

2 Tim 3

Resolutions Every Disciple Can Embrace

It's that time of year again where many will promise themselves that life will be different, in some way, normally via a New Year's Resolution (NYR). Many will make pledges to themselves aimed at improving their finances, relationships, and/or physical and mental health. Simply stated, improving their temporal situation in some big or small way. Though many will participate in this annual tradition very few will succeed (10% actually accomplish their goal). The truth is when it comes to accomplishing your NYR you are the only thing standing in your way. Despite the dismal odds of success around NYR, I have derived from our text three resolutions that are worth our serious consideration. More than mere resolutions, these three are inherent to a life of faithful discipleship. To uncover them, we will have to dig deeper into our text. So, let's start and in doing so I have one observation and two lessons I want to share.

First, the observation. In the last days there will be a crescendo of evil that not only describes the culture but invades the church. (and let me say this, humanity has been in the last days since the ascension of Christ). **V1-5** "But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people." Listen. We should not be surprised by what we see happening in the culture. Neither should we be surprised when these adjectives

describe many in the church. We should be on guard against such things. We certainly should not encourage such behavior by professing believers. And we should seek to bring such individuals to repentance by disassociation. Avoid such people, Paul writes. But we should not be surprised because scripture has prepared us for such a time as this. But most importantly, we should be most concerned that we are not counted among those described here. Those having an appearance of godliness but denying its power. That is professing Jesus with no transformation. No one who follows Jesus will remain the same. It's not possible. Transformation is an inherent result of genuine faith in Christ. And so, we arrive at our first resolution: May my life will be a living testimony to the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus the Christ in 2026.

Gal 2:19-21 “¹⁹ For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. ²⁰ My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.” **NLT**

Titus 2:11-14 “¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” **NIV**

First lesson. Godliness will not let you down. V8-13 “⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹ But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. ¹⁰ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Don’t be deceived by the lure of sin and its propagators. The ungodly always appear to be happier, to be having more fun, to be winning. They always appear to be living their best life. But hear me, it is a lie. Sin always looks more promising. It always promises much but, in the end, leaves you empty. It is certainly the easier way, but its finish line is death. Disciples of Jesus, desire godliness, knowing godliness will bring persecution, suffering, but its end is life with God, now and into eternity. And this brings us to our second resolution: If I am to suffer in 2026, let it be for the godly thing, the Christ-like thing.

Romans 6:22-23 “²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **NIV**

1 Peter 4:12-19 “¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is

revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” **ESV**

Second and final lesson. Hold the line in. V14-17 “¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Paul tells Timothy, hold the line son for there will be many challenges to what you know to be true as revealed by the scriptures. Don't bend to the will of the culture or the people you serve. And he makes clear to Timothy that the only hope he has for holding the line is holding to the scriptures. Church, there is no holding the line apart from holding to the scriptures. All of it. And there is no hope of holding to the scriptures apart from faith in Jesus the Christ. **Listen! If you don't do anything else in 2026 learn to value the word of God above all else. Value it more than success, more than a husband or wife, more than**

children, more than good health, more than beauty, more than anything. For the wisdom unto salvation it brings is priceless.

Isa 40:7-8 “The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people *are* grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

NKJV

1 Peter 1:22-25 “²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For,” All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.” **NIV**

And so we arrive at our final resolution every disciple should embrace:

I will hold the line by holding to the scriptures through faith in God’s Son, Jesus. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.