

Jesus' Concern For Others (#4)

Joe Slater

Though the majority in Jerusalem rejected and hated Him, Jesus agonized over the city's impending doom. He prayed for those who were murdering Him. He even extended salvation to a violent criminal who had mocked him only recently.

Jesus, however, didn't limit His compassion to His enemies. John tells us of the Lord's concern for His own mother. *"When therefore Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother'"* (John 19:26-27). This disciple, evidently John himself, then took Mary to his own home to care for her just as a son would care for his mother.

Jesus' concern for His mother goes beyond merely seeing that she had food, clothing, and shelter. Her other children could have taken care of that easily. But Jesus was also concerned with her spiritual wellbeing. John 7:5 tells us that even Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him – that is, they didn't believe He was the Christ, the Son of God. Later they did believe, and we find them among the disciples gathered in Acts 1:14. But in the meanwhile, Jesus wanted Mary to be with someone who would nurture and encourage the faith she already had in Him. How remarkable, that He would manifest such concern even while He was enduring the most horrendous form of death ever inflicted upon one human by others.

Just as He cared about others during His earthly life and ministry, Jesus is concerned for you. Avail yourself of His love and concern by believing and obeying His gospel! Then share that same love and concern with everyone!

Taking A Hard Look At Ourselves

The following questions are ones that we would do well to ask ourselves (and answer) from time to time...

1. Am I so **CRITICAL** that I see only a person's failures and not his/her good points?
2. Am I so **CHILDISH** that people must handle me gently lest I be offended?
3. Am I **MATURE ENOUGH** to handle hurts and disappointments without feeling mistreated and making everyone else miserable?
4. Do I **HURT** people while boasting "I believe in saying what I think!"?
5. Can I be completely **TRUSTED** with confidential information?
6. Am I guilty of making **SARCASTIC REMARKS** about the success of others?
7. Am I big enough to admit when I am wrong or do I seek to excuse myself by **BLAMING OTHERS**?
8. Do I excuse my own sins while self-righteously **CONDEMNING** others?
9. Are others **UPLIFTED AND ENCOURAGED** through their association with me?
10. Do I follow after peace, or do my words and actions **PROMOTE STRIFE**?

Author unknown; via Sayre, OK

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You do not have to settle scores. If it needs addressing, God will take care of that for you.

--Bill Boyd (via Facebook)

Two Words To Change Your Life

The greatest battles ever fought have been waged in the minds of men. Controlling behavior, whether that of others or of ourselves, is simple business compared to the gargantuan task of controlling thoughts. Yet the fact is simple and undeniable: we are the product of our thinking; or, as the Bible more eloquently affirms, *"As he thinks in his heart, so is he"* (Proverbs 23:7). If we would change our lives, we must change our thoughts.

Open your heart to the wisdom of heaven – *"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice! . . . the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus . . . whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things . . . I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:4, 7, 8, 13).

We take control of our lives by turning control over to God. We rejoice in the Lord; we enjoy the peace only God can offer; we choose to heed heaven's instructions by thinking on things good and right and profitable. This is the Lord's prescription for any human heart.

But notice the two words – the words *"I can."* These words, spoken from a heart of deep conviction and voiced in cooperation with the strength of our all-powerful Lord, have the power to work revolutions in our lives.

No matter your situation, these two small words will determine your direction and, ultimately, your destiny. You say you cannot? You are correct. You say with the Lord's help you can? Again, you are absolutely correct. You see, it's all in your thinking.

Let's develop the "I can" attitude. We'll be wonderfully amazed at the results!

--Dalton Key (Tulsa, OK) via Old Paths