



## *A New Year's Resolution that Matters*

*How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By keeping it according to **Your word**.  
With all my heart I have sought You;  
Do not let me wander from **Your commandments**.  
**Your word** I have treasured in my heart,  
That I may not sin against You.  
Blessed are You, O LORD;  
Teach me **Your statutes**.  
With my lips I have told of  
All **the ordinances of Your mouth**.  
I have rejoiced in the way of **Your testimonies**,  
As much as in all riches  
I will meditate on **Your precepts**  
And regard **Your ways**.  
I shall delight in **Your statutes**;  
I shall not forget **Your word**.  
Psalms 119:9-16*

*There are 9 different words used to describe God's "Law" or "Word" in the Old Testament, all of which are used in the course of Psalm 119. These are not all synonyms that mean the exact same thing, but distinctively communicate something very specific about God's Word, how He conveys it, and how we should apply it personally.*

**Law.** While this most certainly can mean the Bible in general, it's important to note that the Hebrew word for "law" is "torah", which is not just the formal name of the Law given through Moses, but also means "teaching" or "instruction". One of the amazing things to consider is that God provided the Bible as His instruction and personal teaching on how to live.

*Testimonies.* Think of this word in the context of “eye witness testimony”. It’s a powerful statement about the corroboration of the truth of all aspects of God’s Word as provided by His personal witness of their detail, effects, and consequences.

*Precepts.* These are the responsibilities God has laid upon His people, the requirements **AFTER** one has entered into a relationship with Him.

*Statutes.* These are specifically prescribed tasks or boundaries. They are things required (e.g., sacrifices, celebrations, etc.) or that establish limiting guidelines (e.g., who to marry/associate with, etc.)

*Commandments.* These are those things God has spoken which detail the responsibilities of human beings to live in a covenant relationship with Him. Especially in the Old Testament, commandments defined how Israel was to live in a covenant relationship with God, this being expanded upon in the New Testament.

*Ordinances.* In Hebrew this word is a derivative of “judgment”. We might call this “case law”. It’s the verdicts or outcomes or formal decrees established based on resolving the situation brought before the court. It describes the practical application of the Law in situations not specifically detailed word-for-word so that we may understand how God’s Word is applicable in every situation and that it provides no loopholes.

*Word.* This is a matter or cause spoken of directly by God.

*Ways.* The Hebrew word refers specifically to a well-traveled path or road. It’s a reference to human beings’ actions that lead to staying on, or straying from, God’s path.

*Judgments.* Some things have been pre-ordained—that is, declared from the outset—to result in a final outcome. For instance, those that

do not accept God are already “judged” dead because their actions are leading to hell. It’s a very strong set of boundaries and rules established by the Creator of the universe that provide the basis for all that follows.

These are the individual “nuts and bolts” of the Law—God’s Word—as they are to be embraced by us and allowed to work in our life. The truly amazing thing is how they come together as a whole to perform God’s greater work. They’re not just individual “rules”, but combine together in the incubator of our obedience and faithfulness to produce the fruits of a whole relationship with Him.

### *The Word of Salvation*

*Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us **the message of this salvation** has been sent.*

*Acts 13:26*

### *The Word of Grace*

*And now I commend you to God and to **the word of His grace**, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

*Acts 20:32*

### *The Word of Reconciliation*

*Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us **the word of reconciliation**.*

*2 Corinthians 5:18-19*

### *The Word of Truth*

*because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in **the word of truth**, the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;*

*Colossians 1:5-6*

### *The Word of Life*

*holding fast **the word of life**, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.*

*Philippians 2:16*

### *The Word of Righteousness*

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to **the word of righteousness**, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

*Hebrews 5:13-14*

The intended, net result of the personal application of God's law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, word, ways, and judgments is salvation, grace, reconciliation, truth, life, and righteousness.

We should view each individual "rule" within the context of the greater whole it is working. We willingly embrace each because they are leading to much greater things in our life. When faced with the choice of whether to obey even the smallest portion of God's Word or to simply let it slide, we're really making a much larger decision about how salvation, grace, reconciliation, truth, life, and righteousness are implemented in our life. The "micro" elements are the building blocks of the "macro" spiritual processes.

New Year's resolutions are the most oft-broken intentions because they have as their goal to change the large, macro processes that so dominate our life. We have the ability to actually achieve such things if we commit to obeying the smaller increments that will combine to produce the much larger, needed work.

Consider the symbols of God's Word used throughout Scripture and how they each teach of its power to produce the kind of powerful change we seek:

Your word is a **lamp** to my feet  
And a **light** to my path.  
*Psalm 119:105*

*“Is not My word like **fire**?” declares the LORD, “and like a **hammer**  
which shatters a rock?”  
*Jeremiah 23:29**

*“And the one on whom **seed** was sown on the good soil, this is the man  
who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and  
brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”  
*Matthew 13:23**

*Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of  
wickedness, in humility receive the word **implanted**, which is able to  
save your souls.  
*James 1:21**

*For the word of God is **living** and **active** and sharper than any **two-  
edged sword**, and **piercing** as far as the division of soul and spirit, of  
both joints and marrow, and **able to judge** the thoughts and intentions  
of the heart.  
*Hebrews 4:12**

In every example, the allowance for God’s Word to work is active,  
shaping, result-oriented. This is the kind of New Year’s resolution that  
can make an actual difference: Obey the small things.

In His Love,  
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