

GODS PART MY PART IN CHANGING ME P4B

How to Enjoy the Rest of Your Life - Part 4

Philippians 2:12-13. Last week I started off by asking you, "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? What am I supposed to do, if I am suppose to do anything? Is it all me or is it all God or is it a combination of us both? How does Jesus change my life? 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 in the scripture we read to explain this cooperation, he said: "*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.

NOTE: This doesn't say "work for" your salvation. It says "*work out*". 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. Now in saying that your 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, Paul s says 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.

Then he says, "...work out your salvation..." Circle "your". He's talking about an individual assignment, which means you need to accept personal responsibility for your growth. It's your salvation, not somebody else's. He doesn't want a bunch of spiritual clones walking around, He doesn't want you like me or me like you... He wants each of us to work out our salvation and become that unique person He created.

Then he says "...with fear and trembling..." If you've given your life to Christ... Don't ever be afraid of God. Christians have no need to fear God in terms of being afraid of Him. He is your Father and you are a part of His family. What this means "...with fear and trembling..." take working out your salvation seriously; it has eternal

implications. Nothing is more important than your own spiritual growth. Take it seriously.

Paul goes on to say "...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. God says, "*I will give you the power to do what you want to do, what you need to do, and the discernment to know what is right to do. I will empower you, I will 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. He will take your old desire and give you His desires.

Now last week we looked at the 3 tools God uses to work in to your life, God uses to change your life.

I. God's part in changing me – the 3 tools God 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 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.

The second tool God uses is:

2. The Holy Spirit

God puts His Spirit in each believer. 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 living in you. 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."*

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. (REPEAT) He doesn't say they are all good, but He will use them for good to fit into a divine pattern.

You can think: Where are my problems coming from? Did I cause them? Are they from the devil? from God? But to someone who has surrendered their life to Christ... to a

Christian it really doesn't matter where the problems in your life come from, because no matter what the source is... the truth 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 one of my purposes for life is to become like Christ if I am going to become Christ like... 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 will be times that you will feel lonely. There were times when Jesus was tempted. There will be times that you will be tempted. There were times when Jesus was tempted to be depressed or to get angry and blow up or to be impatient. There will be times when you are tempted to be depressed

or to get angry and to blow up or to be impatient. God allowed Jesus to go through those things.

He's not going to spare you from those things? No, Why because He's more interested in your character than your comfort. This is a great example for parents with their children, we parents should be more interested in developing character in our children then comfort for them. 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? 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."

II. MY PART IN CHANGING ME

3 CHOICES THAT WILL HELP YOU CHANGE

1. I can choose what I think about. Growth is not

Automatic, it doesn't just come passively doing nothing. Change is a matter of choice and you and I can choose what we think about. Proverbs 4:23 "*Be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts.*" **You aren't what you think you are. But what you think, you are. Your thoughts don't just direct your life, they are your life.** If we could see on a giant screen what you think about we would really know who you are. Whatever change you want to make in your life starts with your thoughts. Ephesians 4:23-25 "*Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the `new self' that has been created in God's way.*" Change always begins with new thinking. The Bible word for change is the word "repentance". In Greek it means "*to change your mind*". "*to change from to*" When I repented I changed the way I thought about God, when I repented I changed the way I

thought about myself, the world, others. I changed my outlook. When I became a Christian it changed my whole perspective on life and I began to see things differently. I began to challenge some of those old ways of thinking in my life, old values in my life. And that changing the way I thought began changing my feelings which began changing the way I acted.

Romans 12:2 "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" If you want to be changed, start with the renewing of your mind. Psychologists found this out about 2000 years later after Romans 12:2 was written. They discovered that the way that I think determines the way that I feel. The way that I feel determines the way that I act.

In a lot of behavior modification people are trying to change their life by change the actions rather than going back to the root of the actions. The way they think about

this: There is no action without a thought behind it. If you're acting depressed it's because you feel depressed.

You feel depressed because you're thinking some depressing thoughts. Psychologists! If you want to change the key is to start with the way that you think. You can't fight a feeling.

The Bible says change starts in the mind -- "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" If you change it, the direction changes easily.

One of the things you ought to start choosing to think about is God's word. You need to read it, study it, memorize it, and meditate on it, Why?

