

Devotional Thought
Month of September 2008

Theme: INPUT+CHANGE=SUCCESS!

“Whoever loves discipline love knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.” Proverb 12:1 (NIV)

“Only fools and dead men don’t change their minds. Fools won’t. Dead men can’t!” John H. Patterson

Some people call our times the *“Information Age.”* We are bombarded daily with large amounts of new information and facts. This information comes into all areas of our lives – professional, personal, spiritual, etc. Living in these times certainly can be hectic and difficult! We come so near *“information overload”* that many of us ask, *“Wouldn’t it be nice if we could just learn something or come to a conclusion and never have to revisit the issue again?”* Of course, the biblical response to the question is *“Absolutely not!”*

As the little quip above indicates, all of us must be ready to change our minds about things, even ourselves. For Christians, through introspection and God’s illumination we are called to deal with ourselves. In particular, we are called to deal with our own specific sins! Dealing with sin is a bit of like the term *“freedom.”* We do well at the philosophical level, but we have difficulties when it is specific and personal.

God promised in 1 John 1:19 that if we *“confess we sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* You can’t get any more specific and personal than that! However, most people find it very hard to deal with their own shortcomings. We receive input from the Holy Spirit and from others, but we tend to explain it away or reject it outright.

Rejecting necessary information and input can sabotage us. One man reported that he and his wife had a restaurant experience that was totally unsatisfactory. When the check came, it had a space on the back for customer comments. The man wrote: *“The food was overcooked and*

tasteless, the restroom was filthy, and the service was unfriendly and slow.” He concludes his remarks with: “even the clock in the dining room wasn’t working.” He signed his name and address and left. Later, he got a note from the restaurant: “Dear sir, we’ve fixed the clock.”

Part of the discipline of being a person of faith is the responsibility of self examination. Ed Koch, when he was mayor of New York, walked around the city and asked citizens, “How am I doing?” We, too, must look at ourselves constantly, find the areas that need repentance and change, and – as the famous television commercial says – *just do it!* If we quibble with the input or try to “blame the messenger,” inevitably we will add to our own failure!

What would happen if we as individuals and as a church would began the habit of listings to input that might be from God. Why don’t we check ourselves out – what needs to be changed, including our minds, actions and decisions? William Blake said, “The person who never alters his opinion is like standing water – both breed little annoying things which bother people and do little good!” My sense is that this holds true for institutions as well.

We as individual and as an institution must always listen to what we hear internally and externally. If we listen to God we will surely filter the best and most accurate information come up with decisions that are pleasing to the God who has called us into existence.

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