

Acts 17 The Message Bible – “God overlooks it as long as you don’t know any better – but that time has passed. The unknown is now known, and He is calling for a radical life change.”

Navigating through the New Testament we see the writers cover many things concerning this new belief that had come upon the people of that time. Jesus had set a standard that no one had even thought possible before His death and resurrection. We see stages of this kind of life presented and worked through as spiritual matters impacted and modified very human men and women.

Once Jesus had laid the foundation and set the example for living, those closest to Him continued on with His teachings to the early church. Initially, simply repeating the Words of the Savior was enough to change the hearts of listeners. Many embraced the new and wondrous life that had been sent from on high since the sandaled feet hit the shores of the Jordan river.

Something happened, however, as time went on. Human nature entered into the picture. Fledgling churches and new converts, began to need more guidance to work through their lives as they grew in the new found faith. Disagreements, interpretations, and fleshly desires started to impact the purity of what Jesus had presented. Very real daily problems needed pertinent solutions, so we find the writers not only teaching what is needed to grow in the faith but also addressing situations that came up because of the sin nature that was being exposed. Having to teach, exhort, chastise, correct, encourage, and even threaten disciplinary action, the whole new testament has an aroma of very real people acting in a very real manner.

A golden thread that weaves its way through all of the New Testament books, actually all of the Bible, is the call to a deeper, more intimate life with the Lord that is available to those who choose to pay the price for it. Woven through most of the books is the call to come back to the original purity of the initial church, the life exhibited by Jesus Himself. Human nature being what it is, spurred on by the enemy of their souls, migrated from the purest form of service to cold dead religious activity and false interpretations of what was intended. It all had to be addressed.

So it continues through all of church history right up to this day. God is continually presenting the standard of the life of Jesus to anyone who will embrace it. Every generation has allowed every kind of distortion of the Life that Jesus presented to be present within the church, and the Lord has continually presented a better, deeper way, one that had been established by Jesus and copied by the very first believers. This generation is no different. Today, our Lord is raising the standard from who we were, to Who He wants us to emulate once again. If we are wise, we will answer the call.

Needing to respond whole-heartedly to what I am hearing from the Lord – Jim Corbett