

# A New Year, New Beginnings for the Christian Steward

The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over some 3,000 years. The start of a New Year gives us the feeling of a fresh start, a new beginning, and new opportunities. Common New Year's resolutions are to lose weight, exercise more and eat healthier; or to spend more time with the family. Still others include managing money better and being more organized. Many good stewards take advantage of this time of year to become closer to the Lord. They may re-commit themselves to pray more, to read the Bible or to attend Mass more regularly. If you are looking for some help in your New Year's resolutions, here are a few ideas to get you started:

**Practice gratitude** – Cultivating a grateful heart is the hallmark of a Christian steward. Every day, express thankfulness to the Lord and to others for what is received.

**Encounter the Lord each day** – Intentionally set-aside time to be with the Lord each day; whether it be for an hour or ten minutes. Have a meaningful conversation with the Lord. Give your joys, worries and sorrows to Him as well. Allow God's love to transform them.

**Be present to others** – There is much celebration and mourning, joy and sorrow in peoples' lives. What a blessing it is to be able to share those times and not let others experience them alone. The gift of your concern and presence to others is much more valuable than you realize.

**Resist overwork** – There is a pressure to produce, meet goals, be successful. But activities that lead us to overwork, constant fatigue and worry do not give glory to God. What God calls us to do, we can do well. Be mindful that life requires balance, down time and setting realistic goals.

**Give more** – Good stewards realize that everything they have is entrusted to them, as a gift from God to be shared. There is no better place to begin than sharing with the community that gathers around the Lord's bountiful table of the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass. Consider what you are giving to your parish and commit to an even greater contribution of time, talent and treasures.

**Make a difference in your parish community** – Believe it or not, your parish community can use your talents! Offering your talents to your faith community does make a joyful difference.

**Consider living more simply** – We cannot and will not find fulfillment in material possessions. Jesus blessed the "poor in spirit" in his Sermon on the Mount; and Saint Francis of Assisi urged us to live with only what was necessary, for that is how we begin to find and depends on God.

**Get healthy** – Be a good steward of your body. Maintain a healthy diet and exercise habits.

**Don't give up** – People give up their New Year's resolutions because of perfectionism and unrealistic expectations. So take it slow, be kind to yourself and keep trying. Don't just quit!

**Turn to the Lord** – Ask the Lord for guidance, strength and perseverance in achieving your resolutions. St. Paul writes: "I can do everything through Him, who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). If God is the center of our New Year's resolutions and our lives this new year, they have a much better chance for success—blessed by the One who makes all things possible.

(SR: <http://catholicstewardship.com/general/19-a-new-year-new-beginnings-for-the-christian-steward>)