

I must make Changes

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We are creatures of habit. We recognize the power of doing things over and over again. Some of our habits are good and some are bad, but all of us know we are creatures. As believers it is important for us to we try to chart a good course concerning our habits. Many of you have made up a list for this year. Our assignment today is to make you understand how to make that list practical.

When you look at how water flows through a canyon, you see that it flows constantly. The more the water flows the deeper the river becomes. Habits are the same way. The longer we continue a pattern of behavior, the deeper we get off in them. The issue is how do we change certain habits or behavior? Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24: 22That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.- On one hand we have this old man. This is the one we try to change and on the other hand we are standing in between the old man and what the new man will be. We are putting our self into position so that the new man can come to fruition. We have to recognize that it is the spirit of the mind. Whatever we try to change has to begin by changing our mind. Your mentality determines your morality. Get a person to change their mind then you can change their behavior. 2 Timothy 3:16-17:16All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.- This word helps us chart a course that a mature person may have good habits or good nature. Without the word of God, no change can happen. You have to recognize the power of the word of God being part of the change process.

6 steps to change

Step 1- Change your purpose in life.

1. Purpose leads to destiny. We are talking about what God wants you to be and not what he wants you do. If you are sleep and the house catches on fire, it motivates you to get up. You get motivated by the fire. Likewise, crisis should be your motivation to change.

a. Must have love and dedication to God. Romans 12:1-2:1I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. – God wants all of you. He is not impressed when you give offerings and tithes because this is what you owe. This is our reasonable service. Verse 2 says you coexist in a world that has a certain way of living and a certain way of seeing reality. As a result you have to have a different mindset that is transformed, realizing that you were created to bring glory to the creator, and that you exist to do God's will in the earth realm. Whatever you do in life, if it doesn't end up here addressing these things, you have a problem. The problem is you have chosen to conform in your mind. Everything you try to change started in your mind. Our mind is where the battle ground is. If we can get our mind straight, then we can get the rest of us straight. We have got to be dedicated to God. He wants all of us. We want God to have all of us and we are motivated by love. 1 John 5:3:3For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.-When you love somebody this motivates you to change to do the things necessary to chart the proper course. Love will motivate you. Love will make you

do stuff you wouldn't do when you are not in love. -Love will have you at the carnival spending \$40 on something you can buy for a \$2. You are just trying to win for something for your boo. A lot of people came out in the cold to Bible Study just because they loved God. Nobody will change unless they really love God. Have you had someone say that they loved you but never manifested it completely? You try to coach them into doing what they are supposed to do, but it doesn't seem to work until they fall in love. Likewise we will not change unless you completely love God. Love is a thing that will make a man or woman car to trying to save their child.

b. Imitation of Christ-Somebody at the top of their game changes because of somebody they like that is higher in the same game. A person that likes basketball may desire to imitate Michael Jardon for example. Matthew 10:24-25 says 24The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?-If you say you are a Christian, you ought to strive to be like or imitate Christ. Matthew 6:33 says33But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you-Seek Christ first or to be like Christ and the changes you desire will come.

c. Have a desire for eternal life and not eternal punishment. You see people playing hard trying to win the super bowl, but it is a temporary crown. 1 Corinthians 9:25 says 25And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.-We should have the same discipline and strive just as hard to get the crown of righteousness. There are more creative ways to go to hell than attending church. If you are trying to go to hell then why do you spend time attending church? The simple point of matter is this, when you look at what you do that doesn't bring glory to God, this is a good place to start your change.

Step 2 – Believe you can change with God's help.

Proverbs 4:23: 23Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.-It is people's intention to try to influence you, but you don't have to give in. Stuff that sets up in your head, ends up in your heart. Habits start in your head and later ended up in your heart. As a result, when you start talking, the issues of your heart start coming out. It is the pain in the heart that has been lingering there all this time. You have to be careful to guard your heart.

1. How do you handle temptation? How many people know people that have areas in their life that they should change? 1 Corinthians 10:13: 13There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.-When you go to the movie theatre, the first thing that you hear before the movie is they tell you where the exits are in case of an emergency. The Exit signs even illuminate on emergency power during the emergency so that you can find your way out. At the time of emergency, you have a choice to make. You can finish the movie or run for an exit. Just like this, in life, a lot of us see the exits, but we avoid the exit as long as we can. In the time of crisis you have to know when to hit the exit. Lots of times we fail to take the exit because we are in denial about the exit. We avoid the exit because of the temptation is in our heart. Philippians 4:13 says 13I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.-The key part is the second part of this scripture. What does Christ give us to do all things? He gives us strength. We look strong to others, but we are vulnerable when we confront our temptations. When you try to take your authority back by saying "You have no authority over me!" your tempters begin to discuss how we have made this proclamation before. As a result they feel in a couple of months, we will be right back to our

vulnerable self again. The question is what is going to be different this time? The answer is all the other times we were trying to do it without asking for God's strength. Remember when Paul asked God to remove his thorn and the Lord said his strength is made perfect in our weakness? Like this, we need to ask God to do for us what we can't do for our self. We need to get real with God. For many of us, this challenges our Theology. The problem is we think change is only a cognitive experience. The truth is the spirit of the mind is the real problem. It is not just cognitive. Ex-You say this is your last piece of chicken or cobbler, yet you continue to go back. Like this example, you can't do this just because we made up our mind to do it. Like Paul, we need to know how to do what we can't do. We need Gods strength. It is never too late to change. Psalm 37:5 says 5Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.-We have to decide which was we are going to cast our stream now.

