

# How Jesus Changes Us

**Introduction.** In Matthew 22:37, Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5, told the lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matthew's account substitutes "mind" for "strength"; the parallels in Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27 have both "mind" and "strength". It is a love that dominates our emotions, directs our thoughts, and is the dynamic of all our actions; in short, it involves the entire person.

Becoming a Christian is a complete change. The elemental sacrifice of self and the world (Matthew 16:24; Romans 12:1-2) is referred to as being "born again" (John 3:3). The old self dies and the new self comes alive. The steps that follow are how we are changed by the knowledge of Christ.

## ***I. Our Intellect Is Changed By Testimony***

- A. The intellect is the objective faculty of reasoning and understanding. John was eminently interested in proving Jesus to be God's Son (John 5:31-47; 20:30-31).
- B. Those who believe do so because of testimony (2 Thessalonians 1:10). The effects of preaching were the guarantee of its truth (1 Corinthians 1:4-6).

## ***II. Our Emotions Are Changed By Mercy***

- A. Emotions are instinctive or intuitive feelings. Knowing our true state (Galatians 3:22), and that God is merciful develops a feeling within us (Exodus 34:6-7).
- B. Emotions or feelings are clearly a part of the total experience of coming to Christ (James 4:7-10; 1 John 4:11). However, they are only one leg of the stool.

## ***III. Our Will Is Changed By Truth***

- A. Will is the faculty by which a person decides on and initiates action. In Acts 3:12-26 Peter appealed to the Jews with the truth of Jesus' crucifixion (cp. 4:4).
- B. In Acts 17:22-31 Paul appealed to the Gentiles with the truth of God's existence. This caused some to believe and join him (cp. v. 34).

## ***IV. Our Conscience Is Changed By Conviction***

- A. Conscience is an inner feeling that acts as a guide to one's behavior. When the sin of murdering Christ was exposed, they were stung in their hearts (Acts 2:37).

- B. Baptism's purpose is to cleanse the conscience from guilt (1 Peter 3:21). The Romans had "obeyed from the heart" (Romans 6:17-18) — they were convicted.

***V. Our Beliefs Are Changed To Obey***

- A. The gospel, after having appealed to the intellect, emotions, will, and conscience, develops faith in the heart (Romans 10:17; cp. Proverbs 8:33; Luke 11:28).
- B. Faith working by love produces the desire to serve God (Galatians 5:6; Romans 1:5; 16:26; 1 Thessalonians 1:3). Faith without works is dead (James 2:17).

**Conclusion.** The complete metamorphosis of heart, soul, and mind takes the greatest commitment to become like Christ (Romans 8:29). Nothing else in your life will be this difficult, but nothing else will be this glorious.