

PART 7 – SMALL HABITS, BIG RESULTS

PART 2 – HOW TO CHANGE

Last week we looked at Part 1 – What to Change, and specifically on what it means to “**be transformed**” from [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) and [Romans 12:1-2](#). We saw that when someone is truly born again, the idea of being transformed, or being changed is twofold. First, it is an initial event that happens at the moment of salvation when the believer entrusts his life to Christ. [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says it this way,

2Co 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The words “**have become**” are in the perfect tense, the indicative mood. The perfect tense refers to a completed action that continues to have ongoing effects and consequences. The indicative mood means that all things becoming new to the individual is a spiritual fact. These are incredibly important nuances in the language if we truly want to understand Scripture correctly. So, what this verse tells us, and this is very important to understand, is that real genuine and lasting change is not self-driven. It is not a “*do my best*” behavior modification technique, but it comes from an **actual** (key word) supernatural change that is God-empowered and God initiated that continues in your life.¹ The credit for spiritual transformation in our life always belongs to God and not us. When we were saved, He literally created in us and gave to us a supernatural gift and ability to be completely different than we were before we were saved. We now have this amazing capacity to know God and to love God. We did not have that capacity before salvation. We knew about God, but we did not know God. I know about the President, but I do not know the President. Just the idea of salvation itself is the idea of being taken from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light. At the moment of salvation, we were removed out of one spiritual realm and placed into another spiritual realm, or what the New Testament declares as the kingdom of God’s dear Son. [Colossians 1:13](#) says it this way,

Col 1:13 (NKJV) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

So, this idea of becoming even more different **after** salvation should be every believer’s testimony. You must understand that when someone is saved that it creates two things in their life - an **immediate** impact, and an **ongoing** impact on their life. Something supernatural happens initially and something supernatural continues to happen. If there is not some visible kind of ongoing and continuing transformation after someone’s salvation experience, then it is very doubtful that there was ever an initial supernatural salvation that happened in that person’s life. The immediate impact always leads to the continuing impact.

However, the main idea that we addressed last week was the second idea found in [Romans 12:1-2](#) of “**being continually transformed**”, and we saw that the technical term for that is “**sanctification**” and technically it refers to a lifelong process. That is very important to understand. The simple word “**process**” is very critical to the idea of “How to Change” anything. So, what we want to begin to address today is what needs to happen for us to “**be continually transformed**”, to be continually changing

¹ Groeschel, *Change*, 23.

spiritually in our life in a way that pleases God. How does this happen? What is the trigger for this? This is no small issue. To understand what is involved, I want you to look again at [Romans 12:2](#).

Ro 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The specific instruction that God provides in this passage on HOW to be transformed is the **PROCESS** or the **HABIT** of the “**renewing of your mind**”. Please notice, however, that the actual “process” of how is not defined or delineated in a detailed way in this passage. It is alluded to in other passages, but even in that, there is some subjectivity as to how any one individual may incorporate a particular process or habit into their life. I want to say in a very simple way that if you do not develop good, strong spiritual habits and disciplines in your life, it is very doubtful that you will be spiritually successful in your life. This is actually true in any area of your life. If you want to be a good student, you must develop good habits related to studying. If you want to be a good employee, you must develop good habits related to work. If you want to be a good marriage partner, then you must develop good habits related to marriage. Here is the simple principle, so write this down.

WE ALWAYS BECOME WHAT WE ALWAYS DO.

We always become what we repeatedly do. Think of this in a very practical way. Just say that you are not satisfied with where you currently are in some area of your life. It could be any area – spiritual, marriage, work, relational, so I will just leave that up to you to decide what it is that you need to change. If you want to change what you are becoming and where you are headed, then you must **INTENTIONALLY** change the habits in your life that have brought you to where you currently are.

Until you actually change something in your life, nothing in your life will change.

So, you have to decide what needs to change, then find a creative, practical, divine common-sense way to make those changes in your life – and that involves your habits. We all know the story of Daniel and how when he was about 70 years old that a plot was designed against him because of his faithfulness to God. No matter who was king, they saw something different in Daniel, and so he was constantly promoted and was used to mightily influence people in a godly way, but it made other people very jealous and they devised a scheme to get rid of him. What we know about Daniel, though, is that he had one particular habit that stood out above all of the other good habits he had, and that was where his enemies attacked him. Three times a day he would go to his room, open his window, and pray to God. That was his daily, weekly, monthly, yearly habit. He had done this his entire life. [Daniel 6:10](#) says,

Da 6:10 (NKJV) Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom (or habit) since early days.

This was an intentional habit in his life that made all of the difference in the world in his life. It helped him to keep focused on who and what was important in his life, and even when his enemies got what they wanted, God stopped the mouths of the lions and Daniel was saved. I am sure you know, however, who were actually eaten by the lions when all was said and done. I want you think of it this way.

Small habits lead to big results.

So, I want you to think of your life as something that is being transformed one small habit at a time. Habits are intentional. Here is what you will find.

If you keep doing the right things the right way day after day, you WILL get the right results.

No one ever sees the basketball player who spends hours and hours in the gym practicing his shots from all over the court, but they see the results of his habit of constantly practicing in the game. I want to say one very important thing here, so listen carefully.

You develop an intimate relationship with God through small, godly habits.

Now, what is really interesting about this word for “**renewing**” is that even though it “sounds” like it is a verb, it is actually a noun in the dative case. The dative case is used for what is technically called “**instruments of action**”, or the means by which something is accomplished. For instance, if your clothes are dirty, you wash them, where “washing” the clothes is the means and the instrument of action by which you make your clothes clean. If you want to make a good grade on an exam, then you study for the exam, where “studying” is the means and the instrument of action that allows you to make a good grade on the exam. So, the idea of “**renewing**” represents an actual “process”, or “habit” that you develop to get you from Point A to Point B.

