

Mission Village Christian Fellowship

January 2023 Newsletter

2650 MELBOURNE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92123 | PHONE: 858.278.2633

Pastor's Perspective

The Goal and How to Get There

Happy New Year! A new year is naturally a time of reflection and goal setting; goals for self-improvement, professional development, family growth, and more. And a new year is also when we set spiritual goals for ourselves: I want to read through the bible in a year, I want to pray more, I want to be more consistently focused on Jesus in my thought life.

Of course, as is the case with most New Year's Resolutions, we try really hard to achieve these goals, and then after a few weeks (or maybe just a few days?) we give up. Studies suggest that 80-90% of new year's resolutions fail. So given that statistic, each year we engage in a ritual of making resolutions that mostly fail. And when it comes to our spiritual resolutions, that can be really discouraging!

Why such a dismal rate of failure with these resolutions? Let me suggest two reasons specifically in regards to our spiritual resolutions. First, a resolution by its very nature is self-focused. It is something we try to do in our own effort, in our own strength. But if we are relying more on our own strength to do something that only the Holy Spirit can really fully do in us, then we are setting ourselves up to fail.

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Sunday Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m.
Adult Sunday School
- 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service
- 10:00 a.m.
Children's Bible Adventure

Pastor's Perspective, continued

Second, many of the goals that we set as our spiritual resolutions, while they are good achievements in and of themselves, are not actually biblical goals for the Christian life. They are a means to an end, not the end itself. I recently read an article where a pastor noted that there is no command in the bible to read the bible through from start to finish every year. In fact as this pastor noted, the bible was first an audiobook, with most people hearing, not reading, God's Word! So we often set our focus on things that are a means to an end but not an end in and of themselves. When we do this, we miss the ultimate goal God has for us; we end up aiming at the wrong target.

So what is the goal for the Christian life, and how do we get there without falling into this trap of self-effort and failed resolutions? The goal of the Christian life, very simply, is to become like Jesus: "For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Romans 8:29). "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18). That is the call placed on every single person who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Be conformed to the image of Christ. Become like Jesus. As C.S. Lewis succinctly states: "Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else" (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 177).

With our goal clearly understood, how do we get there? Understanding that this is a life-long process of transformation, what practices can we implement in our lives that will help us move towards that goal without it turning into a self-defeating process of self-effort? The monastic movement of the middle ages can greatly help us at this point. Monasticism did not use resolutions, they developed a Rule of Life, a set of practices or habits, that would define each of their days. These habits can be overtly spiritual, such as spending ten minutes in prayer each day, or they can be directed at our everyday lives, such as placing a cap on the amount of time we spend on social media each day. These habits are much more well defined than a resolution, they are attainable, and as we practice these habits, we begin to notice transformation in our lives.

I've been familiar with the monastic concept of a Rule of Life for a while now. But this past year, I was required to implement a Rule of Life for one of my doctoral assignments. In a nutshell, the assignment was this: Write out a Rule of Life of daily, weekly, and monthly spiritual practices that will help you grow to become like Jesus. Then at the end of each month, evaluate the effectiveness of your Rule of Life. What worked? What didn't work? Then revise your Rule of Life for the next month and assess again at the end of the next month. Do this process of evaluation and revision for three months. In developing this Rule of Life, make sure that you are doing something that is attainable (for example if you are not in the habit of reading the bible every day, don't force yourself to read the bible for two hours...maybe start with 10 minutes!), but that also doesn't lead to complacency (where the bar is set so low that even a slug could get over it). Also make sure that your Rule of Life is leading towards transformation to Christlikeness and not legalism (for example, when you read your bible, are you reading to hear from Jesus and be shaped by Jesus, or reading to check the box for bible reading for that day?).

Pastor's Perspective, continued

Developing this Rule of Life over a three month period was a challenge but also a blessing for me. It allowed me to really do a spiritual assessment of myself and ask, what areas do I need to grow in becoming more like Jesus? What weaknesses do I have that get in the way of becoming like Jesus? And what practices can help me in those areas of weakness? It allowed me to develop a Rule of Life that really helps me grow closer to Jesus and become more like Jesus.

So I want to give you this challenge as we head into 2023: Instead of making spiritual resolutions, make a Rule of Life that will help you to become more like Jesus this year. I'd be happy to share my Rule of Life with you and help you develop one for yourself. I would love to walk with you as you revise your Rule of Life each month as you see what works and what doesn't work.

This is a big challenge. But it is well worth it. And don't feel pressure to match what someone else is doing for their Rule of Life. What my spiritual practices look like as a father of teenagers will look very different from a mom with preschoolers, which will also look very different from someone who is retired. Of course there will be some commonalities for every Rule of Life. But the idea is not to copy and paste what someone else is doing, it is to find a set of practices and habits that help you become more like Jesus this year.

I look forward to a wonderful year of growing in Christlikeness with all of you! Happy New Year!

Blessings,
Pastor Steve

January Celebrations



Happy Birthday

Senyo Adjibolosoo 1/7
Derek Carver 1/14

Proverbs 22:17

"A merry heart does good like medicine"



Roger & McCollough 1/2

Youth Ministry

Happy New Year! These words ring true for everyone –no matter where you might be. We are happy to be ringing in the New Year with God’s grace, love and hope for his plan to transform our life’s decisions.

Our 1st Wednesday in December we worked as a team, and strung the Christmas Holiday lights along the fence in the parking lot and bushes. It is a beautiful sight each night to see our church lit up so festive.

