

PART 30 – IT IS ALL ABOUT CHANGE

❖ I JUST DO NOT THINK I AM WRONG

Have you ever told someone else that they were just flat wrong, and it turned out that you were the one who was wrong? Well, I can assure that that has certainly happened to me. I mean, when you do that, doesn't that just eat on you? The problem is that when you do something right, that no one remembers, but just do something wrong and it will follow you for the rest of your life. So, it is not that I remember all of the times that I was wrong or even that everyone else seems to remember. Them remembering is not that bad. What I dislike is them reminding me of what I did that was wrong. Now, the lesson that I have learned through this mixed bag of being wrong when I just knew that I was right is that I was always stubborn about it. Was old Gary going to listen to someone else? Not a chance! Well, the more stubborn you are, the more people will remember and remind you. When you are wrong, trust me, but you want to admit it and then change what is wrong.

❖ TOUCHDOWN!!

That's the goal of a football game – right? Every football player knows what the goal of playing football is – score more touchdowns than your opponent. So, every football team has goals they set so they can be successful and hear those words “Touchdown!”

So, what are some of your goals as a believer, or do you even have any? What would you consider to be a touchdown in your Christian life and when was the last time that you scored one? If you do not have any goals, then you need some. So, let me give you one Spiritual Goal and one Key Principle that I believe are very important.

SPIRITUAL GOAL: To be willing to change what you know is wrong in your life.

Listen. You can be stubborn and resist change, but it only hurts you and those who surround your life. Spiritual change is not optional for someone who really wants their life to make a difference. I think about Saul and what the prophet said about his life in [1 Samuel 15:23](#),

1 Sam 15:23 (NKJV) For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

This verse certainly reveals one way that God sees stubbornness in your life. You cannot give me one good reason why you should be stubborn when you know that you need to make needed spiritual changes in your life – not one good reason. I can give you three reasons why you may be stubborn and always resisting God's deeper work in your life.

1. You are spiritually lazy.
2. You have become spiritually indifferent and are very satisfied with where you are spiritually.
3. You are not willing to accept what God wants to do in your life.

KEY PRINCIPLE 95: MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IS ALWAYS BASED ON MAKING SPIRITUAL CHANGES.

The Christian life is never static, never still, never stationary. It is dynamic and is designed to always be changing. Listen very carefully.

As a Christian, you MUST embrace the idea of changing.

I cannot imagine being a Christian or a husband or a father or a friend without making changes in my life. For someone who is serious about their Christian life, making changes is inevitable. If you can look at your Christian life and see that you are not making any meaningful and necessary changes in your life, then you are not growing as a believer. You have become satisfied with doing nothing. So, what should you do, what should be your goals? Well, for starters,

1. If you know that you do not treat people the way that God wants you to treat them, then **change your wrong behavior**. That would be the goal.
2. If you know that you are not a resourceful person, then **change that direction** so that your life does not have to suffer later. That would be the goal.
3. If you know that you are not really very serious about your spiritual life, then **change that mindset**. That would be the goal.

Now, listen carefully. **If you do not think like this, then you will never change.** You should always be asking yourself a very simple question – “*Lord, what areas of my life do you want to change?*” It is not that change is good, but rather that change is essential. You are to always be growing as a Christian, and that always means changing. I know this may sound a little elementary to intelligent people, but just do the following.

1. Take a sheet of paper and make a list of all of the things in your life that you know need to change. Just do it.
2. Analyze what you have written down.
3. Prioritize which ones are the most important changes to make.
4. Once you have your priority list, then set some goals as to how you believe God wants you to change.
5. Start making the changes.

Just work on something! Let God do something in your life. Give God something to work with in your life. Change must be intentional and deliberate, so set some goals, grade yourself, and do not get discouraged. Stop being spiritually lazy! You will be doing the right thing. The goal is simple. You want to always be learning and growing in the things of God and making the necessary changes in your life that strengthen you to become more Christlike. In [Romans 6:11-14](#), Paul penned these words.

Ro 6:11 (NKJV) **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** ¹² **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.** ¹³ **And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.** ¹⁴ **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

These are some of the most essential truths about the Christian life that you will ever learn – that God has designed you in such a way that as a Christian that you are “**dead indeed to sin, but alive to God**”

and that **“sin shall not have dominion over you”**. Either you believe this or you do not believe this. The only way that anyone can know what they actually believe is by how they live. As a believer, you are commanded by God to **“NOT let sin reign in your mortal body”**, and to **“NOT present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin”**. What God desires for your life could not be any clearer than these verses. These are the kind of truths that you need to make as declarations that you place in your notebook. These are the kind of truths that need to be a neural pathway in your brain – *“I will not let sin reign in my mortal body!”* and *“I will not present my members as instruments of unrighteousness.”*

Just think of all of the really bad traits and habits that some Christians have. It is like they have become addicted to a certain way of life and simply cannot break those chains of bondage on their life. At that point, what good does it do them to even be a Christian?