Your mind is always spiritually transformed by a process and/or habit of renewing itself to God’s truth.

This particular noun for “**renewing**” is only used twice in the New Testament and it means to cause something to become new and different, with the implication of becoming superior. What is unusual about this word is that it has never been found to be used outside of the New Testament. I.e., in this context, before you were saved you thought like the world would think. You were magnetized to the ideas and the culture that the world offered to you. The problem with that perspective is simple – **what the world promises and what it delivers are two very different things**. You could actually call it a demonic mirage and a very deceptive illusion. Jesus said it this way in [Mark 8:36](#),

Mk 8:36 (NKJV) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

What is the benefit of that? Where does that get you in the end? So, this ongoing process of [Romans 12:2](#) of being continually spiritually renewed is what makes you a different person than what you were in the past.² Here is what happens.

The more you renew your mind to how God thinks, the more spiritual transformation will take place in your life.

Now, I imagine that everyone here is thinking that what I am going to eventually say is that what you need to do is to read your Bible more, to pray more, to come to church more, etc., etc. Well, I am NOT going to do that. My goal is not to tell you to read your Bible more than you currently do or to make you feel guilty if you are not able to study your Bible like other people may be able to study. My goal is not to modify your behavior. Here is my goal as we go through this entire series, so please listen very carefully. This is so super important to me as I teach.

² Zodiates, *anakainosis*, ep.

My goal is to so clearly communicate to you about your spiritual value and worth and potential to God that you become inspired and stimulated to see it yourself.³

I want you to see yourself as someone that God has placed so much value on that just knowing that simple reality and that amazing truth empowers you to make the decisions that help you to continually be renewing your mind, to continually be changing your life so that you are **NOT** like the world, so that you do not think like the world, and so that you do not live like the world.

I want you to see how God thinks about you, what God says about you, what God says He wants to do in your life, and how He wants to go about making those changes with you and for you. I want you to see that you really, actually, truly are **“in Christ”** and that your salvation is so secure that nothing can remove it from you – not even your own personal sin. I want you to think like God so much that you can literally do what the end of [Romans 12:2](#) says which is to **“prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”** for your life. The more that you renew your mind to that which never changes (and that is ONLY found in the Word of God), the more you will know what is good, what is right, what is acceptable to God, and what is His perfect will for your life. You will intimately know when something in your life is not right and not pleasing to God, and because you have been drawing close to God every day as the ongoing, continual habit of your life, your greatest desire will be to rid your life of everything that you know is not good or acceptable to God. This is when you will enjoy your life the most. This is when the greatest blessings of God will fill your life to overflowing. This is what you will never want to live without – this NOT being conformed to the world, but being conformed to the very image of Christ Himself. This is when your life will have the greatest influence and impact on others – when you keep renewing your MIND to what you know is God’s absolute best for your life. Make this the habit of your life. Be like Daniel, and no matter what happens to you, never let go of this one habit.

One of the very worst things that could ever happen to any of us is that we completely miss what it is that God has for our life, but if we are constantly allowing ourselves to be **“conformed to this world”**, then we will completely miss everything that God has for us. So, [Romans 12:1-2](#) forces us to choose. Either we choose the world, or we choose something and Someone much greater than the world. I want to say this in a strong way. **If we choose the world, we choose Satan.** We choose the **“father of lies”**. We choose the master deceiver, the one who has only come to **“steal, kill, and destroy”** ([John 10:10](#)).

When we look around at all that is transpiring in the world, it is changing dramatically and rapidly. Life is becoming much more complex, incredibly stressful, and very demanding. The landscape of the family seems to be changing every day. Artificial intelligence is fast becoming the new savior of men. It has all of the answers with just the touch of a button. Listen carefully. With all of the rapid and complex changes that are taking place in the world, if your life is not built on something that never changes, you will find yourself in a place of great fear and insecurity. God’s antidote to all of the changes that are taking place around us is very simple – **to anchor our life to that which never changes, to keep renewing our mind to that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** Think of it this way.

The greater and the more complex the changes that surround us become, the more significant and important are the spiritual habits that we develop to keep our mind and our heart always focused on God and on that which never changes.

³ Covey, 12.

The world is always alluring you away from God, and that is why Paul encourages us not to become enamored and conformed to something that is always changing. **What anchors our life is the truth because God's truth will never change.** The world will change, ideas will change, nations will change, cultures will change, education will change, but the truth that we find in God's Word will NEVER change. So, what do we want to take away from this today. I think it is very simple.

Keep renewing your mind to that which never changes by developing good habits that help you to keep doing this in your life day after day after day – and never stop.

This habit of “**renewing your mind**” is what God will use to literally transform your life. Wherever you know that God wants you to be spiritually, you have to make wise decisions that help you get there. As a part of this process, you want to learn a very important lesson, so listen carefully.

Your outcomes tomorrow are simply a lagging indicator of your habits today.⁴

What you are doing today is determining what you will be like tomorrow. So, you need to learn the value of good habits and the cost of bad habits. If day after day you keep replicating bad habits in your life by making wrong and ungodly decisions and by rationalizing away what you know is wrong, those choices will lead to very toxic results in your life. So, the longer you maintain your habits (good or bad), the more you are defining your future. Time is always magnifying both your good decisions and your bad decisions. You can generally look at someone's life today and define fairly accurately where they will be tomorrow. As we go through this series, I will keep talking about how to develop good habits and processes in your life to help make this even more clear as to how this happens in a person's life.

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⁴ Clear, 18