

April 2002: The Patterns of Change

by Aaron Greenway

The lives of others touch us in a very profound way. When we see the hand of God working in the lives of those close to us, the natural reaction of a believer is that God would do the same for us. All of the sudden we realize the reality of the resurrected power we have so recently talked about this past weekend.

Many times we get discouraged with temptations, trials, and even tragedies in our lives because we believe God has somehow forgotten about us. We can even become hardened enough to see God's mighty hand working in someone else's life but not believe it for ourselves. But, this is precisely the reason why God puts people in our lives, those who have gone on ahead and those who are around us. We feed off one another.

Years ago I realized the reality of my lostness just because a recently-converted, grade school friend had taken the time to show me Christ's love. Since then I have seen God work in my life to overcome habits, temptations, and hard times because I witnessed the same things happening in the lives of my brothers and sisters. They became the catalyst I needed to get through that difficulty. Hopefully, this pattern will not change.

Having just gone through Easter weekend, I am reminded of what it must have been like to have the ultimate Example, the Son of God, to "rub off" on you. He didn't have sins or habits, but He was tempted and He certainly had his share of rough times. Jesus Himself said to His disciples, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). Because Jesus overcame, so can we!

But as we realize the impact that others have, we must also see that we are being watched as well. The change that occurs in us at this point is crucial because we become the reflection of

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what others are looking for. Paul said, “Follow me even as I follow Christ.” When believers want to know how to live a victorious, Christian life, they look to other Christians. They look to YOU! They look to ME! How humbling! This is especially true of children. A child will believe their parent’s actions much faster than anything that comes out of their mouths.

The major point is that when the Spirit of God works afresh in our hearts, we follow after the example of our Examples. We do what they did to prepare our hearts before the Lord. We see their dedication to God’s Word and their tenacity in prayer. And we stand in their footprints on the shores of revival so that we are swept away by the same tide and in the same current. And the others that witness this will not be far behind. This is how the Holy Spirit works revival. He works it corporately.

If we ever get to the point where we don’t need other believers for our spiritual growth, then we have just cut ourselves off from the oxygen the Lord uses to keep His Body vibrant and healthy. It is the very source we need for our spiritual growth and maturity. We need to be encouraged. And we need to encourage others! The mentality of “It is just me and Jesus” doesn’t work!

Perhaps God has put a Daniel in the midst of your years of spiritual captivity. Perhaps God is asking you to be a Paul to a Timothy. Whatever the case, our walk with God and the work of the Spirit in our lives hinges on what He is doing in the Body as a whole, through our predecessors (Hebrews 11:1), through those who are at our side (2 Timothy 2:3), and through those who are looking at us to show them the way (1 Timothy 4:12).