

THE BIBLE VIEW

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How to Have Change in Your Life

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At one time, many have had some desire to change something about their lives. Perhaps it was a flaw in their character, morals, or lifestyle that had them concerned about how it was or would affect their lives. It may have been a drinking or smoking problem, lying, deceitfulness, lack of living the way the Lord would have them live, adultery, or a host of other self-induced problems in their lives that has them distressed.

The problem bothered them so, that they did make an attempt to stop the habit, spiritual, or behavioral problem. Too often, they were successful, but only for a short time. This added to their situation and more guilt crept in, making matters worse. They tried again, and failed. Soon they saw no hope of altering, and just ignored or accepted what was wrong in their lives, and never attempted to change it again. They had lost hope they could get the victory over what was discomfoting to them.

Others, however, saw their weaknesses, sin, or something that had to be changed in their lives, and although they may have struggled, seemed to get the victory over what

they felt compelled to change in their lives. What is the difference that would cause one person to fail over a weakness and another to triumph over what was handicapping his life?

Although not applicable to every situation, the story of a problem in Nehemiah's life sheds some light on biblical principles that, when applied, can cause one to have a change that can be lasting.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer for a king. When Nehemiah heard how the center for his Jewish worship, Jerusalem, was destroyed, in shambles, and not being used to worship God, he was broken-hearted (Nehemiah 1:4).

One of the first needed attitudes to change any situation is a genuine, broken-heartedness for what needs changing in one's life, as did Nehemiah. The usual "Oops," or "I'll not do that again" may not be strong enough to cause a permanent change. A nonchalant attitude is usually one that will only temporarily change a situation. An earnest heart-wrenching conviction, on the other hand, is a first step in a permanent change.

The second step in his desire to rebuild Jerusalem was he went to God. During his mourning for what had happened and his weeping over the terrible thing that had happened to the worshipping of God, he prayed; he fasted; he did all he could to get hold of God for His help. Nehemiah earnestly sought God's intervention in a situation he was confident that only He could remedy.

Likewise, when we have problems, the first ear that should hear of our needs is not our friend, family, neighbor, or any listening ear, other than God's. He is the one that can change all situations.

Thirdly, Nehemiah admitted the problem. He admitted that he and his people had sinned (Neh. 1:6-7) causing the people to stray from worshipping and allowing their place of worship to get in the condition in which it was. To get a real change in one's life, one first must be honest with himself and God. Confess honestly your sin; and do not justify it because it was the teacher's, parent's, friend's, or someone else's fault. Admit what sin was committed, and sincerely want to change what caused the situation in the first place.

Next, the convicted Nehemiah remembered what the Word of God said (Neh. 1:8-9), and trusted in its promises. Today's sinner also needs to read, know, and do what the Bible says. It is God's roadmap through life. If it is not followed, one will usually make wrong turns, and often regret that God's way was not followed.

Lastly, and one of the most important steps, is Nehemiah put "feet to his prayers." After doing all he could to get back in fellowship with God and get his heart right, he had to do the work to make a difference.

Too many are sorry for the situation they usually got themselves into, but fail to do anything about it. They wait

around for some sign to drop out of Heaven with a note from God saying, "It's all better now, my son. Go and play." It usually does not work that way. Work is usually involved to get to where we need to be. Often that work is harder, the longer we put off getting right with God.

In Nehemiah's case, he went to Jerusalem, surveyed the situation, and got those that still wanted to do right and worship God His way and were willing to work. Together they rebuilt that mighty city, faced political and physical hardships and confrontations (*If you think you have confrontations read Nehemiah to learn of what he faced*), but the work was completed and worship again was started.

In our case, the work may involve admitting to others our sins, so we can get it right with the one we wronged, making it more difficult to go down the same wrong road we went down previously. It may involve dissolving friendships with the wrong people, stopping a sin or habit "cold turkey", apologizing to people, or even confessing a wrongdoing to authorities or friends. It should also include confessing it to God.

The road back to where one should be is usually very difficult and costly. The high price builds character and humility. One often pays such a high price to return to doing right that the price will instill permanently the value of doing the right thing; so it does not happen again. Doing the right thing or getting back to doing what should be done should be important to one that is on the wrong

road. It may be hard to turn one's life around, but the principles taught by Nehemiah's example worked for him; with God's help, they will work for you, also.

“Character is only as strong as the weakest part.”

Do What Jesus Did

Bill Brinkworth

While on this earth, Jesus did many things we as Christians are expected to do. He was our example. If we are saved and want to live Christ-like, we should follow Jesus' leadership. John 17 shows us that Jesus:

- Asked the Lord for power over the flesh (John 17:2), even though, unlike us, He was sinless. We may be saved, but we can still be tempted to sin, because we are not perfect. With the Lord's help, we can resist daily temptations to do wrong.
- Showed the world, by His testimony, that there was one, true God (John 17:3, 6, 12). We also can be the light that shows a sin-darkened world that there is another way — God's way.
- Gave God the glory for all that He did (John 17:4, 7). We too can show the world how good God is, and how He is alive and still working in the hearts and lives of man by living and acting godly.
- Finished the tasks that God gave Him (John 17:4). We are saved to serve and not to just sit. God desires each and every one of us to do something for His honor and glory.

- Told the world what God wanted them to know (John 17:8). We can tell the world what God wants them to know according to what is recorded in the Word of God.
- Prayed for those He encountered and had a burden for them (John 17:9). God has allowed us to cross the path of many. We can have a burden for them and pray for their needs.
- Still had a burden for those He ministered to, even though He knew He was leaving this world (John 17:12). This action shows that His desire for others was heart-felt, and not just emotional or skin deep. Our concerns for others should also be deeply ingrained in us. It should be our goal to encourage and help others get closer to God.

Jesus' example is certainly not what the natural man or the world encourages us to be. Our sinful flesh and the self-centered world constantly promote self-satisfaction and self-concern. Jesus' example was certainly not that way. Making our Saviour our example, we can have a life that pleases God and meets the needs of others.

“Lord Collingwood said to a young friend, “You must establish a character before you are twenty-five that will serve you all your life.”

A New Captain

Edited from an article by C. H. Spurgeon

There was a poor man about sixty years old. He had been a rough sailor; one of the worst men in the village. It was

his custom to drink, and he seemed to be delighted when he was cursing and swearing. He came into a church, however, one Sunday and heard preaching about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

The man thought, “Why did Jesus Christ ever weep over such a wretch as I am?” He thought he was too bad for Christ to care for him.

At last he came to the preacher, and said, “Sir, sixty years have I been sailing under the standard of the devil. It is time I should have a new owner. I want to scuttle the old ship and sink her altogether! Then I shall have a new owner, and I shall sail under the colors of Prince Jesus.”

Ever since that moment, that man has been a praying man and has walked before God in all sincerity. Yet, he was the very last man you would have thought would be saved and converted. Somehow God does not choose just the “best” men. He will also take the filthiest and the vilest, and fashion them into glorious beings; making them saints. Whereas they were sinners; He then sanctifies them, and makes them holy.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” *II Cor. 5:17*