



Change/
Maturity

MATURITY AND CHANGE

RON HAWKINS

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Can people really change? Even more, can believers actually become more like Christ? Scripture affirms that people can change, doesn't make change an option, and offers guidance for producing positive change. Believers are told, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

CHANGE . . . TO WHAT?

Scripture identifies a common goal for all who are in the upward cycle toward maturity: coming to "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Paul reminded Timothy that every believer must study Scripture "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). We have achieved maturity when we help edify others, contribute to the body of Christ, and are filled with Christ so that we are equipped for every good work.

CHANGE . . . WHY AND HOW?

In our close relationships with others, we may be called upon to help one another change for the better. "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). Our goal is not to have a judgmental spirit by which we pick out people's faults and then set out to change them. Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). While we do not need to be perfect before we can help others, we should be mature and loving if we are to help engage others in the process of change. Paul wrote, "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14). Follow-

ing are some questions we should ask ourselves:

What is our authority for guiding change in ourselves and others?

Our authority is the word of truth from God that sets the standards for our behaviors. When we challenge ourselves and one another with the truth of God's Word, then we know what direction we need to go in. We should not make a move toward helping another person until we have sought God in prayer and received His guidance for when and how to handle the situation. If He has chosen us to help this person, then He will provide time, the needed corrective, and insight into the approach we should use to help.

What should we not seek to change in

People have core personality traits—such as being extroverted or introverted—that are part of their uniqueness as God's creations (Ps. 139:13–16). We should not try to change people's personalities. The focus should be on helping people conform to standards of behavior found in Scripture.

What should we seek to change in others?

When beliefs and behaviors do not correspond to the truth in Scripture, we need to reprove the unbiblical behaviors and beliefs. Many behaviors and beliefs are rooted in the old life and are incompatible with maturity in Christ (Eph. 5:1–11). We are to

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carefully expose sin, encourage repentance, and patiently instruct believers in the ways of righteousness (1 Thess. 5:14).

How will we know if the change we desire to see has really occurred?

Jesus Christ will become visible in them as they **respond** to biblical truth and **conform** their behavior to biblical standards. We will notice that they desire less of the flesh and more of Him. We will see victories in their life and hear reports from others about victories they are seeing in the one who has embraced change. Remember, however, change takes time!

What motivation should control us as we seek to help people with the process of change?

Christ's love, a spirit of optimism, and a "can-do" attitude should dominate our words and behaviors as we seek to lead others to embrace changes that will lead them to maturity in Christ (1 Cor. 13:4-13).

CHANGE . . . TRYING VS. TRAINING

Frequently we see the need for change in ourselves and others. For example, we may talk to a friend about a need for change in a certain aspect of his or her life. That person may understand and realize the need, saying, "I'll try to change." The problem is, after a few days, people who say they'll "try to change" will crash and burn. Why? Because they are *trying*, and trying almost always ends in failure. When people try to change, they are merely hoping that they will find the inner strength to behave differently.

The biblical model is *training*, not *trying*. Paul teaches that maturity and change come with training: "Exercise yourself toward godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7). There is an enormous difference between *trying* to meet a goal and *training* to meet a goal. People may try all they want to win the big 5K race, but the winner will be the one who has been in training.

In order to truly change, people must ask the Holy Spirit to help them. They must repent of their failures, be accountable to other believers for the consistent practice of disciplines that foster spiritual growth, and, in the power provided by the Holy Spirit, habitually train themselves in godly behaviors.

Change can happen; maturity is attainable. Growth means change. Therefore, every growing believer is constantly changing—for the better. May God change us so that we can be mature in Him!

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of change/maturity include:

- > Jeremiah 13:23
- > John 8:1-11
- > **Romans 8:1, 9; 12:1, 2**
- > 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- > Philippians 4:13
- > Colossians 3:1-3, 8-10
- > 1 Peter 2:1-5

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on change/maturity at Ephesians 4:22-24 on page 1554. See also the personality profile of Paul on page 1432.

their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹if in-

deed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

KEY PASSAGE



Change/
Maturity

A REAL PUT-ON

(4:22-24)

The Christian life is a process of change and growth toward maturity. God does not make us perfect the moment we accept Christ as Savior. Instead, He transforms our old selves. The "old man," the sin nature, is taken off like a dirty piece of clothing. In its place, we "put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." We wear that new man like a clean piece of clothing in all areas of our lives. At times, we may forget about the new clothing and allow sin to get us dirty, but we can go back to God for cleansing. At other times, that new clothing reminds us of our new identity in Christ and helps us make right choices.

