

**Daniel Plan 2**  
**Principles for Lasting Change**  
**Romans 12:1-12**

**Intro:** Today we are looking at what does it really take to change.

- I have to believe that inside we all have a desire to improve in some way
  - Get better at something in our life.
  - Advertisers know this, and try to sell us stuff that will get us on our way
    - Some of it is good...others are gimmicks
- To get better, something has to change
  - something deep in the core of our being.
  - How do we do that?
  - How do we reset the operating system?
    - We go to the owner's manual and check with the creator.

6 Principles for lasting change:

**Romans 12:1-12 NIV**

**1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

**3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.**

**9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.**

**I. The Principle of Dedication: I Commit my body to God**

- Start with the physical...because your body affects your behavior

- Your muscles affect your motivation...
- \*slouching kid comes into class...read the body language
- \*Let's prove it: sit up straight, roll your shoulders, deep breath...
  - I don't know if you feel better, but you sure look better!
  - I guarantee you that you are far more alert than a moment ago!

**Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."**

- Therefore: in light of everything I just said
  - All the cool things that God has done for you...first 11 chapters
- Therefore, offer your bodies.
  - Not your spirit, not your soul...your bodies!
  - Everything you do for God, with God, toward God you will do in your body!
  - \*I will be with you in spirit....means nothing!
- The body is a good thing...not a bad thing
  - gnostic cult taught that the body was evil
- Bible disagrees... "Offer your bodies"
  - God wants your body...but you have to "offer" it.
  - That's voluntary!

### **1st law of change: Change is my choice**

- No one can force you to change...
  - change is your choice

"Living Sacrifice"... Problem with a living sacrifice is that it tends to crawl off altar.  
 "this is your spiritual act of worship"...I can do something with my body that is an act of worship?

### **3 Things I can do with my body that are acts of worship:**

1. I can cleanse it

**2 Corinthians 7:1, "Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."**

- What contaminates your body enters through the mouth
- What contaminates your spirit comes in through eyes and ears

2. I can care for my body

**Ephesians 5:29, "No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body which is the church."**

- How do we care for our body?
  - staying in shape
- 3. I can control my body
  - Some people do this out of pride and selfishness
  - But if you do it to please god...then its an act of worship

**1 Thessalonians 4:4 says this: “Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable.”**

**1 Corinthians 9:27, “I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.”**

\*Article:

-“Seventy-five percent of the \$2.5 trillion of U.S. healthcare costs, 75 percent of all the money spent on healthcare, which is \$2.5 trillion, stems from chronic diseases which can be prevented by lifestyle choices.”

- We start with they physical change today: Why?
  - Any change requires energy
  - Most people don't have the energy to change

## **II. The Principle of Concentration: I must refocus my mind**

**Romans 12:2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

- The reason why he starts here with the mind is because whatever gets your attention gets you.
- What he's talking about is you've got to stop thinking about what you don't want and start thinking about what you do want.
- You've got to stop focusing on what's bad for you and start focusing on what's good for you.
- You've got to stop focusing on your plan and start focusing on God's plan.
- You've got to stop focusing on what everybody else wants you to do and start focusing on what God wants you to do.
- You've got to stop focusing on the negative and start focusing on the positive.
- You've got to transform by the renewing of your mind.

-Let's talk about this verse:

- Conformity: Too often we let everybody else shape our lives
  - Nobody naturally likes to smoke
  - Beer is stinky!
- We all learn how to behave by watching others...some good some bad
- What Paul is saying is we are going to have to learn some new patterns

## **2nd Law of change: To change my life I must change my model**

- There's only 1 perfect model...Jesus
- 26 times Jesus says...follow me
- 6 times Paul says...follow me as i follow jesus

Transformed: in greek is metamorphosis

- Morph into someone completely different!
- Only God can do that! Only God can turn a caterpillar to a butterfly
- This is the essence of "born again"

How? By the renewing of your mind

### **Ephesians 4:22 NIV**

**"Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires;**

- That's those impulses and compulsions that pull you the wrong direction.

**and be made new in the attitude of your minds;**

- Attitudes are kind of like diapers. You've got to change them, every once in a while, or they start stinking. You put off your old self, be made new in the attitude of your mind

**and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."**

-Here's the Key: You've got to put stuff off before you can put stuff on

\*changing room

- This is true spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.
- You've got to put stuff off before you can put on new stuff
- This is key to changing your thought patterns.

### **III. The Principle of Evaluation: I must humbly assess my current state**

If I said to you...I want to come over to your house...what would you ask me?

- Where are you?
- You don't know how to get to where you are going, unless you know where you are.

-I must humbly assess my current state.

- The number one barrier to change: Pride
  - I don't have any problems.
  - They need to change more than me
- Nobobody has it all together!
  - But we pretend like we've got it all together
  - Some of y'all have it all together on FB
  - Other's y'all are super transparent and put it ALL out there TMI

-I have to admit when I don't have it all together.

