

LONG TERM TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

EPH 4:20-24

September 6, 2015

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But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Observations Concerning Change

- Long term – permanent change
- Transformational/life dominating issues
- Non-organic issues
- 95% of all transformational change fails
- Presentation sins vs root sins
- Change is rare and change is hard

Why should I be concerned about change?

- Commands in scripture

Eph 4:15 Eph 4:22 Phil 3:13,14

2 Peter 1:8-10

- Our life should be continual change
- Sin blinds us and we become hyper sensitive
- Adventure of life

Why is it so hard to change to a new direction?

- Sin nature/flesh - it hates God
- Ruts/habits
- Lackadaisical attitude
- Wrong thinking
- I am worshiping something other than God

What needs to change?

My haunted heart – it is serving a different god

Jer 2:11 – 13

"Has a nation changed gods when they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

"Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate," declares the Lord.

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Functional gods

Ex 20:3 – 1st commandment – no other gods before Me

What do we know about the heart?

Jer 17:9,10 Deceitful and wicked but God knows it

Prov 4:23 Issues of life

It is prone to wander and cannot be trusted

If God is not the one calling shots in our life, then what is?

Anything.....and everything

1 Jn 5:21 – Little children, guard yourselves from idols

What/who rules your behavior/heart?

Long term transformational change starts with the heart.









Idolatry (Keller)

Anything in your life that is so central to your life that you can't have a meaningful life if you lose it.

Any good thing that becomes ultimate.

Any object or relations or pursuit can be an idol.

The big four - money, sex, power, control

Idolatry (Bigney)

An idol is anything or anyone that begins to capture our hearts and minds and affections more than God.

It is the sin beneath the sin.

Follow the trail of your time, money and affection.

Suffering/exhaustion exposes idols

Powlison

The alternative to Jesus, the swarm of alternatives, whether approached through the lens of the flesh, the world or the Evil One is idolatry.

Idolatry is by far the most frequently discussed problem in the scriptures.

John Calvin

The heart is a factory of idols.

Characteristics of idols:

They keep us stupid, blind and enslaved.

Leave us with a vague sense of guilt

We can look really good on the outside as long as nothing rattles our idols

They are easy and make us feel good

Heb 11:25 Enjoy the passing pleasures of sin

Eze 13 – whitewashed walls

Challenge an idol and watch out – chaos, violence, confusion James 3:16

James 4:1-3 cravings underlie conflicts

Want, desire, demand become needs

Unsuccessful – dig harder Successful - pride

How do I deal with these idols?

Process – our heart will try to worship anything but the one true God

We are saved by grace, idols try convince us that we are saved by works.

Focus on what God has done for me through Christ

True Repentance – Brokenness

Am I grieved over my sin, or just inconvenienced

You know it's your flesh talking when the peace comes and you don't yet abhor the sin. (John Owen)

By faith I have to believe that God will give me the power to change through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Change comes about in the context of the body of Christ. We can't do it alone.

Change will come about in the context of the body of Christ. We can't do it alone.

Plan "A" has been for God to work through people to help us change

Heb 3:13 – encourage one another

Heb 10:24,25 – provoke one another

Rom 15:14 – admonish/counsel one another

Bonhoffer – we gather as saints rather than sinners.

Note: we are sinners.

Our small groups must have this operating or else they are just social groups.

My conflicted mind

What I think about determines my actions.

Rom 8:6 – mind set on flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace

Rom 12:2 – transformed through the Word

Phil 4:8 – dwell on these things

Create deep biblical ruts in your mind

So then, what shall we do?

- Be in real relationships with those in the body and in a small group – provoke one another and encourage to dig out the idols.
- Renew/guard the mind – scriptural thinking – dig new ruts with scripture memory.
- God on the throne of your heart – repent and nurture your heart through a daily meditative time in the Word.
- Be specific as you deal with issues – memorize verses, share what you are doing to deal with it with your accountability partner, flee from the temptation
- Long Term Transformational Change is not common and is not easy.

Soli Del gloria
Glory to God alone