

7 Desperate Needs That Foster Change in Your Heart

It will require a rejection of the cultural mindset ... a total transformation of heart. We must fill ourselves with the things of God.

As He increases, we decrease. The desire to be filled with the truth of God's Word must be a priority. Every area of our life will be affected as we surrender to His influence.

Here are seven areas that foster change:

1. The Desperate Need for Truth: Absolute truth is a hill on which to die. In battle, there are key strongholds that must be taken, or kept, at all costs in order to win—these are “hills on which to die.” Today, absolute truth is one such hill. A weapon of destruction has set its sights on our nation, our homes and our families. Relativism and postmodernism continue to challenge truth, but to their own destruction. Attacking absolute truth is like waging war on a lighthouse. It cannot be negotiated, bargained with or debated.

Unfortunately, Christians who are sounding the alarm are often categorized as irrational, judgmental, bigoted and intolerant. But how can we warn if we won't confront; correct if we won't challenge; and contend if we won't question? We are not called to make truth tolerable, but to make it clear. It is a “hill on which to die.”

2. The Desperate Need for Love: Will others know that we are Jesus' disciples by how well we translate the Greek, or unravel the Hebrew, or by how well we convey pneumatology, eschatology, soteriology, or eschatology? Will they know by how many Scriptures we quote, or how often we read the Bible? Although all these things are important, the answer is a

resounding, “No.” Jesus said that love, not knowledge, is the characteristic of a changed heart.

It’s possible to be “Bible taught,” but not “Spirit led”—straight as a gun barrel theologically, but just as empty—“the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” This is fertile ground for modern-day Pharisees. Don’t get me wrong, we are to study the Scriptures and defend the faith. But we must equally balance truth and love.

3. The Desperate Need for Discipleship: Your faith must stand trial. Trying times are not intended to break us down, but to build us up. The only way to build into our lives such qualities as love, joy, peace, humility, and patience is to be confronted with situations that require love, joy, peace, humility and patience. Then we are called to invest into the lives of others. In the same way that Mono Lake is too alkaline for fish to survive because it has no outflow of water, our lives can become stagnant and dead if there is no outflow into the lives of others.

4. The Desperate Need for Holiness: Holiness is not a prudish, outdated word. It means being set apart, or separated from anything that causes us to sin, whether mentally (in what we think), or physically (in what we do). Holiness begins in the heart. We should continually strive for holiness in all that we do and say. It’s impossible to develop a deep respect and desire for God if we repeatedly fill our mind with things that oppose Him. “The gratification of the flesh and the fullness of the Spirit do not go hand in hand” (R.A. Torrey). “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34). What goes in, ultimately comes out. It’s time to recognize the desperate need for holiness, beginning within our homes and minds.

5. The Desperate Need for Prayer: A prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian. The men and women who do the most for God are always people of prayer. Many of us lead very busy lives,

making it difficult to be in the right frame of mind to hear from God. Men would live better if they prayed better. If we're too busy to cultivate a prayer life that places God first—we're too busy. We're often too busy because we're doing too much. "When faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live" (E.M. Bounds).

6. The Desperate Need for Power: The Holy Spirit is not some weird, mystical force; He's part of the triune nature of God. The Bible says that the Spirit intercedes, leads, guides, teaches and so on (Rom. 8:26; Acts 8:29; John 16:13.) He enables and empowers us to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to boldly live for Christ. God's Word becomes living and active in the life of the believer who is continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

7. The Desperate Need for Christ: If current statistics hold true, many will continue to reject Christ, never to return; or, they will embrace a glamorized Christianity, both to the same end. Who is Jesus? How you answer this question is the difference between right and wrong, light and darkness, heaven and hell. When asked this question, the apostle Peter gave the correct response: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Jesus Himself confirmed this by saying: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Seriously, consider who and what you choose to follow. We are sinners who need a Savior. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of blood, there is no removal of sin. His blood was shed for our sins; we should be forever thankful. Jesus isn't an option; He's the way, the truth, and the life. {eo}

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