

PART 5 – KNOW, SET, MEASURE, ADJUST

In the weeks to come, I am going to specifically address the idea of **how to develop great habits** in your life. Trust me, but the better your habits, the better your life. You can brush your teeth or not brush your teeth – right? So, we will focus specifically on how to develop great habits and how to get rid of the really bad habits. Think of a habit as a routine or practice that you do over and over in your life, until it eventually becomes automatic. It is almost as if you do not have to even think about what you are actually doing. It could be anything that needs to change in your life. You learn to say “Thank You” to people who help you. You learn to remain patient when people frustrate you. You learn to guard your tongue in a difficult moment. We will learn that **the great habits are generally the small habits** that you develop in your life by repeating them day after day after day. This part of our study will be extremely beneficial to anyone who is really serious about their Christian life.

This morning we are going to address the practical side of “**growing in grace**” that we studied last week, or what we call the “HOW TO CHANGE” part of the study. I want you to continue to think of **spiritual change as that which God uses to create a better direction for your life**. We defined spiritual direction as what God wants YOU to change. Please remember that we established that God not only wants to change everything in your life, but He wants to continually be changing everything in your life. We saw that we are always to be “**growing in the grace and knowledge**” of Christ. It is not a spiritual option, but a spiritual command in the present tense, active voice. We saw that “**grace**” involves two distinct attributes that God must give to us if we are actually going to make any significant changes. The first was the “**desire** to do His will” and the second was the “**power** to do His will”. So, once you know “what to change, then this idea of “how to change” is where your desire comes in. Listen carefully.

If you have no desire to change, then you will never change.

If your spiritual life is not changing, then you simply are not growing. There must be a genuine desire to change before you or me or anyone else will ever change. Making significant changes in your life will involve four distinct factors if you really want to be successful in making the changes you know that you need to make.

1. The first is **KNOWING GOD’S DIRECTION** for your life. You have to clearly define what you believe that God wants you to change, **but it must be based on His Word**, on that which never changes. You always want to base the significant changes that you need to make in your life on what God says is the right direction for your life. The majority of people choose “**the wide gate and the broad way**” and not “**the narrow gate and the difficult way**”. Jesus said that the appealing way leads to “**destruction**”, but the challenging way leads to “**life**”. He has us upside down again. So, you have to decide what direction you really want your life to be heading in and what kind of person that you really want to become. **If you do not define who and what you want to become, it is like running in a race that has no finish line.**¹ There is no telling where you may end up.
2. The second is **SETTING ACHIEVABLE GOALS**. Let us say that you want to lose some weight. That is the direction in which you want to go – lose some weight. Sounds simple – right.

¹ Groeschel, *Power*, 55.

However, we all know that it is not that simple. The problem is that just knowing what you may want to achieve and actually being able to achieve it are two completely different things. Spiritually, you have to develop achievable goals that will help you keep focused on God's direction. Think of it this way.

If you are not willing to set godly goals for your life, then you will never have the motivation to change the current direction of your life.

Goals are something that you write down so that you can keep them before you. The problem is that time has a way of making us forget what we set out to do, so write them down so you can be reminded of what you believe God wants you to achieve. **If you do not define your goals, then you have nothing to achieve.** The moment you lose sight of God's direction that He wants you to achieve in your life, that is the exact moment where you have plateaued and stopped growing.

3. Thirdly, you have to be able to **MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS**. If you want to lose 20 pounds in the next 2 months, then simply divide 20 pounds by 8 weeks. That works out to be 2 ½ pounds each week. If you have a scale, then you can measure your progress. You can find some kind of diet that helps you achieve this. So, spiritually, you have to know how to measure whether or not you are actually making any kind of meaningful progress. For me personally, and this is just my opinion, but you would be better off if you have someone to whom you can be accountable and let them help identify whether or not you are making any actual progress.
4. Fourthly, if you are not making any progress, then **ADJUST YOUR GOALS**. The goal is to make meaningful progress, so if that is not happening, make some adjustments to get you back on track. Maybe your goal needs to be downsized. Maybe they need to be re-evaluated. Maybe you need to adjust some other areas of your life to better help you achieve your goals. There is nothing wrong with making mid-course adjustments along the way. Every good coach makes adjustments at halftime. For most people this will be a necessity – adjusting their goals to make them achievable. Get with a person that you can have as an accountability partner and let them give you their insight into what kind of adjustments you may need to make.