1. Maybe they drink a lot, or they are addicted to pornography, or they are awful with their resources.
2. Maybe they cannot get along with people or they argue with their spouse all the time or make sarcastic and hurtful remarks about them.
3. Maybe they are always making bad assumptions and jumping to the wrong conclusion.
4. Maybe they are not patient with what God is doing in someone, so they hinder God’s work in that person.
5. Maybe they are very lazy or have a tendency to create caustic relationships with people.

Who knows? It could be anything that is hindering someone’s Christian life. In each of those cases, the individual has allowed sin to **“have dominion”** over their life. At that point they have become the proverbial “hypocrite” that all of the lost people see in the church, and their life is never able to make an impact on the people that God brings into their life. Everyone that you know has areas of their life that need spiritual adjustments – some small, some large.

KEY PRINCIPLE 96: MAKING SMALL CHANGES IS THE STARTING PLACE FOR MAKING IMPORTANT CHANGES.

I love what Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery in [John 8:10-11](#),

Jn 8:10 (NKJV) When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

When Jesus told her to **“go and sin no more”**, He was simply telling her to go and make some really important changes in her life. You have to start somewhere. This woman had to make some significant changes in her life. She was an adulterous woman and very immoral. Jesus told her to make some changes. If you know that something is wrong in your life, then from God’s perspective, you have to change it. Does anyone not agree with that reality?

So, let us just assume that you are a Christian and that there are areas of your life that you know are not what God wants for your life, but you have not been willing to address those issues. You continue to hurt others, and in that process, you hurt yourself. In essence, that is simply disobedience, what Samuel

told Saul was stubbornness. You can call it anything that you want, but it is what God calls it. I think we are totally correct in actually calling it sin. So, at that point, you have to be willing to change how and what you think. You have to make that choice or nothing will ever change.

KEY PRINCIPLE 97: UNTIL YOU CHANGE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED, NOTHING WILL CHANGE.

“Duh” – right? This is an enormous problem for so many people. They find themselves dissatisfied with what may be happening in their life, but they have no resolve, no desire, and no motivation to change the necessary areas of their life that need adjusting. They want someone else to change, but they see no need for themselves to change. That is not a good path forward. Listen carefully.

If you will stop fretting about what someone else needs to change and simply get your life in order, then your life will go much smoother for you.

KEY PRINCIPLE 98: DO NOT ASK GOD TO CHANGE SOMEONE ELSE FOR YOU, BUT ASK GOD THAT HE WILL CHANGE YOU FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

I think that is as about as deep as I can go. This is what God wants for your Christian life – for you to allow Him to always be changing you, for you to allow Him to always be making necessary adjustments in your life. In my understanding of Scripture, if you keep resisting change, then you are simply resisting God. Place everything on the table for Him. Please remember that you are always headed in the direction of your strongest thoughts.

If you do not change how and what you think, and if you do not bring your mind and heart into alignment with God’s Word, then it is inevitable that you will continue to simply disobey God and hurt other people in the process.

Genuine, biblical salvation is **ALWAYS** about growing in grace and knowledge, and that reality in the believer’s life is reflected in the fruit that it creates in their life. If you know a believer who thinks that they are mature, but you never see any real changes in their life, then they have stopped growing.

KEY PRINCIPLE 99: YOU HAVE TO CREATE A NEURAL PATHWAY FOR WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME.

You have to develop a biblical and spiritual mindset that is acceptable to God because **the goal is to become Christlike in everything that you do.** If for whatever reason you choose not to develop this neural pathway and this mindset, then you will always struggle with becoming what God wants you to become. Stated another way, the Christian life will always be difficult for you. Listen,

1. You have to think right to get the right results.
2. You have to think the way that God thinks to get God’s results.

If you do not get this settled in your mind and heart, then the Christian life will continually be a great discouragement to you, a difficult lifestyle to maintain at best.

Just say you have a tendency to get frustrated with people, and when that happens you become angry. If that is the case, then you have a bad brain rut. You have to spiritually and mentally change that in your life. You have to create a new neural pathway, and it has to be intentional and deliberate on your part. It has to become a major focus in your life. You have to continue to repeatedly place God's thoughts into your mind. In reality, you have to take the exact opposite approach to how you are living, and that requires a great deal of effort. If the view is not worth the climb for you, then there is very little that anyone can do to help you until you intentionally and deliberately choose to make the changes in your life that God wants you to make. I do not have to tell you what those changes are. You already know.

