

ONE'S LIFE IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING

Matthew 22:37; Romans 8:29

Introduction: When you were a child who did you imitate? Who did you act like? Who did you dress up like? Have you noticed today's youth and how they dress, their make-up, the rings they wear, the language style? Preachers imitate their favorite preacher's mannerisms and pulpit styles, etc. The fact is we are constantly changing. Think about your own life, the changes you have made up to this present moment and the fact that there will be more changes as your life goes on. Our bodies change, our voices change, our eyesight and hearing changes and so on, as well as our outlook on life. Life is constantly in a change.

1. What changes are ahead for you/us?

- Things will either be on an upward path/swing or on a downward/sinking path - better or worse.
- Nothing stays the same for life is constantly moving, changing.

2. We change toward what we care about the most.

- We imitate that/those which we admire, love.
- Love for something or someone changes, molds, shapes and transforms, changes our lives.
- What a person loves is of great importance for it can affect one's eternal destiny.
- Loving wrong things can be fatal to spiritual growth as it can twist and deform one's life and cause one to not see rightly the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Loving the right things causes one to become right and continuing to do so brings one into the right relationship with the Lord.

3. The best change one can make is to be as much like God as he/she can be.

- God made man in His image to begin with but man fell away, left what God had made/done for him and associated with Satan, walking the way of the world as Satan wanted and still wants.
- God's love for man caused Him to provide atonement, forgiveness of sins and through His Son, Jesus, made a way for sinful, alienated man to be restored to fellowship with God and given eternal life.
- Jesus came to restore us to God-likeness again.
- God's work of restoration is continuing on even today and the best change a person can make in his/her life is to allow God to restore him/her to the "Godly" image he/she should have.

4. A major problem exists in trying to be like God.

- We have difficulty in "controlling" what/how we "love."
 - Our love is unpredictable, cold/hot, on/off, springs up, dies off, unsteady, etc.
- How can such "love" be directed toward God? How can it be forced to rest/stay on God permanently?
- Spiritual love is different from human (natural) love in that spiritual love is from the "will" and will go where it is sent and do what it is told to do.
 - One doesn't "fall in love" with God with human feelings but loves God from his/her will.
 - Love is within one's power of choice as we are commanded to love the Lord our God and be held accountable for NOT loving Him.

5. Human/Romantic "love" doesn't work in a relationship with God.

- One is not to "feel" in love with God but to "will" spiritual love.
- We are to set our hearts to love God, not matter what and to be obedient to God's Word.
- Feelings come and go but Spiritual Love from the heart is permanent.

6. To be like God is not by man's efforts.

- It is God who picks us up and raises us to a higher level.
 - A "second" birth is necessary to begin a new spiritual life, like that of God's and that comes from God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit indwells those who experience the "second" birth, sealing them for all eternity as the Children of God, and then guiding them through the rest of their human lives, teaching, empowering them to live as much like God as possible.

7. Human nature is constantly changing, influenced by whatever it loves.

- People are molded by their likes and dislikes, shaped and transformed by what they love.
- Think about those you know or have heard about who started out as innocent little babies and then grew up to become a terrible person (Hitler, Jezebel). What happened to their innocence?
- God has provided right and moral things for us/His Children to admire and love and follow the example of. Although they are not God, they are close to Him and to love them is to love Him.
 - There is righteousness. The heart is drawn to righteousness will be repulsed by iniquity.
 - A person like God will love righteousness and hate evil with all his/her heart.
 - There is wisdom. There is the wisdom literature of the Old Testament - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes which speak with a love of wisdom.
 - A wise man is a good man, a Godly man, and wise man is one who loves God and keeps His commandments.
 - There is truth. It is difficult to always separate the truth but Jesus said, "*...I am the truth...*" So to love God is to love truth and to love truth is to grow toward the image of truth and away from the opposite of that which is true.
 - There are others: mercy, kindness, purity, humility, etc.
- "*...Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things...*"

CONCLUSION:

1. Life is constantly changing - just think about the changes in your own life - the life of your children.
2. Your life is going to continue to change, physically, mentally, emotionally, in every way.
3. What you are attracted to, you will try to pattern your life after, in order to be as much like it as you can.
4. What examples have you already used? What example are you using right now?
5. There is but ONE example to pattern one's life after and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. God wants YOU to become like His Son and He can help you become like His Son.
7. Let God change you, it's something you can't do for yourself, only God can do it.