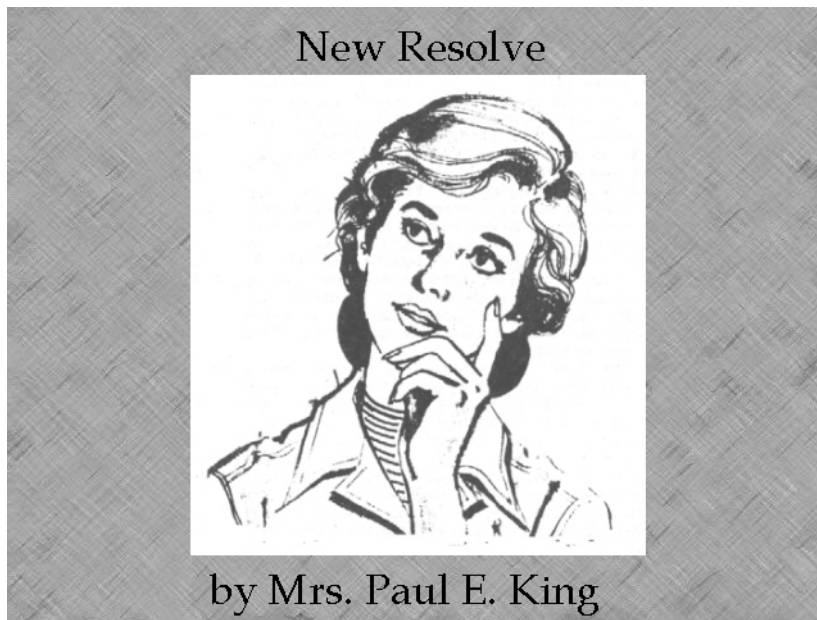


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Digital Edition 10/22/2001  
By Holiness Data Ministry

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**NEW RESOLVE**

**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

From the January 16, 1983 Sunday School Beacon

Sally stood watching the soap suds float off her fingers into the hot water in the dishpan, her mind anywhere but on washing dishes. A new year! she thought. Yes, a brand new year, and a new opportunity to change some things; mend certain ways and begin anew.

She sighed, remembering how well she loved a new book, new tablet, new anything. Always, the first page of a new book or tablet fascinated her. It was almost like it was giving her a peeking introduction or glimpse into things

that were to follow. And always, she met with glad surprises as she read and explored the follow-ups of first pages. Oh that God would make her life this year like that.

The year had been an uneventful one, internationally, nationally and statewide, as different situations in economy developed and, without exception, almost every home felt the crunch.

But it had had to come, she felt. Sooner or later, it would have come. Yet, she couldn't help but grieve and feel a pang of pain and of pity for those who were without work and who had really wanted to work. There were drones in the country, to be sure, she realized; but there were those diligent men and women who loathed sitting down on the stool of ease and doing nothing and who loved and delighted in making a living for their families. Those were the ones she pitied and felt sorry for.

Her tears mingled with the sudsy water. How fleeting a thing life was! How quickly it budded and blossomed and bloomed then vanished away. One generation died and passed away; a new one replaced the old and thus the world kept going 'round and 'round. Job declared that man "cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:2).

Reflecting introspectively on the year that had just made its grand exit, Sally asked herself what she had laid aside for eternity during those 365 days. True, she had cooked three meals daily, (almost without exception) she had kept the house neat and clean for husband and children when each returned home from work and school, and she had kept the clothes clean and mended and put in their proper places. All were necessary chores that seemed continuous and endless around a home and which are never completely done; by the time she had finished a given task, it was all to do over again.

But what about eternity? What had she done that would have eternal value and meaning?

With suds dripping from her hands, she wandered down the lane of yesteryear, the one just past. Each week seemed so ordinary. So much the same to the last: washed on Monday; ironed and mended on Tuesday; washed again on Wednesday and did baking; grocery-shopped on Thursday,

did some cleaning and dusting; washed again on Friday, cleaned the upstairs thoroughly for over Sunday; baked and prepared Sunday's dinner and cleaned downstairs on Saturday; exhausted by nightfall.

"Oh, God!" she cried. "I'm thankful I'm a housewife. I am! But please, help me in this new year to lay up something of value for eternity. Give new meaning and dimension to my life."

Almost immediately, Sally remembered reading of a man who had laid aside money when he was young so he could build the kind of home he wanted, in the peace and solitude of the country, when he was old. He saved and saved, out of what was left after he had helped the poor and needy and paid what little expenses he may have incurred during the week or month. One day, after many long years of hard labor, he had enough money saved to go through with his plans.

