

# Breaking the Status Quo

**Deuteronomy 1:6-8** [NIV] *“The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighbouring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore he would give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to their descendants after them.”*”

**Israel allowed themselves to settle down and became contented with circumstances that were all right, but which could and did break their spirit of adventure and cause them to accept the status quo as being final for them.**

Every once in a while through prophet, apostle or psalmist, God stretches out His hand and tries to arouse His people from their sleep.

**Somebody once said that man is made of dust and dust tends to settle.**

People tend to settle down and do the same things year in and year out, slowly going around in a circle.

**When this gets into our Christian life, it is deadly and evil.**

**The majority of Christians are asleep and in a spiritual rut.** Sometimes Christians who realise they are in a rut put pressure on others to adopt their viewpoint.

But even if truth does not convince and persuade a man or woman, nobody has the right to set up a psychological squeeze on someone else.

If people yield under pressure, it shows that they are too weak to resist.

If they are too weak to resist, and if they take a religious position because they are too weak to resist, they will also be too weak to persist.

**When we follow Christ there must be persistence, we must go on.**

To apply pressure, a person projects himself or herself into the minds and consciences of people made in the image of God and forces them psychologically to do something they have no particular reason for wanting to do.

They are not basically interested in it and have no satisfactory reason for doing it, but they are under pressure.

**If they do not have a reason for doing what they are going to do, they will not know why they are involved.**

**Then when they get out they will not be sure that they were in, and so the whole process makes for weak, spineless religion.**

This violates the law of human nature, which dictates that **all valid acts must arise from a natural urge or from a convinced mind.**

An example of a natural urge is when you are hungry.

You may be very hungry, but your hunger does not have a high intellectual content in it.

Nobody needs to stand up and say, “Now, all you who are hungry raise your hands.” You know you are hungry, and you just go out to eat.

Hunger is a natural urge.

**Another legitimate reason for an act is a convinced mind.**

**I am convinced that I ought to do something, and I do it because I have a conviction that it ought to be done.**

**Those are the only two reasons for doing anything.**

If I force people under psychological pressure and steamroll them into doing something because they are too weak to resist, I have violated their nature.

**The approach to getting people out of the rut, then, must not be to pressure them to do something they don't want to do.**

**Instead, present the truth and let the Holy Spirit prompt them to want to escape the status quo.**

**John 16:8-11** [NIV] *“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

**This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the world.**

## ***Must get out of rut***

**It is imperative not only that we Christians get out of our rut but that we get out *now*.**

**How do we know if we are in a rut?**

**If we are not getting any prayers answered**, or if our prayers are so vague we are not sure but that any answer might have been an accident.

**John 15:16** [NIV] *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

**If we are living far from God**, yet hoping we are saved.

**James 4:8** [NIV] *“Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*

**If we are not progressing**, if we are where we were months or years ago, if we have settled down and learned to live with ourselves and adjusted to our present spiritual state, we are in the rut.

**Hebrews 6:1-6** [NIV] *“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and **go on to maturity**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”*

**There are some reasons why it is imperative that we as a church and as individuals get out, and get moving on our way to a better spiritual life.**

**One is that you have not much time to do anything about it.**

Our own interest is going to flag before long.

**Change is absolutely imperative to getting out of the rut, but the older we get the less we feel the need to change.**

If people have an urge within their spirits based upon a belief and conviction that they ought to move to begin to reassess their lives and adjust their living, then they ought to do it right now while they are thinking about it.

**Another reason for getting out of the rut now is the danger of political developments that will make it less favourable to serve God.**

In human history there have never been two countries like the United States and Canada, not even England, where it was more favourable to become a Christian.

But the political situation could easily shift around so the climate is not so favourable.

**There are many countries where the political and social climate is not favourable to becoming a Christian.**

Anybody who wants to become a Christian in some countries of the world has a rough time of it.

But here the people help us along.

Could we afford to wait until the climate shifted so it were not so favourable, until the social situation shifted so it were not so favourable?

**If you have not taken advantage of this favourable climate to get right with God and to improve our spiritual life in this freedom, would you if we were forbidden?**

**Ephesians 5:15-18 [NIV]** *“Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, **making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”*

## ***The Lord may soon return***

**The next reason is that the Lord may soon return. I realise there is a lot that we do not know about prophecy, but most Christians are looking for the second coming of the Lord.**

**They expect Him to come.**

They do not know when He will come, and the ones who claim they do, do not.

Nevertheless, He may come in your lifetime.

**He said that He would come back in an hour when we think not.**

**It could be that this present decline in expectation may have an ominous significance.**

It can easily be said that this would be the time when fewer people are expecting the Lord. Thirty years ago everybody was expecting the Lord and talking about it.

Now few are thinking and less are talking about it.

**If you press people, they will admit that they believe in the second coming of Christ, but they are not looking for it expectantly.**

**Luke 12:40** [NIV] *“You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”*

The last thing that bears upon the imperativeness of doing something about our spiritual life now is that we have such a short time to prepare for such a long time.

**We have an hour to prepare for eternity.**

**To fail to prepare is an act of moral folly.**

For anyone to have a day given to prepare, it is an act of inexcusable folly to let anything hinder that preparation.

**If we find ourselves in a spiritual rut, nothing in the world should hinder us.**

**Nothing in this world is worth it. If we believe in eternity, if we believe in God, if we believe the warnings in scripture, then there is nothing important enough to cause us to commit such an act of moral folly.**

Failing to get ready in time for eternity, and failing to get ready now for the great then that lies out yonder, is a trap in plain sight.

There is an odd saying in the Old Testament, **Proverbs 1:17** [NIV] *“How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds.”*

When the man of God wrote that, he gave the birds a little credit.

It would be silly for a bird watching me set the trap to conveniently fly down and get into it.

**Yet there are people doing that all the time.**

**People who have the chance to live for eternity fall into that trap set for them in plain sight.**

**James 4:13-17** [NIV] *“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.”*

**It is folly to put off to a tomorrow because we may never see the things that we should do now.**

It is an act of inexcusable folly to count on help that will never come.

It is foolish to ignore God’s help now offered us.

Many are guilty of ignoring the help that is presently being extended to them, all the while waiting for help that will never come from others.

**There is not much that can be said in favour of lazy or careless Christians.**

**God never told anyone to do anything that he or she could not do.**

**Matthew 12:13** [NIV] *“Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.”*

Jesus said to the man with the paralysed arm that hung at his side like a limp piece of flesh to stretch out his hand and the man, believing that Jesus was the Christ, stretched out his hand and was healed instantly.

**God has never asked anyone yet to do anything that He was not enabling the person to do.**