

Midweek Bible Study

Can I Really Change?

Reflections on Biblical Transformation

How many of you want to change?

What does that mean? What does it look like?

Millar's book, *Changed into His Likeness*, offers these perspectives:

1. "Personal change is generally triggered rather than chosen"
2. "Personal change is a highly complex (and unpredictable) process"

We need a biblical theology of change or transformation.

Inadequate Reasons to Want Change

1. Ulterior motives?
2. Selfish motives?

Biblical Reasons to Want Change

1. I want my life to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31).
2. I want to glorify God by being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; Col. 3:10).
3. I want to glorify God by mortifying the deeds of the flesh, laying aside every sin, and the weight (Rom. 8:13; Heb. 12:1-2).
4. I want to be controlled by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-25)
5. A sense of personal *shalom*, a good conscience, a life of happiness and satisfaction. Acts 24:16; Psa. 51:7-12

Expecting Too Much, Expecting Too Little

1. An overrealized eschatology
2. An underrealized soteriology

The Already and Not Yet of Change

Already – We are not what we used to be/We are new

Not Yet – We are not what we will be



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The Hope of Present Change

Col. 2:6-7; Col. 3:1-5

What kind of change are we pursuing?

1. A change in the inner man – a renewal – 2 Cor. 4:16
I want to grow, I want to grow closer to Christ – Phil 3:10
2. A change in our actions, positively and negatively – Eph. 4:22-32; Col. 3:5-10

Can My Emotions Be Transformed?

Emotions are a part of our humanity, an inherent part of our humanity, that are interconnected between body and soul.

1. They reflect the image of God.
2. Our emotions are indicators of what we believe and what we value. (Gauges, not guides)
3. They express the inner man, the soul, the heart, and the mind
4. They influence motives and conduct – strongly influence.
5. They are necessary for us to properly know and relate to others and most importantly, to God.

Emotions may be good, bad, or neutral. There is a moral quality to our emotions.

In our present state, the emotions, originally good and holy, are now corrupted by sin.

1. Our emotions are distorted; our emotions are out of harmony with our minds and wills.
2. Our emotions can pollute our thinking, strain or break our relationships.
3. Our emotions can go to extremes, they can lead us astray, they can twist our thinking, misshape our behavior.
4. Our emotions as expressions of our valuations can be *disordered*.
*We should learn to listen to what they are telling us

The Transformation of our Emotions

1. The transforming power of Gospel Truth
2. Truth comes first ~ Jn. 17:17
My feelings are not God. God is God. My feelings do not define truth. God's word defines truth. My feelings are echoes and responses to what my mind perceives. And sometimes—many times—my feelings



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are out of sync with the truth. When that happens—and it happens every day in some measure—I try not to bend the truth to justify my imperfect feelings, but rather, I plead with God: Purify my perceptions of his truth and transform my feelings so that they are in sync with the truth.

I hope you are learning with me how to avail yourself of the power of the Holy Spirit to put to death feelings that are out of sync with the truth, and how to lay hold on God for the transformation of your feelings so that they match the truth of God's word. John Piper

3. Right thinking is critical in transforming of the emotions
Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:1-2

Truth comes to the mind and to the understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Then having seen the truth the Christian loves it. It moves his heart. If you see the truth about yourself as a slave of sin you will hate yourself. Then as you see the glorious truth about the love of Christ you will want it, you will desire it. So the heart is engaged. Truly to see the truth means that you are moved by it and that you love it. You cannot help it. If you see truth clearly, you must feel it. Then that in turn leads to this, that your greatest desire will be to practice it and love it. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

4. Right beholding is transformational
 - a) Psa 115; 135
 - b) 2 Cor. 3:18
5. Right community is transformational

A Strategy to Gospel-Centered Transformation

1. Isolate the sin (identify and do not make excuses)
2. Begin to search the Scriptures for a biblical analysis of the sin
3. Begin to meditate and soak in the truth about that sin
4. Begin to pray that God would align your affections to the truth
5. Memorize Scripture that relates to that sin
6. Be connected with members in the body regarding that sin ~ Heb. 3:12-14; Prov. 27:6
7. Put the sin into greater and greater biblical perspective – read about it, study about it
8. Be ready to fight the fight of faith with Scripture.

Application

Conclusion

