

January 2009

From the Pastor 

## Happy New Year!

This is a time of New Year's resolutions. Let me encourage you to make some resolutions this year. If you are like me, you have made many New Year's resolutions and have failed. But if you are also like me, there are some that have succeeded.

Even though the failures have outweighed the successes, I still make them. I do this to practically live out Ephesians 5:15-16. The New International Version puts it this way:

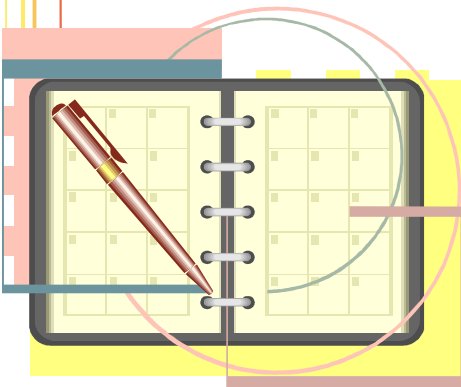
*Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

To make the most of every opportunity there are certain things that we can do as believers.

First, set time aside for God. This year make time with God a daily part of your schedule. This can include personal time in prayer and in the Word. This can also include regular time with your family in prayer and in the Word. But this doesn't happen unless you have set this time aside. This year make it a point to have daily appointment with God. We make appointments with our supervisors at work, with our friends for dinner, and even with our doctors. So it makes sense to me to make appointments with God.

Second, set time aside for your family. I have learned that Mindy and I have to intentionally set aside time for ourselves and Ryan. If we don't, we look back at a week and find out that we've done all sorts of things, but not much of it has been with each other. Two things have worked well for us in our married life: date days and play weekends. Date days are Fridays, which is my day off. After Ryan leaves for school Mindy and I have time every week just for ourselves. We know that on Fridays no one has our time but us. Mindy knows that my time is hers on that day. When Ryan comes home from school he knows that Friday night is family time. Ryan and I also schedule Saturday morning breakfast just for us. When I was a youth minister with Youth for Christ, date days would not work, so we would schedule play weekends. On one weekend a month we get away from everyone else and just spend time together as a family. But date days (or nights) or play weekends don't work if we have not scheduled them ahead of time. Let me encourage you to start this year by getting your calendar out and setting up appointments with your family.

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Third, set goals for the year. Ask yourself, "What do I want to see accomplished this year?" It may be a house project that you have been trying to get done. It may be that you want to understand a certain book of the Bible better. Set a goal. Make sure that goal is measurable. Something like, "I want to paint the house this year." At the end of the year, if the house is or isn't painted, you know if you've met that goal. As you set a goal, map it out on a weekly basis. You will find that if you set aside two hours a week for a certain project by the end of the year you have spent 104 hours on that project.

So this year make resolutions. Do this to *make the most of every opportunity!*

In Him and for His glory

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Art". The word "Pastor" is written in a cursive style, and "Art" is written in a more stylized, blocky cursive.