

Grace is needed to reach the Goal!

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is in me” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Studies suggest that it takes twenty-one days to form a new habit. If that data proves true, then now would be an ideal time to take a self-assessment regarding your goals, resolutions, and desire to form new habits. As we approach the third week of 2026, how are you doing on those New Year’s resolutions? Have you skipped a few days here and there? Are you being disciplined? Are you seeing any progress, fruit, and good come out of those healthy habits that you are seeking to establish? Or in utter honesty, have you fallen flat on your face? Well, if you are off to a good start, then give yourself a spiritual pat on the back. But if, on the other hand, you have stumbled out of the gate (like me), then let me give you a good gospel reminder about goals...

First and foremost, if you are trying to reach any goal as a Christian, then you must rely not on your might, expertise, education, experience, and power but on the Holy Spirit of God at work within you. Paul, towards the end of his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, exemplified this in a superb manner. One of his goals was to work harder in the ministry than any other apostle. Paul was a man of ambition and drive. He was not going to settle for second place in the race of faith. Paul wanted to preach the gospel where no other man had previously (Romans 15:20). He wanted to live a life of surrender to Jesus’ call and press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). Yet Paul realized that in all his striving towards the goal, he desperately needed the “grace of God” to carry him across the finish line.

Nearly 1700 years later, there was a man in colonial America who shared the same spiritual ambition and drive. Jonathan Edwards of North Hampton, Massachusetts, around the ripe age of twenty, wrote out seventy resolutions for life and ministry. These resolutions would serve as a compass for Edwards’ life, as he would frequently recall them to examine his progress in piety. If you read these resolutions, you will be enlightened in the faith and see how, like Paul, Edwards was eager to press on to know Christ “and the power of his resurrection” (Philippians 3:10). And also, like Paul, Edwards knew that he couldn’t reach these goals on his own. Positioned write above resolution number one, Edwards wrote in humility: *“Aware that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do pray that, by his grace, he will enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are in line with his will, and that they will honor Christ.”*

You see, no matter how far off or near that goal seems... You need the grace of God in your life to accomplish it! And so, if you have fallen already a few times on your new year pursuit, that’s ok... Just get back up. Lean on God’s grace. And let the God of All Grace empower you to do His will.

Respect the Blood,
Dalton Mathis