

Good Reasons to Change

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When Jesus began His ministry, He called on people to change: “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Change was imperative. He said things like, “...unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3).

The change Jesus commands is intended to bless us. Changing our hearts and behaviors will enhance our lives and give us hope of eternal life. Yet, we struggle to change. Repentance is difficult. Sometimes we resist change. We do not always understand why we need to change. We do not recognize the severity of sin or the blessing of righteousness.

Developing a Biblical perspective on change is critical for us to engage in the process of conversion. The Bible teaches us that change is necessary. Change is good. Change must be embraced. In this article, we will notice good reasons to change.

1. Change reinforces reality. Part of Jesus’ purpose for coming to earth was to reveal our present reality. He reveals our true spiritual condition: sinners separated from God. Sin is distorting and deceptive. Sin blinds us to the reality of God. Sin blinds us to the reality of our sin. As Jesus taught, if we do not change, we will perish (Luke 13:1-5).

Change is initiated when we acknowledge reality. Solomon wrote, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...” (Prov. 1:7). Sin gains ground in our lives when we deny the reality of God. By embracing who He is and what He has done to provide our salvation, we will begin to see the truth of who we are and what we need to do to be saved from our sin.

2. Change brings God’s forgiveness. When Adam and Eve sinned, they attempted to hide from God and cover their shame. They feared God’s reaction to what they had done (Gen. 3). However, hiding in shame is no way to live.

Some hide in shame due to the fear that God will not love them anymore. This is another distortion of sin. When we decide to repent by acknowledging our sin to God, He promises to forgive us and receive us as His own.

3. Change frees us of guilt. Sin brings guilt. Guilt is another weapon Satan uses to keep us in his control. Guilt prevents us from making positive changes in our lives. However, when guilt for sin is coupled with a desire to obey God, we will begin to change. Paul wrote that godly sorrow brings repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

David wrote about the forgiving nature of God’s love. When we repent, we are given the assurance that God forgives us: “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:11-12). With the newfound confidence in God’s forgiveness, we can live with hope in our new lives.

4. Change creates joy. The guilt of sin is depressing; whereas, change creates joy. In the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin, Jesus taught, "...I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance...there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:7, 10).

If our repentance produces a joyful response in Heaven, surely, repentance will bring joy to our lives. The joy of repentance comes from the knowledge that our sins have been forgiven, we have God's approval, and that we are using our lives to His glory.

5. Change restores relationships. The Gospel calls us to make peace with God through obedience to Jesus. When we turn from sin and embrace righteousness, our relationship with God is restored. Paul wrote, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" (Rom. 5:10-11).

Also, change can restore our relationships with other people. Selfish behavior can create estrangement. It can wreck homes and churches. Repentance brings peaceful reconciliation, reunion, and renewal. Regarding the restoration of an erring saint in Corinth, Paul wrote, "...you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him" (2 Cor. 2:7-8).

6. Change fulfills the desire of Jesus. As noted earlier, Jesus wants us to change. He came to the world to make change in our lives possible. The Gospel is about transformation. We continue to be granted life that we might change.

The apostle Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Instead of resisting change, we must strive to become the fulfillment of Jesus' desire.

Conclusion

The life of a Christian is a life of change. We are to be making changes to our lives daily. This happens as we search our hearts by the word of God. Choosing to make small, incremental changes each day is how we grow into the image of Christ. If we are not changing, we are not growing. If we are not growing, we are dying. Therefore, we must stop resisting change.

We must open our hearts to the restorative work of God. Only good will come from our repentance. In light of the Gospel, Peter once preached, "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" (Acts 3:19-21).