

can i change - part 2 - the question is valid

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Glenn Garvin



BIG IDEA - change is hard, changing is harder

scripture focus - Romans 12:2 NLT “**Don’t copy** the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Last week we talked about the top search in 2022.

As we continue to explore this question, can i change?

Let me comment on the wild and unregulated SELF-HELP industry.

random facts about Self Help

- The new target audience are women
- The industry is still growing even when we were hit by a recession.
- Infomercials bring in the largest sales volume.
- Materialism tramples spiritualism.
- Over 13 million relationship self help books sold in 2007.
- 18,000 life coaches work in the United States.

- Men rarely buy into self help.

According to **Market Research**, the self-improvement market was worth \$9.9 billion in 2016 and is estimated to grow to **\$13.2 billion by 2022** with 5.6% average yearly gains.

- **Millennials are driving the growth of the self-improvement industry.**
- **94% of millennials** reported making personal improvement commitments and said **they'd be willing to spend nearly \$300 a month on self-improvement.**
- Millennials **spend twice as much as** Baby Boomers on self-improvement such as working out, life coaching and well-being apps ([source](#));

So, yes, the search is real, and the question is valid!

And it's important that each one of us answers that question.

The good news is yes, we can. I have found there two examples to answer this question:

What does the Bible say about change?

It just so happens – A LOT.

One is from an unchurched, nonbeliever in God:

This question, “can i change?” can be answered in a couple of ways.

- **One way is the world, the universe, the culture, or a belief in a higher power tells you** in its educational, philosophical, psychological, and honestly illogical ways. **And, as you heard**

from the self-help statistics, it is **BIG BUSINESS** as it tries to answer **that question** by pursuing a lot of self discovery, self expression, self realization.

The promise is that through these self-help gurus, crowdsourced life hacks, some dabbling in meditation, religions and maybe a little help from friends **YOU will be able to find yourself, fix yourself and change.**

All you have to do is look deeper inside yourself, find the real you and LET IT OUT!

- **Is there is another way, a better way? What if you just asked the one who created you. God, can i change?**

The apostle Paul, formerly known by his Hebrew name, Saul was an intelligent, deeply religious man who had been trained by the best [Gamaliel the Elder](#). He and Barnabas were sent out to proclaim Jesus to the Greeks/Gentiles.

He writes to these Jewish/Gentile newly formed churches about all that he knows about God and following Jesus as a disciple. He wrote to the Gentile Church in Rome before he had even visited the city itself. Rome, the epitome of power, wealth, governance and a very robust religious system including [12 major gods](#) with a plethora of minor ones and dozens of temples. **Point being, there were plenty of spiritual ways and pursuits to find yourself and answer life's difficult questions.**

Paul tells the folks in Rome, "Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world." There is only one way to change, one way to find your life and your purpose - it's through the redemption of Christ.

Romans 12:2 NLT **"Don't copy** the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Paul also writes to one of the most secular, hip, cool swanky cities in New Testament times - the Corinthians. These men and women had come to Christ from the worldliest, highly sexualized yet oddly spiritual experiences people had ever seen. **Paul tells this former thoroughly pagan crowd about how to have lasting a real change.**

And what Christ had done to secure this change in them.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Thankfully, God is patient with us in this process of believing in Him and making the decision to follow Jesus.

2 Peter 3:8-9 NLT

"But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants everyone to repent."

Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:"

Lamentations 3:22-24 ESV

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

However, God won't continue to wrestle with folks forever, people are free to reject Him and stay in their unbelief, receiving the consequences of an eternity without God.

God doesn't send anyone to hell, by default they choose to go there!

I also see another angle to this question of change...

But what if I already believe in Jesus and go to church?

It is not so much can I change but...

can I keep changing?

change is hard, changing is harder

The first change is like a Metamorphosis.

The second is what the Bible calls sanctification.

One is a complete change of nature, like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly.

The other is a process of becoming, slowly taking on the qualities of another, in this case, like Jesus.

James, Paul and Jesus all wrote about this process of becoming.

James 1:22-25 NLT

"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For **if you listen to the word and don't obey**, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. **But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."**

2 Corinthians 3:12-18 NLT

"Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. **We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away.** But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day

whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.** So, all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. **And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.**”

Exodus 34:29-35 NLT

Moses came down from the mountain after meeting with God and his face REFLECTED the glory of God. It was so physically bright; it hurt people's eyes and convicted their souls!

Spending time reading and reflecting on God's word gives opportunities to CHANGE – IF...IF we listen to the Holy Spirit leading, guiding, correcting, encouraging us to be OBEDIENT and do what He says.