### **Romans 12:3 NIV**

**"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."**

- I always say be humble or you'll stumble.
- Remember the lesson of the whale: When you get to the top and you're ready to blow, that's when they harpoon you.
- And the man who gets too big for his britches will inevitably be exposed in the end.

-So let me just ask you some honest questions:

- What are you pretending isn't a problem in your life?
- What are you pretending isn't a problem in your marriage?
- What are you pretending isn't a problem in your finances?
- What are you pretending isn't a problem in your health?
- Do you have enough courage to confront yourself?

-That's what this verse is all about.

-Do you have the courage to ask those closest to you to tell you honestly what you need to change?

-So..be humble...be honest...then "in accordance with the measure of faith"

-How do you get more faith?

- The Bible says, "Faith comes from hearing the Word of God."
- The more you hear the Word of God, the more your faith grows.
- This is soul food. It feeds your soul. It stretches your faith.

Why is measurement so important?

**The third law of change from the Word of God, the Bible: I can only manage what I measure.**

If you don't measure it, you don't manage it.

If I don't know the measure of my faith, I can't manage my faith. I can't grow in faith.

If I don't know the measure of my health, I can't develop and grow in health.

If I don't know the measure of where I am financially, I can't set goals financially.

If I don't know the measure of where I am spiritually or vocationally or relationally, then I can't grow in those areas.

I have to evaluate humbly and assess my current state. I can only manage what I measure.

2 Practical things you can do:

1. Get a journal
2. Get your starting numbers

**IV. Principle of Cooperation: I must get group support**

-Lot's of talk on FB in my circles about do Christians really need to go to church

- There are commandments in scripture you cannot fulfill outside of being joined to a group of believers.
- The community is seen from cover to cover.
- One practical thing I'll tell you...and Covid did a number on the church:
  - If the Devil can separate you from fellowship you are vulnerable
  - Wolf catching the sheep that has wandered off
- At this point in the pandemic...we should fear that more than Covid.

## **V. Principle of Affirmation: I must fill my life with love.**

**“Don't just pretend you love others. Really love them. Hate what is evil.**

-sometimes that means you've got to confront it. You've got to do an intervention.

**Stand on the side of the good.**

-You've got to love enough sometimes to confront.

**Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.”**

-Love is a powerful force!

-When we love on others, it energizes change in us.

-It reinforces the bond we have with others and we gain strength together!

## **VI. Principle of Motivation: I must nurture my enthusiasm**

**“Never be lacking in zeal,**

-that's enthusiasm.

**but keep your spiritual fervor,**

That means nurture your enthusiasm. Then he tells you the three ways to do it in serving the Lord.

**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”**

-How do I maintain my enthusiasm for the long haul?

-Nothing great is ever accomplished without enthusiasm....Emerson

-You've got to have passion!

\*Gazelle intensity...dave ramsey

-Without it you will not get out of debt.

-How do I maintain my enthusiasm?

-The way you stay enthusiastic for a lifetime is found in the word “enthusiasm.”

-The word “enthusiasm” comes from the Greek word en Theos.

-En is the Greek word for the English word “in.”

-Theos is the Greek word for “God.”

-When you get in God, you will be enthusiastic.

- And it's the kind of gut level enthusiasm that fills your heart with such enthusiasm that it doesn't matter whether the economy is tanking or it is soaring.
- Or whether it's raining or it's shining.
- Or whether things are going good or bad.
- Or whether you feel healthy or sick.
- Or whether things are bad or good.
- Your enthusiasm is not dependent upon your circumstances.
- It is not dependent upon your circumstances because you are tied to the Rock of Ages.
- You are tied to the Eternal God.
- You are in Christ.
- You are in God and you are eternally enthusiastic!
  
- Joyful in hope: where is your hope set?
- Patient in affliction: affliction is usually for a season...but God turns all to good!
- Faithful in prayer: taking every problem to him

#### Prayer:

Dear God, I don't want to go another day without you in my life controlling every room and every part of my heart. So I want to take these initial steps for change. I offer you my body. I dedicate myself to you. In light of all you've done for me, I give myself as a living sacrifice to you, as a spiritual act of worship. I don't want to think the old patterns any more. I want you to help renew my mind. I want to be transformed. I don't want to be a caterpillar any more. I want that metamorphosis. I want to be that butterfly – set free. I don't want to be conformed to all the pressures of what other people want me to be. I want to be what you want me to be.

Over this year I want you to change my mind. Help me to think the way you want me to think. I ask you to forgive me for my pride and I humbly want to admit that I need help and I need to change in a lot of areas. I don't want to think more highly of myself than I should. I admit that the measure of my faith needs to grow. Help me to set goals that can be measured so I can manage them. Forgive me for trying to do the changes on my own. Help me to get group support. I want to fill my life with love. I want to fill my life with you. Help me to take delight in honoring other people, to focus on giving my life away so that you can take care of my needs. I want to nurture my enthusiasm by being in you. Help me to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. I give myself to you. In your name I pray. Amen.