The building site had long since been picked out and decided, in his mind. Then a poverty-stricken couple crossed his path. He could do nothing less than help to get them out of their distress. So a sizeable amount of his savings went to take care of their grave need.

Shortly thereafter, another faced a crisis. He couldn't possibly turn a deaf ear to the man's pleas, could he?

Again, a sizeable sum of money dispelled the man's fears and anxieties and set him "on his feet" once more.

He met emergency after emergency and crisis after crisis for the poor and needy and downtrodden, and when he finally went to purchase his few acres of land for his retirement home in the country, he discovered he had only enough money left to buy the acreage--none whatever for the house.

Troubled, he wondered what he could do. His money was almost gone. He lay on the sofa to think, and fell asleep. He dreamed: He was walking through a land of breath-taking beauty, being guided by the kindest man he'd ever encountered. Flowers bloomed everywhere; trees seemed eternally green, vibrant and alive. Bird songs, like he'd never heard before, rose and fell on the pure, clean ethereal air. Suddenly, he stood before a mansion of such exquisite beauty and architecture as to dazzle the eye. From top to bottom, it glistened and glittered and shone in resplendent glory and beauty.

He stood looking at it in wonder and awe. Speechless.

"Go in," his guide said kindly.

"But I can't," came the hesitant reply. "Whose is it?"

With a kind smile, his guide answered, "It's yours."

"Mine? Why, I'm not worthy of this. I've never done anything to deserve it!"

"You've been building on this for many years," the guide replied. "Remember the family that had no food and the landlord put them on the street in the dead of winter?"

"Ye . . . yes. But that was many, many years ago."

"You began sending up material for this building then, and you've been sending it up ever since. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of... these,' My Master says. 'Ye have done it unto me.' "

"But I'm not worthy! Could I have done less when He gave all for me?"

"Indeed not. Now I shall let you go. But you will be returning soon and this is your mansion."

The man awoke. He was back in his humble and small home. But that didn't matter. He wept for pure joy. He had his home . . . eternal in Heaven.

Sally was weeping now. If only she'd have had money to help the many whom she knew really needed help. But she didn't have money. In fact, it took plenty of skimping and scraping for her and Dale to make ends meet and keep food on their own table. Due to the plant shutting down, Dale had had to find employment elsewhere. His earnings were slim and meager but at least he was working, a thing she had thanked God for over and over again and again.

She felt broken. What had she laid up for eternity last year? Nothing. That's what.

Wiping her hands on a towel, she dropped to her knees by a kitchen chair. "Oh dear, dear Jesus," she moaned, "I wanted to do something for you; I did! But it looks like I've failed again. Please, show me ways to do something lasting for You..."

Kneeling thus, she felt a warmth encompass her. A warmth and a Voice. A Voice so gentle, so kind and loving as to fill her heart with joy and peace. She recognized Him immediately. No Emmaus road happening here. No! It was instant and immediate recognition. "Daughter," He said.

Daughter/Daughter/He had called her daughter. Sally lifted her tear-filled face to receive His blessing. His gentle words.

"Daughter," He said again, "have you forgotten the food you carried in to the aged Thorntons from your table, giving them your portion that they might eat? And have you forgotten about the little waif you saw on the street and, hurrying home, how you gave him two changes of clothes, taken out of Robbie's wardrobe?"

"What about the trips you've made to the nursing home and hospital to see and pray with Anna Brown and Otto Fleming? I saw the dollar bill you pressed into Mary Burke's hand last summer and I also made note of your peace-making speech between Ina and Irma Franklin. Daughter, go in peace. You have been sending material up to Me ever since you were converted and filled with My Spirit. My eye misses nothing; My records are accurate."

His words ceased, but the warmth lingered. Sally, remaining on her knees, wept and praised. A new year was upon her, walking life's journey with her, one day at a time. By God's help and grace, she would make this the greatest year of her life so far. It would be a year of sending things Heavenward. Eternal things. She would begin today.

Getting to her feet, she finished the dishes then tore bandages for Mrs. Parkinson's running sores. The woman lived in the same block. Perhaps she could squeeze enough time each day out of her busy schedule to run down the street and dress the old woman's wounds--for Jesus' sake. It may just be the key to unlocking her hard heart and opening it to Jesus! Sally thought happily, feeling as though the victory was already won.

Slipping into her worn coat, she started down the street.