

## Keeping New Year's Resolutions

Do you start out each new year with lots of plans to improve your life but, after a few weeks, lose your enthusiasm? If so, here are a few ideas to help you keep the best of your New Year's resolutions:

Make realistic resolutions. Don't try too much too quickly. For example, if you are presently not reading your scriptures at all but your resolution is to read half an hour every day, you may be setting yourself up for failure. It may be more realistic to resolve just to read something, even if it is just a few verses, every day. After that becomes habit, then you can work on increasing your goal.

Set a series of smaller goals. Divide your big goal into smaller sections. Say, for instance, you want to save money. Instead of leaving your goal so vague, plan a reasonable amount to work toward in the first month, then a larger amount to have saved at the first quarter of the year. These smaller goals will keep you encouraged as you make progress.

Make reminders. After you decide the things you would like to work on, make several reminders for yourself. The old method of taping a sign on your mirror or somewhere where you will see it regularly might work. But if you usually ignore your signs, try something different. Sometimes simple things can work. Take the resolution to read your scriptures every day, for example. When you get out of bed in the morning, place your scriptures on your pillow. It will be difficult to say you forgot when you have to move them before going to bed.

Be kind to yourself. If you find you've made resolutions that are making you miserable, be willing to change them. After all, they are your resolutions. Sometimes you can resolve to do things that are really too big to handle. Instead of giving up as a failure, modify your goals so that they will be a true help and result in improvement.

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Resolutions are so hard to keep, so setting goals is a much better way to go. How many of you started a goal and never accomplished it? At some point the goal is reached and another is made or attained. Set goals that are easy to reach, like reading your scriptures once a week to start with. Make it on FHE night with the family. It gets easier as the weeks go by. You will probably find an interesting story that you will want to read and the more you want the more likely you will attain that goal. It takes 21 one days to change or develop a habit. Why not make it a good one? To set a reasonable goal is easy and fun. Reward yourself at first in small steps and before you know it your on your way.

Here are some great ideas to get you started. Each month: send a secret gift to someone on your birthday, write a letter to a cousin or other family member, take a child out just because, send flowers to a homebound person, read a story with a loved one, learn a scripture, learn a hymn, meet a neighbor, rake someone's yard, write a poem or short story about a loved one, help make jams and jellies for others that are unable to for themselves, go to the temple one more time than last year, or take a class. The list is endless and the possibilities are great. By starting small you will feel better about your goal and it will make it more attainable and desirable.

Good luck to each of you. May the Lord bless you and yours during this new year and may you attain your goals. Write them down where you will be able to see them everyday. I know that you will make it and you will be blessed for your endeavors.

*Gayle-Marie Noga*