

BECOMING A GOOD PERSON

Matthew 12:34-35 ... "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

In looking at life and its challenges, we can be tempted to look for something to relieve our pain and stress, without addressing the cause of the challenge. If you have a constant headache and take pain pills to quiet the pain, you might die from a brain tumor. That happened to me when I was 24 years old. I developed a constant headache. Instead of going to a doctor to diagnose the cause of the pain, I lived on aspirin, which caused stomach ulcers that nearly killed me. Only when the brain tumor was removed, was I cured.

It is human nature to try and take the easy way out of our problems. In my case, aspirin was more convenient than a doctor's visit and surgery. Something similar can happen to us spiritually. We look for the easy way out of sin. We might blame the devil or someone else for dragging us into sin, instead of admitting that our hearts were dark to begin with. A teacher with a large number of struggling students may say the students have a low IQ, or they are not interested in school, instead of doing a self-evaluation to find if his or her teaching style is the problem. A fisherman may blame a small catch of fish on other fishermen, the size of his boat, or the quality of his nets, but fail to admit that he did not fish long enough.

Change is one of the key requirements and blessings in our relationship with God. But we must understand the source of change and respect the process. Some feel that they must become a good person before Christ will accept them. However, the opposite is true. Change happens as a result of our relationship with Christ. You do not become a good person so you can be a friend of Jesus, you become a good person because Jesus is your friend.

Most of us desire to be better. We want to be kinder, more compassionate, raise loving children, enjoy life more, and serve God humbly. But unless Jesus is active in your life your ability to become a better person is limited. You need to give the Holy Spirit the freedom to convict you of your sins (so you can confess and repent of them), to lead you down a better path (not the path of your unbelieving friends), to improve your attitude, and reveal your faults. When the Holy Spirit is free to help you, you will become a far better person than you are capable of becoming by yourself.

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