

BECOMING MEN OF PROGRESS

I. The Christian life is portrayed as a walk.

A. We walk in the Spirit, walk in the flesh, walk in the light, walk in darkness, walk in newness of life, walk in a worthy manner, and walk in love.

B. The dictionary defines “walk” this way, to move forward, to advance, and to be in motion.

1. The implication is that the Christian life should never be stagnant but flowing.

2. The Bible speaks about moving forward in your walk with God.

Ps 84:7 - Rom 1:17 - 2Cor 3:18 & Deuteronomy 7:22

3. Another way of saying it is, that God wants you to get to the next level.

a. Each new level will require more strength and more faith from us.

b. Which will then produce more glory for us. How does this happen?

II. Jeremiah 48:11-12 will tell us the problem that keeps us from changing, the process that God uses to bring about change, and the penalty of not changing.

A. The Problem - Verse 11

1. “At ease since his youth” - This describes a condition of idleness or complacency.

2. “Undisturbed on his lees” - This describes an unfinished process or mediocrity.

3. “Neither has been emptied from vessel to vessel nor has gone into exile.”

a. He doesn’t go backward, but neither is he going forward.

b. He’s not cold but neither is he hot. There is a comfortable mixture in his life.

4. The result of “being at ease and undisturbed” is “his flavor and his aroma has not changed.”

5. For the past 6 years I have been at ease and undisturbed.

a. But I haven’t felt His presence like I once did.

b. I have continued to feel the waves of His presence

c. The Lord told be He was right outside my comfort zone

B. The Process - "Vessel to Vessel"

1. The imagery here is that of purifying wine.
2. **The "vessel" is something that God is trying to do in our lives that is designed to tax us, to stretch us, to push us beyond our comfort zones into the next level.**
3. The first thing that the new "vessels" will do is expose impurities, which come in the form of:
 - **weaknesses** - **inconsistencies** - **attitudes** - **feelings of inadequacy**
 - selfishness - Anger - pride - self-sufficiency

4. Let me give you some personal examples:

| <u>Vessel</u> | <u>Shape</u> | <u>Impurities</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - Reading Bible & Praying | (Round) | Laziness & inconsistency |
| - Share my faith | (Oblong) | Fear & Intimidation |
| - Teaching Vessel | (Triangle) | Inadequacy & shyness |

5. Some examples from scripture.

- a. Jacob - God changed him from deceitful and scheming brother, to humble loving brother by pouring him into the vessels exiled and servanthood.
- b. Joseph - God changed him from arrogant proud brother. To loving and compassionate leader by pouring him into the vessels of slavery and prisoner.**
- c. Me, change me from someone who primarily is concerned about quantity to a person who is concerned about quality.

C. The Penalty - "I shall send those who tip and shatter vessels."

1. Some where in the process we move from not wanting to change - to being unable to change.
 - a. Because the vessel that would have brought about a particular change in our life has been tipped and shattered.**
 - b. Continued refusal to change or grow causes one to fossilize.
 - c. The choice is either go through the vessel to vessel process or you can have all those vessels tipped over and shattered.**
2. God will not allow us to ignore our weaknesses. We either deal with them or he will allow them to deal with us.