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Resolutions from the Rear View

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Have you ever looked back before you considered what you want in the future? I hadn't…until now. This year, reflection bore my 2016 resolutions!

For the first time, I'm okay with peering into the rear view mirror in order to make self-improvement. I'm comfortable looking back to move forward. I see how what's behind defines what's before me and how the past can create a better future.

You see, for the last several years turning the page to a New Year has felt more like tearing pages from my heart. After losing the life I knew when Kevin died, [1] my dreams for the future died too. So, I dreaded looking ahead and peering into the rear only revealed what I'd already lost. All I wanted to do was hold on to an impossible past and couldn't fathom how I'd ever create a new future out of a broken me!

~And aren't we all at least a little bit broken striving for ways to be better?~ Don't we just want our

brokenness to transform into blessings? ***[2]***

But that's changing for me. As I remember all those broken reflections, I see how God used every bit of my past to reach ***His goals*** for my greater good. He's always been up to something, creating good from what seemed so uncertain.

~HIS goals…for my greater good…even when I couldn't see straight…~

My life's taken sharp twists and turns. From grief to new beginnings, God's gifts have **always** been good. You might be thinking my ability to look ahead with hope from my rickety, rocky lessons learned is only possible because of my recent story of redemption [3]. Perhaps that's partially true. But really, it's not so much about my loving new man as it is about God guiding me to now. I'd have never had this second chance had it not been for HIM defining my unknown goals!

Because, you see, no amount of man, stuff or any other worldly fluff can craft a life like His sovereign hand.

That's why this year I'm taking serious time to reflect as I look ahead with new hope.

I know, I know. The world touts this notion of never looking back and instead living in the NOW. *'Just keep your head up! Never look back when you can create a bright future!'* Sounds good, doesn't it? Problem is we can never do the creating as well as the awesome Creator…and He happened to create us with a past filled with pieces of our own personal puzzles.

Plus, my past is so rich…colored with my flaws and my failures, filled with joys, gifts, disappointments and grief. It reveals the essence of who I've become through the twists and turns and the lessons I've learned. **But it's my story!** **[4]** It's the history He's given me so how can I refuse the reminders that built me into who I am?

So, yeah, reflections of my life reveal real hope for a fresh future!

You've got a story too, you know. It's filled with stresses and struggles created just for you, meant to make you more of who you're supposed to be! It holds joys and challenges that were crafted just for you by your great Creator!

And when you look back at all that, you realize He's made you into more than the sum of what you've suffered and struggled through. He's created the depth of your soul and the breadth of your being with each step in your story.

I guess I've never really gotten so nostalgic about this whole New Year ordeal. [5]But looking back on my life has me in awe of Him again! I see all the times I've trusted Him and He's worked it all out, even when in the moment my mind was drowning in doubt. I also see the times I failed and faltered in my faith…and the mess that I've made.

And so my New Year's resolutions resulting from all this reflection has a lot less to do with what I want, and more to do with getting down on my knees to let Him lead. ***It's so much more to do with looking into a beautiful, flaw-filled horizon and following Him with NO FEAR***.

Sure, I could just list what I actually want to accomplish. Things like:

- Living well in a way that keeps me fit, daily restores my mental health
- Parenting with loving purpose in this mission of motherhood
- Organization in this home bursting with piles of papers and closets to clean.

That all sounds nice, right? But, what makes my list mean more than a mundane list of 'to dos' without a foundation in faith? Setting my sights on those goals instead of setting my soul on His will sets me up for disaster. I already know I'll slip up on every single one!

What I want isn't a list of resolutions at all. ***What I really want is a soul-revolution [5]!*** *It's looking back, finally gaining wisdom enough to stay so close to Christ that my desires effortlessly careen with His calling.*

Because, you see, when we live close to Him, we can easily hear His calling. We experience the joy of doing what we were created to do! Our very lives become a good fit for us.

My same old resolutions won't work without Him in them! How can I find the right words to color the canvas of a new calendar year into the portrait of a real soul-revolution? ***How can I face the New Year without fear of failure and frustrations that already have ahold of my heart!?***

Maybe learning those lessons from the past and an utter sense of TRUST that He's still all over in my story will finally make the difference!

- I want His ***calm*** in the unknown, inevitable upcoming storms.
- I long for the ***unbalanced life,*** His will far outweighing the ways of the world.
- I want my life to ***speak firm but softly of Him*** by the actions of my hands and the intent of my heart.
- I desire to ***display grace and gratitude*** in small, simple ways that speak loudly
- I want ***Him to dictate my 'to do' lists***, letting me know what really must be done each day and my ability to throw the rest away.

I suppose one statement sums it up: *My deepest desire is to trust and **follow Him without fear**, confident my every day work is for Him and the inheritance He's given me.* **Because when He's at the top of the list and we learn to truly trust, all those tangible 'to dos' fall into place and our lives ultimately transform, naturally prioritized with His purpose.**

Let's do this together in 2016. Let's live close to Christ and let Him fill in the rest!

Have a happy, 'NO FEAR' New Year!

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