As we learn to spend time with God, in the Bible, and let God change our thinking and yield to Him changing our behaviors we too have a glow, a radiance about us – because we've been with Him!

Listening to God's voice through His Word and being obedient means that God does all the work within us to CHANGE US.

can i change... absolutely! Say YES to Jesus.

can i continue to change... although it's more difficult, the answer is still YES as we continue to be with God, experience God in His word and yield our will to His, to obey as the Holy Spirit directs us.

If we stop changing, we stop growing and maturing in Christ!

Next week we'll look at the most difficult part of change, you'll be shocked.

Let me give you a couple of stories to let you see how change happened in my life.

I said YES to Jesus and two days later I find out I am a different person, something drastically changed.

The burrito and the stereo system.

Now, that I've been following Jesus for 46 years, let me tell you how change works in me now.

I am daily challenged to hear and obey the Holy Spirit. **As I have gotten older, I don't like the feeling or idea of getting it wrong or looking like a fool about it. When I was young and in many ways a social outcast, I didn't care. Now, sadly, I care too much of what others might think.** I was more eager to obey than to care what others thought.

As a process of hopefully becoming more like Jesus, now I have more to be concerned about. A reputation, my wife, my kids, grandkids, friends and a whole community of faith watching, listening to almost everything I do and say!

What happened to those early deep and compelling urges to obey? Are they still there? Are they just dormant?

The question is no longer can I change, it's more like can I keep CHANGING? Can I be more aware and obedient to the Holy Spirit moving in my life now?

NOTES

Scriptures

Romans 12:2 NLT

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Exodus 34:29-35 NLT

“When Moses came down Mount Sinai carrying the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, **he wasn't aware that his face had become radiant because he had spoken to the Lord. So when Aaron and the people of Israel saw the radiance of Moses' face, they were afraid to come near him.** But Moses called out to them and asked Aaron and all the leaders of the community to come over, and he talked with them. Then all the people of Israel approached him, and Moses gave them all the instructions the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking with them, he covered his face with a veil. But whenever he went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he would remove the veil until he came out again. Then he would give the people whatever instructions the Lord had given him, and **the people of Israel would see the radiant glow of his face. So he would put the veil over his face until he returned to speak with the Lord.**”

Questions

- Q:** What do you think about the question itself, can I change?
- Q:** Is there a difference between an unchurched, non-believer and someone who grew up in faith, already knowing Jesus?
- Q:** Either as a young believer or an unbeliever, what was like to change? Share that story.
- Q:** What do you think about the statement that change is hard, changing is harder?
- Q:** How have you experienced the Biblical word, sanctification (process of becoming)?
- Q:** Do you find the idea of always changing to be a challenge? How so?

COMMENTARY REFERENCES

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

The city of Rome was the capital of the empire and the home of the emperor, senators, administrators, military personnel, and priests. Augustus, the first of the emperors whose leadership and diplomatic endeavors gave peace to Rome after two civil wars and a century of strife, gave attention to the restoration and adornment of the city. He boasted that he found Rome built of brick and left it built of marble. His efforts at restoring Rome's ancient religious commitment led to the building of many temples. On the Palatine hill Augustus united several houses already there into a palace for his own residence. A new and sumptuous temple of Apollo surrounded by colonnades in which the emperor housed a large library was erected near the palace. The palace itself overlooked an imposing group of new marble buildings in the valley floor below, a fine basilica-

business hall, a senate house, a temple of the Divine Julius, a marble speakers' platform, two impressive new forums, the forum of Caesar and the forum of Augustus.

Dictionary of Bible Themes

Rome is pictured as the embodiment of corrupt earthly power

Rev 17:1-18 Verse 9 clearly identifies the city as Rome, widely known then as the city built on seven hills. **See also Rev 14:8 Babylon was the great godless city of the OT and here is taken by most commentators to depict Rome, which in turn represents corrupt worldly power in general.** However, some believe that only a general reference to the world system is in mind, and others that a literal reference to the actual city of Babylon is intended; Rev 16:19; 18:1-24

The Lexham Bible Dictionary

First-century Corinth **was a city rich in both history and wealth** due to its geographic advantages. It was a **city of cultural diversity**, a **hub of Roman paganism**, and a **hotbed for immorality**. It also hosted the biannual Isthmian games, which drew throngs from across Greece. As an astute missionary, Paul likely chose Corinth for its importance as a busy center of culture and commerce and its ability to receive large crowds, which would serve as audience to the gospel before returning to their diverse homelands.

