

# What If Leopards Can Change Their Spots?

This is the Faith I Live By: God doesn't renovate us, He recreates us.

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Audio Link: <http://bit.ly/ThoughtsinWorship>

*"Can the...leopard [change] its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil."*

## Jeremiah 13:23 (NKJV)

Have you heard any of the following idioms before?

*You can't teach an old dog new tricks.  
The older we get, the more set in our ways we become.  
Old habits die hard.*

If any of these are true spiritually, our future looks grim. But what if there were a way to change the conversation completely? Even if the statements were true, what if, somehow, some way, the "old dog" could learn new tricks? How about age not determining our behavior? What if we could grow older, but still be open to new possibilities and new ways of thinking? Why do old habits have to die hard? What if the old habits don't need to die because instead the old self would die? What if a new self could be? Might that change the conversation?

## **New Creatures**

The truth is, when it comes to spiritual things we need a do over. But God does not renovate people, He recreates us. Paul taught that whenever we come to Christ and surrender our wills to Him, we become new creatures; the old self passes away, and all things become new. God promised to take away from us our hearts of stone, and transplant hearts of flesh that are receptive to God's leading. The psalmist said that when we learn to delight ourselves in the Lord, He would replace our old desires with new ones. New hearts desires new things. Do you see how that works? God does not renovate people, He recreates us. Our old characters invariably carry with them old baggage. Therefore, God announces, "Let there be light!" and we are moved out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light.

## **Wash, Rinse, and Repeat**

Do you desire to become new? Are there some embarrassing habits you wish to overcome? Memories of pain and disappointment, do you wish you could bury them? Are there some wrongs you want to right? Today can be the beginning of your new life. Yes, it will take a lot of work and discipline to resist sliding into your old lifestyle, but the power of God which is in you is so much more effective than the world's pull on you towards sin. You need only

to submit.

Submit your thoughts, habits, plans, past mistakes, aspirations, etc. to God, and allow Him to perform His perfect work in you, moment-by-moment today. And if He spares your life to see tomorrow, do it again. If you make it to the next day, do it again. Wash, rinse, and repeat until Jesus comes. If you stumble and fall along the journey, talk to God about it, and turn away from sin with the Holy Spirit's help, and submit again. Surrendering our hearts is the key, and God will renew us to bring honor to His name.

By God's grace, this is the faith I live by. Let this be the same for you, in Jesus' name.