

## **CHANGED #6 – “COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGE”**

### **Review**

- Our Purpose: To be live “loved, changed and sent” by God.
- True spiritual transformation involves surrender to God, new heart desires, new thoughts of the mind, and knowing the presence of God.

### **Some Common Questions about Spiritual Change**

#### **➔ What role do Satan and demons play in my struggles?**

- 3 main sources of our sin in the Bible: The human body with its beliefs and desires (“flesh” in N.T.), the world and its values, and the devil.
- Whenever Satan tempts us to sin, the Bible teaches us to fight him the same way it teaches us to fight the flesh and the world. So in practice, we don’t really have to figure out what role demons are playing.
  - ▶ *Ephesians 6:11* “Put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Summary of this armor: holiness, truth and faith - if we *live* God’s way, and *believe* God’s truth, and *trust* in God’s promises, we will be victorious.
  - ▶ *James 4:7-8* “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” = Submission, prayer, repentance.
- When Jesus cast out demons, he was fighting the kind of evil that was primarily physical in nature (blindness, deafness, paralysis). He didn’t cast out demons when the evil was of a moral nature (sin).

#### **➔ What should I do when I’m stuck, and when change in a particular area seems so hard?**

- Example: You may be just as critical and judgmental as you were 5 or 20 years ago.
- 7 reasons why Christians often feel stuck in a sin.
  1. You may have failed to completely surrender your will and desires to God.
  2. You may have failed to take responsibility for your actions and emotions. Instead, you blame them on others or you hide behind the idea that “this is just who I am.”
  3. You may have failed to identify the desires (of your heart) and beliefs (of your mind) that lie behind your actions and emotions. In particular, pride, fear and self-centeredness are common inner roots of sin.
  4. You may have failed to appropriate the grace of God in all its fullness, through faith-filled scripture-reading, prayer, worship, fellowship with other Christians, solitude and service.
  5. You may have failed to seek help from others who can love you and shed light on your problem. This could be spiritually mature

friends, a pastor, or a counselor. This is someone who will not judge you for your struggle, who will understand your struggle, and who can point you to God to overcome your struggle.

6. You may have failed to believe God is always loving and good to you – and that you can trust him with this uncertain process of change.

7. You may have failed to really want to be changed – because you’re afraid of what change might do to your life, or because you don’t want to deal with the cost of change, or because you haven’t accepted your calling by God to glorify him in all you do.

- *You’re missing out on the fullness of God in you. . . You’re also possibly hurting some of the people you love because you’ve refused to deal with your sins and issues that affect them.*

▶ *1 Timothy 4:15-16* “Be diligent in these matters [of ‘speech, love, faith and purity’]; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

#### **➔ What place do psychology, psychiatry and medication have in the process of becoming more like Jesus?** [Amy Harlacher]

- Value of social sciences for making the mind and soul whole; provides someone who can listen and care well - and “force” you to reflect well.

#### **➔ Why do some people change easily and others’ don’t?**

- Two primary reasons why change is easy for some, hard for others:
  - (1) *The quantity and depth and duration of “hooks” the sin has into your soul.* (E.g. impatience: A “parent hook” – seeing a sin modeled by a parent; a “perfection hook” – needing others to be perfect; a “happiness hook” – wanting others to do things our way and in our timing ; a “lack of love hook” that judges people; a “lack of surrender to God hook” that lives for self, not for God.)

(2) *The quantity of tools people have to remove the hooks.* God isn’t the only factor at work in change. He’s a huge factor, but there are others at work as well (some are natural abilities or temperaments), and the person who really wants to change will ask God to equip them with every attitude, every motivation, every tool, every resource to make changes (humility, self-control, books, friends, insights, support, worship, etc.)

- Cling to the love and grace of God to you when the journey is slow!
  - ▶ *Philippians 2:12-13*, “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

▶ *1 Timothy 6:11-12* “But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.”