

Three Types of Individuals and Three Responses to Change **by Steve Springer**

It is interesting to meet multiple types of individuals in various settings throughout our lives. We have seen how different types of individuals handle life situations. Some, faced with adversity in a life event or multiple events, change their beliefs and core values. Others may drop out of society or still others live with anger against family or friends due to some offense real or imagined. Still others of faith hold fast to God's Word and weather the storms...setting strong examples for others. This does not mean the Christian does not struggle at times; however, with God and our Christian family we can "take courage" and meet the difficulties with "strength and courage" (Acts 28:15; Joshua 1:6,7,9).

It must be considered that these individuals that will be mentioned are only a limited number of individual responses to life events such as a pandemic, death of a family member, loss of housing and property through storms or fire, a job or position loss due to economic conditions, or facing discrimination due to social injustice. Each of these events does not happen in a vacuum. It is possible that an individual might actually face all of these major challenges at the same time. Much like Job, extreme personal and family losses or problems may occur within a limited time period (Job 1 and Job 2).

In essence, a person can be fighting hard to overcome one or more situations and suddenly another appears. This is much like going to the hospital in an ambulance and another car hits the ambulance and you face additional injury and challenge. Finally reaching the hospital, the power goes out and backup generators fail. Although fictitious, some of the readers have likely experienced situations in the midst of several negative challenges when another arises. Let us look at several types of individuals and see how they may handle adversity or change.

The first type (Type One) we might consider are those who are extremely organized and their life plans have almost been sketched out from the "cradle to the grave" by either they themselves or a significant other. These individuals can often tell you from an early age what career they are seeking, what they are looking for in a spouse, and among other things, they can show you exactly what they value and when things go into disarray with their plan...they strive to turn the "ship" back to the direction they originally planned to seek. A closer examination of these persons is that they are indeed positively internally motivated. This is the type of motivation that we hope every Christian has to fight off a serious problem. So, this type of person, when confronted with one of the previously mentioned life issues and a major challenge to their life plans will not allow their beliefs to be changed even under threats or challenge. When some negative life event does take place...this type of person may not look closely at the events and apply this to learning. Instead, this person gets back on the same road and tries to restore the former ways of living. This may remind us of the rich man who encountered Christ and learned his road was not complete. He apparently had followed the commandments and thought he would check to see what else he needed to do. He was given new knowledge that he needed to sell what he had and give to the poor and follow Christ (Matthew 19:16-26). Instead of applying the new knowledge to change roads, the young man headed in the same direction and same road he was on before meeting Christ. This first type of person may miss the truth even though internally motivated to do what is right when the cost of change clashes with his or her values.

A second type of individual (Type Two) usually allows events and other people to greatly impact their many core values, careers, religious beliefs, and spousal choice. Sometimes whatever seemed the best to choose at the time will be their choice. This person would be externally motivated and, as expected, may bow to pressure all through life. So, it is not surprising to see this person supporting some beliefs strongly and then very quickly change, often because a significant person in the individual's family, work site, or even a political figure either entices or pressures the individual to make changes. Too much pressure will challenge this person and a decision may be made without proof or evidence. This person, when there is limited pressure, may operate well within some type of a value system. However, even when clear evidence comes up that change should be made, they

still may make distinct and sometimes poor decisions...which may change again based on circumstances. King Agrippa heard the clear evidence of Christianity; yet, due to various reasons, failed to act in a positive manner. He chose to stay on the same comfortable road although he was almost persuaded. He made a serious negative choice (Acts 26:28). When times are perilous, this type of person is difficult to depend on and may add to the problems being faced.

The third type of person would be the individual who resembles the first type in several ways...yet differs in a significant way. Like Type One, Type Three knows what is valued, is moving in a determined direction and, when knocked down or losing balance, gets back on the "road" as quickly as possible. The difference lies in the fact Type Three as a person continues to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Bible and God's will. In that study of God's Word, this person strives to make sure his or her life is following the examples given to us. This person is willing to switch to another road in life if the current road is not in keeping with God's will, no matter how long the old road has been traveled or how cherished the old road may be (Acts 2). In essence, both Type One and Type Three may be internally motivated. Yet, without the self-introspection that Type Three uses, Type One may follow carefully and completely a road leading to destruction. So, when we face these challenges, what we learn from God's Word is not a secondary defense nor something that is to be tossed aside like any other life style or theory. God's Word, along with prayer, remains the first line of defense against all the adversities we may face. We cannot ignore his Word. Type Three persons will follow God's Word even if it challenges the very foundation of what they have believed and practiced. What type of person are we today?