Step 3 - Study the bible and what it says about your habit.

1. You might say you are not sure your habit is in the bible, but know that it is. There is not much God instructed us to do without giving instructions on how to do it. Joshua 1:8 says 8This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.-If you follow God's word, at the end of this verse, many think prosperity and success is the same thing, but they are not. There are a lot of people that have prosperity, but without a word that creates character, they don't have the character to keep the money, because they let the money fund their habit. Money doesn't make success. The world will place your gift ahead of your character. Once they realize your character is jacked up, they will pull endorsements. Some people can be gifted, but gifts won't take the place of character. If you don't have character, you can't handle prosperity. There are some people we could give a check for \$100,000 and \$90,000 of it would go towards their habit. We all got that one person in our family that come by the house wanting something and you can give them something to eat, but you can't give them money. There have been homeless people that said they were hungry and when we got something to eat at a restaurant they were gone when we got back. Just like them, we want God to do these great things for us, but we don't have the character to sustain it. If you are not tithing at the point that you are at now, what makes you think it will change when you get money. If you think about it, maybe God didn't bless you the way you wanted because your character couldn't handle it yet. This is ought to be enough to make you want to straighten up right there. You ought to want good success. People ought to be able to pull every stone away from your life and find nothing but good character from you. We have to recognize that we should become an illustration to people that don't read the bible so they will know how to they are supposed to handle a crisis.

2. Find your habit and see what the bible says about this. Use goggle to find it if you have to. Jesus quoted scripture while he was under temptations. Try to memorize some scriptures, but remember that the devil knows as many scriptures as you do.

Step 4 – Repent of sin.

1. You have a stream flowing and you run into blockage. This is sin. Sin is to miss the mark. We shouldn't cover the sin up. We should be real about our sin Proverbs 28:13: 13He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.-Go to God and say this is what I did. about a year and half ago, he read a book on how it was too easy to pray. Learn how to say exactly what needs to be fixed instead of minimizing your sin by saying phrases such as "If there be anything that's not right in me, take it out." You don't have to tell us, because we can't handle it, but you should tell God. Tell God you are tired of this and get as

graphic as it is. The more nasty and dirty it sounds to you, the less likely you to do the same thing. Culture has us calling things much softer names so we can adapt to it. “Lord, I have some indiscretions instead of saying” as opposed to “Lord, I’m a whore. This way you start dreading having telling the Lord what you did and it results in not wanting to do it. John 1:9 says 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.-Be honest. Just tell him it is a good time of year to repent.

Step 5 -Develop a plan of action.

1. Devise a plan to do good and not evil. Proverbs 14:22 says 22Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.- God has a strategy in everything.
2. How do we make changes?
 - a. Accurate thinking (truth over tradition) -We take God’s word on our mind and use it to confront that tradition and make it submit to truth. We don’t like confronting traditions.
 - b. Establish once and for all who you are in Christ. You can’t be that person that shouts in the church, and then smokes and curses people out after church. You can’t be that person that prays in church and then preys on the people in the church.
 - c. Die daily to the things that strengthen our flesh’s opposition to the word. Your flesh wants it, but you have to die daily to those things that don’t want you to get the word. These are the things you wish God made provision for in the word, those things you wish your Pastor wouldn’t preach about, and the things you try to justify by trying to change the meaning of the scripture. There are people that will try and get you not to come to get the word. Anything that tries to keep us from God’s word is a threat to our change.
 - d. Be prepared to handle short term discomfort. It is not easy to change. We are naughty by nature.
 - e. Live everyday according to your convictions and not your feelings and emotions. For woman the devil comes through your emotions and he comes at men through their egos. It is not how we feel, but what we know. Many of us accepted the Lord out of emotion or a feeling. This is not solid enough. Having gas is a feeling too. Many of us grew up in Lord on that feeling we had, but now we know him for real. We now have convictions. You can’t fight the devil on your emotions. Remember the scenario we discussed before. First it is no, then stop playing, and then you play to much!

Step 6 – Pray regularly.

1. You won’t do this because it is essential.
2. A child of God should pray for forgiveness. Romans 10:9 says 9That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.-If you pray you are sorry he will give you a clean slate.
3. Understand the power of praying for God’s help. Matthew 6:13:13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. – What we are really saying here is “Lord, prevent me from going into this temptation. Whatever you got to do, frustrate my plan so I won’t blow it. You rein in my life and sub-sequentially I need your power and I need your light to be my glory forever. So be it.” You got plans, but you want God to frustrate it so you can get to it. God might fix it one time where your car won’t start. You have to take a victory any way you can get it.