

January 9, 2022

Three Beginning Steps to Renewal

by Ken Weliever

“None of us has enough inner strength to last a lifetime. We simply can’t make it,” wrote my friend and preaching colleague Gary Henry in his Daybook Enthusiastic Ideas.

“If we are to keep going, we must be ‘renewed’ fairly often. And this process must take place deep inside of us,” Gary opined.

Our preaching and writing theme this year speaks to the issue of renewal, which we want to introduce and define in each blog post this week.

If we are to make renewal real, if it is to become more than just a catchy slogan, then we must get deep inside ourselves. We must begin with three very important, fundamental steps.

#1 Believe that renewal is realistic.

We may dismiss this talk of renewal with excuses like, “I’m too old to change.” Or “I’m too set in my ways.” Or maybe, “I’m fine just the way I am.”

The concept of renewal implies that we’re growing. The Bible commands that we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). When does that stop? When we’re 40 years old? 50? 60? 70?

When I was a student at Florida College, one of my Bible professors, Homer Hailey, was in his mid 60’s. His Bible knowledge was legendary. He could quote scripture for an entire class period. Occasionally, some of us

preacher-boys would get carried away and call brother Hailey a scholar. He would always say, “Boys, I’m a student. I’m still learning.” Indeed, he was. As many of his books and commentaries were written in his 70’s, 80’s and even his early 90’s.

Growing and learning, of course, involves change. God wants us to change. Becoming a Christian requires change when we repent of our sins and are baptized into Christ. We put off the old person of sin, and are “created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24). But this transformation is not fully complete upon primary obedience. It is a lifetime process.

#2 Decide what you value.

Values are the basic, fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate our attitudes and actions. They determine what is really important to us. Values describe the personal qualities that we choose to embody. The character we develop. The person we become. Hyrum Smith says, “Whatever your particular governing values may be, they are represented by the clearest answers you can give to these questions: What are the highest priorities in my life? And, Of these priorities which do I value the most?”

Is it possible for us to give lip service to our spiritual values on Sunday morning, but fail to live by them Monday through

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Lectures in Killeen - Each Friday in January is a different speaker and topic.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

Saturday? As one writer observed, “It is unlikely you will become the person you want to be if the decisions you make conflict with your values.”

This is where we must honestly ask, “Are my values based on my relationship with Christ?” His Word? And His standard for my life? A good place to sort out what you truly value is to read and reflect on The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

Are you seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? (Matt. 6:33).

#3 Quit talking about being better, and focus on specific changes.

It’s easy to talk in general terms and say, “I want to be a better Christian.” Really? Then, what would that look like? What would make you a better Christian? Where are you falling short? What habits do you need to give up? What disciplines do you need to develop? Are there areas of your life with weaknesses that require attention?

The apostle Paul exhorts, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith” (2 Cor. 13:5). This is an exercise, as Gary expressed it, that “must take place deep inside of us.”

Renewal is not a yearly event. But a daily process. Paul said that our “inner nature” can be “renewed day by day” (2Cor. 4:16).

As Pulitzer Prize author Pearl S. Buck expressed it, “Inside myself is a place where I live all alone, and that’s where you renew your springs that never dry up.”

Let’s renew in ‘22.

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Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson has improved some but still has limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing cancer treatments.

Karen Hallmark has improved but is still struggling with her health and her eyes, as well as asthma.

Dinah Williams is home but still has very limited mobility.

Don Simmons is home and still struggling with his breathing, he is on oxygen at all times.

John Miller (Dyanne Turner’s brother) is undergoing treatment for liver cancer.

Mark Braddock has stage 4 cancer and is not going to seek treatment.

Debbie McMurray has been diagnosed with cancer and will be undergoing chemo.

Randall Vanaman is having problems with one of his feet.

David Beckley is having health problems.

Ana Urquhart recently fell and broke her arm.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord’s body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord’s will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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