The Traits of Transformation

Good morning Seekers! This morning we are going to attempt to get a handle on the obvious results of a person being drawn to the Cross of Calvary, and saved. We will examine those who make a full-bore, bold commitment to following Jesus Christ, for the rest of their earthly existence, at all costs. We will examine the common traits that are exhibited, after transformation, between each of these brothers and sisters in Christ, and which started with those living during Jesus’ day, right up to our modern day.

My question is this… **[Q]** What are the traits necessary to stand-alone for Christ?

**[Q]** Does genuine Heavenly spiritual transformation look any different between a man, and a woman; or between an American, and an Egyptian; or a white man, yellow man, or black man? (No)

**Romans 12**

1Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living **sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. [**2**](http://biblehub.com/romans/12-2.htm)Do not conform 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. *(put a marker here)*

**Sacrifice** {**thusia**} thoo-see’-ah… an offering; Properly: an official sacrifice prescribed by God; hence, an offering the Lord accepts because it has been offered **on His terms**.

Offerings to the Lord must be on His terms, and what He wants, not what you want. We cannot custom tailor, or design for our personal convenience, our own transformation experiences. The word “sacrifice” means just what it says. You can’t say to Him, “I will just give you this portion of my life. That isn’t acceptable, and is not a true sacrifice.

**Genesis 4**

1Adam[***a***](http://biblehub.com/niv/genesis/4.htm#footnotes) made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.[***b***](http://biblehub.com/niv/genesis/4.htm#footnotes) She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth[***c***](http://biblehub.com/niv/genesis/4.htm#footnotes) a man.” [**2**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/4-2.htm)Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. [**3**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/4-3.htm)In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. [**4**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/4-4.htm)And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, [**5**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/4-5.htm)but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Cain did not offer a sacrifice to God on God’s terms, but his own; and, you see what happened. He found no favor with God.

I am afraid there are way too many professing Christians today, whether knowingly, or unknowingly, who are doing exactly the same. As Paul taught here to the Romans, your life’s main purpose, once committed to Jesus Christ, is to become an offering to Him; determine what that means, and carry it out, on His terms.

Cain had been taught, by his parents, what was required by God…a blood sacrifice; but he made a determination that he would bring what HE wanted instead. Fast forward to 2017… Many, if not most say, or maybe just think, “I know what God is asking me to do, but I have other plans. I will give Him what I want, and He will just have to be good with it. After all, I have a life to live”. BAD MOVE!!! Back to **Romans 12**…

**DO NOT** **Conform** {**suschematizo**} soos-khay-mat-id’-zo… identified with; having outward shape; properly, assuming a similar outward form (expression) by following the same pattern (model; mold)

**DO Transform** {**metamorphoo**} met-am-or-fo’-o… I change the form; **meta**- change after being with; **morphoo**- changing form in keeping with **inner reality**: properly: transformed after being with.

This is where we get the English word “**metamorphosis**” which means… a profound change in form, from one stage to the next in the life history of an organism; example: caterpillar to the pupa, and from the pupa to the adult butterfly.

No one knows how this happens. **[Q]** How can a slimy worm metamorphocally change from a worm to a beautiful butterfly? (**BUT God**…is the only answer)

**Metamorphosis**: The dictionary says…a complete change of form, structure, or substance, as transformation by magic, or witchcraft. In other words, science cannot explain it. It is viewed as “magic” which takes place inside that pupa. It’s not magic…it’s the Living, Everlasting, Miraculous, Life-changing, Uncomparable, God of the Universe.

**2 Corinthians 5**

17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Actually, I like the way the King James reads a little better than the NIV translation…

17Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

When you make the personal choice to reach out, and touch Him, it is like taking hold of a lightning bolt. Life is out of your hands at that point. This reminds me of a cool story…

**Luke 8**

40Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. [**41**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-41.htm)Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house [**42**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-42.htm)because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, **the crowds almost crushed him**. [**43**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-43.htm)And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years,[***c***](http://biblehub.com/niv/luke/8.htm#footnotes) but no one could heal her. [**44**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-44.htm)She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. [**45**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-45.htm)“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” [**46**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-46.htm)But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

[**47**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-47.htm)Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. [**48**](http://biblehub.com/luke/8-48.htm)Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

Out of that whole crowd, who was pressing around, and just curious about Jesus, with many physically touching Him…ONLY that one very needy woman, REALLY touched Him…in Faith. He knew who it was, and was pleased.

Let’s see if we can capture the essence of what Paul is attempting to explain a true new convert to Christ looks like; to this carnal, superficial, Corinthian church.

