

CAN GOD REALLY CHANGE ME? - BROKEN RELIGION 11

Can God really change me? *Am I really free?* If this is your 1st week – Broken Religion – When we declare we can reach God and move God by our good, that we can make ourselves right with God or gain God's favor is BR. We cannot reach to God – God came to us in Jesus – rescued, but is also restoring. The last two weeks we have started looking at this amazing promise of God: **GAL 5:1 (ESV) For freedom, Christ has set us free. *If we use the terms changed and freedom in Christ interchangeably*** - why don't we feel freer from all our sin, mess-ups, shame, & guilt? Why aren't we more changed? *Can God really change me? Am I really free?*

If you are a Christ follower, what is your freedom like? Is it cramped, a show for others, or a prison.

Is this the freedom you know in Christ? **God promises more!** We are going to try & answer 1 main question today: **Can God really change me?** As we walk through this passage, I believe God will answer this question by unveiling one great truth. It will be a slow unveil but when we get to the end – I believe we will have one powerful truth that will lead us to see God as more freeing, more beautiful and more powerful than maybe we ever have. That's a big hope – but I believe that is what He wants to do – every time we open His word and hear His voice. So, here's our question again:

Can God really change me? *Am I really free?* 3 smaller questions about freedom – *will help us see God's answer.*

01. How do we live in Christ's freedom? 02. Why is it so hard to live in Christ's freedom? 03. What happens when we begin to live in Christ's freedom?

01. How do we live in Christ's freedom?

GALATIANS 3:16, 18 (ESV) 16 But I say, walk *(live)* by the Spirit, and you will not gratify *(complete)* the desires of the flesh. **18** But if you are led *(to be directed by, to be in submission to)* by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

These words from God tell us that freedom or change is possible. *And we will spend the last portion of our time examining what this means.* But first, hear this loud and clear from your God – freedom, change is not only possible it is God's great desire and plan for you. But notice there is only 1 way to live in this freedom or change:

- **We live in Christ's freedom by continually submitting to the Holy Spirit.** Eph 5:17 – Be filled w the Spirit

This practically means: *daily, hourly, always - submitting to God's Spirit through prayer.*

In this ongoing prayer, we are saying to the Spirit of God, I submit to Your rule. *Which means: I submit to your ways. I submit to Your power to work in me and through me. I submit to Your love and pleasure for me.*

Visuals or pictures: 1) **Evacuate his THRONE** – His Ways. When the Spirit of God is on the throne of your life – His rule makes His ways good and pleasing in your eyes. And there is joy in following Him. 2) **Give Him His SWORD** – His Power. When God wields the sword in your life – you are saying only by Your power can I walk in freedom today. 3) **Remember your RINGS** – His covenant. When you remember the covenant God has made with us through Christ's work – you live in submission *from* His pleasure and love – not to *for* it, or to get His pleasure.

Can God really change me? 1st pt **Greater Truth: Submitting to the Spirit - we walk in freedom**

02. Why is walking in Christ's freedom so hard?

GAL 3:17 (ESV) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are *opposed (to confront, fight, be hostile)* to each other, to *keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

We are in a deadly Spiritual War. And we live in ignorance. *One of the main attacks in this war – lies.*

- **Lie: Freedom in Christ - is not freedom or good.**

Ultimately - We think sin is better than following Christ. *Sin or the works of our flesh promises freedom – even those sins we see as small – if I lie this will make this go away. Freedom in our culture is being able to do what I want and think what I want. Freedom in Christ sounds – not so free.*

In the garden at creation, God promised unlimited freedom with one small restriction for man's good. The enemy said: God is holding out, keeping you locked up, not free. He lied & believing his promise led to death. **God promises freedom from the power of sin to live as we were created with God, for God, from His pleasure. The enemy promises a life where we get to do what we want – is this what is good?**

GALATIANS 3:19-21 (ESV) 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. *(Some sin tastes good for a moment or season – but you get all your flesh – and eventually all of it begins to sour and produce self-centered death for you and others.)*

- **Lie: Sin is not that powerful – I can manage my sin.**

One of the reasons sin is so powerful is bc we believe it is like a bad habit. Something that starts small and grows till we can't control it. Sin is not a bad choice that can become something bad for you. Sin is death – from the very beginning. It is a deadly disease that lives in our old nature.

I personally know 6 pastors in the past year that have had to step down from serving bc their sin was more powerful than them. Churches, families, their marriages, and their kids have been wrecked. Its not just pastors, I know way more than 6 men and women who are followers of Christ that have lost their families in the last year.

We way underestimate the power of sin. For Sin is powerful. Maybe even worse ...

We way overestimate our ability to deal with sin on our own. We think we can manage sin.

At the least, we think sin is like a new job we should we should be able to get a handle on. At the most, we think sin is like parenting: one of the hardest things I've done, but give me some time & I will survive and so will my kid.

