

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Lasting Change

(Part 2)

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25

Sunday, September 1, 2019

External reform of behavior - even obedient behavior - does nothing significant to bring us in line with the will of God. We will see in this continuation on our study on lasting change that if it is to be lasting, it must affect us on the inside.

Galatians 5:16-18

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, / and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. / ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ESV

WHEN THERE IS FALSE CHANGE

You cannot claim spiritual growth just because things are improving physically, financially, or socially. Any growth or development that can be seen with the eye can often be deceiving.

Take note of **3 John 2** - **"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."**

This verse is used by some to argue that outward change "for the better" is proof of one's spiritual growth. While God wants our lives to ultimately go well, He did not declare that the proof of this reality is always outward. On the one hand, circumstances may be very tough at a particular season of one's life, but spiritual growth could be increasing significantly. On the other hand, conditions may be filled with the trappings of earthly success, and the reality could very well be spiritual bankruptcy.

There is also a difference between internal spiritual growth and acts of goodness or benevolence. The great reformers, Martin Luther and John Wesley, were very religious for a long time before that they understood Christianity and changed internally. They fed the hungry, clothed the naked, shared the faith, and instructed the disobedient, but they ironically admit that they were not growing themselves.

You may do many wonderful things and have nothing if you do not have the fruit of the Christian that grows from the inside.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. / ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, / but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

In **Matthew 7:21**, Jesus pointedly asserted, **“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”**

If people's lives are being changed through you, but your life is not, run to God immediately!

WHEN CHANGE IS REAL

Galatians 5:22-25

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. / ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ESV

It is important to note that the word “fruit” is singular. But Paul follows it with a list of nine attributes (a plurality). This is evidence that all these elements flow from one's life at the same time if our growth is from the Spirit of God.

For example, peace and humility go together if you are a real Christian. If you are proud person and at peace, it is a counterfeit peace. Because real peace always goes with humility.

Even worry comes from arrogance. It says “I am confident that God should come through for me as I wish. If I were in His position, things would happen my way. I seriously doubt that His method and timing are correct.” This is arrogance in disguise. It is self-important, and therefore refuses to take a humble posture before God.

Do not be so sure of your idea about the future. If you are a person with humility, you will say “Lord, you alone know what I need, not me.” This causes the fruit of peace. It, of course comes with love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and goodness.

Philippians 4:6,7

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. / ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

If you are at peace because things are going well for you, be suspicious of that peace.

Change is real when the fruit grows together. If you do not have all the fruit, you don't have any of the fruit.