



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?



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?

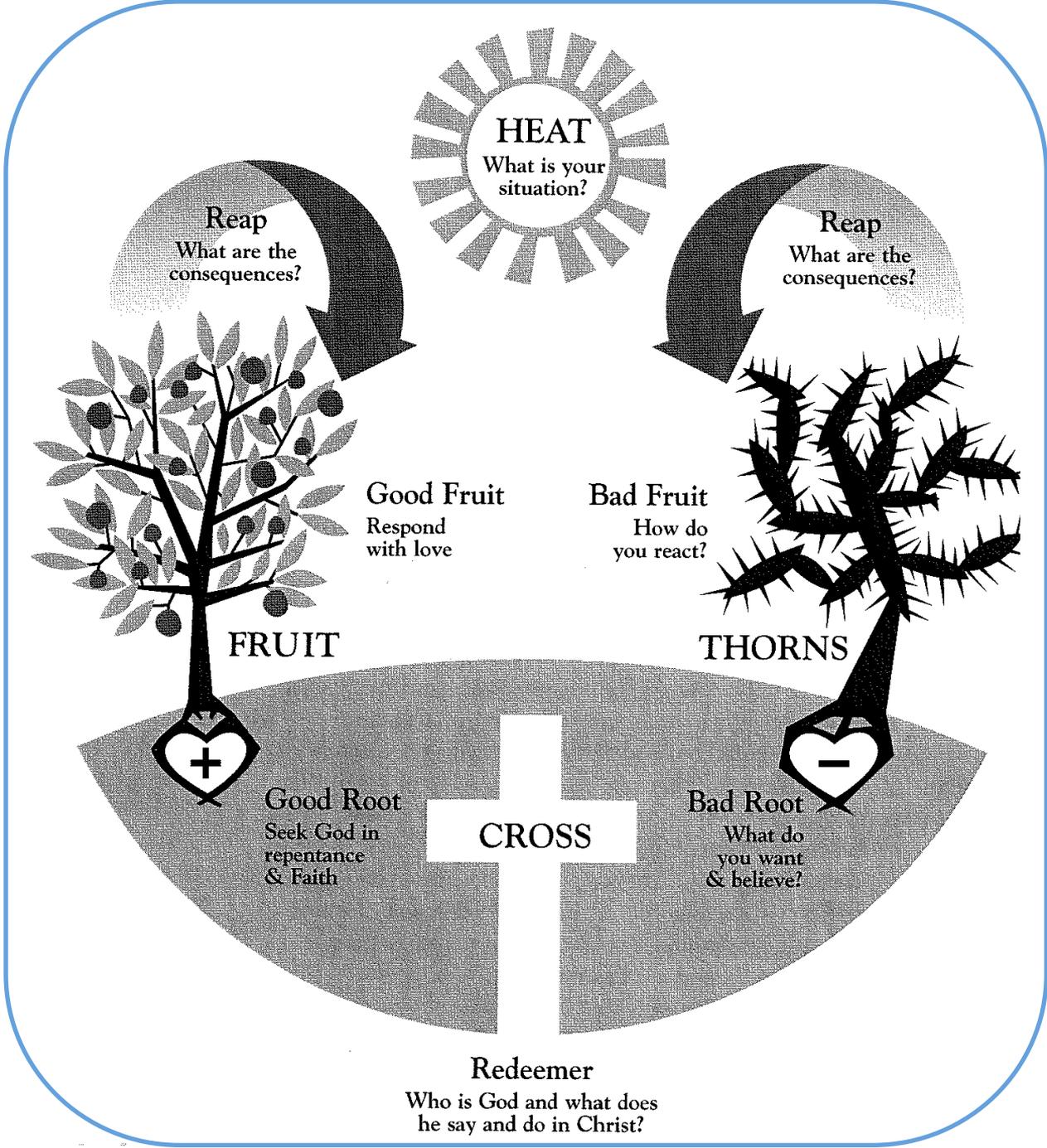


how people change

# Jeremiah 17:5-10

- heat
- thorn
- cross
- fruit

# THE BIG PICTURE





## 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?



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

SIN CURSED BODY



MURTURE

SIN CURSED WORLD



God reigns over everything

Nurture: World

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.



how people change

# 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?



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.