

A photograph of a small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves growing out of a deep, dark crack in dry, light-brown soil. The soil is cracked and textured, suggesting a dry environment. The seedling is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame. A semi-transparent, light-colored rectangular box with rounded corners is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text "how people change" in a dark green, serif font.

how people change





goals & overview

Change is a by-product of being known and loved by Jesus, our Redeemer. Change is not accomplished by mastering a technique or following a system; it takes place as we are in **relationship** with Christ.

Paul Tripp

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

What are some
of our biggest
obstacles to
change?

change's destination:
heaven

change's power: marriage
to Christ

What is the storyline of the Bible?

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. Redemption
4. Consummation

Adam wasn't lonely because he was imperfect; Adam was lonely *because he was perfect*. Every other problem in our lives arises out of our sin and imperfections. But loneliness is the **one** problem that we have *because* we are made in God's image. So if you're content being a loner, congratulations: you aren't very much like God.

J.D. Greear

Sin renders us incapable of doing what God has ordained us to do. This inability colors every situation and relationship of our lives. It is not just that I don't want to do God's will, or that I think my way is better, it's that even when I have the right intentions, I can't pull it off. I always fall short of God's standard.

Paul Tripp

sin is a *condition*
which results in
behavior

Living with God's
ultimate destination in
view gives hope and
perspective in our daily
situations and
relationships.

Paul Tripp

Positive personal change begins to take place when my dreams of change begin to line up with God's purposes for change. Leaving behind goals of personal comfort and self-fulfillment, I begin to reach out for Christ, desiring to be more and more like him each day. As I do this, I become more and more prepared for my ultimate destination—eternity with him.

Paul Tripp

God is taking you
where you do not want
to go to produce in you
the change you could
not on your own.

God invites you to
come as you are,
not stay are you
are.

Tim Keller

The grace that identifies me as God's child is not based on my actions. He characterizes me based on my relationship with him, not on the basis of what I have done. My union with Christ (the indicative of who I am) precedes and motivates my obedience (the imperative).

Bryan Chapell

Gospel Gap:
2 Peter 1:9

Past
Forgiveness

Here and
Now

Future
Hope

Many believers live a ‘gospel gap’ in their lives: They have some sense of the past forgiveness of our sins and the future promise of heaven but without understanding or experiencing the power of the gospel in the present. The monotony of life lulls us to sleep, and we miss the miraculous presence of Christ.

Paul Tripp & Tim Lane

discussion questions:

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- Do you find biblical change to be a difficult process? Why or why not?
- Where does the gospel gap show up in your life?

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how people change

change's destination: heaven

change's power: marriage to
Christ

change's method:

relationships

change's location: the heart

More than any before us, an American today believes 'I must write the script of my own life.' The thought that such a script must be subordinated to the grand narrative of the Bible is a foreign one. Still more alarming is the idea that this surrender of our personal story to God's story must be mediated by a community of fallen people we frankly don't want getting in our way and meddling with our own hopes and dreams

Tod Bolsinger

What prevents
community?

fear of rejection

fear of vulnerability

fear of being known

fear of not being understood

pridefulness

hidden sin

expectations of other people

shyness, introverted nature

accountability

shallowness

superficiality of life and faith

I appeal to you therefore, **brothers**, by the mercies of God, to present **your bodies** as a living **sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is **your** spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of **your** mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, my beloved, as **you** have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out **your** own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in **you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2:12-13

What is the
heart?

Keep your heart
with all vigilance,
for from it
flow the springs of
life.

Proverbs 4:23

Sin isn't only doing bad things, it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things. Sin is building your life and meaning on anything, even a very good thing, more than on God. Whatever we build our life on will drive us and enslave us. Sin is primarily idolatry

Tim Keller

idolatry is
fundamentally
making good
things into ultimate
things

A good thing becomes
a bad thing when it
becomes a ruling
thing.

Paul Tripp

three words which the Bible
uses to describe idolatry:

1. trust
2. love
3. obey

what promises do idols make?

autonomy

pleasure

care free living

security

happiness

good relationships

wealth

health

The Progression of an Idol

1. Desire: “I want”
2. Demand: “I must”
3. Need: “I will”
4. Expectation: “You should”
5. Disappointment: “You didn’t”

what things, people or environments make me most happy
or joyful

what happens when those items are taken away, removed
or changed

do I feel threatened when I lose something in particular

when times get tough I typically turn to _____

when times are good I typically attribute it to _____

I am most known for...

