

# ineed2change

*April 6 - 27, 2008*

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## **Introduction**

christnotes.org gives some great insight into change.

## **Study**

*4/6 - Heart (emotion)*

*4/13 - Soul (spiritual)*

*4/20 - Mind (intellectual)*

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## **We want God to change our circumstances, but God wants to use our circumstances to change us.**

It can be easy to think that God is obligated to make life easy for us and to remove all of our difficult circumstances. But, the truth is that *during hard times God is preparing us for greater things. If He removed the difficult circumstances in our lives, we would probably never mature.*

[James 1:2-4](#) says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." In other words, *rejoice in "trials of many kinds", because they test your faith, which causes you to grow closer to God.* Indeed, God assures us that something beneficial can come from the hard times in life.

If you are going through trials now, take hope in the fact that almost everyone in the Bible who did great things for God also had to endure great hardships. For example, in [2 Corinthians 11:24-27](#), Paul recounts many of the difficult circumstances that he had gone through: "Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked."

Clearly, Paul had suffered greatly for the Gospel. However, God used those circumstances to make Paul more mature and to give him a great love for God and for spreading God's Word. Now, Paul is widely considered the second most important person in the New Testament—behind Jesus, of course. However, we must remember that Paul had to go through many difficult trials. It was those times of testing that caused Paul to grow closer to God, qualifying him to be a great witness for Christ.

This same principle can be seen in almost every other person in the Bible who did great things for God. *It was during times of testing that such people developed the strength and character for which we respect them.*

Therefore, don't always beg God to change your circumstances. Instead, view each as an opportunity for God to change you, making you "mature and complete, not lacking anything."

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## Heart (Emotion)

### Luke 6:43-45

43"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

44Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars.

45The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

**Warm-up:** What is one of the best things you have ever done for someone?

- What is V. 43 saying?
- Can a person that is addicted to something that is a sin produce good fruit?
- Jesus also said "I am the vine and you are the Branches" (jn 15:5). How are these scriptures related/unrelated?
- What is said about the significance of having a good heart in V.45?
- Why is it so important for us believers to guard our hearts ?

### Application

- How can you guard your heart, so that you can bring good things to others in need?
- How have you treated your family, friends, and enemies lately?

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## Matthew Henry Bible Commentary

VII. We may expect that men's words and actions will be according as *they* are, according as their hearts are, and according as their principles are.

1. The heart is the *tree*, and the words and actions are fruit according to the nature of the tree, v. 43, 44. If a man be really a *good man*, if he have a principle of grace in his heart, and the prevailing bent and bias of the soul be towards God and heaven, though perhaps he may not abound in fruit, though some of his fruits be blasted, and though he may be sometimes like a tree in winter, yet he does not *bring forth corrupt fruit*; though he may not do you all the good he should, yet he will not in any material instance do you hurt..

2. The heart is the *treasure*, and the words and actions are the expenses or produce from that treasure, v. 45. This we had, Mt. 12:34, 35. The reigning love of God and Christ in the heart denominates a man a *good man*; and it is a *good treasure* a man may bring forth that which is good. But where the love of the world and the flesh reign there is an *evil treasure* in the heart, out of which an *evil man* is continually bringing forth *that which is evil*; and by what is brought forth you may know what is in the heart, as you may know what is in the vessel, water or wine, by what is *drawn out from it*, Jn. 2:8. *Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*; what the mouth ordinarily speaks, speaks with relish and delight, generally agrees with what is innermost and uppermost in the heart: *He that speaks of the earth is earthly*, Jn. 3:31. Not but that a good man may possibly drop a bad word, and a wicked man make use of a good word to serve a bad turn; but, for the most part, the heart is as the words are, *vain* or *serious*; it therefore concerns us to get our hearts filled, not only with *good*, but with *abundance* of it.

VIII. It is not enough to *hear* the sayings of Christ, but we must *do* them; not enough to profess relation to him, as his servants, but we must make conscience of obeying him.

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## Soul (Spiritual)

**Warm-up:** What things in your life are you willing to give up for Christ?

### Matthew 16:25-26

25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

- How can someone lose his life and find it at the same time?
- What is meant by “loses his life for me” in this passage?
- What is meant by gaining the world in this passage and why is it compared to losing your soul?
- Why does the author ask the two questions in V.26?
- Is there anything a man can exchange for his soul?

### Application

- Will others say that your actions show them that you are trying to give your life over to Christ or will people say that striving for earthly possessions and “the world” seems to be more important to you?

