

Introduction:

The greatest danger in seeking to change for the better is believing it's simply a matter of “_____”.

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 (NIV)

Back to the Basics:

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB)

- Change is a work of the **Spirit**.
- Change is a **by-product** of a personal, accurate and deepening relationship with God.
- Change occurs from the **inside out**. The goal of change is **Christ-like character**.
- Change is a **progressive** on-going process.

A Biblical Theology of Change:

I. Salvation:

- It Begins at Spiritual Birth: *"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*
John 3:5 (NIV)
- The Gospel – The Good News: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*
John 3:16 (NIV)
- Justification: A legal declaration of our standing before God. He takes away our sin legally. He imputes the righteousness of Christ. It is a point in time.
- It is by _____ we are saved, through _____.

II. Sanctification:

- *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation..."*
1 Peter 2:2 (NIV)
- *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*
Galatians 2:20 (NIV)
- Progressive Sanctification: A continuous process of becoming more and more righteous or holy, in daily experience.
- What do we do when we blow it? *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
1 John 1:9 (NIV)

- How do we become more holy?
 - The body of Christ
 - Personal Time with God
 - Ordinances
 - Conviction and Empowering
 - Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

III. Glorification:

- "... we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

1 John 3:2 (NIV)

Four Key Concepts to "Put It All Together":

1. Spirituality is the life of Christ.
(John 14:20, Phil. 1:21, Ephesians 3:17, Galatians 5:19-20)
2. Spirituality is the life of Christ **reproduced in the believer.**
(2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 4:5-10)
3. Spirituality is the life of Christ reproduced in the believer **by the Holy Spirit.**
(Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:16 & 25)
4. Spirituality is the life of Christ reproduced in the believer by the Holy Spirit **in obedience (response) to the Word of God.** (Hebrews 5:11-14, James 1:19-27)

Conclusion: The Work of God
The Word of God
Personal Commitment
Other Believers
+ Time and Trials
Maturity

The issue isn't _____ harder, it's _____ in grace.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does change require more than will power?
2. What aspect of this teaching helped you most?
3. What was most unclear or confusing? Discuss and help one another in your group.
4. Read Philippians 2:12-13 and discuss the balance of “God’s part” and “our part” in seeing change become a reality in our daily experience.

References: *True Spirituality* – Francis Schaeffer
The Pursuit of Holiness – Jerry Bridges
The Spirit of the Disciplines – Dallas Willard
30 Days to Understand the Christian Life – Max E. Anders