WHY DO WE RESIST CHANGE?

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"If I could convince you that Christianity was true, would you become a Christian"? The reply was "no."

This question was posed by a Christian involved in outreach ministry to those who visited his tent at local Ribfests. The answer touches one of the most fundamental issues of life and reveals how reluctant we are to _choose_ change when we are clearly made aware of the need. We do have the power to choose and always retain the ability to say "NO" whether it relates to lifestyle behaviours, relationships or as in this case, our eternal destiny.

As Christians we deceive ourselves if we think that because we had said "YES" to the original question that we were now different, but on truthful examination we often say "NO" when the need to change stares us in the face. We can be stubborn to the point of our own death, so why is it so difficult to embrace the idea that we should change and why is change so difficult? But change has a further challenge when we do make the necessary decision to persevere enough to get the benefit of that change. Every New Year the Gyms are filled with hopeful candidates hoping to loose pounds and become fitter but those numbers drop dramatically by mid February.

There are parts of the body of Christ that believes and has embraced a doctrine that we are predestined to salvation with no ability to choose life unless God has predetermined it. This not only annuls any idea of saying "YES" or "NO" but it also appears to contradict the reason for this article. Experience however shows that we daily exercise our God given ability to make choices.

Jesus said that the reason we refuse to say "YES" to change when confronted with truth about ourselves is because "we love darkness rather than light." He touches on the real cause for our resistance; we LOVE doing and being what we are despite the consequences. To walk in the fullness of God's plan for us our transformation requires us to be prepared to change what God says needs to be changed. We need to LOVE those things that bring life and _want_ to change those things that bring death. God has granted us the empowerment to change if we are prepared to take that first step of faith; but the question remains, do we want to change or do we LOVE what we are or do more?

There are further influences at work against us to prevent us from making the changes we need to make. We have an enemy. Satan, wants to destroy God's plans for mankind and he will do all he can by using lies and deceit to frustrate our ability to choose to change. He will use every form of addiction to immobilise our free will and tell us that we cannot change.

We are told that "Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil." When we engage Jesus in our lives we have the ability to use divine resources to defeat the devil as well as our own weaknesses so that we can choose to change.

We know that God's ultimate purpose for us is to be "Changed into the image of His Son." That way God can fully enjoy us and we Him. The _process_ of "CHANGE" has to be at the heart of all we do, from our initial conversion experience to when we see Him "face to face". In simple terms, Heaven is being in God's presence and Hell the opposite.

Moses left this appeal to the Children of Israel at the conclusion of his life: [15] "Look, today I have set before you life and death, depending on whether you obey or disobey… [17] "I call heaven and earth against you today, I have set before you life and death, blessing or curse. Oh, that you would choose life; and that you and your children might live." DEUTERONOMY 30:15, 17 (LB)

But how then can we choose life when both our old sinful nature (the influence of this world and the temptation of the devil) are stacked against us? In his letter to the church in Rome Paul states: "Cut the nerve of your instinctive actions by obeying the Spirit." We hold the key to change when we make that step of faith to obey the Spirit. He provides the power, the grace, the enabling to break all the powers that would try to prevent us from choosing life.

Shalom.

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