The Corinthian Church was one of those churches, which operated similarly to Cain. They had been taught very well what was necessary, but they made their worship into something quite different. They were more focused on themselves, than what their meetings were Heavenly designed to accomplish. Paul was not pleased.

They were operating in the flesh…not the Spirit. Back to **2 Corinthians 5:17**

**New** {**kainos**} kahee-nos’… unused; fresh; novel; properly: new in quality (innovation); fresh in development, or opportunity, because not found exactly like this before.

**Creature** {**ktisis**} ktis’-is… creation; institution; properly: creation, which is founded from nothing; creation out of nothing. Often refers to the founding of a new city.

Look at this…Paul takes for granted that if you are “in Christ”, **you have to change**. In Paul’s thought process, and in what he has written, as being led by the Holy Spirit of God, **it is a given**. If you are truly “in Christ”, you have to change. It is a metabolic reality, when you truly touch Him. When you place yourself in that extremely vulnerable position, it MUST happen; and it should, because He is King…not you.

I have always used this sad illustration. I heard a story once about a guy who continually threatened to commit suicide, by holding up a bottle of red lye (basically an acid) in his hand, and threatening to drink it, to end his life. Nothing happened, as long as he was only talking about it, and contemplating it.

It never happened… until that one black day that he did put it to his lips, tip it up, and swallow it down. Guess what the result was. I think you know. If you do this, you can rest assured that it will eat out your stomach, intestines, and all organs that it touches. It WILL do just as you might expect an acid always will do… you will die.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is exactly like this. Once you humble yourself, and allow God’s Holy Spirit entrance into your body, by making a bold, and genuine profession to follow Christ, at all costs, He WILL change you. You cannot control it from that point forward. It is now out of your hands, and He will do what He does with every human being who does the same….change them. It is a given.

So, for all of those out there, who profess to be Christians, but still identify, for the most part with the world, and which have shown no real visible change in their daily lifestyle, Paul is stating, by implication, they are not truly Christians, and have not changed, and are only Christian wanna-be’s. They have not yet “entered Christ”.

Paul states…He **IS** a new creature. He doesn’t say he “might be”. It has to happen this way, and has never been any different since the days Christ walked this earth.

I thought it may be beneficial for us to examine a past saint who came to Christ, and see if this hypothesis holds true. Actually, let’s look at the person who wrote both of these letters we just read …the Apostle Paul.

**[Q]** Was Christianity something that Paul toyed with, pondered, gradually walked into, and just snuck up on at his own leisure? (Let’s read, and you tell me) His name originally was Saul of Tarsus; a Jewish religious giant of his day, and a mighty warrior for God, with a well-known reputation. He was on the fast track to religious Super-Star status.

**Acts 9**

**1**Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest [**2**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-2.htm)and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. [**3**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-3.htm)As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [**4**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-4.htm)He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” [**5**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-5.htm)“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. [**6**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-6.htm)“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”[**7**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-7.htm)The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. [**8**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-8.htm)Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. [**9**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-9.htm)For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. [**10**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-10.htm)In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

[**11**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-11.htm)The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. [**12**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-12.htm)In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” [**13**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-13.htm)“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. [**14**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-14.htm)And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

[**15**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-15.htm)But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. [**16**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-16.htm)I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

[**17**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-17.htm)Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” [**18**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-18.htm)Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, [**19**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-19.htm)and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. [**20**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-20.htm)**At once he began to preach** in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. [**21**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-21.htm)All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” [**22**](http://biblehub.com/acts/9-22.htm)Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

Everyone, including the Disciples themselves, were amazed at the instant change that had taken place in this flamboyant persecutor of the Way. Now, he was one of them, instantly, miraculously….or at least he was saying he was. **Verse 20**: **AT ONCE** he began to preach. This man had encountered the Living God, and humbled himself, and was changed supernaturally, thru, and thru.

Every fiber of Saul’s being was modified. He could no longer be Saul…actually he wasn’t Saul. He became the mighty, bold, driven, in-your-face, and undeterred Paul. He was immediately on a mission. He immediately became an advocate for Jesus, everywhere he went. His mission was to bring as many others, as possible, to this same place (which by the way, was Jesus’ mission also).

I have to tell you that I am more than a little disappointed, and confused, by many who profess to go through this same process today. I have watched it over, and over. It does not seem to be a “fiber, thru and thru, metabolic change”. After making their profession, nothing at all, or very little, seems to change in their life. If any, it is minimal, and almost unrecognizable.

