

Grace Bible Church

2021 Biblical Counseling Conference

TRACK ONE



Session 1 – Newheiser. Help I Want to Change.

Help! I Want to Change Romans 6

I. Introduction – We all want to change.

- A. The change we seek is unique. Col. 1:28; I Tim. 1:5
- B. Unbiblical approaches to change will impede your spiritual growth – mysticism, deliverance ministries, self-improvement formulas, moralism, etc. Eph. 6:11ff; Pr. 2:2ff Mark 7:20ff; Pr. 4:23

II. The gospel is the key to change.

- C. Remember what God has done for you.
 - 1. Scripture generally begins with the indicative, what God has done for us in Christ, as the ground for imperatives. Rom. 1-11; Eph. 1-3; Col. 1-2
 - 2. Specific New Testament exhortations are grounded in the gospel. Rom. 15:2-3,7; Eph. 4:19-20,24,32; 5:1-2,25ff; 6:6
 - 3. Only Christians are able to change according to the will of God. Rom. 8:5-8;14:23; Heb. 11:6
 - 4. What about cases in which unbelievers appear to change (i.e. lose weight, quit smoking, stop drinking)? Mt. 12:43-45; Rom. 14:23; I Co. 10:31; Heb. 11:6
 - 5. The change we need is inward and Godward. Mark 7:14-23; Col. 2:20-23
- D. The gospel is just as important for your sanctification as it was for your justification. Rom. 1:15; Gal. 3:3
 - 1. Your standing is secure in Christ and is the basis for the changed life you want to live. Rom. 6:11; Col. 3:1ff; II Pet. 1:3-4
 - 2. The first imperative in Romans is to consider your identity in Christ – remember who you are. Rom. 6:11
- E. Understanding your union with Christ is key to your growth in holiness. Ro. 6:1ff
 - 1. Paul anticipates an objection. Romans 6:1-2
 - 2. The gospel, rightly understood, promotes holiness. Romans 6:2ff; I Th. 4:3; Titus 2:14
 - 3. You can't go on sinning because you are united to Christ. Romans 6:2b
 - 4. Your old self has died in union with Christ. v. 2b-4a,6; Col. 2:12; Ga. 2:20
 - 5. You died to sin in the same sense in which Jesus died to sin. v. 8-10; He. 7:27 9:12

6. You are a new person, united with Christ in His resurrection. v. 4b-5,8
7. You have been set free from slavery to sin to serve righteousness. v. 6-7,9b,15-22
8. This is true of every believer.
9. Now, live in light of who you are. v. 12-13

F. The gospel is life-changing and liberating.

1. You have a new identity so don't label yourself according to your past sin.
I Cor. 6:9-11; II Co. 5:17
2. Christ is better than the idols which tempt you. Is. 55:1-2; Jo. 4:10, 7:38, 6:35,48ff
Gen. 39:9b; Prov. 9:1ff; Ps. 34:8
3. Christ empowers you to bear fruit. Jo. 15:1ff; Ga. 2:20; 1 John 2:6
4. Comprehending God's love and grace to you motivates and enables you to show love and grace to others. I John 4:19; John 14:15; Eph. 5:25

II. You are responsible to exert effort towards change.

A. Some wrongfully stop with the indicatives of what God has done for us, while neglecting the imperatives of what God calls us to do. 1 Th.5:14

B. How should we use the biblical imperatives (God's law)?

1. The first (civil) use of the law – Rules with sanctions produce order. Ro. 13:1ff; Pr. 22:15
2. The second (evangelical) use of the law -- God's law shows us our need for Christ. Gal. 3:24 2:16 Phil. 3:9
3. The third (normative) use of the law – God's law also shows us how He desires His redeemed people to live. I Th. 4:1; Eph. 5:10; John 14:15; Titus 2:14; Ps. 40:8

C. God's Word calls believers to exert effort towards obedience.

1. The typical pattern in many NT epistles is to begin with the indicative as the basis for the imperative. Rom. 12:1ff; Eph. 4:1ff; Col. 3:1ff
2. Immediately after telling us to consider our identity in Christ, Paul exhorts us to take action against the lusts of the flesh. Romans 6:12ff
3. Jesus tells us what we must do in order to abide in Him. John 15:1-11; 1 Jo. 2:6
4. Our responsibility and God's work in us are placed side by side. Phil. 2:12-13; 4:13
5. The New Testament is filled with exhortations to fight sin and to diligently pursue righteousness. Ro. 12:ff; Mt. 5:29-30; Eph. 4:17,22,24,25,28,29; Rom. 6:12-13
6. It is not enough to merely hear God's word or even to agree with it. We must do what God commands. Mt. 7:24-27; James 1:22; Mark 8:34

7. Your motive for obedience is crucial. Rom. 3:20; 1 Tim. 1:15

III. What determines when and whether change takes place?

- A. We experience a variety of outcomes in our efforts to change.
- B. Sometimes change doesn't take place because the person is not yet regenerate. John 15:2,6; Phil. 1:6; I John 2:3-4; Mt. 7:16ff
- C. God is the author of change. Jo. 3:8;15:5; Ps. 71:20;85:6
 - 1. Personal revival is like corporate revival.
 - 2. God sees fit to sovereignly work in powerful ways at certain times.
- D. God uses various means to accomplish change.
 - 1. His Word is a powerful agent for change. II Ti. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13; Ps. 119:25
 - 2. Pray for personal revival. Ps. 119:25,37,40,88,107,149,154,156,159; Mt. 7:7
 - 3. Sometimes the Lord brings circumstances into our lives to change our course. Ps. 119:67,71; Heb. 12:4-11; John 15:2; James 1:2ff
 - 4. God works through His church – discipleship and admonition. 2 Tim. 2:2; Ro. 15:14

IV. Concluding applications

- A. God wants us to change and to bear fruit for His glory. John 15:8
- B. The gospel is the key to change. Rom. 6:11
- C. We are responsible to exert effort to change. Mt. 14:28-30

Discussion questions

1. In what ways would you like to change?
2. What are some common unbiblical approaches to change?
3. What can we learn from the order of the indicatives and the imperatives in Paul's epistles?
4. How does the gospel empower and motivate you to change?
5. What part does your effort play in your sanctification?
6. Why does change take place in some cases and not in others?