

Let's Do Difficult Big Changes Ahead

I. Obedience vs. Rebellion

Isaiah 1:18–20 (NIV®)

¹⁸ “Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord.

“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; ²⁰ but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Christianity is not easy, it is difficult.
Christianity costs you everything.

A. Giving & Receiving

Matthew 10:37–39 (NIV®)

³⁷ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

1 Corinthians 9:24–25 (NIV®)

²⁴ Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

B. Unlikely Recruits

1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NIV®)

²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ **He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things**—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Acts 26:9–11 (NIV®)

⁹ “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

II. “You Have Heard That It Was Said”

Matthew 5:38–42 (NIV®)

³⁸ **“You have heard that it was said,** ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:21–22 (NIV®)

²¹ “**You have heard that it was said** to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’” ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Matthew 5:27–30 (NIV®)

²⁷ “**You have heard that it was said**, ‘Do not commit adultery.’” ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Matthew 5:43–48 (NIV®)

⁴³ “**You have heard that it was said**, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

III. Tradition vs. Command of God

Matthew 15:1–14 (NIV®)

¹ Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ² “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

³ Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’” ⁵ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ ⁶ he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’”

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’”

¹² **Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”**

¹³ He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ **Leave them; they are blind guides.** If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”