



Happy New Year! Can you believe that it is 2019? Our Fall semester at STP has flown by, and 12 weeks of classes have come and gone. We are getting to know one another, learning new things about music and theater, but most importantly, we are learning more about God and how much He loves us. I am so glad that you are adventuring with us at STP, and that our adventures always take us from one year to the next together.

When the Christmas season draws to a close, everyone starts talking about resolutions. For some reason, thinking about a new year urges people to evaluate their lives, and think about what they could or should be doing. For many, the change in the calendar signals a fresh start, and when the calendar changes, they work really hard at accomplishing a new goal, or giving up a bad habit. New year...new you - have you heard that?

Setting new goals and desiring to put away poor habits can be a good thing. They give us direction, can help improve our relationships, and can help us care for our bodies well. There is quite a market for helping us achieve our goals - there are fancy planners to help lay out our lives, digital calendars to help us coordinate with others, and apps to help us monitor fitness. The world has surrounded us with everything we need to be successful...or so we are told.

As 2019 approached, and as the calendar changed, I was reminded of three words. Every time I thought about the new year, the same three words came to mind. Can you guess what they might be? I could keep you guessing, but I won't. The words that have come to mind over and over are, "In the beginning..." When I think of these words, two Bible addresses come to mind - Genesis 1:1, and John 1:1.

What follows those words? Well in Genesis, God is the very next word in the sentence. In John, it's a little more of a puzzle. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." That's a little confusing, but if we keep reading, we get to verse 14, the pieces start to make a little more sense. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." Ahhh...there we are! When John talks about the Word he means Jesus!

In the beginning...God. In the beginning was Jesus (the Word). If we are trying to restart, or reboot our lives, then there is one place that we need to begin again, and that is with our hearts and minds focused on God. Creating goals is fine, but we should be seeking the Lord first, and asking Him what His plan is for our life. If we are more focused on our personal plans and goals, than spending time in His Word, listening for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and loving people well, then something is out of kilter. Join me on an adventure in 2019, and let's begin again together...right in the beginning...with Jesus!

**Key verses:** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*  
John 1:1-2, 1:14