PART 2 – HOW TO CHANGE

So, what do you need to do and / or change in order to grow in your understanding of the grace of God? What can you do to better receive the grace of God in your life? Let me say it in a very simple way. **YOU MUST DO WHAT IS RIGHT**. If you are prone to continue doing what you know is wrong, then you will be actually **REMOVING** the grace of God from your life. I want to give you four ways on how to grow in this area of “**growing in the grace of God**”.

1. **LET GO of all known sin in your life**. This is how you receive the grace of God. (Illustration of the monkey and the hole in the tree.) **You must choose to let go of all those things that you know are not acceptable to God.** If you know that something you are doing is wrong before God, **then STOP!** If you want God's grace in your life, if you want the desire and the power to do the will of God, then you must be willing to let Him deal with all of the known sins that are causing you to be disobedient to Him. You have to let them go. [**Romans 6:1**](#) says,

Ro 6:1 (NKJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

This is a rhetorical question and the clear answer is NO. You NEVER want to continue in sin. You have to begin somewhere and this is where you MUST start. You MUST allow God to cleanse your life of anything that you know is displeasing to Him – no matter what it is or its cost to you personally. There are inappropriate things that you have to stop doing, ugly words that you have stop saying, moral areas that you have to put to death in your life if you really want to experience the grace of God in your life. [Colossians 3:5-10](#) says,

Col 3:5 (NKJV) Therefore (YOU) put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

I want to say something critical about making godly decisions in your life, so listen carefully.

Enjoying the life that God wants you to experience begins with making small, but extremely important decisions that you do consistently over time.

What small, godly decisions do for you is that they keep reinforcing God’s will for your life.

Doing the right thing, doing the small, godly things over and over have a cumulative and compounding effect on your life. You make the right decisions today to ensure what you will be like tomorrow. Just keep being ugly to people today and I can tell you exactly where you will be tomorrow. Here is the problem - **time multiplies whatever you feed it.** Good decisions make time your ally, but bad decisions make time your enemy. **Just making one small, godly change in your life can change everything about your life.**² Keep believing God. Keep sharing your faith. Keep fighting to stay pure. Keep telling your marriage partner and children “I love you”. **Keep choosing what you want most over what you want now.**³ Every day, keep making good, small, godly decisions and God will give you His grace.

2. **DO NOT RESIST the changes that God wants to make in your life.** This is how you receive the grace of God. You must “humble” yourself before God and be willing to accept that you are not where God wants you to be. None of us are there yet. Some people think that spiritual change is always painful, but personally, I think that spiritual change is exhilarating and exciting. Why? It is because it lets me know that God is actually working in my life. [James 4:6](#) says,

Jas 4:6 (NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

God gives His grace to that person who is NOT always resisting Him and always refusing to submit their life to His will.

² Groeschel, Power, 182, 186.

³ Groeschel, Power, 191.

It does not even make sense to resist God. It actually sounds stupid when I say it. God gives His grace to the men and women who do not resist the changes that He wants to make in their life. They hear the Word of God being taught, they read the Word of God, they fellowship with other believers, they pray, and in that process God speaks to them, and when He does, they willingly and readily choose to address the changes that they need to make in their life. **They do not argue about it. They do not fight with God about it.** They do not ignore or resist what they clearly understand God wants them to change. They simply yield their life, their mind, their heart, and their will to allowing Him to help them make those changes. Just humble yourself before God – **no arguing, no ignoring, no resisting,** and He will give you His grace.

3. **ACCEPT** that “HOW” God makes spiritual changes in your life is much better than how you want to make those changes. This is how you receive the grace of God. We always want it to be easy, and if it is not easy, then we generally do not want it. Here is my humble advice to you. Never question how God achieves His results in your life because it will rarely be what you would have chosen to do. If you truly believe that God is Who He says that He is, then why would you ever question His wisdom and how He chooses to work in your life? When you get discouraged, keep going. When you want to say something harsh, do not say it. When you feel hurt, forgive. When you do not feel loved, show love. Just do what you know God wants you to do! Accept that to be how He works and God will give you His grace.
4. **CHOOSE** to make godly choices for your life. This is how you receive the grace of God. You make godly choices! **It is the most difficult choices that lead to the greatest life.** Not having the courage to make the right choices will stifle and paralyze your life. **Please understand that when you make the right choices that you never see the results that you want today. You plant the right seeds, and then you wait for the harvest.**⁴ You shape your life the way that it should be shaped by simply doing the right things. Always ask yourself the question – “*Is this what God would want me to do? Is this how God would want me to talk? Is this how God would want me to treat someone?*” If it is not, then **CHOOSE** to not do it. **CHOOSE** to not do it, and God will give you His grace.

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⁴ Groeschel, 192.