

## “Being Changed to Live Like Jesus”

### How to Begin Doing What is Right

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Steve Freeburne / July 18, 2004

#### I. Review

“The Christian life is first and foremost about God. Christianity is primarily a relationship with the Creator, not merely a means to achieve creature comfort. It is not primarily about escape from everlasting torment or deliverance from life-dominating sins or freedom from unsettling emotions. Every trial that ever burdened a mortal man, every temptation that ever stormed a human heart, and every blessing that ever delighted a needy soul have been skillfully designed by the Creator for one purpose: to draw men to Himself.”

*Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg pages 115-116

Biblical Change Involves a Radical Change in Our Thought Process	Learning To Think Like God means We Must Deeply Know Him
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>We learn to think like God by developing our relationship with Him as our Creator, our Father and our Master.</li><li>In this process of change the spirit of our mind is renewed (made brand new) Eph 4:23</li><li>We are transformed into a new person through our renewed minds Rom 12:2</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As our Creator we learn that God is immeasurably superior to man in every way</li><li>As our Father He is always available, He is near to us and He provides us security.</li><li>As our Master we are to be a duolos (one responsive to His will) and a diakonos (one responsive to the needs of others)</li></ul>

#### II. Exposure to God brings about profound change in a believer – the kind of change to Christ-likeness we need

**Psalms 36:9 NIV:** For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

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

A few men saw the “white light” of God’s glory. They were almost blinded by the manifestation, as if looking at the sun directly, and fell on their faces in stunned humility. We must not think that reading the Bible alone changes a man. God’s Spirit must personally show the realities of God to that man as he ponders the Scriptures. This divine work is called “illumination.” Change into Christ likeness is not something we do to ourselves. It is something that happens supernaturally through the agency of the Holy Spirit when we expose ourselves to God’s Word and He reveals to us His glory.

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#### III. To begin doing what is right requires wisdom which is knowing the response in every circumstance that would honor God the most and then acting on it.

**Proverbs 4:7-8 NIV:** Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her and she will exalt you; embrace her and she will honor you.

Joseph did not know why he had to spend time in prison on a trumped-up charge of attempted rape, nor did Job know why all of his children and properties were wiped out in God’s providence, nor did the apostle Paul know why God refused to remove his “thorn in the flesh”. But each of these men knew and practiced responses that kept them usable to God in spite of their circumstances. The important lesson here is that wisdom is not having God’s perspective of the whole matter before us, but having God’s perspective about what next response will honor Him while keeping us still usable to Him. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 167

#### IV. Biblical wisdom involves two disciplines: hearing and doing

**Matthew 7:24 NIV:** ... everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

One of the most practical benefits of Holy Writ is guidance in the acts of daily life; it is not sent to astound us with its brilliance, but to guide us by its instruction. It is true the head needs illumination, but even more the feet need direction, else head and feet may both fall into a ditch. Happy is the man who personally appropriated God’s word, and practically uses it as his comfort and counselor. *The Treasury of David*, Charles Spurgeon volume III page 342

**Discipline:** Training that corrects molds or perfects moral character and mental faculties. **Merriam-Webster English Dictionary**

#### V. Gaining Wisdom involves the Biblical discipline of hearing

##### Hearing God requires our Attention: Choosing to listen to God

Adam was not created autonomous; he was designed to listen to someone for direction in life. That direction was to come from God as Adam fellowshiped with Him in the garden. If we are to move out of the foolishness of our own heart and develop a renewed mind, we must make it a habit of life, a discipline, to listen to God rather than to our own heart. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 173

**Proverbs 4: 10-13 NIV:** Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. Hold on to instruction; do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.

**Proverbs 4:20 NIV:** My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my word. Do not let them out of your sight; keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

### Hearing involves Meditation: Choosing to think like God

**Psalms 119: 97 NIV:** Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. **Psalms 119:147-148:** I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word. My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

Meditation was the food of David's hope and the solace of his sorrow: the one theme upon which his thoughts ran was that blessed "word" which he continually mentions and in which his heart rejoices. He preferred study to slumber; and he learned to forego his necessary sleep for much more necessary devotion. It is instructive to find meditation so constantly connect with fervent prayer: it is the fuel which sustains the flame. How rare an article is it in these days. *The Treasury of David*, Charles Spurgeon Volume III page 402

Meditation opens the door in the inner sanctuary of the heart (for fellowship with Christ). Inward fellowship of this kind transforms the inner personality. We cannot burn the eternal flame of the inner sanctuary and remain the same, for the Divine Fire will consume every thing that is impure. Our ever-present Teacher will always be leading us into righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Everything that is foreign to his way we will have to let go... Our desires and aspirations will be more and more conformed to his way. Increasingly, everything within us will swing like a needle to the polestar of the Spirit. *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster, page 20

## VI. Secondly. Gaining Wisdom involves the biblical discipline of doing.

### Doing what the Word of God says requires obedience.

**James 1:22 NIV:** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Biblical obedience is not just compliance to some abstract law or rule. It is the submissive response to the person of the Holy Spirit who has revealed the will of God to us through His Word. It means saying yes to God as we say no to self. It means denying self instead of indulging self. It means pleasing God instead of pleasing self. It means walking in the Spirit instead of grieving the Spirit. It is the way of wisdom instead of the way of the fool. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 192

To be obedient to the Word of God we must be careful to follow the admonition of **Ephesians 5:18 NIV:** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

James MacDonald in his book, *I Really Want to Change ... So Help me God*, notes that there are three hindrances to the filling of the Spirit in our lives:

**We can grieve the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:30).** Oswald Sanders has written that "grieve" is a love word, meaning that we only grieve ones who love us, not our enemies

**We can quench the Holy Spirit. (I Thessalonians 5:19).** Grieving the Holy Spirit is doing things we should have left undone. Quenching the Spirit is refusing to do things that He does want us to do.

**We can reject the Holy Spirit. (I Thessalonians 4:8).** When we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit so long that we have essentially rejected the ministry of God's Spirit in our life by refusing sanctification, we have rejected God Himself.

Christian people, it is our chief business at a time like this to make clear to all with whom we come in contact what Christianity really is... Let us enlighten men and women. But above all let us continue instant in prayer for revival, for re-awakening, for a might outpouring of the Spirit of God, that His truth may be authenticated, that large masses of people may be brought to life and to the faith, and may proceed to demonstrate it in practice. And thereby influence the general life of society. Be filled with the Spirit, the Spirit of the living God. *Life in the Spirit*, Martin Lloyd-Jones page 39

### Gaining Wisdom involves the biblical discipline of doing what the Word says through endurance by choosing to persevere for God

Endurance is continued obedience to God even under pressure.

II Corinthians 4:16-18 NIV: We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far out weighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**Hebrews 12:2 NIV:** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scoring its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This endurance is the fruit of a Christ like, renewed mind. It is more than having a head filled with bible passages and scriptural principles. This endurance has its face toward God and its eye on the eternal. When listening to God is followed by reflection on God's words so that we begin to think like God, we are then hearing. When obeying His words and enduring in them because they are His words drives us to be "faithful unto death" (Rev 2:10), we are doing His will and living wisely. *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg page 197

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