



The Flame

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from GCCN Prayer Ministries

New and Improved!

Ah! The word “new.” Don’t we love it!

Marketing geniuses bring us products reintroduced as “new and improved.” In some cases that’s nothing more than a bright blue wrapper replacing the old green one and a jazzed up name.

“New and improved” apparently can be a matter of interpretation.

With the birth of a new year, we look forward to the potential, to the “new and improved.” We sense the promise of change. The turn of the calendar opens up a host of clean slates and the alluring custom of resolutions ranging from health, financial, professional issues and more. We obviously recognize a need to improve and embrace new beginnings.

The problem with resolutions is that they are based on the assumption that the power to change rests in our will power. Of course if that were all that is needed, no one would have to wait to turn the page on a calendar, would they?

What are our goals for this New Year? How many of those goals would start with the word “more?” There may be genuine needs (vs. wants) that might be solved with “more,” and there’s nothing inherently wrong about that.

Before we start with the “more” list, however, let’s focus on the “deeper” list. Let’s set our sights on going deeper in understanding the impact of grace in our lives, embracing a deeper sense of God’s presence penetrating every facet of our lives, and a willingness for the Spirit to probe deeper into our hearts to rid us of all that hinders us from becoming more and more like Him.

And perhaps we should start with the commitment to new depth in our prayer lives. Here is where we encounter the presence of God in a way that can permeate the rest of each day.

But, we must not make the mistake of approaching our “deeper” list, or any list for that matter, as if we will achieve something based on our strength of purpose and resolution of our will. Our will does indeed play a part, but only in as much as we surrender it to the work of the Spirit. It is “not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6).

Taking Your Next Step

Begin this New Year with a prayerful approach to your goals. Spend a couple weeks asking God to birth the goals and resolutions that He wants for you. Listen to the promptings of your heart, not only in your prayer time, but throughout the day, and He will bring to your heart and mind the areas in which He wants to work in and through you this year.

Pray with expectation, and be prepared for the Spirit to embolden you. If He brings to mind something that seems too difficult, share those with someone who can pray with you about that issue.

Let this year be a fresh adventure of faith, and may the expression “Happy New Year” take on a deeper meaning than ever before.