

*Like the Jews in the days of Christ, many today hear and believe*, but are not willing to step out upon the platform of obedience, and accept the truth as it is in Jesus. They are afraid of losing worldly advantages. Their minds assent to the truth, but to obey means to lift the cross of self-denial and sacrifice, and to cease trusting in man and making flesh their arm. Instead, they turn away from the cross. They might sit at the feet of Jesus, learning daily of Him whom to know aright is life eternal, but they are not willing.

Every one who is saved must surrender his own plans, his ambitious schemes, which lead to self-glorification, and follow where Christ leads the way. The understanding must be yielded up to Christ for Him to cleanse, and refine, and purify. It is hard for self to die daily, even when the wondrous story of God's grace is presented with the wealth of His love, which He unfolds to the soul's necessity. But transformation of character will always be done when the truth of Christ is received into the heart.

We need a more intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus. We need to enter into His will and carry out His purposes, saying with the whole heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Day by day we are grieving the Holy Spirit with our lukewarm religious life, a life neither cold nor hot (Revelation 3:15, 16).

The danger is that as a people, we have been entertaining false ideas of justification by faith. For years Satan has worked in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain.

How greatly Christ would be honored and glorified before irreligious, worldly men and women if His followers were what they claim to be—true Christians, the love of Christ compelling them to make Him known before an idolatrous world, showing the marked contrast between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. We are to tell others of the love of Christ, and in order to do this, we must know by experience what it means to have Christ's love in the heart. *B'*

## JANUARY 2017

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sabbath
1	2	3	4	5 BIBLE STUDY 5:30PM	6	7 SS -Ann Walper Sermon - Leslie Walper
8	9	10	11	12 BIBLE STUDY 5:30PM	13	14 SS - Joyce Kimbel Sermon - Tory Kimbel
15	16	17	18	19 BIBLE STUDY 5:30PM	20	21 SS - Jerry Vogt Sermon - Leslie Walper
22	23	24	25	26 BIBLE STUDY 5:30PM	27	28 SS - David Steen Sermon - Pastor Clark <b>Communion</b>
29	30	31				

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# Bread from on High

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## New Year's Resolutions

by E.J. Waggoner

**The "New Year" is at hand;** and the time by common consent sacred to the formation of new resolutions. In most cases, however, the resolutions of the previous year have the dust brushed off from them, and are made to serve again, being just as good as new on account of never having been used.

There is a difference of opinion as to the value of making resolutions at any time. It is not our promises that save us, but the promises of God. Making good resolutions often tends directly against real improvement, since the resolution is taken as a substitute for action. A man makes a resolution and breaks it, and then when he is confronted with his failure, he makes another, or repeats the former one with new emphasis, and straightway his conscience is at rest. The resolution is accepted as an "indulgence."

In saying this we do not in the least discount a fixed choice, nor a firm purpose to cleave to the Lord; but the penitent who makes real progress is the one who comes to the Lord, saying,—

"No preparation can I make,  
My best resolves I only break,  
Yet save me for Thine own  
name's sake,  
And take me as I am."

Yet allowing the most that might be claimed for good resolutions, the custom of having one special day for making reformation, out of three hundred and sixty-five, is most pernicious. It is often the case that people wait for months till the New Year to "turn over a new leaf." This evil habit is fostered by religious papers and teachers who make so much of the New Year as the fit time for reflecting over the past and making a fresh start. From such talk people get the idea that there's something sacred about New Year's day.

This evil would be avoided if they would remember that the first day of January is no more the beginning of a new year than is the third of March, the 13th of June, the 19th of October, or any other day of any other month in the year. Every day is just one year from three hundred and sixty-five days before, and so every day begins a new year. Whatever is fit and



especially appropriate for the first day of a new year, may be attended to at any time. Are you convinced of the error of your ways, and impressed that you ought to reform? Then never think of waiting for the first day of January to come. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

One word more as to the date of the New Year. It is purely arbitrary, and is not the same in all parts of the world. In England, until the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, in 1752, the legal and ecclesiastical year began at March 25. This was more nearly the original time of beginning the year, as directed by the Lord.

The spring of the year is the natural season. To begin a new year in the beginning of winter is as senseless and

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arbitrary as to begin a new day in the middle of the night. As a matter of convenience in reckoning, and for business purposes, the 1st of January is as good as any other day; but no one should think that any sort of sacredness attaches to it, or that it is any better than any other day for ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

The false idea concerning the 1st of January, which is due chiefly to the Roman Catholic Church, has led to what are known as “watch night” services by many people. They assemble in a meeting-house on the last day in December, and remain together until after midnight, to “watch the old year out, and the new year in.” There would be something irresistibly funny in this performance, even if the first day of the year were sacred by Divine appointment. For since the last day begins at sunset, it is evident that the new year must also begin at sunset, with the day. So that when people watch till midnight to see the new year in, they are like men who watch for a train that has passed eight hours before.

It is stated on good authority that the term “watch night” originated with Wesley, but not with any reference to the New Year. That godly man was accustomed to spend much time in prayer, and would often, with a company of his people, spend the entire night in prayer. Thus they “watched” the night through. Not that they were watching the hours as they passed, but that they were watching with the Lord. The thought came from the Saviour’s words to His disciples on the night of His betrayal, “Could ye not watch with Me one hour?” and, “Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.” If there were more of this sort of watching every day in the year, there would be less superstition concerning one particular day.