The 2nd Wednesday we shopped for Angel tree gifts. This special night gave us all the good feelings of family and joy and brought good tidings of happiness. We shopped at Target to get gifts for the children and had lots of fun doing it. Thank you to Jenni Fiori who helped us drive some of the Youths as Pastor and his family were in quasi-quarantine. Our Youth Group members are expert shoppers in record time. Thank you to everyone who helped wrap all these gifts. Then we delivered Angel Tree gifts to over 45 children, in 2 days, record time. This year, each gift had a note attached written by their parent, thanks to Mr. French, who typed each one and then attached them to their gifts. He delivered most of them to the families too. I delivered a few of them and felt the gratefulness from the caretakers. This mission is well received by the givers and receivers every year. We are aimed at ‘breaking the cycle’ and showing these children there are better days ahead, to avoid jail themselves, and to know, especially that with God at the center of their lives, they can be better people. We prayed for each family.

December 9th we had our Woman’s Holiday dinner gathering in the fellowship hall. We had a special appearance by the San Diego Chorus singers quartet with Jennifer & Hannah French. What a sweet treat! Thanks to them for putting this all together with Ronda who shared with us that she will be starting a Women’s bible Study to be held at our church. She is excited to be sharing God’s Words.

Four of us went to Camp Christmas in Pine Valley. The Youth Group participated in watching the awesome water show, the dancing light show on main street, played games in the game room. I could not get them to do the laser tag, climb the trees nor go on the hayride. They thought those things were for the younger youths and they were. Walking around the main lodge office area was magical. In fact, Terri went back there and brought her husband Andy to see the beautiful Christmas camp displayed. We watched the light show on main street, then ate all you can eat soup and salad in the main eating lodge. We bought lots of candy by the pound, ate cotton candy and popcorn, sat by the warm fire pits with our smore kits and hot apple cider. We even did take the hayride. What an adventure! We drove to the back area of the property where the windmill is. There were big displays of Rudolph, Frosty and other Christmas icons.

Youth Ministry Continued

When we go to our furthest point – our humungous tractor wheel fell off and we tipped. The driver was 'ok' but we all had to get off and wait for the other hayride tractor to pick us up. People were a bit timid, and some were scared. I thought it would be a good idea to sing Christmas Carols while we waited for our ride. Everyone sang along and had a great time. Some people said that was the first time they went 'caroling' and thanked me. I prayed for God's guidance, and he said, "Sing!"

We only had 2 meetings in December and will be starting back up again January 4th 6:30-8:15p.m. In the meantime, Evan De Vos had his 13th birthday. We will be celebrating that coming up as it was the last week of December. We hope to have a great year of meeting together and learning about the bible.

God bless you and your loved ones. Stay healthy and happy and seek the Lord as much as you possibly can. When we pray and ask and thank God for what he does for us and our families, we are much happier. We are teaching the Youths at each meeting to seek God 1st before any event they encounter.

If anyone has any inkling to be a guest speaker at any of our meetings to teach, please reach out to me or pastor.

It is such a pleasure to serve as our Youth Group leader as we learn so much each time from each other.

God Bless You!

Terri Carver



"WE SAW HIS STAR IN THE EAST AND
HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM."

MATTHEW 2:2

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12/25 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	12/26 1:00 p.m. Afternoon Bible Study at MVCF	12/27 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting	12/28 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Food Pantry	12/29	12/30 6:30-p.m. French Home Fellowship	12/31 New Year's Eve
1/1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	1/2 MVCF Office Closed	1/3 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting	1/4 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Food Pantry 6:30p.m. Youth Group	1/5 5:30-7:30p.m. de Vos Home Fellowship at MVCF	1/6 6:30-p.m. French Home Fellowship	1/7
1/8 Epiphany service 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	1/9	1/10 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting	1/11 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Food Pantry 6:30p.m. Youth Group	1/12	1/13 6:30-p.m. French Home Fellowship	1/14 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Christmas – Undecorating
1/15 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	1/16 1:00 p.m. Afternoon Bible Study at MVCF	1/17 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting	1/18 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Food Pantry 6:30p.m. Youth Group	1/19	1/20 6:30-p.m. French Home Fellowship	1/21
1/22 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	1/23 1:00 p.m. Afternoon Bible Study at MVCF	1/24 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting	1/25 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Food Pantry 6:30p.m. Youth Group	1/26	1/27 6:30-p.m. French Home Fellowship	1/28 8:30 a.m.—11:00 a.m. All Church Work Party
1/29 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship Service	1/30 1:00 p.m. Afternoon Bible Study at MVCF	1/31 6:30 p.m. Online Prayer Meeting				



We're on the web!
missionvillage.church

Council Members

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Pastor | Steve de Vos |
| Moderator | Jennifer French |
| Clerk | Ronda Adams |
| Financial Secretary | Tony DaVee |
| Treasurer | June McCollough |
| Children's Ministry | Christopher French |
| Youth Ministry | Terri Carver |
| Adult Ministry | Joanna de Vos |
| Stewardship | Frank Romeo |
| Fellowship | Jenny Fiori |
| Service | Carl Demas |
| Missions / Evangelism | Matt & Ellen Davis |
| Finance Ministry | Ernie Garcia |
| | Hannah French |

..as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3:12

Sunday Schedule

Worship & Children's Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Nursery & Toddler Care is Available During Worship Service
Service will be live on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#)

Elders

Pastor /Elder.....Steve de Vos Administrative
Elder Tony DaVee
Elders.....Chris French
Carl Jensen

Staff

Administrative Assistant.....Judy Jacob
Nursery Attendant.....Hannah French