

Sunday, November 9, 2025 - GODLY CHANGE: WHAT GOD WANTS FOR US – Pastor John Henry Raskin

Key Theme:

Godly change is not just about what God wants *from* us, but what God wants *for* us—transformation into the image of Christ, empowered by His Spirit, for a life of purpose, joy, and holiness.

The World's Desire vs. Godly Change

- People everywhere long for change—better habits, relationships, circumstances.
- Self-help can only go so far; true transformation comes from God.

What God Wants FOR You

- A Relationship with Him: God desires a loving relationship with you through Jesus.
- Christ-like Character: God wants to make you a new creation, reflecting Jesus.
- Healthy Relationships: God wants you to experience joyful, fruitful relationships with others.
- Ability to Serve: God wants you to serve Him and others as His ambassador in the world.

The Foundation of Godly Change

- New Identity: In Christ, you are a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.
 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."— 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Ongoing Transformation: Godly change is a lifelong process called sanctification.
 - "Not that I have already obtained it... but I press on so that I may take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."— Philippians 3:12

How Godly Change Happens

- Renew Your Mind: Transformation comes by renewing your mind with God's truth.
- "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."— Romans 12:2
- Put Off the Old, Put On the New: Let go of old habits and embrace your new self in Christ.
- "Put off... the old man... be renewed in the spirit of your mind... put on the new man..."— Ephesians 4:21-24
- God's Power at Work: You are not alone—God works in you to will and to act.
 - "Work out your own salvation... for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."— Philippians 2:12-13

Practical Steps for Godly Change

1. Remember Your New Identity: You are secure in Christ.
2. Renew Your Mind Daily: Fill your thoughts with God's Word.
3. Rely on the Holy Spirit: Ask for His power to obey and step out in faith.

God's Promise

- "He who has begun a good work in you will continue to perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."— Philippians 1:6

Embrace Godly change—walk fully into the new life God has for you!

GODLY CHANGE: WHAT GOD WANTS FOR US

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we discussed how our prayers have power when we submit ourselves fully to God's will and purpose, and trust in Him for their outcome in our lives.

Today we're going to talk about how making Godly change in our lives is possible and how we are all afraid of it and how we all want it but especially how God wants it for us.

If you look around our world, you will see a deep, restless desire for change in people who are not believers.

People want to change their habits, their finances, their appearance, their relationships or their circumstances.

The self-help industry thrives on this yearning for a better version of themselves that people think will lead to a better life.

Those of us who are followers of Jesus should also be desiring change in our lives.

Too often in my encounters with other Christians I hear people say things like "oh that person will never change" and I wonder if they realize what they're saying...

Very often, when these same people sink into depression or display outbursts of anger, they might say... "Hey. I can't help it. That's just who I am".

While there are certainly valid reasons why each of us carry forward certain negative behaviors throughout our worldly lives,

in Christ we don't need to accept them as crutches or curse others who we might be able to encourage.

We who have a relationship with Jesus should have a yearning to be, in practice, who we already are in our position in Christ, Holy.

This is a transformation far deeper than any self-improvement plan can deliver.

Today, we are going to talk about that kind of change. Godly change.

We are going to explore what God, our Creator and Redeemer, truly wants for us: to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

This is the process that the Bible calls sanctification.

The greatest change of all, is the change that God makes in us when we first believe in Jesus and receive Him as Lord.

It's the change that starts when God's Spirit awakens our spirit and it continues throughout our lives in Christ making us truly new humans from the inside out. That is, if we will allow it.

How many of you can say that since you've received Jesus, you have changed?

How many of you, like me, still have a way to go? Amen.

If you're not perfect yet, don't get depressed.

The Apostle Paul, who was arguably the most Christ-like of the New Testament writers, said this,

Philippians 3:12 AMP

12 Not that I have already obtained it [this goal of being Christlike] or have already been made perfect, but I actively press on so that I

may take hold of that [perfection] for which Christ Jesus took hold of me and made me His own.

So today let's talk about what this pressing on, which is exactly what embracing Godly change looks like.

Unfortunately, some believers approach Godly change with a "do I HAVE to?" mentality.

"What does God want FROM me?" is their complaint.

This type of person tends to approach God as a demanding boss, disapproving and severe.

In many cases, this is what their experience with religion has done to them.

The common worldly perception of religion is that it is about what God wants from us so that He will accept us and we can go to Heaven when we die.

Before Jesus came to set them free, God's chosen people felt this way under the law of Moses. They struggled and failed to live up to what God required of them and many of them resented it.

Ironically, some Christians who were raised religiously feel this way as well.

But when we realize that the real question is "What does God want FOR me instead of what does God want FROM me?" it opens the door to a beautifully changed existence.

Then Godly change becomes not what we HAVE to do to please God, but what we GET to do.

Godly change is about what God has done for us in Christ and what God wants for us in this life as well as the next.

Some of you might object, “Why do I need to change?

Doesn’t God love me right now, just as I am?”

Of course He does. And He loves you so much that He won’t let you stay there. He wants you to grow.

When you change WHO you do things for you will change HOW you do things. The old person did things for himself. The new person will do things for God and for others.

When you change WHY you do things, you will change the WAY you do things.

This is the Gospel, the good news: God wants something better for you and so He sent His Son to show the way to live and to BE the way the truth and the life!

God wants you to follow Jesus and experience Kingdom life to the full in the here and now.

