SOFTWARE & TECH

Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions

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Introduction

In the history of Christian spirituality, few documents are as intensely personal and profoundly challenging as the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**. Written in 1722–1723 when Edwards was just 19 years old, these resolutions reveal the disciplined mind and fervent heart of a young man determined to live entirely for God's glory. For centuries, these seventy concise pledges have inspired believers to pursue holiness, self-examination, and wholehearted devotion. Whether you are a student of theology, a seeker of spiritual depth, or simply curious about historical Christian disciplines, the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**offer timeless wisdom for purposeful living. This article explores their background, themes, and enduring relevance, showing how these resolutions remain a vital resource for anyone seeking to order their life around eternal priorities.

Who Was Jonathan Edwards?

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was a Puritan preacher, theologian, and missionary. He is widely regarded as one of America's greatest intellectuals and a key figure in the First Great Awakening. His sermons, such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," are famous, but his personal writings reveal a man deeply committed to spiritual growth. Edwards served as a pastor in Northampton, Massachusetts, later became a missionary to Native Americans, and eventually president of what is now Princeton University. Throughout his life, he maintained a rigorous habit of self-examination, which he began as a teenager. The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** are a product of that early commitment, and they shaped the trajectory of his entire ministry.

The Origin and Purpose of the 70 Resolutions

Edwards wrote his seventy resolutions over a period of several months, beginning in 1722. He did not intend them for publication. Instead, they were a private covenant between him and God. In the introductory note, Edwards stated: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake." Each resolution is a short, direct statement aimed at shaping his thoughts, actions, and affections. The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**cover a wide range of spiritual disciplines, including Sabbath observance, stewardship of time, resisting sin, cultivating humility, and living with an eternal perspective. They are intensely personal, yet universally applicable.

Key Themes in the Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions

Reading through the seventy resolutions, several major themes emerge. These themes reveal Edwards' deepest concerns and his strategy for spiritual growth. Below are the most prominent themes, each supported by specific examples.

1. The Glory of God as the Ultimate Goal

The very first resolution sets the tone: “Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God’s glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now or never so many myriad of ages hence.” Edwards anchors every decision in the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**, reminding readers that every thought, word, and deed should be evaluated by this standard.

2. Self-Examination and Mortification of Sin

Many resolutions focus on identifying and rooting out sin. For example, Resolution 29 says: “Resolved, never to allow the least measure of any foolish, sinful, or ungodly thoughts to lie in my mind.” Edwards believed that spiritual growth required vigilant self-awareness. He resolved to confess sins promptly, resist temptations, and avoid even the appearance of evil. This theme is central to understanding the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** as a tool for personal transformation.

3. Stewardship of Time

Edwards was acutely aware of the brevity of life. Resolution 5 states: “Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.” He saw time as a gift from God and a resource to be invested wisely. This emphasis on productivity and purposeful living is one of the most practical takeaways from the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**.

4. Death and Eternity

Several resolutions directly address mortality. Resolution 9: “Resolved, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.” Edwards used the reality of death as a motivator for holy living. He wanted to live each day with the end in mind. This eschatological focus gives the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** a sense of urgency and gravity.

5. Love for God and Neighbor

While Edwards emphasized personal discipline, he also stressed love. Resolution 6: “Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.” Resolution 46: “Resolved, never to give way to the least measure of any passion that interrupts the spirit of love.” For Edwards, obedience to God was inseparable from love for others. The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** are not a cold legalistic list but a passionate declaration of love.

How the 70 Resolutions Reflect Edwards’ Theology

The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** are deeply rooted in Reformed theology. Edwards believed in the sovereignty of God, the depravity of man, and the necessity of grace. Yet his resolutions are not about earning salvation; they are about responding to it. He wrote, “Resolved, to strive to my utmost to obtain and increase the graces of the Spirit.” This reflects his conviction that spiritual growth requires effort, but that effort is enabled by God. The resolutions also show his commitment to Puritan disciplines like fasting, meditation, and journaling. By studying the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**, one gains insight into how a great theologian applied his beliefs to daily life.

Modern Relevance of the 70 Resolutions

In an age of distraction and moral ambiguity, the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** offer a radical counterculture. They challenge the modern tendency toward casual faith and superficial commitment. Here are some reasons why these resolutions remain powerful today:

- Intentionality: Edwards refused to drift through life. His resolutions call us to be deliberate about our values and actions.
- Holistic Discipleship: The resolutions address mind, heart, will, and body. They remind us that Christianity is not a compartmentalized religion but a total way of life.
- Accountability: Edwards wrote these resolutions as a personal pact, but they can also serve as a template

for mutual accountability among friends or small groups.

- Eternal Perspective: In a culture obsessed with the present, the resolutions redirect our focus to what truly matters.

Many contemporary Christians have found the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**to be a practical guide for spiritual growth. Some use them for daily meditation; others adapt them into modern language. Regardless of method, the resolutions continue to inspire.

Applying the Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions Today

How can a modern reader engage with these eighteenth-century resolutions? Here are some practical steps:

1. Read Slowly: Do not rush through the list. Read one or two resolutions each day, reflecting on their meaning and application to your life.
2. Personalize Them: Edwards wrote for himself. Consider creating your own set of resolutions based on your unique challenges and goals. Use his as a model.
3. Memorize Key Resolutions: Internalizing a few of the most impactful resolutions can shape your thinking throughout the day. For example, Resolution 1 about God's glory is a powerful motto.
4. Discuss with Others: Share the Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions with a friend or small group. Discuss how they challenge cultural norms and encourage holy living.
5. Pray for Grace: Edwards himself knew he could not keep these resolutions without God's help. Approach them with humility and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

The goal is not to become a legalistic perfectionist but to cultivate a deeper love for God and a more disciplined walk with Christ. The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** are a means to that end.

Conclusion

The **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions** stand as a remarkable testament to one man's determination to live for God's glory. Written in his youth, they remained a guiding force throughout his life. For centuries, these resolutions have challenged believers to examine their priorities, resist sin, and embrace eternity. While the language may be archaic, the principles are timeless. Whether you adopt them verbatim or use them as inspiration for your own spiritual disciplines, the **Jonathan Edwards 70 Resolutions**offer a roadmap for a life of purpose, holiness, and joy. In a world that constantly pulls us toward distraction, Edwards' resolutions call us back to what really matters: knowing, loving, and glorifying God.

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