



5 SPIRITUAL

New Year's RESOLUTIONS

A PHILIPPIANS BIBLE STUDY

5 Spiritual New Year's Resolutions: A Philippians Bible Study

by Vivian Bricker

The best time to try to cultivate new habits is during the start of the New Year, such as making New Year's resolutions. Set your heart on Christ this year, and you will experience much growth in your walk with Him.

During the start of each New Year, it is common for us to want a new beginning or a fresh start. With the start of the New Year, it is a great time to begin trying to cultivate your relationship with Christ. Through this five-part Bible study on the Book of Philippians, we will be able to cultivate a better perspective on the New Year in a way that glorifies God.

Within this five-part Bible study, there are sections on living for God, cultivating humility, focusing on our future citizenship in heaven, giving all of our anxieties over to God, and setting our hearts on Christ.

1. Live for God

([Philippians 1:1-30](#))

Within the first part of our spiritual New Year's resolutions, we focus on the aspect of living for God, as found in [Philippians 1:1-30](#). Throughout this first chapter of Philippians, Paul speaks of how his chains and imprisonments were actually a way to advance the gospel.

Despite Paul having been imprisoned multiple times, beaten, and persecuted for his faith in Christ, Paul never wavered in his faith in Christ. Instead, he chose to continue to live for God.

In [Philippians 1:27-30](#), Paul tells us, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved — and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have."

In this passage of Scripture, Paul urges us to live our lives in a manner worthy of Jesus Christ and to stand firm in the Spirit. Paul also informs us that we are called not only to believe in Jesus but also to suffer for Christ.

As Paul displayed throughout his life, he was constantly suffering, yet he counted it as nothing compared to the joy he had in the Lord. While it can be hard for us to do at times, we need to take the same perspective as Paul. Just as Paul lived for God, we, too, need to live for our great Savior.

Living for God can be in tangible ways, including conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel ([Philippians 1:27a](#)). When we follow Jesus' teaching and apply His instructions to our hearts, we will grow to become better followers of Him.

With the New Year approaching, we need to challenge ourselves to be like Paul and choose to live for God. By choosing to live for God, we will face struggles, persecutions, and spiritual warfare, yet it is nothing compared to what Christ did for us in order to redeem us back to Himself.

Cultivating a heart of living for God can be done through being active in prayer to God, reading the Bible, applying the Bible's teachings to your lives, growing in a faith community, and utilizing your own spiritual gifts to help edify the church.

God wants you to grow in your faith, and through this, you will be better able to live for Him. The world might teach us to live for ourselves, but this will only lead to destruction. Instead of living for ourselves this upcoming New Year, we need to live for God.

Questions to Consider:

- How am I actively living to serve God now?
- How can I better serve God this year?
- What are some tangible steps I can take this year to live for God?

2. Cultivate Humility

([Philippians 2:1-30](#))

The second part of our spiritual New Year's resolutions includes cultivating humility, which comes from [Philippians 2:1-30](#). Learning humility and cultivating it in our daily lives is important for our Christian walk.

The best time to try to cultivate new habits is during the start of the New Year, such as making New Year's resolutions. With the New Year approaching, cultivating humility is extremely important in our communication with others and God.

Paul tells us in [Philippians 2:1-4](#), "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

As Paul tells us in this passage of the New Testament, God wants to take the same mindset as Jesus. We are to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Instead, we need to value others above ourselves.

We do this by placing other people's needs above our own. This is exactly what Jesus did when He died on the cross for our sins. He looked out for our own interests and well-being over His own.

[*Philippians 2:5-8*](#) tells us, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

In this section of [*Philippians 2*](#), we are told more about the humility of Christ and how He lowered Himself to take on the nature of a servant in order to redeem us from our sins. Jesus did this because He loves us and desires to have a relationship with us.

With the upcoming New Year, we need to try to cultivate humility in our own daily lives. Humility can be hard to cultivate, and there is no point where we

can declare ourselves to be “humble.” Rather, other individuals in our lives will be able to see if we are living in true humility.

