



“New year, new you!”

I don't know about you, but I've lived through enough New Years to notice that nothing revolutionary changes because the calendar does. I've also noticed that whatever motivation I have to change everything this new year dissipates almost as quickly as the one snow we get in South Carolina.

But - and hear me out - what if that is not a bad thing? What if the path to a healthy and whole life is less about radical declarations of change and more about small steps to the life you were made for? **Sales** is full of testimonies of immediate change: “I lost 100 lbs in 3 months with total gym!” “I quit smoking in 1 week with this gum!” **Life** is full of small, intentional steps that make a sustainable difference. I want to offer you three simple ideas to take a small step towards the life for which you long:

1. **Presence:** In this season of life, find a small way to be present to the people and world around you. Set a time lock on your phone to limit social media. Pick 3 questions to ask your spouse, kids, or roommates over dinner or before bed each night. Take 5 minutes each day to write down the answers to the “explore the iceberg” tool by Pete and Geri Scazzero: “what am I mad about?” “What am I sad about” “What am I anxious about?” “What am I glad about?”. Before any real change is ever made we must notice what is actually going on in our lives. *Being present is choosing to engage in reality.* My wife decided to put the internet router in our house on a timer. At first I was admittedly annoyed. But now when the internet shuts off each night I am reminded to be present where I am instead of observing something somewhere else.
2. **Practice:** Before you quote Alan Iverson to me, let me offer a quote from Mother Theresa instead: “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” The greatest things we do are small and consistent. A wonderful step to take this year is to find a healthy practice. *Practice will not make something perfect, but it will make something permanent.* Start your day with 5 minutes of silence. Walk around the block every Saturday morning. Start attending church. Join an AA meeting. Download the Lectio365 app and use it each morning. Add a small practice to your life that reflects the life for which you long. You won't notice the movement at first, but eventually you'll be surprised by the movement made in small steps.
3. **People:** Making friends as an adult is as difficult as asking someone out in 6th grade. It is awkward and fraught with peril. But allow me to invite you to give it a try. Invite someone to coffee. Host a movie night. Ask your co-worker about their hobbies. *Whatever the life you long for is, I can guarantee you one thing: it requires people.* I genuinely believe you have friends you do not know about. If you live in the Greenville, SC area, we try to make it easy to meet them. Each Sunday at 10am and throughout the week in smaller groups. A small but profound step to the life you long for is a step into community.

It's time to let go of the need to reinvent ourselves every year and grab hold of the knowledge that we are loved right now, as we are. Does that mean nothing should change in life? No, it doesn't. But frantic striving and unrealistic goals have yet to change my life. I believe there is a better way. These three ideas will help you no matter what you believe, but it's no secret that I believe the way to the life we were created for is the way of Jesus. If you'd like to know more about that way, we're always here.

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