**). In doing this, a precious few are saying that they are striving for that which is better. They know that following their own wishes and thoughts will not get them to Heaven (**Jer. 10:32**). They know that God is wiser, and

**10. Let us resolve to be truly a (N) New person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).** We are new in Christ; the old sinful self has been put to death (**Romans 6:6**). The old man is the sinful man, a servant of sin (**Romans 6:17**), but in Christ we are new people! The new man is "created in righteousness and true holiness" (**Ephesians 4:24**). A new man is indeed a Christ-like man (**Colossians 3:10**). Are we Christ like? Do people see a difference between the old you and the new you (**1 Peter 4:4**)?

**11. Let us resolve to (S) Support this congregation!** I love the church of our Lord! Have you ever wondered just what you could do to support, to help this congregation be what God desires for it? We can support, help this congregation by:

- Living pure lives.
- Giving the men of this congregation support.
- Promoting love and unity.
- Never bringing shame to this congregation.
- Giving as God as commanded.
- Doing the best you can for the cause of Christ.
- Attending every service.
- Putting God first.

What are you going to do with this new year God has given you? •

wish to be in His presence in eternity (**Isa. 55:11**; **I Cor. 1:20-31**; **I Jn. 1:7**).

Once one becomes a Christian, he is then free from his past sins (**Rom. 6:17-18**; **Col. 2:12-13**). Then, the true test begins! One who is a Christian recognizes that God's word is the standard he follows. He does not follow the consensus of the people (**Jn. 12:48**). He recognizes **II Timothy 3:16-17** and knows that no act, word, or thought is a "good work" unless it is authorized by God in the Bible! He understands that God's thoughts are important. His thinking must conform to the will of God, and he must think on things that are pure and upright; not on things that are debased and degrading (**Rom. 12:2**; **Phil. 4:8**). He sees that he is not to act like "everyone else." In fact, most will be astonished at the degree of change that has taken place (**I Pet. 4:3-5**). This person recognizes that his speech must also be in line with the word of God (**I Pet. 4:11**). To talk as the world talks is unacceptable to a Christian, for he is striving for that which is better; to a higher standard!

Continued on Page Three

Continued from Page Two, "Striving For That Which Is Better"

The apostle Paul wrote: "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (**Phil. 3:13-14**). The word "press" means, "to pursue, ensue, follow, given to" (**Strong's**). In other words, Paul said he was following, or pursuing that "mark" set before him! He was active. He had a goal/purpose, and was given to better things because of Christ!

When Jesus talked of the two roads one may travel in this life, He said, "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*" (**Lk. 13:24**). To "strive" is to, "struggle, lit. (to compete for a prize), fig. (to contend with an adversary), or gen. (to endeavor to accomplish something):-fight, labor fervently" (**Strong's**). Christ was saying that in order to be on the strait and narrow road that leads to life we must struggle, or fight for it. We must be contending and active in reaching this goal (**Matt. 7:13-14**)! The Christian cannot be complacent. We will not accidentally go to Heaven. It takes determination! It takes effort! It requires striving for that which is better!

Unfortunately, there is an element of lazy people who do not work toward this end. As a result, they are like the prodigal son who, after having wasted his living, was found in the pig sty (**Lk. 15:15-16**)! When Jesus spoke that parable, we rejoice to know that the son did not stay there, but repented and returned to his father (**Lk. 15:17-21**). I am sad to say, however, that instead of leaving, we see some folks today who are satisfied to stay in the proverbial "pig sty" long after the prodigal son has gone home to his father!

**1)** Some are satisfied to stay in the "pig sty" if it means they can have another drink! Alcohol so controls their lives that they would rather have it than the Lord. Remember, "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*" (**Prov. 20:1**). There are a lot of "unwise" people around today!

**2)** Some are satisfied to stay in the "pig sty" if it means that they can be like the world. If they can dress like the world, talk, think, act, and die like the world, then they are satisfied. The apostle John showed us, "*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*" (**I Jn. 2:17**). Why would we wish to be like the world when we can strive for that which is higher, nobler, and better and be with God one day? This shows the pull that the world has on us that we must re-

sist!

**3)** Some are satisfied to stay in the "pig sty" if it means that they can still listen to their "favorite" teacher. It matters little to some whether or not this one is teaching the truth of God's word! "Just give me good ol' brother so-and-so" is their cry, without any regard for whether or not this "brother" holds fast the pattern of sound words (**II Tim. 1:13**)! Have we become complacent in this area of our spiritual lives?

**4)** Some are satisfied to stay in the "pig sty" if it means that they can have a "soothed conscience." If a preacher preaches the truth (**II Tim. 4:2**), and does so as a "good minister" of the gospel (**I Tim. 4:6**), reminding people from whence they have fallen (**II Pet. 1:12-15**), then this man is considered by those in the "pig sty" to be "offensive," "rude," "a meddler," and someone for whom they have little or no respect! How sad, when this same one is respected and loved by the most high God, because he is doing what he is supposed to do (Remember **Heb. 11:38**)!

**5)** Some are satisfied to stay in the "pig sty" if it means that they can wallow in their denominational dogma, their creedal crutches, or their pseudo-unity, in which they "put aside" various differences for a time, but return to them when in the "safety" of their own meeting houses! The Bible says that true unity can be had! Yet, it comes only when we lay down these man-made opinions and philosophies, and unite under the blood-stained banner of the cross, to rely only and solely upon the book of God for our guidance (**Col. 3:17**). Yes, there can be unity. In fact, it is commanded (**I Cor. 1:10**). But, unity only comes when we agree to follow the right standard. True Bible unity is not attained by following what our parents did or did not do, by simply doing what we like or avoiding what we do not like. Nor is unity based upon what society approves, or does not approve!!

## Conclusion

Yes, God calls those who are His children to a higher and nobler standard. He calls us to that which is better. Seeing that the New Testament is a "*better covenant, which was established upon better promises*" (**Heb. 8:6**), doesn't it make sense that His people would be called to a higher, better standard!

Don't you want to be a part of this? If so, why not start today by becoming a Christian. Do not listen to what the denominational world says is necessary for salvation. Do as the Bible says! Why not live for God? Do His will; be "*faithful unto death*" that you might receive "*a crown of life*" (**Rev. 2:10**). Do as Paul says and "*be ye stedfast,*

Continued on Page Four