We should be maturing in our Christian lives, finding that the new clothing is comfortable and that wearing it is second nature. We must never stop seeking to become more mature in Christ. That process lasts a lifetime.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about change/maturity on pages 1526, 1527. See also the personality profile of Paul on page 1432.

KEY PASSAGE



Anger

BEFORE THE SUN SETS

(4:26, 27)

The Bible doesn't say, "Never get angry." It does say, however, "Be angry, and do not sin." Anger is a God-given, powerful emotion. Handled well, anger can cause positive change. Anger handled poorly, however, can cause great harm.

So what should believers do with their angry feelings? They should not indulge that anger, because that could cause them to speak or act in ways that they would later regret. Nor should anger be stuffed deep inside with people pretending they never feel angry. That can cause a host of personal and relational problems. Stuffed anger will eventually cause a "system overload" whereby years of resentment erupt when a small spark sets it ablaze. The healthy way to handle anger is to deal with it as quickly as possible—before the sun goes down—so that we do not nurse the anger and thus "give place to the devil." Satan loves to use angry feelings to divide believers. We should seek to resolve our differences with others quickly. Then we can get on with the Lord's work.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about anger on pages 692, 693. See also the personality profile of Cain on page 11

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²²But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

SAUL ESCAPES DEATH

²³Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. ²⁴But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. ²⁵Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.

SAUL AT JERUSALEM

²⁶And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and

how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. ²⁹And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. ³⁰When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

THE CHURCH PROSPERS

³¹Then the churches^a throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

AENEAS HEALED

³²Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also

9:31 ^aNU-Text reads *church* . . . was edified



**Change/
Maturity**

PERSONALITY PROFILE

PAUL'S CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

(ACTS 9:22)

Saul (who later was called Paul) probably thought he had it made. As a young and zealous Pharisee, he knew God's Word thoroughly. He had studied under a well-known Jewish rabbi, Gamaliel, and had apparently learned his lessons well. So well, in fact, that when the sect of the Nazarene—people who believed that Jesus was the Messiah—began to grow and flourish, Saul did all he could to stop it. Along with many of his fellow Pharisees, Saul thought that Jesus of Nazareth was a deceived man, certainly not the promised Messiah. Therefore, Jews who became Christians were considered traitors and deserved to be rounded up, locked up, and even killed.

That all changed one day on the road to Damascus. Saul was on his way to find and arrest more Christians who had fled from Jerusalem. On the road that day, Saul met Christ and was never the same again. Paul's early training took on a whole new aspect. The Scriptures he had so diligently studied opened up with a brand-new understanding. He saw Christ throughout God's Word, and he saw Him as the fulfillment of the prophecies.

It would be correct to say that Paul changed. Yet he merely made the logical move from being a Jew to accepting the Messiah of Israel and becoming a Christian. His belief system found its completion in Christ. As Paul restudied the Scriptures, God opened his mind to see Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all of God's promises.

As people come to Christ, many find Him to be the logical answer to their deepest questions. Others are surprised by who He is and what He has done for them. God has no set pattern or time frame for changing people's lives with His presence. Some will be convinced immediately; others will take more time; some will be slow to change. But we can know for sure that when Christ enters people's lives, they will never be the same!

To Learn More: Turn to the article about change/maturity on pages 1526, 1527. See also the key passage note at Ephesians 4:22-24 on page 1554.

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neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' "

¹³So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die." ¹⁵Then Nathan departed to his house.

THE DEATH OF DAVID'S SON

And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. ¹⁶David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. ¹⁷So the elders of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. ¹⁸Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he

would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

¹⁹When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."

²⁰So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. ²¹Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

²²And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell *whether* the LORD^a will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

12:22 ^aA few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *God*.

SOUL NOTE



Spiritual Health (12:1–23) Psalm 51 records David's lament after being confronted by Nathan. Evidently David had felt no guilt until God, through Nathan, revealed his sin to him. When David felt the crushing weight of his guilt, he felt sick and tormented. "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me," he said (Ps. 51:3). David had withdrawn from God and failed spiritually. The result was devastating. The pain sent him back to God, for God alone could restore him. Guilt can crush people, or it can send them to God for forgiveness and spiritual restoration.

Topic: Health/Spirituality

SOUL NOTE



Me First (12:13) As Nathan spun his story, David flashed with anger. "The man who has done this shall surely die!" he exclaimed (12:5). David clearly saw the rich man's sin, but failed to make the connection with his own actions toward Uriah and Bathsheba until Nathan said, "You are the man!" (12:7). It is easy for us to hear a sermon or read a Bible passage and think of other people to whom it applies. Instead, we should first ask, "What can I learn that will help me grow spiritually?"

