

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
From *YouthWorker Journal* and YouthWorker.com

I Resolve...

Make a New Year's Resolution to Help Someone Else

By Paul Asay

What Happened:

It's a new year now, which for many Americans means a lot more than buying a new calendar. Many of us decide to turn over a new leaf at the turn of the New Year, promising ourselves that we're going to be healthier, kinder, slimmer. Yes, it's time for the infamous New Year's resolution.

According to the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, about 62 percent of Americans usually or sometimes make New Year's resolutions. The most popular resolution? To lose weight. Getting organized was second, while becoming more fiscally responsible was third. Helping others? That ambition was way down the list.

Sadly, only 8 percent of people were successful in any given year in achieving their resolutions—perhaps because resolutions are, by their very nature, individual goals: Not everyone gets a lot of moral support to follow through.

On the flip side, those who make specific resolutions are 10 times more likely to change their lives in a significant way than those that don't. There's something about publicly resolving to do something that increases your odds of success.

Talk About It:

Have you ever made any New Year's resolutions? What were they? How did it work out for you? Have you known anyone else—family or friends—who have done so?

If you were to make a resolution this year, what would you resolve to do? Exercise more? Study more? Spend more time with family or friends? Get more involved with your church or community?

Have you ever thought about making a resolution with a group of friends? Your youth group? If you resolved with your friends to make a difference somehow—feeding the homeless, picking up trash, petitioning for a worthy cause—do you think you could make a real impact in your community?

If you were to make such a resolution, what would you do? Is there something your church desperately needs? Your school? Your neighborhood? Can you think of a creative way to help? What would be your goals? What would be your first step?

If your youth group *does* resolve to do something special, we'd love to hear about it. Let us know what you're doing in your church or community. There's a chance we might

focus on your youth group in an upcoming *Youth Culture Lesson*. Send an email to Alee@SalemPublishing.com.

What the Bible Says:

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:12-13).

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31:8-9).

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38).

Paul Asay has covered religion for *The Washington Post*, *Christianity Today*, Beliefnet.com and *The (Colorado Springs) Gazette*. He writes about culture for *Plugged In* and wrote the Batman book [*God on the Streets of Gotham*](#) (Tyndale). He lives in Colorado Springs with wife Wendy and his two children. Follow him on Twitter @AsayPaul.