“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

## Self Dies Hard

The last inward enemy of the believer to be destroyed is self. It dies hard; it will make any concession, if only allowed to live. Self will permit the believer to do anything, bear any crosses, afflict soul or body to any degree—anything, if only it can live. It will allow victory over pride, poverty, and passion, if only it is not destroyed. It will permit any number of rivals, so long as it has first place. It will consent to live in a hovel, in a garret, in the slums, in far-away heathendom—if only it can be spared. It will endure any garb, any fare, any menial service rather than die. Dying to self is a poetic expression—it sounds romantic, chivalrous, supernatural, saintlike. It is beautiful to read about, easy to talk about, entertaining to theorize about. Yet it is hard to do. But it must be done. There is no abiding peace, spiritual power, or prosperity without it. We must die to good deeds and to bad deeds, to successes and to failures, to superiority and to inferiority, to exaltation and to humiliation—to every manifestation of self, and to self itself. The Saviour said, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” Self lifted up repels. Self crucified with Christ draws; for only then is Christ lifted up in the yielded life. Happy those who can say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ ... the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God.”

**The old year, with its burden of record,** has passed into eternity, and the new year has begun. Let us gather up the treasures of the past year,—our remembrances of God’s goodness and mercy,—and carry them with us into the new year. Let us brighten the future by the thought of past blessings.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Let us cooperate with the Lord Jesus. Only thus shall we be able to accomplish our part of the work. He is our efficiency. He will give us power. Let us plant our feet firmly on the platform of eternal truth; then we may know that over us is the protection of God.

Oh, what wonderful blessings and opportunities God has in store for those who wear Christ’s yoke! Trouble comes to us because we manufacture yokes for ourselves, refusing to wear the yoke of Christ.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” To be justified means to be pardoned. To those whom God justifies He imputes Christ’s righteousness; for the Saviour has taken away their sins. They stand before the throne of God justified and accepted. They have crucified self, and Christ abides in their hearts.

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## BAKED BELL PEPPERS, MEXICAN-STYLE



Makes 4 servings

If you prefer, you can stuff poblano peppers, and use chili-seasoned tomatoes to add more heat to this dish.

- 4 large green bell peppers
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 1 15-oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-oz diced tomatoes
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 8-oz package Mexican-style grated cheese

1. Trim tops from green peppers, remove seeds and membranes, place in large pot with 1/2 inch of water, steam peppers 2 to 3 minutes, until just softened; heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir onion until softened and transparent, 5 to 10 minutes

2. Mix rice, black beans, tomatoes, and cooked onion in a large bowl. Add seasonings, stir to mix; fold 1 1/2 cups Mexican cheese blend into rice mixture. Spoon rice mixture into each bell pepper; arrange peppers in 9x9-inch baking dish; sprinkle peppers with remaining Mexican cheese blend; bake 30 minutes in 350° oven

## Exercise For Brain Health

**In 1975, 15 percent of the total population** were diagnosed with a mental disorder. In 2015, an estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older or about one in four adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. Just over half (50.6%) of children aged 8-15 received mental health services in the previous year. Seventy percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition, and at least 20 percent live with a serious mental illness. Major depressive disorder accounts for 27.37 percent of disabilities in the mental and behavioral disorders category.

The American Psychiatric Association stated that the direct cost of treating and supporting mental illness is approximately \$55 billion a year. But there are indirect costs to society as well, including the cost of lost employment or decreased productivity, accidents, and expense of social welfare programs, which total a staggering \$273 billion a year. Mental illness represents 8 percent of all health care costs, and ranks third as the reason for Social Security disability payments.

Is there nothing that can be done to halt the rising tide of mental disorders? Well, yes there is and the answer is astonishingly simple.

Exercise increases the release of endorphins, which are naturally occurring “feel good” hormones in the brain. They are the hormones that produce the “runner’s high” for persons who run or fast walk on a regular basis. The tiny hippocampus is damaged by a sedentary lifestyle and actually shrinks in size. But exercise causes neurogenesis, or new brain cell growth in the brain, and will actually regrow damaged brain cells. Generalized inflammation is caused by a sedentary lifestyle, and

exercise also reduces the neurotoxic chemicals that are produced by inflammation. Inflammation damages both the hippocampus and amygdala, but exercise helps to repair your brain’s damaged tissues.

By improving mental ability exercise increases intellectual functioning and academic performance, improves memory, boosts overall mood and improves emotional stability. And it decreases age-related cognitive decline, depression, stress, nervous tension with its related headaches, reduces the anger response and decreases anxiety, to name just a few of the benefits.

Exercise even has a positive effect on your IQ. Tests were done on mentally handicapped children who were placed in a structured exercise program. These studies demonstrated significant gains in the children’s IQ scores.

### Did You Know?

A recent study conducted at Oregon Health and Science University appears to cast doubt on the need for tetanus vaccinations at 10-year intervals. Based on the high antibody levels of 546 subjects, the researchers determined that 95 percent of them would stay protected against tetanus up to 72 years after their last vaccination. But, until more research is done, you should get revaccinated when you sustain a puncture wound from an object that might have been contaminated with soil, dust or animal feces that could contain *Clostridium tetani*.