As far as, within our modern day corporate church setting, I am skeptical of our tactics. I am a fan of the Old Time Religion altar calls. The new, modern method of accomplishing this, seems to be that a person is asked to bow their head, close their eyes, and parrot a prayer offered by the one leading the meeting. They are then informed, corporately, that they are now saved, and their names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life….**SECRET SAINTS**, who in many cases, to put it bluntly, are not really saints at all, but could we safely say… Aint’s in the Faith.

The old time way of doing this was for a person to listen to a stirring, in your face, Holy-Spirit filled, and highly convicting message, which had your heart beating about 200 beats per minute, and caused your knees to buckle. At the end, there was no doubt in that person’s mind what they needed to do.

I remember many times prior to finally “diving into Jesus” that I stood, holding onto the back of a pew, and literally shaking inside, with a voice (the Holy Spirit) repeating over, and over again, “YOU have to do this…NOW! Let go of the pew, and humble yourself in front of this whole congregation. Get up there and confess publically, NOW!” I finally did this at a Jack Van Impe Crusade, one glorious September 28th evening, in 1978.

**[Q]** What happened? (A metabolic change. An immediate mindset change. An immediate desire to tell everyone I knew. An immediate 10,000# weight being lifted off of my shoulders. I didn’t know whether to laugh, or to cry. I didn’t know whether to fall down, or run. All I knew was that my life, from that moment forward, would never be the same again…and it hasn’t…and never will be the same again)

I had no desire to be a “secret saint”…I was now one of the team of past Saints who had done the same thing throughout the hundreds of years prior to my existence, many of whom lost their lives for this cause. The baton was now passed to me. I could not drop it; and had to run, with everything in me, toward the finish line, until my lungs felt like they were about to pop.

Listen to the advice Paul gave to the confused, and unfocused Corinthians, who had professed a faith in Christ, but were not modeling it…

**1 Corinthians 9**

19Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. [**20**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-20.htm)To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. [**21**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-21.htm)To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. [**22**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-22.htm)To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. [**23**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-23.htm)I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

[**24**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-24.htm)Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? **Run in such a way as to get the prize**. [**25**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-25.htm)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. [**26**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-26.htm)Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. [**27**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-27.htm)No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

The Apostle Paul likens living the Christian life to running a race. It is hard work. It takes hours of training, and a mindset that is not worried about yourself, and what you want; but making every effort to bring others into the same Faith.

Trust me…true salvation is not found in mumbling a few, empty words toward the Savior, and casually touching Him, with no intention of immediately diving into the same life Paul is identifying in what we just read. Weak, hapless, and un-life-changing rhetoric only sickens our Savior. He is not moved by it; and definitely will not respond to it.

Listen to Jesus words…

**Revelation 3**

14“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.[**15**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-15.htm)I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! [**16**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-16.htm)So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. [**17**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-17.htm)You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. [**18**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-18.htm)I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

[**19**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-19.htm)Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. [**20**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-20.htm)Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

[**21**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-21.htm)To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. [**22**](http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-22.htm)Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

**Verse 16**: **Lukewarm** {**chliaros**} khlee-ar-os’… tepid. When referring to an individual, it is describing these traits…unemotional, halfhearted, apathetic; characterized by a lack of force, or enthusiasm.

Truthfully, I am not sure how a person whose life has been invaded by the Holy Spirit, cannot be somewhat emotional, enthusiastic, and highly motivated. The same Holy Spirit that entered Paul, enters us in 2017. He does not change…just as Jesus, and God the Father do not change.

He implants the same goal in each of us…”to seek and to save those who are lost”.

**Verse 19**: Jesus, I believe, is revealing the dilemma for those who He is declaring make Him nautious…they have not yet truly repented. I believe that this church in Laodicea is a very good picture of the majority of the church in these final days…more interested in themselves, than others.

It amazes me that there are some who claim Faith in Christ, who can work next to someone for years, after supposedly being transformed by Christ, and never say a word to them about the Savior.

