

"Make It So"

Some of you may recognize the familiar command of Jean Luc Picard, commander of the Star Ship Enterprise. I have always been enamored not only with the great authority with which Jean Luc uses this phrase, but with its simplicity as well. As a devoted fan of his style, as depicted on the TV series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, I realize what strength lie in these three words.

I read an article in a local newspaper several months ago describing what it claimed were overused and useless words. The phrase that struck me was, "I'll try." It was among other statements such as "I can't." We counselors often hear people committing to try.

I remember my grandmother telling me the road to hell was paved with good intentions. Although not exactly scriptural, it points us to a primal reaction to the challenges of life: "I'll try." What exactly does this mean? For many of us it means, "I will say what I'm going to do instead of doing it." We seem to have a love affair with the idea of trying and yet where do we ever read in scripture that Jesus tells us to try, or even to "do our best"? Christ's command are clear and crisp, as in, "I command you to forgive," he doesn't ask us but tells us to "Make it so."

As committed Christians we are familiar with the concept of repentance. The Greek word, *metanoia*, means change, and the Hebrew, *nacham*, means to sigh as if sorrowed. Yet how many of us consider repentance to mean confessing our sins, talking about them, claiming we are sinners, without much commitment to real change?

When Jean Luc Picard says, "Make it so." he isn't telling his crew to try, but to do it. So often Jesus addressed the twelve with equal strength and conviction! The gospel of Luke relays his words, "If any wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (9:23). And in Matthew he says, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine, and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon a rock (7:24)

When the Lord tells us to make our yes's yes and our no's no he calls us to act. The time for deciding and pondering and choosing must end and a course of action implemented. The decision is already made, and we must carry out that decision.

As any counseling process nears closure, we share the disciplines necessary to walk in the new way. They include:

Embracing Defeat: Putting off our old practices is painful—let the pain work.

Make Choices: Make one small choice at a time until many small choices become second nature. Leave the big ones to the Lord.

Choose New Ways to Respond: Mentally rehearse righteous responses. Speak truth about our new life.

Receive Correction: Be accountable to someone. Talk about our struggles.

Stop Making Excuses: Stop blaming others.

Choosing Life: This doesn't mean deciding each day whether or not we WILL choose life; rather it means to CHOOSE the life Jesus has given us. We must believe Jesus has made us, his handiwork, created us to lead the life of good deeds which God prepared for us in advance (Ephesians 2:10).

None of our decisions to act preclude the Lord's grace, and yet within that grace He wants us to be strong and confident (Joshua 1:9). He wants us to choose our course of action. He wants us to depend upon and trust in Him and He wants our actions to reveal that trust. He wants us to look out in front of ourselves to Him as he says to us, "Make it so."

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