

Why Nothing Seems to have Changed! Part 1

By Wayne Vasilenko

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Did you ever know someone who says they “Found Jesus and were Born Again,” but you never saw any change in that person, even years later? How about this... people tell you they believe in miracles but say they never witnessed a miracle, they pray for healing but it doesn’t come, they pray for prosperity but it doesn’t come. Then there are the people who say they’ve “Found Peace in knowing God,” but in reality, they’re emotional basket cases! We all know people like this; truth be told we ourselves may even be people like this! So what’s the deal here; is our Bible and our Christianity for real, or is it all just some psychological or emotional crutch as some people claim or... is something else going on here? Many people who come to Jesus and say they believe in the Bible get disappointed when they don’t experience immediate changes in their lives, some are disappointed to the point that they quickly lose faith when things don’t change for the good as fast as they would like and before long, they drop out of the faith. So again, it begs the question, “What’s the Deal?” Many years ago, I had the privilege of helping to lead someone to the Lord. I have mentioned him in past writings but it is worth repeating as we explore this topic. His name was Jeff, and he was experiencing a deteriorating marriage among other emotional issues to the point where he was seeking solace in weekly beer parties at his house which drew many of his “friends” whom were more than happy to council him as they drank together. I can only imagine what his friends were telling him, but I do know this... I know that the counseling he was receiving from his drinking partners was not working. His marriage was still in trouble and something had to change, and it had to change fast. As desperation began to take hold, Jeff was to the point to where he was open to hearing about God and the Bible so when I was given the opportunity to share the gospel with him, I seized that opportunity.

Many people are told that when they receive Jesus as their Savior, “Everything will be ok, now things will get better, everything will work out for the good from that point on.” After all, the Bible does state plainly in **Romans 8:28 (NKJV)**²⁸ ***And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose;*** This passage of scripture sounds very comforting, especially to someone seeking the Lord, or to a person new to the Christian faith. However, this is also one of the most misused passages, because it is used almost always taken out of context! People quoted this verse are often led to believe their problems will fade away once they accept Jesus; If you are a Christian, I ask you, “How did that work out for you when you accepted Jesus?” When my friend Jeff accepted the Lord, I told Jeff ***not*** to expect things to instantly change for the good! In fact, I told him in all probability, things will get worse for a time. Why did I tell him that you might ask? First, let me say that it is true that some people do indeed experience instant change and some experience a complete “180 turn” in their lives when they come to the Lord; but that is not always the case, in fact, it is rarely the case. In order to get the true meaning of **Romans 8:28**, you have to read the entire chapter! Rest assured that when someone accepts Jesus, they are, with no doubt whatsoever, instantly and completely forgiven of all their sin, past sin, present sin, and even future sin, that fact is very clear in the Bible.

Hebrews 10:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"*¹⁷ *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

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1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

However, though your sins are forgiven, it does not necessarily eliminate the consequences of those sins! (Past, present, and future) This is why your salvation isn't a license to sin, as some seem to think, and this is why I told Jeff what I did. This is hard to comprehend for some, but if you are a born again believer and you sin, let's say you rob a bank; you are still forgiven by God and He does not hold that sin against you. However, that won't keep the police from slapping the cuffs on you and hauling you off to jail. Sin still has consequences whether you're saved or not from the Wrath of God! This doesn't mean that these consequences cannot be corrected in the future, after all, there is always the possibility of making things right regarding consequences, but it doesn't always work out that way does it? I went on to explain to Jeff that things might indeed get worse for him for a while because of a simple truth that I told him. I told him, "Satan cannot take away your salvation, but he is willing and able to take away your joy, your peace, and your witness to others." **(If You Let Him)** The main reason why many people get disappointed with their newfound faith in God is that they do not know what really takes place when they are "Born Again." Just as God is comprised of three parts, the same is true of man; after all, we are made in the image of God as stated in Genesis. The three parts of God are, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three parts of man are Spirit, Soul, and Body. When someone is Born Again, it is the Spirit part of him or her that is instantly made new. Since God is a Spirit, this is the part of us that God directly relates to while we remain alive on the earth. The Soul and Body however are still influenced by our choices and actions; therefore, our Spirit in God's eyes, is as holy and pure as Jesus Himself having been cleansed by His blood; not only is your Spirit cleansed and pure but it is forever protected against corruption by the Holy Spirit as the following passage plainly states.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

In order to see changes manifest in your body and soul, it requires action on your part; action in the form of "Repentance," and actively seeking God's will for your life. The word "Repent" basically means, to change your mind, to turn away from or go in another direction. This may happen faster in some people's walk with the Lord than others nevertheless, there should be some evidence of repentance, some evidence of change if a person is truly born again.

2 Timothy 2:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

As stated in 2nd Timothy above we are taught to "Turn away from wickedness." So the big question is, especially for people who call themselves Christian, "Has there been any change in your life since you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If there has not been any change, then there is a problem. I remember a preacher years ago made the following statement, "When you get saved, you can smoke all

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you want to, you can drink all the Booze you want to, You can do all the drugs you want to!” This of course got the attention of many Christians, especially the legalistic Christians in the audience. After letting his listeners fester a few moments he continued by saying, “Yes you can do anything you want to, but if you are truly Born Again, when it comes to those things, God will take away the Want to.”

1 John 1:6-7 (KJV)

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If someone claims to be a Christian but continues in a sinful life style, enticing you to do the same, remember this closing passage:

Matthew 7:15-20 (ESV)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Another Pastor asked a question that we should all ask ourselves from time to time, “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” The answer becomes more evident over time, and the amount of evidence should continue to grow as you seek to find, follow , and fulfill God’s plan for your life. In Part 2 of this study we will study some other reasons why with some Christians, Nothing Seems to have Changed.