



CHANGING FROM THE CENTER

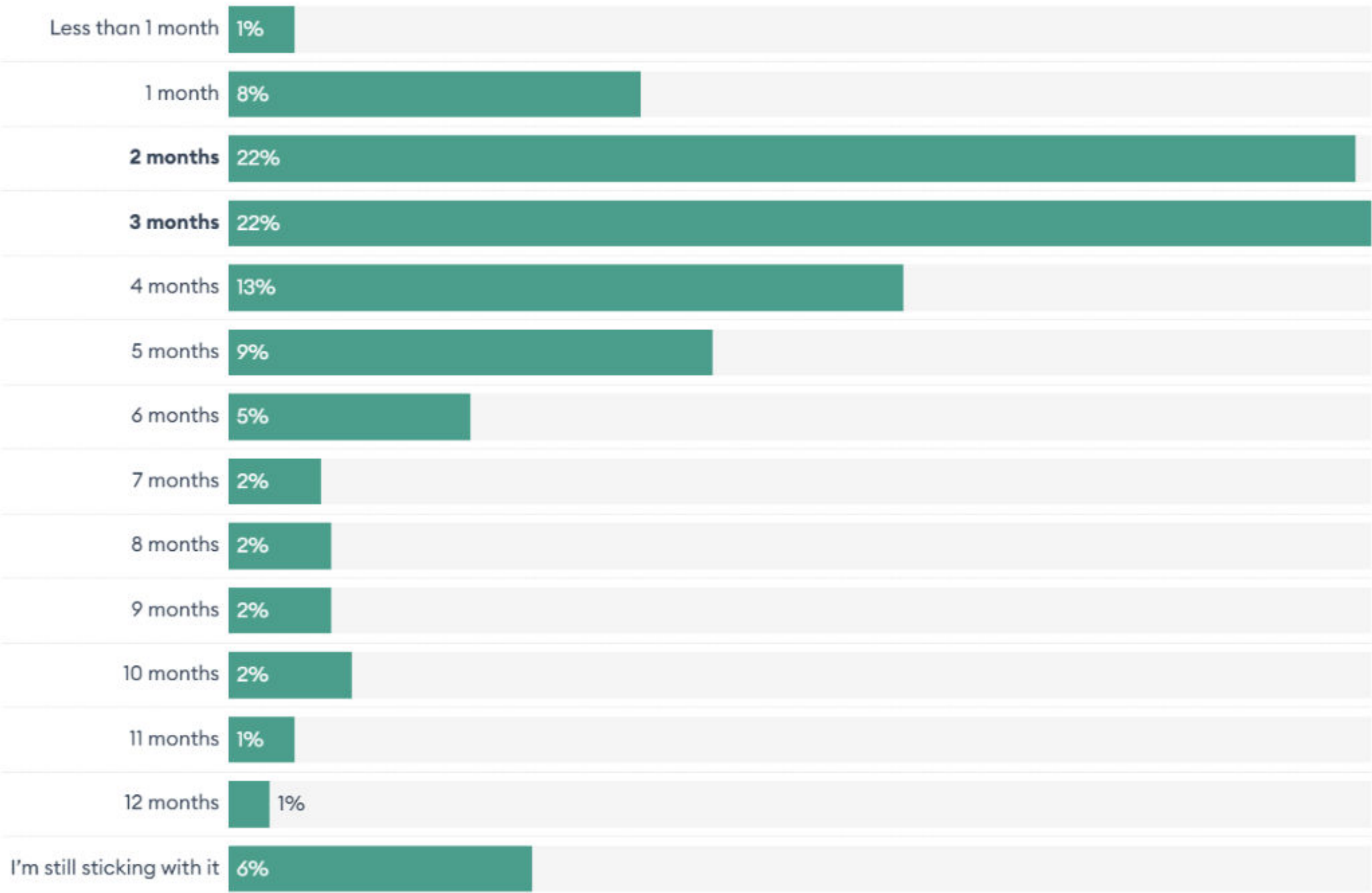
What's In Your Way?

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh... ¹⁶ Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want...

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control... ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

How Long Do Resolutions Last?



The above data is based on a survey of 1,000 U.S. adults who plan on setting a new year resolution. Data was collected on Oct. 23, 2023.

Source: [Forbes Health](#) • [Embed](#)

“These resistances rarely feel like a shout. They usually sound more like an insistent whisper within that leans against the good that I intend.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

“Spiritual resistance is a resistance to what is good, beautiful, and true that rises up from within us. *Resistance* is a word for the impulses that rise up within us against the good invitation to live a more transformed life.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

“The flesh here is not the physical body, but a way of life we’ve grown used to living in a world that does not recognize the reality of God and his kingdom. It is an ‘I can do it myself’ approach to living that presumes the absence of a loving God.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

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The “flesh” is the “resistance” that hinders us from the good and holy goal of having Christ formed in us.

The word that gets translated as “indulge/opportunity” was used in the ancient world in a military context to talk about a “lunching point” or a “base of operations.”



Walking by the Spirit won't silence the desires that come from patterns of living outside of the Kingdom of God. It will be an ongoing battle between keeping in step with the Spirit and wandering off into the shadows of the flesh.

Walking a line between the resistance that comes with the flesh and the (true) freedom that comes with the Spirit is just as impossible as approaching an intersection and choosing to walk both directions at the same time.



"You are not to do whatever you want..."



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sexual immorality,

debauchery,

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hatred and rage,

jealousy and envy,

discord and factions,

and selfish ambition...

“If we let the impulses and inclinations of our human resistance to good guide our lives and make our decisions for us, we end up with a lot of unhelpful, unhealthy, and unholy realities in our behavior, relationships, and outcomes. When followed, these make us less and less at home in the kingdom of God.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Want?*)

Fighting resistance in order to grow fruit looks like planting, weeding, fertilizing, and caring for a garden.



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“What do we do with the resistance that arises within us in the form of passions, desires, and inclinations? We let all of that die on the cross with Christ... And, by the Spirit, truly live—risen, like Christ. Our problem arises when we imagine our resistance as the most alive thing about us, when the opposite is actually true.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

Closing Reflections

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How do you view the relationship between your body and your soul? Do you gladly receive your body as the good gift from God that it is?

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What forms of resistance are most commonly manifesting themselves in your life? In what areas do you most clearly sense the opposition between the flesh and the Spirit?

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How do you tend to place the “acts of the flesh” into a hierarchical order that attempts to lessen the focus on the resistance you struggle with the most?

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Ask the Spirit to grow fruitfulness in your life, and remind you regularly of the “most alive” thing about you.

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