We can cultivate humility by following Jesus’ example. By placing the interests and needs of others above your own, you will be able to cultivate humility in tangible ways. When we love others, we can’t help but place their own interests above our own, even if it makes life a bit more difficult for ourselves.

Similar to Christ, when we have true humility, we will not look out for our own interests but for the interest of others. We will not see our own interests and well-being as being more important than those around us.

Cultivating humility can take time, yet it is possible through prayer, studying God’s Word, and following Jesus’ example.

Questions to Consider:

- How would you rate your own humility?
- How would others rate your humility?
- Are these values equal? Why or why not?
- Humility is not something that comes easily to us.
- What are some ways you can cultivate humility this upcoming year?
- What is a way you can practice humility with those who are not kind to you?

3. Remember That Our Future Citizenship Is in Heaven

(Philippians 3:1-21)

The third section of our spiritual New Year's resolutions focuses on our future citizenship in heaven, as found in chapter 3 of Philippians. With the New Year, we can have hope because our future citizenship is in heaven.

Paul tells us, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (*Philippians 3:20-21*).

As Paul tells us, our future citizenship is in heaven, and we will have ownership of our glorious bodies.

Some of us may have difficult years approaching along with the genesis of the New Year. Many individuals may be starting college, starting a new job, or moving out for the first time. Each of these new starts can cause anxiety to rise in our hearts.

God wants us to have hope for the New Year because He has great plans for our lives. Even if the year might not go as planned or it is filled with many ups and downs, we can still look forward to the day when we will be with God in heaven.

As believers, our ultimate home is in heaven. Despite the truth that many of our situations this year will be less than ideal, we have the eternal hope of being with God in paradise.

With the New Year coming up shortly, it is important that we rest in the knowledge that our future home is with Christ. The teachings of the world might try to tempt us that we are “missing out” on things because we are following Christ, yet this couldn’t be further from the truth.

Paul tells us, “For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again, even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things” ([*Philippians 3:18-19*](#)).

Paul helps remind us that those who live according to the world and don’t know Jesus are living as enemies of Christ. Instead of accepting Christ, they deny Him. As Paul says, their destiny is destruction.

Questions to Consider:

- What are some steps you can take this year to keep your focus on heaven?
- What are you most excited about concerning your citizenship in heaven?
- With the New Year starting soon, how can you help others know about the glorious gift of knowing Jesus and becoming fellow citizens of heaven?

4. Give All Anxieties Over to God

([Philippians 4:1-23](#))

The fourth section of our spiritual New Year's resolutions covers the topic of giving all of our anxieties over to God, as found in [Philippians 4:1-23](#).

Chapter 4 of Philippians has also been a special part of the Bible for me ever since I became a believer. This chapter has helped me reframe thoughts and has helped me start giving my anxiety over to God.

Paul tells us in [Philippians 4:4-7](#), "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

As this Bible passage tells us, God doesn't want us to be anxious about anything but rather to present our requests to Him with prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Once we have done this, the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds.

With the upcoming New Year beginning soon, we can try our best to start giving all of our anxieties over to God. Anxiety happens to everyone at some point, yet anxiety can be paralyzing when you're constantly struggling with it.

If you are experiencing debilitating anxiety, you need to talk with a doctor or a therapist about it. There is nothing wrong with seeing a doctor or a therapist to help with anxiety. In fact, God places doctors and therapists in our lives to help us.

Think about everything you are anxious about for the upcoming year and list them. Once you have listed them, pray over them and ask God to help you in your struggle. God will answer, and He will give you the peace that only He can provide.

Paul also urges us to think on only things that are good to help us as he says, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" ([*Philippians 4:8-9*](#)).

As Paul tells us, he urges us to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy. When we think about these positive things, it can help our anxiety lessen.

With the upcoming New Year, challenge yourself to give all of your anxieties over to God. While it can be difficult at times, God wants you to bring all of your anxieties to Him. We acknowledge our dependence on God when we turn to Him in prayer and ask for His help.

