

Necessary changes

If we were to take a survey asking if change is really necessary, we would find that the majority of people would like to see some changes.

It is certain that many would like to change something that is no longer in style or is useless. Others look for changes motivated by advertising that insists they exchange their old automobile for a new one, or get the most recent cellular phone. And there is always someone who wants to change how the government is working, or the way his favorite football team plays.

Consider the scenario of a husband who is under the influence of alcohol and abuses his children and his wife. The next day he cries with remorse, but the following week he does the same thing all over again. Or the one who goes to jail for a crime that he committed promises to mend his deeds, but comes back to make the same mistake.

The fact is, when a person needs to change, they need to change from the inside out. Outward, superficial change will not truly transform a person.

What are the incentives that induce a person toward the desire to change? At times our situations reach a limit and we cannot continue to follow the same path. Then the moment arrives when we need relief and the only alternative is change.

Another motivator for change is boredom. We ask ourselves: "What is life for? If this is all there

is, why do we need to continue living?" For some people, boredom is the crossroad that prepares them to gain a desire to change as long as it gives purpose and meaning to their lives.

Another incentive for change can be an encounter with a person who has changed. It might involve someone who has experienced the same problems. A person then realizes that change is possible and is willing to analyze what happened in the life of the other person. They want to know which steps they need to take to begin the process of changing.

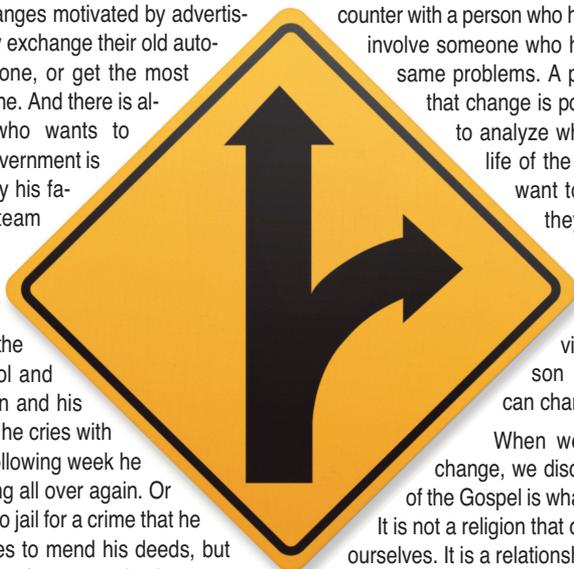
They are convinced that if this person has changed, they can change as well.

When we have a desire to change, we discover that the power of the Gospel is what we are looking for. It is not a religion that demands we change ourselves. It is a relationship with Jesus Christ that can change us.

Yet, we may not know how to let the Gospel change us. If we recognize our sinful condition and accept the forgiveness that God offers us, we have made the first and most important step.

The next step is to read the New Testament and to contact someone who has been changed by Christ.

Jesus said: "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10b). Allow Jesus Christ to change your life!



How do you cope with your difficulties?

When I picked up a job from a printing shop, I had a conversation that more or less went as follows:

—Excuse me, but this is not what I ordered. Do you remember what I had told you about the borders?

—We have many customers from big businesses and have never had a complaint.

—I am sorry, but we talked about this before. I explained clearly and you told me you would do it the way I had asked. This ink will not work for this type of paper. It will never dry and the printing will be spotted.

—This is the way we always do things. The press will not print otherwise.

I wanted to ask him to do the job all over again, but through our conversation I understood clearly his attitude.

He did not know how to do the work the way I had requested and he was not interested in learning how. It was as if he had said: "I do not want to do the work and I will not get paid more by doing it the way you have asked me to do it."

This is just an example of how many people attempt to justify their faults, deficiencies and failures. Once they are accustomed to taking on the attitude of leaving things the way they are, it is natural for them to keep doing things the way they've always done them.

It might be inconvenient to read, to study, or to learn something which would require more work. If a person struggles in certain areas, they might use it as an excuse for not being able to improve their life. If they do not have friends, that gives them an excuse not to wash or comb their hair or to be courteous. In brief, they are free to enjoy their misfortune or unhappiness.

The Lord Jesus, before helping a needy person who was in a helpless situation, knew Himself that in reality the person genuinely desired change. He asked a blind man: "What do you want me to do for you?" This was Jesus' way of showing the blind man that he needed help from an outside source.

Some people use sickness, lack of education, defects and social oppression to justify their decision not to accept the responsibilities of a normal life of work and struggle. Nevertheless, they have the option of turning to God who offers help and hope and solutions in difficult situations.

The Lord Jesus Christ desires that we no longer reject His offer of salvation and a new life, but that we accept His free gift of love and forgiveness. We cannot excuse our sins, but through His death and resurrection our sins can be forgiven. We can be confident that Jesus will answer us, just as He did when the blind man asked Him for his sight, which changed his life. □



"IT'S NOT MY FAULT!"

Take the correct path!

—So, you want to go to Realization Port? There's only one way to reach your destination: you need to take Bus 23.

—But I don't want to take Bus 23. I prefer Bus 17 because it's my lucky number.

—I'm sorry, but Bus 17 takes you to a different place, to Disillusion City. Only Bus 23 takes you to Realization Port.

—Please, let me take Bus 17 this time; many young people and others that are kind and happy take this bus.

—Yes, but they are not going where you want to go.

—That's fine. Have Bus 17 drive us to Realization Port just this one time.

You might ask yourself: What kind of attitude is this? Undoubtedly, if someone wants to travel to a certain place, they need to take the route that will bring them there.

When we stop and think about something as important as a person's final destiny and eternal life,



some people proceed without considering what God says in the Bible about this topic.

Because God created human beings with the special purpose of having eternal life, He provided a way to complete His purpose.

The Apostle Paul recognized the impossibility of being accepted by God and being in His presence when he said: *"The wages (payment) of sin is death (eternal), but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6:23).

That is why Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me"* (John 14:6).

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our salvation. He is our only way to reach the final destination of eternal life in heaven with Him. King David said: *"You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fulness of joy..."* (Psalm 16:11).

Take the correct path now!

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It's never too late...

as long as there is life

Teachers in the old days used to refer to children as soft clay and to adults as hardened clay. They wanted to show how simple it is to educate and help form good habits in a child and how difficult it is to erase bad habits when an adult is already trained.

This concept has been the source of discouragement for many who otherwise might search for a change in their lives.

The secret for change involves the “reprogramming” of the different experiences that have contributed to the formation of a person’s character. It means breaking our old patterns of thinking and living.

It is certain that with age our habits become more rigid and we are less able to accept a radical change. But at times stubbornness and fear contribute to our unwillingness to change.

Sometimes a brand new experience can produce a change so notable that we seem like another person. This is precisely what the Gospel teaches.

Beginning in our childhood, we are taking in twisted attitudes about ourselves and the world we live in. We become self-defensive, creating difficulties which causes grief. But then one day

God’s message comes to us saying that He loves us and we are priceless to Him.

Jesus’ death and resurrection are evidence of the truth and power that can establish order amidst our life’s confusion. When we accept and receive Him, He is able to break all the patterns of our bad actions and thoughts.

The heavy load of guilt and failure disappear and are gone forever. Difficult situations in life won’t destroy who we are, but instead, for the first time we will see purpose in these times of testing.

The apostle Paul expressed this great reality in one of his letters. *“Therefore if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). □