This is the Abundant Life that is only found in Him and is both the goal AND the journey.

These are four things God wants for you:

- 1. He wants you to have a relationship with Him:** God wants you to know Him. He wants to have a love relationship with you. He sent His Son so that you could know Him and He could know you.
- 2. He wants you to have a Christ-like character:** God wants to change you. He wants you to become a new kind of human, like

Jesus who is the image of Himself. God made man in His own image, but sin corrupted us, so we need to change back to who He made us to be.

3. He wants you to have healthy relationships with others: God wants to socialize you. Your old person was a bit of a self-serving sociopath. He wants for you to have joyful, fruitful relationships with others.

4. He wants you to have the ability to serve Him and other people: God wants to send you out into the world as His Ambassador. He wants for you to be able to serve joyfully and effectively, to live a meaningful life and to be a light to the nations.

Believers often think as the world thinks that Godly change begins with our effort: trying harder to avoid sin.

This is true, but it doesn't start with you, and you do not have to do this alone.

The Bible tells us that real Godly change begins with a radical change in identity. A new life, not just a new leaf.

The Apostle Paul says...

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Before God asks us to do anything differently, He makes us something entirely new.

When you surrendered your life to Christ, you were not simply polished up; you were completely re-created.

The “old self” bound by sin and brokenness has passed away.

You are now, fundamentally, a new creation, a different kind of human.

This is the foundation of all Godly change: It is not about managing your old self better;

it is about living from the position of your new self; the re-born identity God has given you in Christ Jesus.

When you face temptation or failure, you don’t have to define yourself by the past mistakes of the old person.

Instead, now you can define yourself by the new life, the clean slate, and the holiness that you possess in Christ Jesus.

Paul confirms this in the next verse after the one we read about becoming perfected in his letter to the Philippians...

Philippians 3:13-14 AMP

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal to win the [heavenly] prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Leave the failures of the past behind whether they are 5 years or 5 minutes ago.

Stand in the power of your position NOW and reach forward for the goal.

Godly change is striving for perfection in your behavior even as you are already perfect in Christ.

Accept your new identity as a FACT.

You are who God says you are in Christ. His Word says so and the Holy Spirit living in you confirms it.

It is the Holy Spirit who guides, comforts and strengthens you in the change process.

Once you have settled into your new identity, the battle for change moves to the most critical battlefield: your mind.

Paul again tells us plainly...

Romans 12:2:

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.

Our minds are the filters through which we view God, ourselves, and the world.

If that filter is still stained by the world's values, we will never experience the change God desires.

The world is constantly pressuring us to conform to itself—to adopt its priorities, its definitions of success, its standards of morality.

Paul gives us two alternative active choices in this scripture:

1. Stop Conforming:

Actively resist the molds and expectations of the world around you.

Identify the ways the world has shaped your thinking on money, relationships, and priorities, and reject them.

2. Be Transformed:

Transformation isn't passive. It happens through the renewal of your mind.

This means intentionally filling your mind with God's truth, meditating on Scripture, and seeking godly counsel.

When you constantly align your thoughts with God's Word, your attitudes, your reactions, and your character will follow.

This transformation is how we learn to discern and live out God's good and perfect will.

But if we are honest, the thought of genuine, daily transformation can be daunting.

It is easy to feel the weight of our failures and conclude that this deep change is impossible.

That feeling comes from wearing our old person like a suit which we must take off before we can put on the new one.

This is why it is so important to read, study and meditate on God's Word daily.

When you do, you will learn directly from Christ as His Spirit directs your understanding through His Word.

Then you will be able to receive Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians when he tells them...

Ephesians 4:21-24

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

This is where I want you to grasp the beautiful balance of God's sovereignty and our human responsibility.

The Apostle Paul describes this partnership this way...

Philippians 2:12b-13:

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Paul here was exhorting the Philippian Church, where many had fallen into selfish ambition and disunity.

Notice his powerful command to each of us: "Work out your own salvation."

This is our part, the intention to honor God, the diligence, the discipline, the effort to pray, to serve, to forgive, and to resist sin.

We must take our spiritual lives seriously.

Godly change does require serious commitment and effort from us.

But immediately following this, Paul provides the glorious reassurance: "**for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**"

You are not alone in the effort. The same God who initiated the change is providing the power for the process.

He works in you to give you the desire (Paul says to will) and the ability (to work) to live a holy life.

Our labor in sanctification is fueled by God's grace. We simply work out what He is faithfully working in.

What God wants for us is nothing less than complete, total, Godly change in Christ.

He wants us to walk in the beautiful reality of the new creation we already are, with a mind renewed by His truth, and with an effort empowered by His Spirit.

If you feel stuck today, remember these three truths:

1. **You are a New Creation.** Stop dwelling in the failures of the past. Your identity is secure in Christ.
2. **Renew Your Mind.** Be intentional about what you allow to fill your thoughts. Saturate yourself in the Word of God daily.
3. **Rely on His Power.** Don't try to change in your own strength. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the will and the power to obey today and then step out in faith and work diligently.

God is faithful and His Word is clear.

As Paul said to His beloved friends in the Church at Philippi, so I say to each of you...

Philippians 1:6 AMP

6 I am convinced and confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will [continue to] perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus [the time of His return].

Beloved, let us commit today to embrace Godly change, walking fully into the new life that God in Christ has already won for us.

Let's Pray