

“Being Changed to Live Like Jesus”

How to Change the Way you Think

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Steve Freeburne / July 11, 2004

I. Review

Christianity is primarily a relationship with the Creator, not merely a means to achieve creature comfort. Every trial that every burdened a mortal man, every temptation that ever stormed a human heart, and every blessing that ever delighted a need soul have been skillfully designed by the Creator for one purpose: to draw men to Himself. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 116

Repentance, involves the use of our mind, emotion and will. It produces actions which are done in the spirit of humility. They are rapid, moving with diligence and have a serious purpose. They are undertaken with a sense of alarm or even fear over the seriousness of our sin. These actions are the result of biblical thinking which has a vehement desire to clear our conscience and make any restitution necessary. There is significant emotion in the expression of godly sorrow that leads to repentance. There is zeal to do what is right and a longing to see God honored even to the point of experiencing physical pain as we seek to repent of our sin.

The Power of Sin in our Lives has been Broken because	Putting Sin to Death in our Lives requires that we
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are a new creation II Corinthians 5:17• God’s grace demands it Romans 6:1-2• Christ’s victory assures it Romans 6:10-11• Our experience confirms it Colossians 1:6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize the danger (confess our sin and repent) Ezekiel 18:31• Take away the fuel (escape from temptation) I Corinthians 10:13• Apply the brakes (deliberately choose to stop) Titus 2:11-12

II. Changing the way we think means that we learn to think like God

Romans 12: 2 NIV: Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. NLT: Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

II Corinthians 3:18 NIV: ... we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with every increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit

The pattern of my behavior is not set in the activities of those about me. Don’t follow the example of those you left in the world, nor those you find in the church. Rather, the law of God, found in His Word, shall be my standard... He makes his ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos of other things. Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be aflame... Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God. **From Jim Elliott’s personal diary at the age of 20 while he was a college student**

How does this transformation begin? There must be a spiritual renewal of our mind (our thoughts and attitudes), Paul says in **Eph. 4:23**

III. As a first step we must recognize that the goal of biblical change is not to gain relief from our problems but rather to grow in our relationship with our Creator.

We learn to think like God the better we know him as a person

Act 17:28 NIV: For in Him we move and live and have our being.

Knowing God requires that we pursue the desire for HIM that he placed in our hearts at our conversion.

Psalms 42:1-2 NIV: As the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you. O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing. *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis, page 54

There are three aspects of our relationship with God that as we apply them will help us think like God.

- Creator to creature -
- Father to child -
- Master to servant

The Christian life is first and foremost about God. It is not primarily about escape from everlasting torment or deliverance from life-dominating sins or freedom from unsettling emotions. Our despondency, anger, worry, fear, guilt, bitterness, lust, etc are indications that the dependent love relationship with God has grown cold – or has never been developed in the first place. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 115

First our relationship with God is one of Creator to creature. God is immeasurably superior to man in every conceivable way. Understanding this causes our thinking to be different.

We must not compare the being of God with any other...He is exalted far above the created universe, so far above that human thought cannot imagine it. To think accurately about this, however we must keep in mind that “far above” does not here refer to physical distance from the earth but to quality of being. Forever God stands apart, in light unapproachable. This is more than preeminence this is transcendence. *Knowledge*, A.W. Tozer, page 107

Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Reflecting on the enormous distance between man and his Creator will produce a humility that expresses itself in a spirit of dependency upon God. That dependence replaces any confidence man is tempted to place in himself or in any other part of God’s creation. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 135

Secondly consider our relationship to God as one of a Father to his child. Although God is immeasurably superior to man, as a Father he is always available for us, he is near to us and gives us security.

John 1:12 NIV: ... to all who received him, to those he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

Romans 8:15-16 NLT: So, you should not be cowering, fearful slaves. You should be like God’s very own children, adopted into his family – calling him “Father, dear Father”. For his Holy spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children

Charles Spurgeon speaking of the Father / child relationship stated: To those who truly reverence his holy name, the Lord is a father and acts as such. Fathers feel for their children, especially when they are in pain, they would like to suffer in their stead, their sighs and groans cut them to the quick: thus sensitive toward us is our heavenly Father. We do not adore a god of stone, but the living God who is tenderness itself. He is at this moment compassionating us ... his pity never fails to flow, and we never cease to need it. *The Treasury of David*, volume II page 280 on Psalms 103:13

Seeing God as immeasurably superior to us in every way yet knowing we are able to draw near to him for comfort and security as our Father causes our thinking to be different.

Third consider our relationship to God as one of Master to servant. God is immeasurably superior to man; as our Father He is always available to us to provide us comfort and security; however his plan and purposes are accomplished through works of service by his children.

First century servants were responsive to the needs of others.

Matthew 23:11-12 NIV: The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. **Mark 9:35 NIV:** ... If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all. **John 12:26 NIV:** Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

A useful first-century slave did not hang around the shadows hoping he would not be called upon to perform a task. He was right in the middle of the action – washing feet, filling water pots, tutoring children, working in the fields, running errands, and so forth. God’s attributes of love, compassion, kindness, patience, and mercy, when manifested in the life of a believer beholding the glory of God, result in Christ-like service for others. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 198

First century servants were responsive to the will of their master.

Luke 6:46 NIV: Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say? **Ephesians 6:6-7 NIV:** ... obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ... Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does...

This aspect of servant hood is often overlooked in our freethinking, democratic society. By this definition, many believers are not very good servants. They do not respond well to the will of their masters... They do not cheerfully submit to parents, husbands, church leaders, and other authority figures in their lives. The spirit of our age preaches that if you do not like the will of your master, it is all right to ignore or defy it. Nothing is more un-Christlike. Changed into His Image, Jim Berg page 199

IV. Our thinking is changed to be like Christ's as we are exposed to Him.

John 1:14 NIV: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. **Psalms 36:9 KJV** ... In thy light shall we see light.

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