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Today is a day of new beginnings. Every moment is time for a fresh start, but we place special emphasis on this opportunity at the beginning of each year. What does a new year mean to a Christian? Does it mean a list of new habits we want to cultivate or a list of old habits to be put away?

It seems New Year's resolutions are meant to be broken. At the end of the Christmas holidays when many have overeaten and under-exercised, there are always commitments to stick to a healthy lifestyle. Or, if budgets have been strained to the point of huge indebtedness, promises are made to spend less. In a few days or a few weeks, those goals usually are forgotten.

If you are a parent who helps your child create a list of New Year's resolutions, you might try something a little different this year.

Paul wrote often about becoming a new creation: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation." Galatians 6:15. "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Colossians 3:9-10.

A "new creation" wants to live according to the principles that God outlines for us in his Word. It is not a matter of willfully sticking to a diet, exercise program or spending plan. It is, rather, a question of a heart change. Every part of my life is of concern to God – even a healthy lifestyle and good stewardship. He wants to give us the power we need to walk in his way in all areas.

So, how do we become a "new creation"? Some think that it is only a matter of a one-time act of asking Christ into one's heart and accepting his gift of salvation. That is critical; however, it is much more than that. Over and over, we must seek God's will in our lives and seek to become like him. It is a life-long process.

Next week, I will write about how we can help our child grow into the heart change that is a "new creation."