Struggling with anxiety is nothing to be ashamed of because everyone struggles with it at some point in their lives.

I personally have generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), so don't feel alone in your struggle. You are not less of a Christian or less of a person because you struggle with anxiety. Often, our anxiety can point us back to God and rest in His presence.

Questions to Consider:

- How do you currently cope with anxiety?
- Which anxieties are you going to give over to God for the upcoming New Year?
- If you struggle with disabling anxiety, who is a doctor or a therapist that you can reach out to for a fresh start in the New Year?

5. Set Your Heart on Christ

The final part of our five-part Bible study ends with setting our hearts on Christ. Throughout the Book of Philippians, Paul reminds us to live for God and to be joyful always.

Paul tells us in [Philippians 4:4](#), “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Maybe you’re going through a difficult time right now, and it’s hard to focus on rejoicing in the Lord, or maybe the New Year is bringing up terrible feelings of fear or anxiety.

When we start to feel this way, we need to set our hearts on Christ. Even though there might be difficulties in the upcoming year, God is always with us. He never leaves our sides, and He is always walking with us through every season of life.

The New Year can be a time of change and new starts, which can be scary, but they can also be beautiful. Staying the same and never growing in our walk with Christ is also scary, yet many of us tend to stay with what is comfortable and never take the step to change.

With the New Year starting soon, challenge yourself to set your heart on Christ every day and to rest in the joy of knowing Him as your Savior and Lord. It is important to mention that joy and happiness are not one and the same.

Simply because we feel joyful doesn't mean we are happy. Happiness is based on circumstances and outside factors, yet joy is based on Jesus.

Set your heart on Christ this year, and you will experience much growth in your walk with Him. Various things will try to grab our attention and cause us to lose our focus on Christ throughout the year, yet we have to be intentional and not allow these distractions to derail our relationship with Christ.

When we make time for God and live for Him, our lives will be much more pleasing to God, and we will be a light for Jesus. Each of us is given a fresh start at the beginning of the New Year, yet it is up to us to use it wisely.

While it is all too common for individuals to make New Year's resolutions to make themselves "better," such as weight loss, achieving goals according to the world, or doing anything to grow financially, we know as Christians, our main goal needs to be following and loving God.

Questions to Consider:

- What would you say is your top resolution for the upcoming year? Is it focused on growing in your relationship with Jesus, or is it a worldly goal?
- What are some steps you can take to help you better set your heart on Christ throughout the New Year?
- If Jesus returned this upcoming year, how do you think He would respond to your choices?
- Do you think He would be happy or disappointed?

The New Year is the perfect time to start changing and growing to become more like Christ. It is difficult to follow Christ at times, especially when we are persecuted or made fun of for our faith, but we have to keep our hearts and minds focused on the Lord.

Even though the world tries to tell us other things matter more than God, they are wrong. God is the most important part of our entire lives, and He loves us more than anyone can. With this upcoming New Year, strive to know Him better and enjoy your time with Him. God loves you, and He has amazing plans for you this year.

A Closing Prayer for the New Year

Dear Lord, please help me to use this upcoming New Year to live for you, follow you, and help others to know you. The things of the world often cause me to be distracted or cause me to fall away from you.

Please help me to remain focused on you and to live for you in every area of my life. Help me to also cultivate humility and help me to extend humility in my daily actions. Show me, Lord, and remind me of my future citizenship in heaven with you.

Help me to give all my anxieties over to you and help me to know when I need to seek out doctors or therapists to help in my struggles.

Lastly, Lord, please help me to set my heart on you and to rest in the joy of knowing you. I love you, Lord, and I trust you with this upcoming year. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Vivian Bricker loves Jesus, studying the Word of God, and helping others in their walk with Christ. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master's degree in Christian Ministry with a deep academic emphasis in theology. Her favorite things to do are spending time with her family and friends, reading, and spending time outside. When she is not writing, she is embarking on other adventures.

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