



God, Help Us Find the Motivation to Change!

Read: Romans 12

Charles Dickens Christmas Carol:

1. Several spirits visit Ebenezer Scrooge. One of the spirits takes Scrooge back into his past life and shows him things he had said, done and others he had harmed. This individual spirit also reveals to him what he had lost in life due to his self-centered behavior.
2. Scrooge both hears and takes witness to the people talking behind his back, saying both negative and cruel things about him. He also hears others who have pity upon his loneliness and his isolation due to his character flaws. It was a rude awakening for Scrooge who felt he really had it all.
3. Another spirit takes Scrooge into his present and yet another takes him into his future. They both reveal to Scrooge the negative consequences of his life if he doesn't change his today and his entire hereafter. Not only his behavior, but also his entire character. *His Heart!* The spirits reveal to Scrooge that without change only misery, isolation and loneliness lie ahead. *Ebenezer Scrooge was shown a ray of hope if only he had the motivation to change.*

TRANSFORM: To change radically one's moral character, condition, or nature through the renewal of thinking power. ***Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***



Think about your past. Go back and remember the effects of what living in dysfunction has had on your life and your well-being.

1. Ever try to estimate just how much your lifestyle has cost you monetarily? Have all your personal assets and belongings disappeared? Got only the clothes on your back and you could really use a warm winter coat.
2. Ever thought about how the effects of active addiction have ravaged your physical or mental health? Some of us have or still will suffer from high blood pressure, rapid weight loss or gain, heart, kidney, respiratory problems, stomach or liver damage. Brain damage, memory loss, depression, anxiety and many additional psychological effects.

3. How has the lifestyle affected your relationships with others? Friends and family that are suppose to be important to you; *“Are they still hanging in there?”* Or: *“Where did they all disappear to?”*
4. Finally, what could people be saying about you behind your back after you have spent possibly years abusing yourself and eroding the very fabric of society in some form of self-destructive behavior? Are they speaking truth? Get in touch with these feelings and truths because: *“They are not a storybook tale. “ “This is reality.”*



Now let's imagine a few more years down the road still actively using to change who we are, how we feel and how we deal with life on its terms.

1. If still living in a dysfunctional lifestyle what would life be like now and how much more has it cost you monetarily to remain in bondage? Court costs, attorney fees, incarceration costs, traffic fines, probation or parole fees, repairing wrecked vehicles or replacing lost ones.
2. A few more years down the road and still living in denial what would be the condition of your physical or mental health? How many more relationships or friendships have you lost? Maybe you don't even have relationships anymore. Friends and family have said, *“Enough is Enough”* and they ask you to leave because they can no longer listen to your lies or bear watching you destroying yourself.
3. How many more jobs have you lost because you can't get up in the morning? Or, maybe you have no vehicle because all your money goes to support your lifestyle. Then again, just maybe you have lost your license due to DWI's. *How about your freedom?* How many more times have you lost it by sitting behind bars for one reason or another due to the insanity of your lifestyle?
4. How about your belief systems and how about your purpose in life? Do you wake up in the morning feeling so empty and alone that you can barely get yourself out of bed by simply placing your feet on the floor? You feel totally disconnected from society and you may even wonder if you are a member of this universe.
5. Stop before it's too late...The day can *“Yet”* come when the police find your body behind some dumpster in an alley, dead from an overdose, killed in an alcohol or drug related accident. Or, to escape a messed up world you commit suicide.



***If you're saying ouch get off my toes remember:
This is not a Fairy Tale Story: “This is reality!”***

***And now, like Ebenezer Scrooge we must make that choice.
Whether we have failed or succeeded in the past makes no difference.
We must start where we are today and go on from there. Do it before time runs out!***

Jeremiah the prophet asked this question. ***Jer 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil.***

1. God specializes in loving those who are unloving and undeserving. As with Scrooge; we caught a glimpse of who we had become. Today; understand that we all have character flaws that are beyond our control and deep inside we feel a sense of brokenness that is a constant reminder of our humanity.
2. As with Scrooge, we need to do a personal inventory and if problems exist we need to admit them and respond with appropriate actions. But, as the quality of our lives has deteriorated still many of us choose to look the other way, *pretending everything is all right.*
3. Admitting that we are powerless to change and surrender to God is going to be an on-going commitment. We must remember that our character flaws did not happen overnight. They had long become a part of us, but through His grace and his restoration power they don't have to be our future.
4. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin and the leopard cannot change his spots but our God is a God of liberation and transformation who can: *"Change us from Glory to Glory."* Our God will give us a new heart and change us from the inside out. But, only if we have the motivation to make those needed changes.

2 Cor 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

1. Our Heavenly Father asks, *"Do you want to get well?" "Do you really want to change and put your past behind you?"* What He is speaking about is *"True Change"* because He can give us liberty and freedom from our past. He will help us overcome our character flaws by transforming us from the inside out into His image from: *"Glory to Glory."*
2. True change takes the motivation and the willingness to get better acquainted with *"God's High-Ways"* rather than this *"World's Low-Ways."* We need to focus our attention on God and His Word because He will be the one to guide us through the uncharted territories of life by placing us under His umbrella of protection.
3. Scrooge was a selfish, grumpy and lonely man. Understand: That's not what God wants for us. He wants us to live joyfully. As we become obedient and are transformed into His image people will begin to see the change in our life. We will become that *"Living Testimony"* of His power to transform even shattered lives. How long will it take? *Change never comes overnight, but God does promise to complete the transformation in our life when the time is right.*

Ezek 36:24-26 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

1. Before he was motivated into change Ebenezer Scrooge had a heart of stone. In this fairy tale story he was a bitter and very lonely old man who had fairy-tale spirits take him through his messed up life.
2. Today and in real life our God who never changes is calling us. He is the same yesterday, today and all our tomorrows. He will gather us. He will clean away our filthiness. He sprinkles clean water upon us. He will put a new, real and living spirit within us (*The Holy Spirit*) and He will give us a new heart.
3. He will love us through this process of change even when we fall short. He will be there for us even when we are self-motivated, self-destructive or self-centered. Today the one true and living God is calling us.



**Is God calling you by name?
Whether we have failed or succeeded in the past makes no difference
We must motivate our self to change.
As with Ebenezer Scrooge we must choose our future, and we must choose before time runs out.**