By the time Paul arrived, Corinth had a reputation for its banking industry and was known as a wealthy region (Plutarch, *De Vitando*, 831a). Its inhabitants represented every tier of society—Alciphron mentions the “nauseating behavior of the rich and the misery of the poor” (Alciphron, *Letters*, 3:60). Paul addressed this disparity in 1 Cor 11:17–34. He then reminds the church of the importance of generosity and compares their apparent procrastination to the eager liberality of the relatively impoverished Macedonian Churches (1 Cor 16:1–2; 2 Cor 6:10; 8:1–2, 9; 9:9).

The resettled city was culturally Roman and was “established to foster the majesty of Roman culture, religion, and values” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 3). As such, **it was a cultic center for the worship of Roman deities**. Paul addressed the resulting social and ethical ramifications of eating meat in a city which had little meat available other than what came from animals slaughtered in cultic sacrifice (1 Cor 8:1–13).

Corinth had also developed a reputation for sexual license—a reputation that was fueled primarily by Athenian propaganda (Murphy-O'Connor, *The Corinth that Paul Saw*, 152, 56). Strabo's oft-cited report that Corinth was home to 1,000 cult prostitutes is unrealistic, and has been thoroughly disproven (Strabo, *Geography*, 8.6.20c; Murphy-O'Connor, *The Corinth that Paul Saw*, 152; compare Conzelmann, *Korinth und die Madchen*). Nevertheless, sexual immorality was at least as much of a problem in Corinth as it was in any other

part of the Mediterranean as indicated by ancient sources and Paul's numerous references to sexual immorality, prostitution, and incest (1 Cor 5:1, 9, 11; 6:9, 13, 15–16, 18; 7:2; 10:8; 2 Cor 12:21).

Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words

Sanctification

The Greek term for sanctify, *hagiazō*, means to “**set apart**” for God’s special use, or “**to make distinct from what is common.**” Hence, **sanctification is to be made like God** who is distinct from all else and therefore holy. The Greek word for “sanctify” refers to a process which is perfect in principle, though not yet attainable. Though we are not yet completely holy, we stand in relation to God as though we are. This is indicated in Hebrews 10:10 where the verb “sanctified” is a perfect participle, literally “having been sanctified,” indicating the present result of a past action. **Sanctification is something that has been done once for all, but its effect still continues**—as stated in Hebrews 10:14, “those who are being sanctified.”

A comprehensive definition of sanctification is found in the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833), which states: “We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer” (Article X). This definition helps us to distinguish sanctification from regeneration in that the regeneration speaks of the beginning of the Christian life. Sanctification is also distinguished from glorification, which focuses on the consummation of God’s work in the believer. Put quite simply, then, regeneration refers to the beginning of salvation, sanctification to the middle, and glorification to the end of salvation.

The Bible, which contains 66 [<https://i0.wp.com/churchgists.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/image-849.png?w=1000&ssl=1>] books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament) written by 40 authors [<https://overviewbible.com/authors-who-wrote-bible/>] have this idea of change threaded throughout because the whole thing is written about God’s story redeeming (changing) humankind through Jesus.

INTERNET LINKS

[The self help industry statistics](#)

16 Facts About Self Help

The following list of facts will help to provide trends and common traits associated with the self improvement industry.

1. The new target audience are women.
2. The industry is still growing even when we were hit by a recession.
3. Readers have renounced ownership to themselves.
4. Self help is dated back to 1859 with the first self improvement book was released titled, "Self Help."
5. Infomercials bring in the largest sales volume.
6. self help guides do not consider environmental factors.
7. Materialism tramples spiritualism.
8. Moving into other industries such as athletic trainers and personal coaches.
9. Over 13 million relationship self help books sold in 2007.
10. 18,000 life coaches work in the United States.
11. The more stupid the title, the better it sells.
12. Men rarely buy into self help.
13. No oversight board for life coaches.
14. Televisions helps the already flourishing industry with shows such as Hoarders and Intervention.
15. Life coaching can become a profitable angle for mental health professionals.
16. Infomercial declined by 40 percent between 2007 and 2011.

[More self help statistics](#)

[Bible verses about change](#)

[More Bible verses about change](#)

[Metamorphosis](#) - caterpillar into a butterfly - Watch if you dare! The latest news about this metamorphosis is that the caterpillar completely disintegrates into a goo before completely being rebuilt into an all together different insect.

Butterflies are [insects](#) in the [macrolepidopteran clade](#) Rhopalocera from the [order Lepidoptera](#). **Caterpillars** (/ˈkætərpiːlər/ KAT-ər-pil-ər) are the [larval stage](#) of members of the order [Lepidoptera](#) (the insect order comprising [butterflies](#) and [moths](#)).