Walking in freedom is not about getting a handle on sin or surviving sin – bc you can't.

Managing sin is any attempt to deal with our sin – without being submitted to the Spirit's rule.

1) Confession, repentance, saying no to sin, saying yes to Jesus – without being submitted to the Spirit is impossible.

*2) I need your help – is still managing. That is saying to God – **I'm on the throne and I've got the sword** – but I might need some counsel in this battle or I might need a hand in this fight. You have dethroned and removed the sword from the Spirit because you are managing this. God being your wing man or counselor or fellow warrior is not you being in submission to the Spirit. After a season of trying to manage sin – you & I fail and the consequences are costly. We hurt others and teach others that the way to walk in freedom is to manage sin. But most painful – you will begin to **believe the ring** you are wearing doesn't mean much. For constantly living a part from the Spirit makes it hard to hear God say – I am still pleased with you. You are my son/daughter – whom I love.*

Managing your sin – apart from the Spirit will make you feel like you have abandoned God or worse – He has abandoned you. It will even make you mad at God because of the mess your sin has put you in. Do you hear the craziness of that? Sin is powerful – and apart from the Spirit you and I are powerless to fight sin.

So - **Can God really change us? Am I really free?**

GALATIANS 3:16 (ESV) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

03. What happens when we begin to live "in Christ's freedom"?

"gratify" - to complete; to finish over and over the desires of our old sin nature.

When we live in our flesh, we continue to complete the work of sin in us and through us - affecting many.

(Generations are affected by our works of our flesh, but generations can be changed by the Spirit!) **Greater Truth:**

Submitting to the Spirit - we walk in freedom - joining God in destroying the works of our flesh.

Let' be clear. Living by the Spirit in Christ's freedom is not about – not about avoiding sin.

Christianity is not about us avoiding sin. It's about Christ colliding with us, Christ intercepting us, Christ laying hold of us forever – and destroying in us everything that is not like His image.

Avoiding sin is not the goal of this war. The goal of this war is being with God – living from His pleasure – joyfully following Him for His glory. In Christ's freedom, change comes as God begins to destroy your old nature.

(Will you stop getting angry and sinning? No. God destroying the works of your flesh means "fits" of anger don't define you. If you are known as an angry person – that can change! God can destroy this work of your flesh!

*As He removes anger – you will know the peace of God which allows us to more fully enjoy our freedom in Christ – His presence, His pleasure – His glory. **Hear God's invitation to change – to destroying the works of our flesh!***

COLOSSIANS 3:5 (ESV) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

ROMANS 8:13-14 (ESV) 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Gladys Aylward – English missionary to China in 1932 – started orphanages, food banks, with govt. help.

God's greatest work in my life was not just what he did thru an uneducated, weak, tiny woman of no means.

Rather, it was moving me out of my sin that said – "I can not, I will no."

God is All-Powerful over sin. How do we know God is all powerful over sin? *Broken religion says – you don't – so we need to manage sin.* The gospel proves God's Spirit is All-Powerful to work in you and change you. **The gospel says:**

• Christ lived a sinless life, in joyful obedience to God – **by the Spirit's power.**

LUKE 4:18 (ESV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.

If Jesus lived by the Spirit and knew freedom - we must live by the Spirit and CAN! How?

- Christ died a sin bearing death in our place – **by the Spirit's power.**

HEB 9:14 (NLT) For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. *Because of His death in our place – we get Christ's perfect life which makes our soul a perfect, holy temple for God's presence – the Spirit of God to walk with us, be with us. Remember, this is the reason we were created!*

- Christ was raised from His death for sin - **by the Spirit's power.**

ROMANS 1:3-4 (NLT) 3 The Good News is about his Son. ... 4 and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.

By raising Christ from the dead – God proves He alone rules over and is more powerful than sin.

God can and does change His sons and daughters – by His power!

Submitting to the Spirit (in Christ's freedom) - we join God in destroying the works of our flesh.

He can and is changing you! Hard to see the transforming work of God in our own life. Phil 1:7 He will complete the work He began in you. *Others need to see and speak the changes in you – but only you can submit. You I can inhibit the work of the Spirit – and enhance the work of our flesh – but in simple submission – God will continue to destroy the works of your flesh.* But that's not all. Next week we will see that He is also producing the life of Christ in you. ***Why is he doing all this? He is preparing us for the life we were created for – which is the life we get to taste now.***

Freedom in Christ is good – **for it frees us to the life we were created to live.**

GALATIANS 3:16 (ESV) But I say, walk by the Spirit,

GENESIS 3:8 (ESV) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden

**The freest, most powerful, life changing place to be –
is being led by the loving hand of God's Spirit.**

Vacate His throne – *This is the Spirit's place in your life – to lovingly rule.*

Give Him His sword – *His power is at work in you and through you for His glory.*

Remember your rings – His covenant – *He is forever with you and He is forever pleased with you because of Christ.*