What things do I celebrate as objects of worship in my life

What things/people have my affections

What things do I find pleasure in

What/who do I trust in regularly

“You will have to let me undress you.” I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it. The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve ever felt...

Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off – just as I thought I'd done it myself the other three times, only they hadn't hurt – and there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. And there was I as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been... I'd turned into a boy again.

C.S. Lewis

discussion questions:

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- Is biblical community an important part of your life? Why or why not?
- Do you seek change at the expense of ignoring the heart? Why or why not?

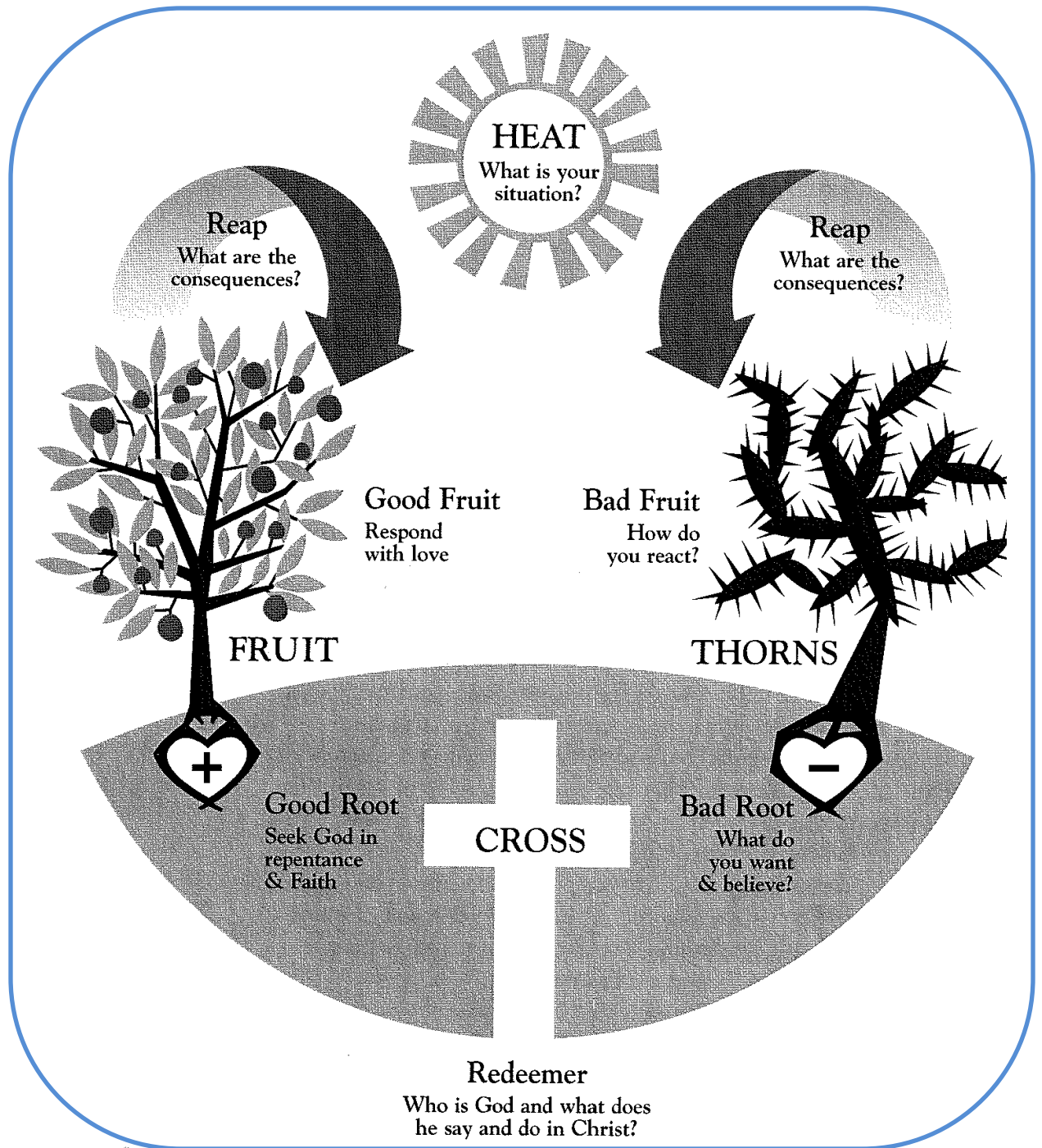
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how people change