Maybe you have a tendency to use caustic or unkind words. Why is that? Well, it is simple. It is because you have thought that talking to people that way is okay and you have not been willing to change even though you know that God is not pleased when you talk that way to people. You lack self-control, and when you lack self-control, your life spins out of control. I do not believe that being unkind with your speech is biblically justified. Unfortunately, you have created a mental rut in your brain that has justified something that is wrong. Using ugly words with caustic tones is not okay because it is not how God wants you to live. It actually hinders the work of God in your life and destroys His testimony in your life. How do I know that? Well, I know it because [Ephesians 4:29](#) says the following,

Eph 4:29 (NKJV) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

The word “**corrupt**” in [Ephesians 4:29](#) comes from the Greek word “*sapros*” which means rotten and worthless.¹ The NASB calls it “**no unwholesome word**”. The AMP calls it “**no foul or polluting language**”. I understand the idea of wrong speech being “**rotten**” and “**polluting**”. As far as God is concerned, cursing and caustic and unkind words are simply rotten and worthless. They not only pollute you, but they pollute everyone around you. What you want to do is to build people up with your words because edifying words “**impart grace to the hearers**”. If you want to be godly and glorify God in your life, then this is the neural pathway, the way of thinking that must be developed in your mind. Then to make it even stronger, this is actually a command in the imperative mood.

KEY PRINCIPLE 100: YOU HAVE TO RESOLVE TO BREAK THE NEGATIVE PATTERNS AND HABITS IN YOUR LIFE.

This will take time, but God will certainly help you in the process because this is His perfect will for your life. You will not change in a week, and you need to appreciate that reality. Change is often slow. Why? It is because you have a **dominant** and negative neural pathway that you have to overcome. You have probably been thinking the wrong way for so long that you do not know how to break the vicious cycle in which it constantly places you. It is okay to fail at times as long as you are making progress in how you think. If you do not make that choice, then your choice **not to change** will become a strong neural pathway and you will keep moving in the wrong direction. That is how God designed your brain to work. There is nothing physically, mentally, or neurologically to prevent that from happening. If you

¹ Strong, *sapros*, #4550, ep.

continue to think the wrong way, then you literally have no means and no leverage to change anything that is wrong in your life.

KEY PRINCIPLE 101: YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS BUILT ON AND REFLECTED IN THE CHOICES THAT YOU MAKE.

You make your choices and then your choices make you. They can be good choices or bad choices. So, you have to make a conscious and deliberate decision as to how and what you are going to think. Jesus said it in a different way, but it is still the same principle. He said the following in [John 14:15](#) and [21](#),

Jn 14:15 (NKJV) **"If you love Me, keep My commandments.**

Jn 14:21 (NKJV) **He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."**

John wrote the following in [1 John 2:4](#),

1Jn 2:4 (NKJV) **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

Obedience to God's commandments is simply a choice that you have to make. Maybe you will, maybe you will not. If I can say it this way, **this becomes a mind game that you are playing with God** because obeying God is a conscious, deliberate, intentional mental choice. In the terms that we are using in this study, how you respond to these three verses is based on your neural pathway for obedience. It is based on your personal "thought pattern", your mental pathway, your brain trench, and whether or not you actually have a biblical mindset regarding obedience. Many Christians have a well-developed brain rut that is based on "**rationalizing away**" those things that they do not want to obey. They have developed a meaningless multitude of reasons, excuses, and objections as to why they are the exception to obeying God. It really is very sad. The good news is that God has built your mind in such a way that you can tear down all of the strongholds that prevent you from becoming what God wants you to become. Because of who you are in Christ, you "**can do all things through Christ who strengthens you**". Do not let the enemy keep deceiving you, misleading you, misinforming you, and cheating you of what God knows is best for your life. Do not believe his lies.

Here is what I want you to take away from this. It is simple – "*By the grace of God and with the help of God you can change anything and everything that God wants you to change.*" Make that your neural pathway, your mindset. Make that the goal of your life. Constantly declare that to God and to yourself. God's grace and your choices will help you be the marriage partner that God wants you to be, to be the parent that God wants you to be, to be the friend that God wants you to be, to be the employee that God wants you to be, and to be the kind of Christian that God wants you to be. You "**can do all things through Christ who strengthens you**".

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