

January 2001: New Beginnings  
by Aaron Greenway

For many of us, the beginning of a new year is a relief — that chance to start over and start afresh. For others, it means beginning to work on those dreaded income taxes, digging themselves out of snowdrifts, etc.

Last fall, I, myself was faced with many challenges, burdens, and emotionally-charged situations. It is never easy telling people that I struggle with certain things. It is very difficult being open to scrutiny especially when you are somehow in the public. People expect a Christian leader to be impeccable in his testimony. But I want to tell you that I have struggled with depression and heartache this past semester, things that I could not begin to explain because I do not understand them myself. This led to many nights of struggling with God over these issues.

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And I finally came to this conclusion, that when circumstances happen in our lives, that is when we need to come back to the fundamentals of our faith. New beginnings always begin with Christ and who He is. If we get so deep in our theology and lose sight of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” then what have we gained? We have lost the very core of our faith — the cross. If we concentrate and brood over situations when there is no clear answer as to why they happen, then we no where else to turn but to Jesus.

And so I have begun to memorize key verses out of the Book of Colossians. I am not sure I would call this a New Years resolution, but somehow they have provided a basis of comfort for me. For example, Paul said to the Colossian Christians,

For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God,

strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love in Whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Repeating this over and over in one's spirit begins to settle, to soak into one's heart. I think that we often become discouraged too easily in our lives because we have forgotten God's Word. We have not let it penetrate our lives deep enough to where we have that anchor when the bottom falls out. Perhaps if I had a deeper anchor, I would have run to God rather than question Him this past fall.

God has somehow got to be real to us. If He is not real in our lives, what hope do we honestly have? If the Word of God is not real and vibrant in our lives, then what hope do we have? Whether we begin a year or a day, we must begin with God. We must start with God because this determines how we end that year or that day. This means allowing God to have more of us.

It is my desire that all of you will begin 2001 with Jesus, determined to live life more fully consecrated to Him this year than any year before. I hope that you will pray for me, that God's Spirit will lead me to do the same.