Jesus said, "*My word is truth.*" If you want to change start filling your mind with God's word, the bible. Psalm 1:1-3 "*Blessed is the man who meditates on God's word.*"

When we meditate on God's word it gets into our mind and changes us.

Phil. 4:8 says "*Think on these things*" and it tells you the kinds of things to think about. Col. 3:6 "*Let the word of God dwell in you richly.*" Psalm 1:19 "*Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against God.*" Joshua 1:8 "*The secret of success is meditate on God's word day and night and you'll be successful.*"

So let me ask you...What have you been thinking on...?

Because that is who you are and if you begin by thinking on God's word you will become like Christ. If you're not having a daily quiet time with the Lord... I bet you're not seeing much change in your life.

My Part In Changing Me the second choice that will help me is :

2. I can choose to depend on God's Spirit moment by moment.

WOW - How many times have you heard me say we are spirit filled spirit led people? This is where the power comes in. Jesus gave a beautiful illustration of this in John 15:4-5 *"Take care to live in Me and let Me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him shall produce a large crop of fruit."*

We are the branches and a branch is totally dependant upon the vine. When it is cut off from that vine, it won't and can't bear any grapes, or figs, or whatever. Why? A branch cannot produce fruit by itself. It's got to be connected.

What is Jesus saying to you this morning here... Jesus is saying that's the way we have to be with God. We have to

be plugged in. God has the power. But it's not automatic.

It's when you're plugged in, tuned in to God that the power comes through you.

Fruit is an inside job. How would it be if I planted an old, dead tree? Then two weeks before harvest I tie a bunch of apples to it. A lot of Christians try to do this. They are trying to tie good works onto their life to look like they are making progress, when it's something they just picked up from the outside rather than let it flow through their life from the inside as they depend on God's Spirit.

And that's a choice we all have.

How do you know when you're depending on God's Spirit? Check your prayer life out. Whatever you pray about you're depending on God for. Whatever you don't pray about you're **not** depending on God for. What does it mean to depend on God? It means to pray continually. Your

decisions, your feelings, your relationships, deadlines, purchases, everything. Whatever you want God to bless, that's what you pray about. You are aware that God is constantly with you.

You practice His presence with you all the time and have a running conversation with Him 24/7. You whisper up a prayer to God no matter what you're doing. Talk to God about anything and everything. That's what it means to depend on His Spirit. **My Part In Changing Me the third choice that will help me is :**

3. I can choose my response to circumstances.

There is a parallel between God's resources and your choice.

God has the resource of His Word, the Bible; your choice... you're supposed to read it, study it, memorize

it, and meditate on it. One of the ways you study the bible is get involved into a small group.

- **God has the Holy Spirit; your choice... you choose to depend on Him.**
- **God uses circumstances; your choice...you choose your response to circumstances.**

SLIDE FOR ALL THIS ABOVE PLEASE

James 1:2-4 *"When all kinds of trials crowd into your lives don't resent them as intruders but welcome them as friends. Realize that they come to test your faith and produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed and you become people of mature character, people of integrity, with no weak spots."* Circle the word "process".

The Christian life is not a one time event. It is an event followed by a process. You're born again and you've got to

grow, develop, work out the salvation you've been given. Not work for, but work out the implications. You develop it. The more you use your muscles the more you develop your muscles. There is a process going on in your life to produce mature character.

That's God's goal -- Christ like character in your life.

James is saying in the scripture we just read I can choose my response to life.

You cannot choose what is going to happen to you next week, next month, next year. We don't have that choice.

But you can choose how you're going to respond, how you're going to react -- whether it's going to make you or break you, whether you're going to be bitter or better, whether it's going to be a stepping stone to maturity in Christ or a stumbling block to failure. It's your choice the

way you choose to respond to the circumstances that come into your life.

What really matters in life the most is not what happens to you. **What happens to you** is not the most important thing in your life. **What happens in you** is what matters most.

That is a choice.

We've seen people put in the same bad circumstances. One will come out a winner and the other will come out a whiner. One's complaining and the other is turning it into a gold mine of Christ like character. Mark Hall and Bernie Herms knew this revelation... You say who's that... they wrote the lyrics for Praise You In the Storm that Casting Crowns made popular.

Romans 5:3-4 "*We can be full of joy here and now, even in our trials and troubles. These very things [the trials and*

*troubles] will give us patient endurance; this in turn will
develop a mature character."*