

# SET YOUR HEART

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In this third week of January, 2023, most of us have been probably consistent and doing great in fulfilling our New Year's Resolutions, or for some of us, our faith goals that we have set for this year. Most of us might actually have the same resolutions or goals like: be more productive, save more financially, get better grades, more family time, travel more, build deeper relationships, be involved in church ministry, etc. But, we are all aware that after months and months of persevering, we tend to fall short of some of the resolutions or goals that we have set. Some might be due to lack of time, lack of resources, lack of energy, or even because of an unexpected challenge that has limited our ability to continue. And this cycle happens year after year for most of us. We start strong, but along the way, we fall short.

I remember how I always included "Read the whole Bible" in my faith goals since I was 18 years old. Year after year, sadly, I have fallen short. It was due to various reasons and most of them might be considered as excuses. Year after year, I try, but just couldn't succeed and it's been frustrating until I decided to give up and resigned that perhaps I am not capable of reading the Bible in its entirety.

Years passed, and in 2013, GCFSM had a campaign on reading the Bible for a

year, entitled, "Bible 365". I participated with excitement in my heart thinking that it might work for me that time. Praise God for His sustaining grace for I was indeed able to finish reading the whole Bible! And in that journey, I realized that for the past years of trying, I depended on myself alone and did not leave room for the Holy Spirit to work in me. Probably, I was too eager to read the whole Bible for my own selfish reasons. My heart was not right and not fully surrendered and committed to the Lord in achieving this goal, that's why I lost my focus when distractions came my way.

When we do something for God, our hearts should be set to do it. I wasn't ready for such commitment until 2013. My heart was not set on the goal, and my eyes weren't fixed on God. Though it is a good thing to do, it won't be automatically easy. We need to be diligent and choose to press on despite circumstances, remaining committed.

In Ezra 7:10 it says, 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. This verse tells us that Ezra decided to stay committed to studying the Law of the Lord. It's like nothing could stop him nor change his mind. He decided to choose to immerse himself in the word of God, at the same time, abide in it and teach it.

This is how we should conduct ourselves when we read and study the word of God: we are to pre-determine in our hearts that no matter what lies ahead of us, whether in our favor or not, we are to choose to remain faithful in immersing ourselves in God's Word and presence.

I read the whole Bible for the first time in NIV. After a couple of years, I committed to read the whole Bible again in ESV. It took me two years that time as I enjoyed unhurried times with the Lord. Now, I am on my journey in reading the whole Bible again in NASB.

For those who committed to read the whole Bible through participating in our "Knowing God" Bible Reading Program, continue to have the right heart and posture as you persevere this year till next year. The Lord is gracious and is abounding with love. He will bless the desires of our hearts in accordance with His good will and purpose. Continue to press on to what you have set in your heart in reading and studying God's word, living it out, and sharing it to others.

And for those who have not yet decided, it's never too late! God's timing is always perfect. This year might be the year of your 180 degree turn in life when you will finally set your heart on things that are of Christ and will commit to read, study, live, and teach God's word.✱