

LIVE LIFE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Some people says, "Everyone is influenced by his circumstances." Right? Wrong.

We often do not think of our response and so we respond reactively. We do not respond but we react – and often we regret that we reacted that way. No! You can control your response. You are free to choose your response.

(James 1:19) "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,"

When we are quick, then we do not think.

It is so easy to be reactive. Don't you find this to be the case in your life? You get caught up in the moment. You say things you do not mean. You do things you regret. You say, "Oh, if only I had stopped to think about it, I never would have reacted that way!"

We all need a "pause button" – something that enables us to stop between what happens to us and our response to it, and to choose our response.

It is possible for us as individuals to develop this capacity to pause!

When we are proactive, we see that our circumstances do not control us. On the contrary, we control them. Our proactivity lets us see that we can create the things that we want.

When we are not proactive, we are reactive and are controlled by our circumstances. They transform us. When they go well, we feel good. When they go poorly, we feel bad.

When we are reactive, a cloudy, gloomy day might make us feel gloomy. When we are proactive, we carry our weather around with us. We create internal conditions of happiness and productivity, so that circumstances alone no longer dictate what we do or feel.

You can make your own decision. In fact, once you have been saved, you can now live according to the will of God. A born again person is born from above. We are changed from the inside out.

This is one of the primary principles of the Bible. The principle is that "Life is lived from the inside out and not from the outside in."

Living life from the inside out means this – to act based on principles and values – based on the Spirit – rather than reacting based on emotion or circumstances – based on the flesh.

That is why people need to be born again. People need to be changed from the inside out rather than just give them a different social environment. Socialism says that we will change the world when we can change the circumstance that people live in. Christianity says that you will change the world only when you change the individual.

BIBLICAL BASIS

(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

How are we become new? We did not become new in the outside – our physical bodies or our mind. We are made new by having our spirit made new.

(Ephesians 2:1-5) "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved."

Ephesians 2 tells us that we used to live in our trespasses and sins because we were dead in it. We followed the way of this world because we were controlled in our hearts by the ruler of the world. This was our nature. We cannot help but sin because our nature was sinful.

We were dead in our trespasses, but we are now made alive in Christ Jesus. Before we became a Christian, we were dead – our spirits were dead – we cannot respond to God – not unless God's Spirit touches us. Just like God said to Adam and Eve – the day that they eat the fruit of the tree, they will surely die – and they did – their spirit died.

However, in Christ Jesus, we are made alive – we are new creation.

(John 3:3) "In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.""

To be born again is to be born from above. The life of God comes into your life and you are born from above. This is what happens in the supernatural realm.

There are 2 worlds that we are living in – the physical or natural world and the spiritual or supernatural world. Both are just as real.

Jesus died on the cross – this is what happened in the natural realm – we know this as a historical fact, because people saw him died and he was buried by people. There are eye witnesses to this physical event.

However, we say that when Jesus died, he died for your sins and my sins. What do we mean by this? How do you know that He died for you? This is what happened in the spiritual or supernatural realm. You cannot see, so you need to believe by faith.

(Romans 6:3-6) "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--"

This is the picture in Romans 6 which used the baptism as a picture of this truth. When we became a Christian and is baptised, we actually died to our sinful nature and are now made a new person which is resurrected with Christ. We no longer live in slavery to sin, but live in freedom to be for God.

(Romans 6:11) "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Romans 6:11 tells us to "consider" ourselves to be dead to sin and "consider" ourselves to be alive to God. This means that you are already free from sin, so consider yourselves to be so. Live as though you are.

That is why we can obey the instructions of Romans 12:2.

(Romans 12:2) "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

There are 2 key words in this verse – conform and transform.

“Conform” means to take on an external appearance that is not what you are in the inside. You are born again in the inside – you have the life of Christ in the inside – but if you conform to the world – become like the world on the outside, then you are taking on an external that is not consistent to what the life that is inside you.

“Transform” means to take on an external appearance that is consistent – the same as – what you are in the inside. The Greek word is “metamorphosis” – when the pupa becomes a butterfly. What is happening? The butterfly is always a butterfly, but it did not look like a butterfly until the outside also take on the form of a butterfly – when the outside looks exactly like what it is in the inside, that is what being transform mean.

It is possible to not let the world squeeze us into its mould. It is possible not to conform to our circumstances and environments. We can be in the world and not live like the world. This is a definite possibility.

Romans 7 shows us the life of a person who does not live proactively. The things that I want to do I do not, but that which I do not want to do I go and do it. There are two laws in Paul's inner being.

Verses 22-25: "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin...What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Romans 8 then tells us that we can go the way of the spirit if we wanted to. Galatians says to "Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

All this is saying is that you can determine what kind of life you want to live. You don't have to sin just because there is a temptation. You can still walk in the spirit when all around you is flesh and sin.

(Galatians 5:16) "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

(Galatians 5:17) "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want."

The word "sinful nature" is the word for flesh.

Walk by the spirit – here it can mean the human spirit and not necessary the Holy Spirit.

Walk according to your spirit – you will have the fruit of the spirit. Walk according to the flesh and you will have the fruit of the flesh.

(Galatians 5:19-21) The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:22-23) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

(Galatians 6:7-8) Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

IT IS POSSIBLE

It is possible to be angry and yet not sin.

(Ephesians 4:26) "In your anger do not sin" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

It is possible not to utter foul language when others do so.

We can decide and we ought to decide and we should decide. In fact we decide every time whether consciously or subconsciously. We must live out our salvation.

Proactivity is the way of every Christian. It is God's design for us.

Your circumstances never destroy your life — it is how you respond to them that counts.

The main damage that comes from "bad" circumstances is the damage that we cause ourselves if we become so dependently attached to things that we become resentful or self pity when we lose them.

That is why the person who has lost all for the sake of Christ can be truly living life from the inside out.

It is possible not to take revenge – the Bible calls it being gentle.

(Matthew 5:5) Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

(Matthew 5:38-41) You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

(Romans 12:19-21) Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

It is possible to love your enemies.

(Matthew 5:44-48) But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 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. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

It is possible to forgive even though people wrong us.

(1 Peter 2:20-23) But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

It is possible to forgive 70 times 7.

It is possible to rejoice always.

(Philippians 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

(Philippians 4:6-8) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."