

New Possibilities
Pastor John Hicks
First United Methodist Church

It's fun to play with all the brand-new possibilities open to us on January 1. Go jogging on January 1, and you've exercised every day this year. You come down to breakfast and can truthfully announce, "I'm so hungry, I feel as if I haven't eaten since last year!" Get through lunch without eating potato chips or a candy bar, and this year reflects a whole new healthy and perfectly-kept diet regime. So far this year, perhaps you have never cussed at someone, never yelled at the kids, never forgotten to floss, never thrown your dirty clothes on the bathroom floor and never forgotten to read the Bible in the morning!

On January 1 our whole life can be transformed. For one day at least, all our good intentions can be jump-started, and all our bad habits can be unplugged. At least for a few hours (or minutes?), the year is a perfect reflection of our best self.

But January 1 is followed by January 2 and January 3. Soon we will opt for staying in a cozy bed a few more minutes rather than plunging out into the cold on that jog. Pretty soon candy wrappers will start appearing in our desk drawer again. By the 4th or 5th, we will surely have been aggravated enough at a bad driver or frustrating situation to have unsanctified thoughts. By the 7th, our socks are back on the bathroom floor and our dental floss is gathering dust. By the 10th we fall asleep before we can even get the Bible open.

For all but a few of us, most New Year's resolutions get packed away with the last of the Christmas decorations. The problem with most resolutions is that we resolve to make changes in our lifestyles, but miss restructuring our lives and changing the paradigms by which we live.

The ultimate New Year's resolution does not challenge us to cut fat grams, or quit smoking or get to aerobics class twice a week. The ultimate resolution a Christian can make is to live in the light of divine intentions, not human inventions. The New Year's resolution to end all resolutions is to make it our business to be a part of God's business.

What's God's business? Transformation. An electrical transformer takes high voltage and transforms it into energy that we can use in our everyday lives. Without a transformer, there could be no light in the darkness, no safety in the storm. At Bethlehem, God came to us and gave us Jesus the Christ, who transforms in His life the love and power of God into the impulses of grace and salvation that the world desperately needs.

A fresh New Year lies unblemished before us. Our life, our commitment to the ultimate resolution can help the love of God through Christ to transform the world.