

GOD'S PART MY PART IN CHANGING ME P4

How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life - Part 4

Philippians 2:12-13. What would you like to change in your life? As I was growing up, I heard people say, "Jesus changed my life." And I always wondered, "How does Jesus change your life? Does He do surgery or brain washes you? Maybe He Zap's you with something and all of a sudden you're changed?"

Some people say, "Just wait on the Lord." A passive approach. Other people say, "If it's to be, it's up to me." An activist viewpoint.

What am I supposed to do in order to grow? Is it all me or is it all God or is it a combination of us both? There's a lot of confusing advice out there about how God changes us. So I wanted to talk with you about this today in our series called, "How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life."

Paul deals with this very issue in God's word, the bible.

God's word, the bible says, when it comes to your spiritual growth, the fact is God has a part and you have a part. Paul uses two phrases to explain this cooperation: "*Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.*" Circle "*work out*" and "*work in*". Work out is your part. Work in is God's part. We are to work out what God is working in.

This doesn't say "work for" your salvation. It says "*work out*". The Bible says "*It is not of works, lest any man should boast.*" These are already Christians to whom Paul is writing and talking to. So if your here today and your not a Christian well first let me say welcome and let me invite you to sit back and consider the claims of Christ. So Paul writing to Christians says develop what you already have.

Assuming then that we were given something when we first invited Christ into our lives... Amen!

Paul says, Work out the implications. If you're born again, start growing it. Work it out.

What do you do in a physical workout? You do a workout not to get **a body** but to **develop the body** you already have. When you work out a puzzle, you already have all the pieces. You've just got to put it together. When a farmer works the ground, he's cultivating it. Not working for, but work it out. Work out the implications.

Then he says, "...*work out your salvation...*" Circle "*your*".

He's talking about an individual assignment. Accept personal responsibility for your growth. It's your salvation, not somebody else's. Yours. Individually. God wants to work out the implications of it in your life individually.

God does not want cookie-cutter Christians. He doesn't want a bunch of spiritual clones walking around, everybody copying each other.

Let me ask you a question? What does the gospel mean in your life? You are unique and individual to God. He doesn't want you to be Billy Graham; He wants you to be you. And He wants you to work that personal and individual relationship with Him out "...*with fear and trembling...*" Don't be afraid of God. Christians have no need to fear God in terms of being afraid of Him. You are a part of His family. This means take your salvation seriously; it has eternal implications. It's a life or death issue here. Nothing is more important than your own spiritual growth. Take it seriously.

"...*for it is God who works in you...*" That's God's part.

Circle "*works*". We get the word "energizer" or "energy"

from this Greek word. God is the energizer for change in your life. He says, "I will give you the power to do what you want to do, need to do, and know what is right to do. I will empower you, energize you." God is the energizer to will and to act. He will give you the will power and the ability. He'll give you the desire and the capability to change.

There are 3 tools God uses to work in to your life, change, and three choices you need to make to work them out. But today we're going to look at what we need to work in to our life to change and next week we will look at how they are worked out. Your part is to work it in to my life.

I. GOD'S PART IN CHANGING ME

THREE TOOLS HE USES

1. He uses the Bible.

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point..." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible changes our thoughts so therefore it changes us.

If you want to get serious about change in your life, you need to get into this book. Read it, study it, memorize it, and meditate on it, live it in your life. That's why we have bible studies and small groups during the week for you to get involved in because they promote you to do most all of these. The more you get the Word of God in your life, the more you're going to be changed.

People say, "I don't have any faith, Pastor bill" I ask them, "Are you reading the Bible?" They say, "No."

What do they expect? The Bible says, "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*"

The second tool God uses is:

2. The Holy Spirit

God puts His Spirit in us. This is where the power comes from to change. Romans 8:11: "*Once the Spirit lives within you, He will bring to your whole being new strength and vitality.*" God will bring power into your life. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, in Spirit form. When you commit your life to God, He comes into your life.

I Corinthians 3:18 "*As the Spirit of the Lord works with us, we become more and more like Him.*" God's number one purpose in your life is **not** to make you happy, but to make you like Jesus.

Genesis 1:27 when God first formed the world He said, "*Let Us make man in Our image*" and He's been wanting to do that ever since. That is His ultimate goal to change you. God's ideal is to tell us how to change through His word and give us the power to change through His Spirit. You read it and then He empowers you to do it. Unfortunately, we don't always follow the ideal. So God has to use a third way to change us when we don't respond to the Word or the Holy Spirit.

3. Circumstances

A problem, pressures, headaches, difficulties and stress always gets our attention. Romans 8:28-29 "*To those who love God and are called according to His plan everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. For God chose us to bear the family likeness of His Son.*"

There is nothing that could come into the life of a believer without God's permission. He doesn't say they are all good, but He will use them for good to fit into a pattern. There is a divine pattern.

Where are my problems coming from? Did I cause them?

Are they from the devil? from God?

It really doesn't matter where the problems in your life come from. No matter what the source is God can use it in your life if you'll let Him. All things can fit into a pattern for good -- to make me like Jesus.

If God is going to make me like Jesus, then He's going to take me through some situations that Jesus went through.

There were times when Jesus was lonely. There were times when Jesus was tempted. There were times when Jesus was tempted to be depressed or to get angry and blow up or to be impatient. And God allowed Jesus to go through those

things. Do you think He's going to spare you from those things? No, because He's more interested in your character than your comfort.

Hebrews 5:8 "*Jesus learned obedience through suffering.*"

How do you think you're going to learn it? Hebrews 2:10 says, "Jesus was made perfect through suffering." How do you think you're going to be made perfect?

He works first through His word, then the Holy Spirit, then, if those two don't work, He uses circumstances. For instance: Scripture says, "*Be humble. Before honor is humility.*" You read it from the Word and ask God for the power to get rid of the ego in your life. That's God's ideal way of dealing with that. But if you don't learn to be humble from God's word, He will humiliate you through a circumstance. It's very easy for God to humble me. He has 1001 ways to do it!

Even if you read the Bible six hours a day, it's still not the major section of your life. How many hours a day do you have circumstances? Twenty four hours a day. God often has to depend more on the third way than the first two. Those are the tools that He uses in your life. Proverbs 20:30 *"Sometimes it takes a painful situation to make us change our ways."* We rarely change until we get desperate. We don't change too often when we see the light, but we always change when we feel the heat. God lights a fire under us and we get moving. Often we will put up with things we know needs to be changed in our lives until when, until we began being uncomfortable, then we will look at changing/// God sometimes has to bring some thunderstorms into our lives to say, "Do something. I want you to change. Don't get stuck in a rut."

LET US PRAY: