

# A Pledge for Renewal

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By Justin Morton

It's a new year, which for many of us means something has to change. This is the time each year when many of us look at ourselves and think about all the things we need and want to change. For some, it's losing weight, while for others it might be breaking a bad habit, such as excessive complaining. Or maybe we want to develop a good habit like daily Bible reading. Whether we make them public knowledge or not, we all have a few things we'd like to change about ourselves in this New Year.

As Christians, maybe we don't need to change as much as we need to renew this New Year. Let's consider making a pledge to renew these areas of our lives:

- 1) **LOVE** – Jesus said the greatest command we have is to love God (Matt. 22:37-38). Because of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, we should be inspired to love God with all our hearts. After all, just consider the significance of the sacrifice He made on our behalf. This year, let's renew our love for our Heavenly Father.
- 2) **DEVOTION** – Because of our love, we should be devoted to God and His service. This is not something that comes easily. In fact, devotion will be extremely hard at times. Jesus even said we would have to deny ourselves and take up a cross (Lk. 9:23-26). True devotion to the Lord takes self-discipline and whole-hearted commitment. This year, let's renew our devotion to God.
- 3) **OUTREACH** – Jesus went on to say the second greatest command was to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39-40). If we truly have experienced the love of God, it will change us and cause us to love others in a way we never knew we could. Love will produce a passion in our hearts for others who are lost and dying in sin. This New Year let's renew our commitment to community outreach and make a difference in the lives of others.

My hope and prayer is for 2014 to be the best year possible. Together, I want us to do more than make resolutions that might soon fall by the wayside. Let's pledge to renew our love, devotion and outreach to God and others. I truly believe if we do these things, our congregations, and the church as a whole, will have a blessed year.