**Changed Into His Image**

***Lesson One: Understanding Biblical Change - 2 Cor. 3:18***

**Introduction**: It is a passion in our hearts to make sure that the members of Hillcrest Baptist Church are continuing to grow spiritually. The teaching and fellowship that take place in the Sunday school are vital to that growth. It is our prayer that this study in the principles of spiritual growth from Jim Berg’s book, Changed Into His Image, will help you to grow in Christlikeness and enhance your service to God.

It is evident from Scripture that it is God’s goal to conform us to the image of His Son. Consider the following passages in their context: Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:17-32; 1 John 2:6.

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

* Explain God’s primary goal for wanting you to make biblical change.
* Summarize the Holy Spirit’s role in making biblical change.
* Explain the three parts of biblical change.
* Define the term “discipleship” and explain the important part it plays in life’s relationships.

We need to know where we are going in the process of spiritual growth lest we should receive the Christopher Columbus Award.

“This award goes to those who, like good old Christopher Columbus, when they set out to do something, don’t know where they are going; neither do they know how to get there. When they arrive, they don’t know where they are, and when they return, they don’t know where they’ve been. “ (Source Unknown)

1. **This study is about sanctification.**
   1. Sanctification, in the sense we are discussing in this study, is progressive.
      1. The word, sanctify, means to set apart.
      2. Sanctification is used in reference to a believer’s salvation (1 Cor. 6:11). Paul said of the Corinthians that they were sanctified. In this context, Paul is referring to their salvation. This is a completed work that takes place at the time of the new birth. In this sense, every believer is sanctified. We are set apart unto God. His righteousness has been credited to our account. There is another way in which the same word is used.
      3. The word is used in other contexts to describe the spiritual growth of a believer. Yes, a believer belongs to the Lord. He or she has been set apart from the world for God’s use. At the same time, there is a process through which every believer must pass. Jesus had this process in mind when He prayed for His disciples in John 17:17. Obviously, the disciples were already saved. Jesus’ prayer was that they might be set apart for God’s use. God would do the work of progressive sanctification through His Word.
   2. Sanctification is the process by which God changes a believer to become more like Christ in his attitudes, ambitions, and actions. In other words, we are considering the process of spiritual growth.
   3. Not just any change will do. More often than not, the change that we desire is a change in our circumstances. We say things like, “Life would be so much better if I had a different job, a new boss, a new house, etc.” While God can change our circumstances, He is interested in changing us in our circumstances.
   4. The situations of life reveal what is in your heart. – Mark 7:21-23
   5. When a tea bag is placed in hot water, the flavor of the tea is released. The hot water didn’t create the flavor; it merely revealed what was in the bag.
   6. The situations of your life do not create your response. They only serve to reveal through your words and actions what was already in your heart. If you don’t like the flavor, you must change the contents.
2. **The Goal of Change**
   1. The result of sanctification is a believer who looks increasingly like Christ—the “grown-up Christian.”
   2. God is so pleased with His Son that he desires to conform all His children to that same image.
   3. God loves you just the way you are, but too much to leave you that way.
3. **The Person of Change**
   1. The Holy Spirit is one of the three Persons of the Godhead.
   2. He is actively at work in the life of the believer to conform him or her to the image of Christ.
   3. We are changed by Him as we cooperate with His leading (Rom. 8:14; Ps. 23:3).
      1. He leads through His convicting voice. He leads away from sin and to Christ’s likeness.
      2. This takes place when we obey God’s admonition to be controlled by the Spirit. Eph. 5:18
   4. Any change that occurs in the life of the believer is a result of the Spirit’s work and He is the only One worthy of praise for the change.
      1. If a farmer says he plowed his field, he does not mean that he personally pulled the plow. While he was involved in the process, it was the tractor that did the hard work. Don’t misunderstand, you are to be involved in the process of sanctification. It is, however, the power of the Holy Spirit that does the work.
      2. In the process of remodeling a house, you may remove the old tile floor from a certain room. Anyone who has tried to remove the old glue knows what a tedious process this can be. Home improvement stores carry products that can make the process feasible. The cleaning agent goes to work on those tough spots so that they can be removed. This makes it possible for the new floor to be laid. This is similar to the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of change. The old must be removed for the new to be installed. It is the Holy Spirit that goes to work on the tough areas of our lives.
4. **The Process of Change**
   1. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and changes us to become like the Son of God.
   2. This process will follow three basic steps:
      1. Restraining Your Flesh
      2. Renewing Your Mind
      3. Reflecting Your Lord

Note: These steps will form the basis for the remainder of our study. There will be areas where the flesh will need to be restrained and the mind renewed so that you will reflect the Savior.

1. **It is the design of these lessons to help you see how to change in your own life and to help others grow spiritually through discipleship.**
   1. Discipleship is helping another believer make biblical change toward Christlikeness.
   2. Discipleship is central to all we do as believers.
      1. Parenting is discipleship.
      2. Edification in the local church is discipleship.
      3. Christian education is discipleship.
      4. Counseling is discipleship.
      5. Management in Christian work is discipleship.
   3. Discipleship is not a 14 week process. It is a lifelong process.
2. **Application for Life Change**
   1. Identify specific areas of your life that need biblical change.
   2. Recognize times during your day when you can cooperate with God’s plan to sanctify you.
   3. Ask God to burden you for the needs of others around you who also need to make biblical change.