



The Good News

July 3rd, 2022

Volume 22, Issue 23

The Nature of Our Change in Christ

By Michael McCleary

Life is full of learning and growing. We see this all around us, from little children to older adults. We grow and learn about the world around us and what it means to be a productive member of society. We understand that the early developmental years for a child, from ages 1-16, are the crucial years in which a child determines their character and behavior. Beyond 20 years of age people rarely change their established character, mental process, and behavior. However, we find an exception to this rule in the change that can be brought about by God's word.

We were sinful creatures – **I Peter 4:3**, *“For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles – when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”* Peter describes in one verse the character and behavior that we used to exhibit by listing the different sinful qualities of conduct in which we were once engaged. The term “lewdness” describes the concept of “excess, absence of restraint, wantonness”. “Lusts” describes “strong desires”, and when coupled with the context describes “strong sinful desires”. “Drunkenness” is literally “to bubble up, or overflow, with wine” and describes inebriation and impaired judgment. “Revelries” means “a revel, carousal” and described by Vine’s as the “consequence of drunkenness”. “Drinking parties” is defined as “a drinking bout, carousal”. Finally, “abominable idolatries” is defined as “illegal or unlawful worship”. While each individual description may not have applied to our life before we became a Christian, we see the type of character behind them: unrestrained, selfish, desires that ruled our thoughts and actions.

We no longer live for the “lusts of men” – **I Peter 4:2**, *“...that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”* Peter makes it clear that while we are “in the flesh” (i.e. living, alive) we are to no longer be slaves to our passions and sinful desires, but rather be servants to the will of God, effectively changing the core of our character and behavior to be in line with the will of God.

We no longer “fit in” among our peers of the world – **I Peter 4:4**, *“In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”* The term “strange” here means “surprising”, and the phrase “flood of dissipation” means “overflowing excess of prodigality”. Peter suggests that it will be obvious to those around us that we have changed our ways and that they will not always be appreciative of the change.

Our character and mindset are to change to submit to the will of God. As a result, our conduct and behavior change to fall in line with what is commanded by God, as is fitting of a Christian. The challenge for us is to remind ourselves daily that we are not to be like those we see around us, nor engaged in the sinful activities of those around us. Paul says in **Col. 3:1-2**, *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”* We are to nurture within us the same character and mindset that Christ had, seeking to be pure and holy in all we think, do, and speak.