

This is my last column of 2017. The few remaining hours of 2017 are quickly fading away. Did you do everything you said you wanted to do in 2017? Did you fulfill all (or any) of your resolutions for this year? Did you thrive during 2017, or merely survive? I'm sure there are as many variations of feelings about the events of the past year as there are people reading this column. Maybe the most prevalent feeling is this: relief that another year is over and hope that we'll do, be, think, and act just a bit better in 2018 as we did in 2017.

In reality, we should all have the same resolution for 2018. We should all have the same goal set in our hearts and minds as we approach this new year. In 2018, we will have 365 chances to live our lives in order to more fully reflect God's character. We have 365 chances to live each day as a series of right choices.

It reminds me that in some wedding ceremonies, there is a phrase that the bride and groom vow to each other. They will promise to love or honor or cherish "from this day forward till death us do part." It's flowery language, and some don't like the formalness of the phrase, but nevertheless, we all know what it means. From that moment until the moment one of them dies, this man and this woman have promised to remain faithful to their marriage vows. It's a comforting and romantic thought. And yes, I almost always cry at this point in the ceremony.

I like that phrase, though: "From this day forward." I like it so much I want to make that my theme for 2018. In the coming year, and for every year after, I want to live my life "from this day forward."

From this day forward, till death parts me from this life, I want to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with my God, (Micah 6:8). From this day forward, I want to love the Lord my God with all my heart and soul and strength and mind, and I want to love my neighbor as myself, (Luke 10:27, Mark 12:30, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18).

From this day forward, I want to pray continually (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17). I want to be transformed by the renewing of my mind (Romans 12:2). I want to bear much fruit (John 15:8). From this day forward, I will rejoice in my weaknesses so that in God, I may be strong (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:10).

From this day forward, till death takes me from this earth, I want my words to point to Jesus, my smile to reflect Jesus, my message to reveal Jesus, and my life to be a witness for Jesus. This is my prayer for 2018: From this day forward, I want to live more Jesus, less Verna.

How will you be living from this day forward?