**Matthew 10**

16“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. [**17**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-17.htm)Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. [**18**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-18.htm)On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. [**19**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-19.htm)But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, [**20**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-20.htm)for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

[**21**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-21.htm)“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. [**22**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-22.htm)You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. [**23**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-23.htm)When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

[**24**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-24.htm)“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. [**25**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-25.htm)It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

[**26**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-26.htm)“So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. [**27**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-27.htm)What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. [**28**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-28.htm)Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [**29**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-29.htm)Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.[***b***](http://biblehub.com/niv/matthew/10.htm#footnotes) [**30**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-30.htm)And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [**31**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-31.htm)So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

[**32**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-32.htm)“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. [**33**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-33.htm)But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

[**34**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-34.htm)“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. [**35**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-35.htm)For I have come to turn

“ ‘a man against his father,

a daughter against her mother,

a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

[**36**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-36.htm)a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’[***c***](http://biblehub.com/niv/matthew/10.htm#footnotes)

[**37**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-37.htm)“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. [**38**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-38.htm)Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. [**39**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/10-39.htm)Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

**[Q]** Doesn’t it sound to you like Jesus is EXPECTING this to happen to everyone that belongs to Him? (He knows what the reactions from those around us will be; but says to just keep being bold. Keep telling them. Don’t worry about the looks on their faces. Keep sharing, and praying for them. It doesn’t matter whether they like it, or not.)

Keeping our mouths shut will not bring any of this on. You can live lives of peace, and tranquility, next to your lost friends, co-workers, and family; OR you can do as we are commanded, and boldly tell them, and trust Jesus with the outcome.

You may lose that friend. You may lose your “cool” reputation. You may become estranged from your family member. Someone may try to hurt you, and malign you to others. You may, and probably will be, uninvited to gatherings, or God forbid, on Facebook.

It takes some mighty strong disagreement to turn those closest to you, against you, especially when it may be your father, or mother, or daughter, or son; which are supposed to be our closest bonds on earth.

**Verse 27**: Jesus plainly says, SHOUT from the housetops what you know to be true. Do not worry about, or focus upon, what the fall out may be. That is not up to you. You are only called to tell them plainly, whether they choose to listen or not…whether they choose to rebel, or not…wh**ether they choose to retaliate, or not.**

The stakes are way too high to soft-peddle the Gospel. They need it, like they need medicine when they are sick. **[Q]** Do you let your child talk you out of taking their medicine, just because they don’t like the taste? (No you don’t; because you know that the only way they are going to get well, is to take it, as bitter as it may taste)

Sharing the Gospel is even more important…it is astronomically more necessary. If your child has a life-threatening disease; not taking their medicine can only kill their body; BUT if they fail to drink down the medicine of the Gospel, they will lose their soul.

Every one of us here, who are saved, and have the very same Holy Spirit within us that the Apostle Paul was endowed with, should have the very same enthusiasm, and mindset that Paul had. Listen, once again, to what he shared with those weak-kneed, and self-serving Corinthians…

**1 Corinthians 9**

16For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since **I am compelled to preach**. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! [**17**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-17.htm)If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. [**18**](http://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/9-18.htm)What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

**[Q]** Do you feel compelled to share the Gospel with others? (If not, WHY?)

We have ALL been given the same command…whatever your excuse, it does not hold up. We all have been given the same Holy Spirit. We all have the same Word of God. We all have the same amount of minutes in any given day. We are all busy.

Our mission is the same as Jesus’ mission. We do not have the latitude, or authority, to remake the “Church”, or our mission, in our own image, for our own pleasure. It has one primary goal…

**Luke 4**

14Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. [**15**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-15.htm)He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

[**16**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-16.htm)He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, [**17**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-17.htm)and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

[**18**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-18.htm)“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

[**19**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-19.htm)to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”[***f***](http://biblehub.com/niv/luke/4.htm#footnotes)

[**20**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-20.htm)Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. [**21**](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-21.htm)He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

There you have it…plain as the nose on your face.

**Luke 19**

10For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**[Q]** Did Saul, who was transformed into Paul, finish his journey strongly?

**2 Timothy 4**

1In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: [**2**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-2.htm)Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. [**3**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-3.htm)For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. [**4**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-4.htm)They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. [**5**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-5.htm)But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

[**6**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-6.htm)For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. [**7**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-7.htm)**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**[**8**](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/4-8.htm)**Now** there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Paul DID finish as strong, or stronger, than he began. **[Q]** Was all of the physical pain, and rejection, and emotional pain, and loss of prior life, worth it?

**Verse 8: NOW**, there is something amazing waiting for me…for eternity; BUT, he said, not to just me only, … but everyone else who willingly puts themselves in these same tough circumstances…YOU and I.

In closing…Remember Jesus’ words to the crowd…

**Mark 8**

34Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. [**35**](http://biblehub.com/mark/8-35.htm)For whoever wants to save their life[***b***](http://biblehub.com/niv/mark/8.htm#footnotes) will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. [**36**](http://biblehub.com/mark/8-36.htm)What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? [**37**](http://biblehub.com/mark/8-37.htm)Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? [**38**](http://biblehub.com/mark/8-38.htm)If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”