

No More Grinch; It's a Wonderful Life! Happy New Year!

I'm always grateful for a new year, a fresh start, and a fresh perspective. As I reflect, I learn from others, God's Word, His Spirit, and even movies. So here are some contemplative observations and considerations for all of us in the New Year.

Some people appear to be related to the Grinch as they age. They seem to develop a grumpy, cranky, scowling, attitude and often become socially isolated. The grumpy Grinch became known as a monster with an empty soul.

- There is bad in the world, but a heart can change.
- When a heart doesn't change, don't let it destroy you.
- People can't drive you crazy if you don't give them the keys.
- Allow your heart to grow three sizes this year and spread more love and joy in our world.
- *Don't be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.* Romans 12:21

There are Cindy Lou's in the world who look beyond the mean, hairy, smelly Grinches with cold, clammy hands, and welcome them, no matter how different they are.

- Take time to understand and show respect, compassion, and empathy to those who are different than you.
- Consider possible depression in those who get really irritable, grumpy, and/or who withdraw socially.
- Change our world for the better, one Grinch at a time.

Always be eager to practice hospitality.¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. Romans 12:13b-14

George Bailey, in "It's A Wonderful Life," focused on his problems and thought life would be better had he not been born. But after a series of events, George's perspective changed. He realized that his life really did matter. George had purpose and was grateful for a do-over.

- Hug your humans. Celebrate and see people as precious.
- *Life is not measured by how many breaths we take, but the moments that take our breath away.*
- Experience peace in your problems by praying. Let go and let God take over! Philippians 4:6-7.
- *Don't tell God how big your problem is. Tell your problem how big your God is!*

2024 will be sure to include life's storms, whether they be financial, health-related, relationship-centered, or relocating, to name a few. May these considerations help get your new year off to a great kick-start!