

FOR LOVERS ONLY - LOVE IS NOT CRAZY IX

False assumption IX

“If I change my behavior, I will grow spiritually and emotionally.”

²⁵ *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”*

Matthew 23:25,26

- I. The behavioral trap.
 - A. This false view says that behavior change is the key to spiritual and emotional growth.
 - B. Examples: To combat depression, act happy and think positive thoughts. To deal with angry feelings, behave kindly towards others. To overcome destructive habits, just say no.
 - C. The first problem / Changing only our behavior confuses fruits with roots.
 - D. The Bible teaches that our actions are the result of spiritual change, not the cause of it. Good behavior is the cart, not the horse.
 - E. The Second problem / Changing only our behavior forces us first into Pharisaism, then into despair.

F. Don't become the "sprinter" with resentment - driven bursts of good behavior.

II. True root healing. Grace, truth, and time.

A. Instead of attempting to fix our symptoms, we can actively take ourselves to good nutrients. Grace, truth and time.

B. The safety net called grace. Maturity is the cycle of trying and failing our way into growth.

1. You try.

2. You fail.

3. You receive grace and forgiveness.

4. You suffer consequences.

5. You will learn from the consequences.

6. You try.

7. You do a little better.

8. You fail.

C. We learn by practice. (Hebrews 5:14) When we know that we won't be condemned when we fail, we grow faster. We take more risks. But living under the "just do it" bondage dooms us to not learn from our mistakes.

¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

III. From the inside out.

A. Spiritual and emotional growth doesn't occur all at once. Just like the growth of a tree from the inside out through the seasons of life, we mature.

B. Good behavior is fruit which indicates that God is doing an invisible, internal work within us, transforming us to be more like him. (II Corinthians 3:18)

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

C. Positive behavior comes from God's work in our hearts. (Colossians 1:10)

¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

D. 12 choices we can make.

1. Confess our sins.
2. Give up the notion that we can save ourselves.
3. Submit our inability to God.
4. Ask for help in searching for our faults.
5. Repent.
6. Take account of our needs and let others meet them.
7. Make amends.
8. Forgive.
9. Invest and practice talents.
10. Seek God.
11. Seek truth.
12. Love one another.