

How Can We Truly Change?

II Corinthians 5:1- 17

2/3/02

Intro

- Women’s conference coming up this weekend.
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In chapter 4 last week, Paul was giving us reasons to not lose heart. In those verses he said that we are being renewed day by day. In verse 3:18 he said we are being transformed into the image of Christ.

How does that change happen? Many people want to change, but the question is how?

These verses give us insight into how we are truly changed.

Illus- People do all kinds of things to change, but for the most part, people are concerned about changing their bodies. Some people do actually try to change the inside, but how is this done? Maybe subliminal messages could work!

THIS IS PAUL’S INSIGHT INTO TRUE CHANGE.

I. Walk by faith and not by sight. Vs 7

A. If we focus on our bodies, we should know that they are just a tent to dwell in.

- We groan waiting for the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8: 23-25)

- This body has its own set of fleshly desires.

B. He gave us the Holy Spirit as a pledge.

- But it is important to know that he gave us the whole of the Holy Spirit!
- The Holy Spirit is not like water that we get little by little.
- We are not a little bit more of a Christian today than yesterday!

C. We walk by faith and not by sight.

- Faith is having a different perspective. It is seeing life from God’s perspective.
- Compare 4:18 – a temporal vs. eternal point of view.

Illus- The Jewish boy in Poland in WWII, “Don’t you recognize me, I’m the Jesus who you say you love.”

II. Let the love of Christ control us. Vs 14

Vs 9

A. We have as our ambition to be pleasing to the Lord.

Vs 10

B. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

- Is there judgment for Christians?

- See I Cor 3:11-15 for insight.

Vs 14-15

C. We should no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.

- Let the love of Christ control us.

Illus- Falling in love with Jordi vs. working for Mr. "M."

III. Be in Christ.

Vs 17

A. Old things passed away, new things have come.

- Many of our difficulties as Christians come from the struggle between our new spiritual nature and our fleshly bodies.

B. This is one of the greatest promises of our faith – that we are made new!

- We have a new heart, nature, future, name, family, beginning, new covenant, peace, promises (and better), song in our heart, and new life.
- So why put on the old clothes?

Illus- If one of your children went playing in the mud and you gave him a bath, how would you feel if he put back on his old clothes?

IV. In order to truly change, we need to...

A. Admit we cannot change on our own.

- Our changes never last.

B. Ask Christ to make the change.

- Our willingness is an important key.
- Ask Him to come in... not just to your Sunday morning, but to your whole life.

C. Be willing to let go of whatever you're holding onto.

- Sometimes we pray, we cry out, we moan – but won't let go of it.
- We must be willing to let go of the comfort we get from it.

Illus – For a child there is great comfort in nursing

Conclusion

The old things have passed away and all things are new...

What clothes are you wearing?

Put on the armor of God.

Put on a garment of praise.

Put on the righteousness of Christ.