

Ole Miss FCA Weekly Devotional: 10/26/09

The Power and Passion of the Master Coach, Elliot Johnson



Thought of the Week:

God is Immutable

Verse of the Week:

I, the LORD, do not change. Malachi 3:6

How things change with time! In 1911, Ray Harroun won the first Indianapolis 500, using castor oil fuel, mechanics who rode in the car, and sand thrown onto the track to soak up oil spills. The Marmon Wasp's winning speed average was 74.59 mph, slower than today's Speedway rescue vehicles!

Our God is immutable. Unlike the Indianapolis 500, He never changes. His nature and character will be the same tomorrow as yesterday. God has proven Himself faithful to His Word. How comforting to trust someone who will not go back on His Word (Psalm 119:89), change His mind (Numbers 23:19), or become less faithful (2 Timothy 2:13)! Because of God's stability and trustworthiness, He is like an immovable rock, which remains in a turbulent sea.

God is subject to no change in His being, His attributes, or His determinations. Today, men have concocted a prominent theology called "process theory." This heresy says God has not completely matured and He is still developing. Process theologians have built part of their theology upon a few obscure verses in the King James Bible that say God "repented" (Genesis 6:6; 2 Samuel 24:16; Jonah 3:10). Process theologians have made God out to be less than God. They have ignored the many verses that speak of God's immutability. They say God is not all-knowing. They build an entire theology upon a few scattered verses, a very dangerous practice. Every Scripture must be applied in light of the entire Bible, and a major Scriptural doctrine is God's immutability. When the KJV says God repented, it is using human terms to describe a new phase in God's plan, often after man has made a change! For example, God's Word to Nineveh was, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (Jonah 3:4). But Nineveh repented, so God spared the city (Jonah 3:10). It was man that changed, not God's plan. God always wanted to spare the city. His character remains the same, but when man changes, God deals faithfully with those changes.

Observe the attributes of God that do not change. First, His existence does not change. His immutability and His eternity are fixed together. God's life does not change, because God is eternal. His rule is everlasting (Psalm 93:2). Psalm 102:27 says, "But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Second, God's character does not change. Throughout life, our character might change. Our outlook on life may change drastically because of some tragic event. Sometimes a person who has a good outlook on life and a good disposition can become a sour person because something happens to him. Maybe he was a great athlete who suffered an injury. Maybe age has led to declining skills and he is no longer wanted by his team. But nothing can happen to change God. He is never affected by change or mishaps. Because His character does not change, He always deals consistently with us. God never becomes less truthful, less merciful, less just, or less good. Likewise, He never becomes more truthful, more merciful, more just, or more good. The character of God always will be exactly as it was in Bible times. When Moses asked God whom he should say had sent him to Israel, God said, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). In other words, "I am who I always was and will be." There is no past or future tense in the character of God. He remains constant. Because He is who He is, His love remains constant and eternal. He told

Jeremiah that He loved him with everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). 1 John 4:8 says, "God is love." Since God is eternal, God will eternally be love. His immutability includes all His attributes. God will always be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, holy, merciful, and just. He is no more wise today than He was one thousand years ago, because He was all wise and all powerful one thousand years ago! God's character will never change.

Third, God's truth does not change. His Word stands forever (1 Peter 1:24-25; Psalm 119:89, 152). All of us have wanted to take back something we said because we did not have enough information or we acted foolishly. But God has never taken back His Word. What He has proclaimed remains the same, and He is always faithful to His Word. Jesus said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Man may try to change or criticize the Word of God, but His truth will stand forever. When Jesus said, "No man can come to the Father but by me" (John 14:6), He meant just that. People throughout history have believed they could get to heaven another way, such as Mohammed, Buddha, their church affiliation, or their good works. Some have denied the Word of God. But God does not change! Unless a person enters heaven through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, he will not enter at all (1 Timothy 2:3-6; John 10:7-10; Acts 4:12).

Fourth, God's purposes do not change. His plan will be worked to perfection. What He does in time, He planned from all eternity. Everything He planned in eternity He carries out in time. Charnock writes, "God's purpose never suffers. One of two things cause a man to change his mind and reverse his plans—want of foresight to anticipate everything, or lack of power to execute those plans. But, as God is both omniscient and omnipotent, there is never any need for Him to revise His decrees." "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations" (Psalm 33:11). His purpose is unchanging (Hebrews 6:17). Trusting in a God who never changes gives His people great stability! No wonder each believer in Jesus has power to live consistently. We serve a consistent God!

The next Indianapolis 500 will be very different from Ray Harroun's historical first victory run, and it will be interesting to see the changes. In contrast, God never changes! It is our privilege to discover new truths about Him forever.

Time Out:

- 1) How does the immutability of God affect your life?
- 2) You may feel that you cannot trust anyone because you have been deeply wronged. But you can trust God because He is faithful. What do each of these verses tell you about God and your relationship to Him? Isaiah 54:10, John 15:12-16, 1 John 1:9
- 3) If God is faithful to all His promises, let us imitate that faithfulness by our unchanging obedience. What do these verses tell you about how you ought to live? Ephesians 5:1, James 1:5, Revelation 2:10
- 4) Meditate upon this truth: An immutable, faithful, morally good God can never change and become an unfaithful, evil God.