Jeremiah 17:5-10

- heat
- thorn
- cross
- fruit

THE BIG PICTURE



relationship
struggles

difficulty at work

disappointment
in marriage

problems in the
church

extended family
relations

stress of
parenting

overbooked
schedules

expectations of
others

pressures of
culture



health issues

financial stress

temptations of a
promotion

rejection of
friends

death of a loved
one

rebellious
children

difficulties in
ministry

trauma and
abuse

chronic sickness

natural disaster

Psalm 88- Man's View of the Heat

1. vs. 1-2: uncontrollable crying
2. vs. 3-5: deep inner despair; feels as if he has been to hell
3. vs. 6-7: God has put him in this predicament
4. vs. 8a: all his friends are gone
5. vs. 8b: trapped and helpless
6. vs. 9-12: feelings of dying and no one comes to help
7. vs. 13-14: God has turned His back on him
8. vs. 15-17: bad things always happen to him, and nothing ever changes
9. vs. 18: he wakes up every morning in a dark world

James 1:1-18- God's View of the Heat

1. vs. 2: trials are certain
2. vs. 2-4: trials are beneficial
3. vs. 5: we need wisdom from God
4. vs. 12: there is a reward for those who persevere through trials
5. vs. 13-15: trials can quickly become temptations or opportunities for sin
6. vs. 16-18: a proper perspective of God is needed from those going through trials and temptations

Psalm 88 and James 1 both remind us that the Bible speaks of a real God who meets and comforts real people in the midst of difficulty in the real world. Psalm 88 emphasizes that God knows and understand what we are going through. James 1 provides an example of a pastor applying this truth to the lives of people he dearly loves. In both passages, the reality of the HEAT is acknowledged and responded to in ways that are truly liberating. We are not alone. God does understand. So what can we learn from these 2 passages

(Psalm 88 and James 1)?

Paul Tripp & Tim Lane

From the greatest joys to
the most crushing
sorrows, God
understands the full range
of human experience.

The presence and
promises of the Redeemer
address people like us
who live in a world where
such things take place.

God's honesty about these experiences invites me to be honest about the things I face. Biblical Christianity is never blind, indifferent or stoic in its reaction to life.

Going to God with my
despair, doubt, and fear is an
act of faith. Psalm 88
reminds me to run to God in
these desperate moments and
not away from Him.

The Bible is not about
an idyllic world
inhabited by noble
people who always
made the right choice.

discussion questions:

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- Take a current situation (HEAT) in your life. How might you be misinterpreting? What could God be up to in your life?

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how people change

You and I are never really
passive. We are always
acting, reacting, and
responding to the *heat* in
our lives.

Paul Tripp

common excuses to explain thorn-bush responses

1. other people
2. family background
3. your body

While external conditions can be very influential in our lives and should not be ignored, the Bible says that they are only the occasion for sin, not the cause. Difficulties in life do not cause sin. Our background, relationships, situation, and physical condition only provide the opportunity for our thoughts, words, and actions to reveal whatever is already in our hearts.

Paul Tripp & Tim Lane







nature:
ACTIVE
WORSHIPPER

Our struggles and temptations
often trigger sin, but they never
cause it. The root cause is
always the heart and its sinful
desires.

Tim Chester

DENY-AVOID-ESCAPE

- pornography
- escapist fantasies
- depression
- suicide
- various addictions
- self-injury
- various eating disorders
- work-a-holic

MAGNIFY-EXPAND- CATASTROPHIZE

- gossip
- slander
- explosive anger
- verbal/domestic abuse
- various personality disorders
- narcissism
- bi-polar

PRICKLY-HYPER SENSITIVE

- bitterness
- resentment
- excessive defensiveness
- paranoia
- stinginess
- jealousy & envy
- excessive insecurity

RETURN EVIL FOR EVIL

- hurtful anger
- revengeful manipulation
- various forms of abuse
- silent treatment/coldness
- constant criticism

BOGGED DOWN- PARALYZED-CAPTURED

- depression
- acute anxiety
- religious OCD
- fear of man
- struggles with the past
- morbid introspection

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

- constant judgment
- arrogance
- legalism
- entitlement attitude
- constant comparison to others
- blame-shifting
- constant excuse making

THORN BUSH PASSAGES

- Mark 7:21-23
- Romans 1:29-32
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- Galatians 5:19-20
- Colossians 3:8-10
- 1 Timothy 1:9-10
- 2 Timothy 3:1-6
- 1 John 2:15-17

James 1:13-15: The Progression of Sin

‘tempted’
‘attraction’

‘lured’
‘deception’

‘enticed’
‘preoccupation’

‘death’
‘subjection’

SIN



Human sin is stubborn, but not
as stubborn as the grace of God
and not half so persistent, not
half so ready to suffer to win its
way.