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## Matthew Henry Concise Edition

[Verses 24-28](#) A true disciple of Christ is one that does follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory. He is one that walks in the same way Christ walked in, is led by his Spirit, and treads in his steps, whithersoever he goes. "Let him deny himself." If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised, to redeem us, and to teach us. "Let him take up his cross." The cross is here put for every trouble that befalls us. We are apt to think we could bear another's cross better than our own; but that is best which is appointed us, and we ought to make the best of it. We must not by our rashness and folly pull crosses down upon our own heads, but must take them up when they are in our way. If any man will have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow Christ in the work and duty of a disciple. If all worldly things are worthless when compared with the life of the body, how forcible the same argument with respect to the soul and its state of never-ending happiness or misery! Thousands lose their souls for the most trifling gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, often from mere sloth and negligence. Whatever is the object for which men forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan buys their souls. Yet one soul is worth more than all the world. This is Christ's judgment upon the matter; he knew the price of souls, for he redeemed them; nor would he underrate the world, for he made it. The dying transgressor cannot purchase one hour's respite to seek mercy for his perishing soul. Let us then learn rightly to value our souls, and Christ as the only Saviour of them.

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## Mind (Intellectual)

### Romans 8:5-6

5Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6The mind of sinful man<sup>[a]</sup> is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

**Warm-up:** Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

- What is meant by living according to the sinful nature compared to living with the spirit?
- Why is it important to have your mind set on what the spirit desires?
- What is the author trying to portray by using the words “death” and “Life” in V.6?
- Does the author mean physical, spiritual, or even mental Death?

### Application

- How can this scripture help you get peace of mind?
- How have your thoughts affected how you live?

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## Matthew Henry Concise Edition

*The freedom of believers from condemnation. (1-9)*

[Verses 1-9](#) Believers may be chastened of the Lord, but will not be condemned with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are thus secured. What is the principle of their walk; the flesh or the Spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? For which of these do we make provision, by which are we governed? The unrenewed will is unable to keep any commandment fully. And the law, besides outward duties, requires inward obedience. God showed abhorrence of sin by the sufferings of his Son in the flesh, that the believer's person might be pardoned and justified. Thus satisfaction was made to Divine justice, and the way of salvation opened for the sinner. By the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us; there is that in all true believers, which answers the intention of the law. The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, the concerns of eternity, are the things of the Spirit, which those that are after the Spirit do mind. Which way do our thoughts move with most pleasure? Which way go our plans and contrivances? Are we most wise for the world, or for [1 timothy](#) sanctified soul is a living soul; and that life is peace. The carnal mind is not only an enemy to God, but enmity itself. The carnal man may, by the power of Divine grace, be made subject to the law of God, but the carnal mind never can; that must be broken and driven out. We may know our real state and character by inquiring whether we have the Spirit of God and Christ, or not, ver. 9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Having the Spirit of Christ, means having a turn of mind in some degree like the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and is to be shown by a life and conversation suitable to his precepts and example.

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## Strength (Physical)

### 1 Co 6:18-20

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

**Warm-up:** What is your definition of strength? Who is the strongest person you have ever known?

- What is sexual immorality and why the author separate this sin from all others?
- Why is it so important to refrain from sexual immorality?
- In what ways are our bodies temples for the holy spirit?
- V.19 says that we are not our own, Why and how are we not our own?
- Looking at V.20, should we as believers consider ourselves property? If so why and to whom do we belong?

### **APPLICATION**

If we are the property of Christ and are the temple for the holy spirit, how should we begin treating our own bodies? (sexually, what you eat, sleep, etc...)

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## Matthew Henry Concise Edition

[Verses 12-20](#) Some among the Corinthians seem to have been ready to say, All things are lawful for me. This dangerous conceit St. Paul opposes. There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast. But surely a Christian would never put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. The body is for the Lord; is to be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, therefore is never to be made an instrument of sin. It is an honor to the body, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and it will be an honor to our bodies, that they will be raised. The hope of a resurrection to glory, should keep Christians from dishonoring their bodies by fleshly lusts. And if the soul be united to Christ by faith, the whole man is become a member of his spiritual body. Other vices may be conquered in fight; that here cautioned against, only by flight. And vast multitudes are cut off by this vice in its various forms and consequences. Its effects fall not only directly upon the body, but often upon the mind. Our bodies have been redeemed from deserved condemnation and hopeless slavery by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. We are to be clean, as vessels fitted for our Master's use. Being united to Christ as one spirit, and bought with a price of unspeakable value, the believer should consider himself as wholly the Lord's, by the strongest ties. May we make it our business, to the latest day and hour of our lives, to glorify God with our bodies, and with our spirits which are his

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