

## January 2025: Now is the time

Apparently approximately two thirds of UK adults make New Year resolutions. I wonder if you are one of them? Although exact percentages vary, all the surveys I looked at suggested that younger people are more likely to make New Year resolutions than older people.

The names of our months came originally from an ancient Roman calendar, with several of our months named after Roman gods. January is named after the Roman god, Janus, the god of beginnings and endings, and transitions. Janus is depicted with two faces; one looking forwards and one looking backwards. New Year has traditionally been a time to look back over the last year, and forward to the coming year, with New Year resolutions intended to help us move from where we are to where we would like to be. Of course other occasions, particularly births or deaths or a big change in circumstances, can also prompt us to reflect on what is most important to us.

Looking back thoughtfully, and looking forward, planning and hoping, are both important. But Christianity also identifies **now** as an important time. Bible verses such as 'Be still and know that I am God,' from Psalm 46, and the writings of Christian mystics through the ages, teach us that focusing on **now** is important. Being still, physically or mentally, being 'present in the moment,' attentive to ourselves and the world around us – and people of faith would also add attentive to God – enables us to know ourselves better, to be more in touch with our deepest wishes and values, and more in touch with God, and his values for his world.

I believe that wonder is a precious part of being present in the **now**; wonder at the beauty of a sunset or a flower, wonder at the joy of love, or at our own existence. In the Bible, Jesus told his disciples that to enter the kingdom of heaven they needed to become like little children, and I am sure that part of what Jesus valued so highly in children was their capacity for wonder, their ability to be totally absorbed in the present moment.

If you make only one resolution this year, I invite you to resolve to find more time to wonder, more time to be still and do nothing, and my prayer for us all is that we may all, as Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, said in the title of one of his books, 'Do nothing to change your life.'

Yours in Christ,  
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