Topic: Change/Maturity

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the Prophets:^a

"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,

Who will prepare Your way before You."^b

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

*'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'*

⁴John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

⁹It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from^a the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

¹²Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was

with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

JESUS BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY

¹⁴Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom^a of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

¹⁶And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

¹⁹When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. ²⁰And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

JESUS CASTS OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

²¹Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²²And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

²³Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet,

1:2 ^aNU-Text reads *Isaiah the prophet*. ^bMalachi 3:1 1:3 ^aIsaiah 40:3 1:10 ^aNU-Text reads *out of*. 1:14 ^aNU-Text omits *of the kingdom*.

SOUL NOTE



Immediately! (1:16-18) Simon and Andrew were casting their fishing nets into the sea when Jesus called them to drop everything and "become fishers of men."

And they did: "They immediately left their nets and followed Him." Being a

disciple, a follower of Jesus, means a radical change in life and focus. New believers may not have to leave a job, as these disciples did, but they may have to make other kinds of radical changes in order to follow their new Master. Jesus still says, "Follow Me." Nothing should keep us from going "immediately." **Topic: Change/Maturity**

ness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

¹²Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which

are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,^a let us be of the same mind.

OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, ac-

ording to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

4 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

BE UNITED, JOYFUL, AND IN PRAYER

²¹I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³And^a I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6, 7

your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS

⁸Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

⁹The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

3:16 ^aNU-Text omits *rule* and the rest of the verse.

4:3 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *Yes*.

SOUL NOTE



Forget It (3:12-16) Believers must constantly seek the goal of maturity in Christ. Even Paul knew that he had not attained that goal, so he pressed on to grow in Christ. A key to that growth is "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead." Past sins have been covered and need not hinder us, and past worldly accomplishments mean nothing. We are "heavenly citizens in training." All that matters is walking with Christ through life, allowing Him to prepare us for His kingdom. **Topic: Change/Maturity**

GREETING

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.^a

THEIR GOOD EXAMPLE

²We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. ⁵For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

⁶And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. ⁸For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

PAUL'S CONDUCT

2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. ²But even^a after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we

were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. ³For our exhortation *did not come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

⁴But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. ⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

¹⁰**You are witnesses**, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged^a every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, ¹²that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

THEIR CONVERSION

¹³For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it not as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. ¹⁴For you, brethren,

1:1 ^aNU-Text omits *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. 2:2 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *even*. 2:11 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *implored*.

SOUL NOTE



Life Changing (1:8, 9) The Thessalonian church was only a few months old but was already having an impact! These young believers were being tested by severe suffering (1:6), but their solid faith was being talked about "in every place." That's what the good news of Jesus Christ does—it makes astounding changes in people's lives that could not happen any other way. For some, the change is more noticeable than for others. But whenever Christ enters a life, He changes things. We need to let Christ work in our lives so that we can make an impact on our world. **Topic: Change/Maturity**

above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. ¹⁸Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.

QUALITIES NEEDED IN TRIALS

¹⁹So then,^a my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

DOERS—NOT HEARERS ONLY

²¹Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

JAMES 1:21

²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a

man observing his natural face in a mirror;

^{1:19} ^aNU-Text reads *Know this* or *This you know*.

SOUL NOTE



Strength to Resist (1:12-15) Temptation comes from evil desires inside us, not from God. It begins with an evil thought that becomes sin when we act on it. God does not tempt His people, but He will allow Satan to tempt us in order for us to refine our faith and grow in our dependence on God. And He will not allow us to be tempted more than we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13). When temptation raises its head, often unexpectedly, we can resist it by counting the costs and turning to God, asking Him for help, and choosing to obey Him. He will give us the strength we need.

Topic: Temptation

SOUL NOTE



Listen Up (1:19) Communication is more than just talking. If two people are talking at the same time, they aren't communicating—they're just making noise. Communication involves both parties taking turns speaking and listening. Good communication, wrote James, occurs when people are quicker to listen than they are to speak. We want to speak and make our opinions known, but we must also be willing to listen to others. We show respect for others when we listen intently and then speak carefully. **Topic: Communication**

SOUL NOTE



Do It! (1:22) Many people sit in church and listen to the sermon, only to forget what they heard upon exiting the sanctuary. James says, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only." It is important to read, listen to, and know God's Word, but it is also important to obey it. We can measure the effectiveness of our Bible study and attentiveness to the Sunday sermon by our behavior and attitudes during the entire week. How much is our faith affecting how we live? It should make a huge difference, for "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (2:17). **Topic: Change/Maturity**