

A Willingness To Change

Everyone is in favour of progress, but most don't like to change, because change is **not** made without inconvenience and uncertainty.

Each year our life will be filled with surprises, new opportunities, new threats, new challenges, new defeats, new victories, new frustrations, new fulfilments all demanding certain changes.

Being aware of something we need to change is not the same as being willing to change.

Willingness to change is an essential ingredient of a Christian life if we are to mature.

Romans 1:20 [NIV] *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

When we look at God’s physical creation we see that everything comes to maturity as the result of changes.

We need to apply this to our spiritual path to maturity.

2 Corinthians 8:8-12 [NIV] *“I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our **Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.***” Paul is talking about having a willing mind, just as our Saviour Jesus Christ had.

Philippians 2:5-8 [NIV] *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!”*

The willingness of Jesus to change from His glorious position to become a very humble human being is a shining example for us to follow.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 [NIV] *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. **Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;**”*

Always be thankful for our life whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

If we don’t accept such changes it will be detrimental to us because we will be putting out the fire of enthusiasm [God in us] that the Holy Spirit gives us.

2 Peter 3:18 [NIV] *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.”*

Remember that in the physical creation, anything that is not growing through change is dead, has no life in it.

There are some who are unwilling to entertain changes in our understanding of scripture as we seek to apply it to our era and culture.

Some need more time than others to understand such changes, and we are encouraged to carefully study the changes, but with an open mind.

Going to God in prayer asking Him to give us clear understanding.

Acts 17:11 [NIV] *“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.**”*

Such careful study of the scriptures is commended in God’s Word, but note it was with a positive attitude of mind.

Philippians 2:13 [NIV] *“for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*

God will help us mature in this way for it is His pleasure and will for us.

Patience is another key in learning to accommodate change.

We must be patient with one another and even patient with ourselves if we have difficulty in understanding the need for change.

Remember God is above all else patient with every one of us.

Take care when discussing doctrinal adjustments with others, we should never complain or *“put down”* the decisions made by the leadership in the church.

Do **not** forget the commitment we all made at baptism [our initial conversion].

Conversion is a positive commitment to change, to lead a new life.

At conversion we accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, a commitment to live a life compatible with His example and teaching.

Are we willing to listen to Jesus Christ as He brings us to maturity, individually and as a Church?

Are we willing then to change?