Cornelius Plantinga

To let God meet us where
we are, we must know where
we are, and such an exercise
in truth-telling can often be
painful.

Gordon Dalbey

discussion questions

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- In response to the HEAT, what are your default THORN-bush responses?
- Using the progression of sin diagram, analyze underlying desires which feed external, sinful (THORNY) responses.

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Galatians 2:20

1. The Redemptive Fact
2. The Present Reality
3. The Results for
Everyday Living

Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church. The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

A benevolent malefactor, merciful, gentle, helpful, clement, a convict, returning good for evil, giving back pardon for hatred, preferring pity to vengeance, preferring to ruin himself rather than to ruin his enemy, saving him who had smitten him, kneeling on the heights of virtue, more nearly akin to an angel than to a man. Javert was constrained to admit to himself that this monster existed. Things could not go on in this manner.

Victor Hugo

1. We will live with personal integrity
2. As recipients of grace, we will create a climate of grace in our relationships
3. We will act with courageous grace and constructive truth

Yet so many believers only think
of faith and repentance as the
way to enter the Christian life.
They fail to realize that faith and
repentance link us to Christ on a
daily basis.

Paul Tripp & Tim Lane

All-of-life repentance is the
best sign that we are growing
deeply and rapidly into the
character of Jesus.

Tim Keller

Common Misconceptions

- selective
- self-preservation
- eliminates consequences
- sorrow equals repentance
- being sorry for something
- penance and repentance are equal
- doing to cover your sin
- self defense is compatible with repentance
- open confession

7 Principles of True Repentance

1. True repentance is a gift from God
2. True repentance is not a single act but an ongoing and continual attitude
3. True repentance is not a mechanism to escape the consequences of sin
4. True repentance is not what you do for yourself but what you do for God
5. True repentance is not merely of the fruits of sin but of the very roots
6. True repentance is not secret but open
7. True repentance is both negative and positive

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False repentance flees
correction; true
repentance seeks it.

Bryan Chapell

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How do we repent? We repent
through faith...turning to God
in faith and from sin in
repentance are the same
movement.

Tim Chester

Luke 15:11-32

1. Wake Up
2. Own Up
3. Go Up

The older brother

- restless anger: ‘was angry and refused to go in...’
- joyless duty: ‘all these years I’ve been slaving for you...’
- anxious performance: ‘I never disobeyed your command...’
- proud comparison: ‘This son of yours...has devoured your property with prostitutes...’

discussion questions

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- In what areas of repentance do you need to see grace-empowered growth?

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how people change

The process of
redemption is
painfully unfinished
this side of eternity.

David Powlison

Many people change their
behavior, but their motives and
desires are still wrong; so their
new behavior is no more
pleasing to God than their old
behavior.

Tim Chester

“...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22-24

What are characteristics of true biblical change:

1. My perspective on life changes
2. I understand the dynamics of my vertical relationship with God and my horizontal relationships with others
3. The way I speak with other people changes
4. How I deal with sin
5. The manner in which I worship God

6. My motivation for change becomes less and less me-centered, and more and more God-centered
7. My desires, hopes, dreams and goals become aligned with Scripture
8. My time, talent and treasure become increasingly aligned with biblical principles
9. My daily awareness of Christ increases
10. I run to Christ first instead of other substitutes

11. I become more attuned to the dynamics of heart idolatry and my own sinful propensities
12. Momentary pleasures no longer hold your attention
13. The Bible gets personal, it's not just talking about them- it's talking about you
14. You begin to see that God is a God of grace and mercy, and He becomes increasingly attractive

discussion questions

- What are 1-2 things you are taking away from this session?
- Write down 1-2 areas from our discussions today that you want to return to over the next few weeks.
- Discuss 1-2 areas of encouragement you've received today.