

Sermon Study Guide



A New Way of Living

January 5, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

Reflect

Every year, we find ourselves making new year's resolutions to start or stop doing something so that we can become a better person. But after a few months (or even a few weeks), we always revert to old habits. What is a recurring resolution that you have trouble keeping? What is one thing that you hope to accomplish or change in 2020?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Towards the end of his life, King Solomon came to the conclusion that life lived apart from God is utterly meaningless. He wrote the book of Ecclesiastes because he wanted His children to avoid the pitfalls he has fallen into and to take their walk with God seriously.

Discussion Questions

Resolutions based on the superficial will not endure. Unless there is a tangible change of heart and a genuine desire for newness, you will always fall back to your old habits. In this chapter, we draw out five new ways of living we can cultivate to help us towards a transitional transformation of our Christian walk:

1. **A life of LISTENING (v. 1).** What's the difference between hearing and listening? How can you tell if a person is really listening to what you are saying or not? How much do you actually hear when you are listening to the Word of God being taught and read? How were you impacted and transformed by listening to God's Word last year.
2. **A life of COMMITMENT (v. 2-3).** Think before you speak. A person who speaks a lot shows himself to be a fool. Discuss why many people tend to make promises that they don't intend to keep? What does commitment really mean? Why does this generation seem to lack commitment in their relationship with God as well as in other areas of their lives? When God uses people to do His work, He looks for someone who

is committed. How do commitment and blessings go hand in hand?

3. **A life of RESPONSIBILITY (v. 4-5).** When you say something, you should do it, especially when you make a vow to God. Discuss how people are quick to promise to do something, but lack a sense of responsibility to actually do what they said they would do. Have you promised something to God but have been irresponsible in fulfilling it? How should you mend it? How does responsibility change the way you live your Christian life?
4. **A life WITHOUT EXCUSE (v. 6).** God doesn't want to hear your excuses. If you want to start new this year right, live a life without excuse. What are the usual excuses that Christians give when they don't follow through with their promises or responsibilities to God? Discuss why should you not even consider giving excuses to God, who knows everything.
5. **A life that TAKES GOD SERIOUSLY (v. 7).** What does fear of God mean? God is loving, merciful and gracious, but what other attributes does God have that you should fear and take Him seriously? How do we as God's children exhaust His patience? Why should you not wait for Him to be impatient with you before you change?

Respond

In Walk: What a blessing it is that we are given a new year to start our life anew by cultivating a life that listens, is committed and responsible, makes no excuses, and takes God seriously. Among these five habits, which do you need to work on? How do you plan to live it out?

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You so much for another year that You are blessing me with. Thank You so much for all the blessings You have bestowed on me this past year: the good things, the challenges, and the lessons learned in life. As I start this year, may You help me be sensitive and be aware of the areas in my life where I need to change or improve. Through Your enablement, may I be intentional in my pursuit to live a better life—in words, actions, and attitudes—so that I can have a more effective testimony to others around me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.