

## **CHANGED #3 – “A HEART THAT WANTS GOD”**

### **Review**

- God loves us! He both accepts us as we are, and he seeks to change us into what he wants us to be.
- Being conformed to the image of Jesus requires us to (1) *want* to be changed and (2) *surrender* to God in total and in the specifics of our sin.

### **The Centrality of a Changed Heart**

- “...the greatest need you and I have – the greatest need of collective humanity – is renovation of our heart. That spiritual place within us from which outlook, choices, and actions come has been formed by a world away from God. Now it must be transformed.” (Dallas Willard, “Renovation of the Heart”)
- Our hearts have already been formed. For instance, there are particular heart reasons why we would rather not initiate conversation with the person in the pew in front of us. And when our spouse is critical about the way we do something around the house – or not do something around the house - we tend to blame them for our frustration. But the real source of our frustration isn’t them – it’s our heart.
  - ▶ *Matthew 15:18-19* “But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these defile you. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”
- To understand our heart ask: **“What do I want?”** Your heart is best described by your desires.
  - ◆ Do you want to glorify God or glorify yourself? ◆ Do you want to be loving towards people or self-centered? ◆ Do you want to trust God or trust the government, your bank account, your employer and your intelligence? ◆ Do you want to be grateful for trials that make you needy for God, or do you want life to go smoothly so you don’t need God that much? ◆ Do you want to grow into the character of Jesus – even if it means experiencing trials - or do you prefer to skip the trials and stay unchanged?
    - ▶ *Acts 8:21* “your heart is not right before God.” ▶ *Acts 13:22* “I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.” ▶ When a man lusts after a woman, Jesus says, he commits “adultery with her in his heart” (*Mat. 5:28*).
    - ▶ But - it’s the “pure in heart who see God” (*Mat. 5:8*).
- Where is your treasure?
  - ▶ *Mat. 6:21* “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
  - ◆ Our treasures tell us where our heart really is. Physical treasures (homes, cars, kitchen); Relational treasures (our kids, spouse, close friends); Inner treasures (always wanting to be right, always wanting approval from others, always wanting to be respected by our children, always wanting to get our way around our homes or at our jobs, or always wanting people to do things according to our time-table.)

▶ *Hebrews 8:10* “I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.” God writes his will on our hearts like he renews our minds – over time as we yield to the Spirit. Intentional effort!

◆ *Luke 6:45* “Good people bring good things out of the good stored up in their heart, and evil people bring evil things out of the evil stored up in their heart.” Stored by the people we spend time with; TV and video games; activities we pursue. ◆ *Ephesians 6:5* “Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart...” We should want to please them and serve them. ◆ *Ephesians 5:19* “Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.” Our songs should flow from what we want, from our spiritual longings and desires, not simply words put to catchy music.

▶ *Colossians 3:1* “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” Not on things below! This is intentionally reorienting our desires to align them with God’s desires. **We want to want what he wants.**

### **The Process of Obtaining a New Heart**

#### **1. Recognize when our hearts are not pure and God-focused.**

▶ *Psalms 139:23-24* “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

● Four common sinful heart desires: The desire for self-promotion – pride. The desire for control and power over situations and people. The desire to use people for our purposes instead of loving them for their good (self-centeredness). The desire for pleasure apart from God and his will (lust and addictions). Other expressions: Insecurity, jealousy, worry, bitterness, prejudice, greed, envy, a critical and judgmental spirit, ingratitude, disrespectful, boasting, perfectionism and conflict avoidance.

**2. Immersing yourself in places that delight in God and his life - soak yourself in a good heart.** The Bible, sermons, godly friendships or a spiritual mentor, Christian radio and literature. Celebrate the goodness of God so you begin to want what he wants – not because you should, but because it’s attractive. *Psalms 34:8*

**3. Expose the harm and darkness behind a self-orientation to life.** *Romans 12:9* “Hate what is evil.” Unmask it for what it is. If sin looks attractive, then think more deeply about it and see it’s real evil - the harm it does to you and to others. Hate and be repulsed by sin’s ways.

**4. Use disappointments to experience spiritual satisfaction in God rather than in comfort and physical blessings.** Includes refining our character. Realize that “God is devoting his power to an agenda I don’t properly value.” (Larry Crabb, “The Pressure’s Off”)

**5. God’s Presence.** Confess your self-centered desires and pray for God-centered desires. Ask him to expose the impurities of your heart.

**Places to Begin:** ◆ A new heart wants to glorify God more than experiencing self-glory in what we do, accomplish buy or say. ◆ A new heart wants more to become like Jesus than to avoid discomfort and pain. ◆ A new heart is focused more on loving others than on others making life easy for them around the house, at work or at church. ◆ A new heart delights more in being loved by God than in being loved by others. ◆ A new heart uses temptations to drive us to God and be hungry for more of him. ◆ A new heart wants peace to come more from God than from our kids, parents or a boss.