

# PERCEPTIONS

## Finding Your Motivation and Plan for Change

*Mark Beard is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) in Huntsville, Alabama, a pastor for over 25 years, and an author and freelance writer.*

One of the largest sections in most bookstores is the self-help section. Personal growth and improvement is on many people's mind and a huge industry has developed over the years to help people see their dreams of personal change or growth to come true. Let's face it, personal growth can be challenging. Someone once observed, "Nobody likes change except for a baby with a wet diaper." Even when we choose to make changes, we are not always happy about what it takes to change. I'm excited about the possibility of losing weight for example, but I'm not happy my favorite foods are not on the diet plan!

Most of us will explore various needs and desires to change over a lifetime whether physically, spiritually, relationally, or in our career. Not all will be about weight loss or the need to exercise and get in better physical shape. Many will center on our need to feel we matter or to make a difference in some way—others will be about becoming a better person or finding the meaning in life. The avenues to explore are countless and I would urge caution in choosing one's path because not all paths lead to good things. Nevertheless, search, learn, and dream.

Sometimes when people just want or need to be different deep down in who they are or just want to be different than they are, they often use faith as a means of facilitating change. It can be a powerful motivator and source of strength. My chosen faith is Christianity. For me, I think of the New

Testament verse that tells us that, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV Wow, what a promise!

Some find their motivation in times of crisis or frustration. Some find it easier to start at the beginning of a new year and begin by making a new "resolution" or promise to change. Some look to others for help, such as their clergy, or a counselor, or a life coach to help them develop a plan. Obviously, everyone would need their own goal and their own plan to meet their specific needs, however, allow me to suggest a few ideas for thought.

Try beginning with who do you want to become or what you would like to accomplish? Once a destination has been chosen you can begin to work backwards to a starting point. Next, "get real", or be totally honest with yourself about where you are in life and where you need to be in the future. No pretense. Mentally let your guard down and make an accurate assessment. At this point you will need a plan—a real plan. Write it down. Go back to it from time to time and review it. Finally, maintain your courage. People often go from being excited about change to being frightened by what it brings. Make adjustments. Don't be afraid of asking for guidance from others. But whatever you do, don't give up. You can make it! © 2012 Mark Beard

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