

Until I Make It Better

October 4, 2017



As I was growing up, I had a good friend who always said, "Let's take the bull by the horns and get this thing done." It was his way of saying, "Things will not get any better until I make them better."

This is not easy. We are tempted to sweep sin under the rug, ignore problems and hope they will go away, turn away when things get ugly, and sit down to watch when there is conflict. The Bible says that we should roll up our sleeves and face challenges head-on (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Philippians 3:14). The priest was condemned for passing by on the other side when someone needed help (Luke 10:31). Paul had an "as much as is in me" attitude (Romans 1:15). His motto was, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"Choose . . . whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15; cf. Luke 16:13). We are creatures of choice. Travelers come to a fork of the road and choose their way; every day, we make choices that direct our lives. Jeremiah said, "Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

Things Will Not Get Any Better in My Personal Life until I Make Them Better.

Each person struggles against sin and wants freedom from its shackles, but until we determine that with God's help we are going to conquer it, we will not. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us,

and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

Each person has sins that are difficult to overcome.

- Some struggle with alcohol or nicotine. “Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1; cf. Luke 1:15). Take care of the body (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).
- Others feel trapped in bad habits such as gossip or lying (Leviticus 19:16; 1 Peter 2:1; Ephesians 4:25).
- With another, the sin is not attending Bible classes and worship (Hebrews 10:25).
- Someone else has an impure mind (2 Peter 2:14).
- Some lack compassion for those who hurt (1 Peter 3:8).
- Others are cowards and compromisers (Proverbs 23:23).
- Some are racists (Acts 10:33; Romans 2:11; James 2:1).
- Others struggle with a quick temper (Ephesians 4:26).
- Several are lazy about doing God’s work (John 9:4).
- Others have too much pride (any is too much) (1 John 2:16).

Sins will not just go away. In heaven, the Book of Life contains the record of our deeds that will be read at the judgment (Revelation 20:12) to determine if we enter heaven or hell. We cannot make changes then. If you are dissatisfied with your life, decide what you need to change and do it now. Things will not get any better until you to make them better.

Things Will Not Get Any Better in My Family Life until I Make Them Better.

Many homes need help. Marriages are breaking up. Children are hurting. Wives are crying. Husbands are suffering. Too often, we decide to ignore problems instead of facing them. We hope and pray that time will cure the problem, but we need to

examine the situation, talk about it, determine what God would have us do, and then do it.

- Children need to be loved, taught, and disciplined (Titus 2:4; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 13:24).
- Wives need to be cherished and nourished, provided for, and led (Ephesians 5:29; 1 Timothy 5:8; Ephesians 5:23-28).
- Husbands need to be loved, respected, and obeyed (Titus 2:4; 1 Peter 3:6; Ephesians 5:23).

Paul summarized it thus: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged" (Colossians 3:18-21). Decide what you need to do and do it. Things will not get any better until you make them better.

Things Will Not Get Any Better with the Church until I Make Them Better.

Are you disappointed with the way things are in your local congregation? Each congregation has weaknesses. Who is responsible for making things better? You are. If every member would try to correct problems before criticizing, many problems would never see the light of day.

- Are members not making enough visits? Then I must get in my car and visit hospitals, nursing homes, prospects for conversion, lonely widows, new members, straying saints, and old friends.
- Are only a few members inviting their neighbors to worship? Then I will set the example by filling up my car or making two trips.
- Have some members ceased to follow Christ? Then I will

try to win them back. If my brother skips Bible classes, I will pray, send a card, make a call, invite him over for a meal, engage in a friendly, frank conversation, and offer to study the Bible with him. If the tables were turned, would I want to be ignored? Would Jesus, the Good Shepherd, be too busy or disinterested to find the wayward sheep? Am I not to follow in His steps? (1 Peter 2:21–22).

- Are members failing to show hospitality? Then I will open my home more often.
- Are others lazy? Then I will labor “more abundantly than they all” (1 Corinthians 15:10). The work of Christ will not suffer on my watch!

Decide what you need to do and do it. Things will not get better until you make them better. Christ loves us dearly and wants us to make a difference in the world for Him (Matthew 5:16).

Let's not make excuses; let's make progress.