

# New Christ, new self

Twelve-Step Spirituality saves lives every day. However, even the best programs are not best for everyone. Women For Sobriety, founded by Jean Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., has discovered that women who are not helped by the 12 Steps are helped by what they call the Thirteen Acceptance Statements.

Since this time before Christmas, the season of Advent, is the church's "New Year" liturgically, I thought these might be worthy practices or "resolutions" for our new life and new year.

The Thirteen Statements are theirs. The commentary is mine.

1. *"I have a life-threatening problem that once had me."* Someone has wisely said that the mind is a wonderful servant and a terrible master. We can allow our desires and cravings to rule us, or we can allow the God within us to rule us.

2. *"Negative thoughts destroy only myself."* Resentments, bitterness, hurtful memories spoil our lives. Forgiveness, compassion and understanding heal our lives.

3. *"Happiness is a habit I will develop."* We choose our moods. If I'm unhappy, I'm likely focusing on what's wrong, on what's missing. If I'm happy, I'm likely focusing on all that is good in my life and in the world. Gratitude is a wonderful antidote to the blues.

4. *"Problems bother me only to the degree I permit them to."* We can choose our attitude in every situation.

5. *"I am what I think."* It has been said that the greatest discovery of the 20th century is that by changing our thinking we change our lives.

6. *"Life can be ordinary or it can be great."* Each day can be just another day, or each day can be a unique gift, never to be repeated.

7. *"Love can change the course of my world."* Love is the answer to every problem. If I'm thinking judging, blaming and condemning thoughts, people will pick that up. If I'm sending out loving, forgiving, and caring thoughts, people will pick that up.

Thinking changes our lives. Love changes our lives and our world.

8. *"The fundamental object of life is emotional and spiritual growth."* Accepting God's unconditional love and extending God's unconditional love to ourselves and to others will heal our emotions and our spirits.

9. *"The past is gone forever."* If something from the past still bothers you, send love to any people and any situations in the past, and lovingly let them go. Guilt and shame can't heal the past. They can only spoil our present.

10. *"All love given returns."* It may not always return immediately from those you extend it to, but it will always return.

11. *"Enthusiasm is my daily exercise."* Enthusiasm comes from two Greek words "en theos," meaning "in God." To live in God is to truly live.

12. *"I am a competent person and have much to give to life."* We need to believe in our worth and value. If we don't think we are worth much, we may decide we don't have much to give. And we may engage in self-sabotaging behavior!

13. *"I am responsible for myself and for my actions."* Responsibility doesn't mean blaming ourselves. Responsibility simply means that we are the creators of our own lives. If we don't like what's in our life, we have the power to create something else.

Women For Sobriety suggests that we review these statements each morning, and then take one particular statement to reflect on each day. At the end of the day see what effect it had on you and your actions. Keeping a journal can help.

Not a bad way to prepare for the birth of Christ and the birth of a new self.