**Changed Into His Image**

***Lesson Two: Recognizing the Evil Within - Jeremiah 17:9-10***

**Introduction**: It is evident from Lesson One that God desires to change us. More than He desires to change our circumstances, He desires to conform us to the image of His Son. God is so pleased with His Son He wants everyone to be just like Him. That change does not come easy. Our “old man” or “flesh” is in constant conflict with the Spirit of God and represents everything within us that attempts to make life work apart from God. We must recognize and acknowledge the evil within us in order to see true biblical change occur.

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

* Explain how the wrong view of man leads to a wrong diagnosis of man’s problems.
* Explain what is wrong with man and why trusting the heart of man is so treacherous.
* Understand why submission to the authority God has placed in your life is so crucial to your spiritual success.

1. **The Evil Within**
   1. Even after salvation, an indwelling principle of sin corrupts every part of us.

* 1. Something is desperately wrong with man.
  2. The Bible offers man his only hope – redemption.

1. **Getting the View of Man Right**
   1. We have a distorted view of man.

“We sometimes think we are pretty good people who ‘mess up’ once in a while. The biblical picture is just the opposite: We are all pretty bad people who do right only by the grace of God.” (Berg 26)

* 1. If the view of man is not right, there will be a misdiagnosis in every area.
     1. Misdiagnosis in parenting
     2. Misdiagnosis in counseling
     3. Misdiagnosis in the local church
     4. Misdiagnosis in Christian education
  2. More misdiagnoses
     1. “I can’t believe I did that!”
     2. “I can’t believe anyone would do that!”
     3. “I trust my kids. They would never do anything like that!”
     4. “I can’t believe God would send anyone to hell!”
     5. “The Devil must really be fighting me!”

“A believer who has been giving in to the pull of his sinful heart never learns the extent of its power over him. When he decides to “row upstream,” however, he meets the “current” of indwelling sin full force. He quickly realizes that life lived against his sinful bent is not only difficult – it is impossible. He must learn how desperately he needs God.” (Berg 33)

1. **The Nature of Our Nature**
   1. It is the nature of man to be wise in his own eyes.

“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6).

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil” (Prov. 3:7).

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes” (Prov. 12:15).

“Cease from thine own wisdom” (Prov. 23:4).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” (Isa. 53:6).

*Illustration: In his book, Discovering Your Destiny, Cary Schmidt relates the story of his 3 year old son who was excited to have dressed himself for the first time. The only problem was that he put his pants on backwards. When Bro. Schmidt told him that his pants were on backwards, his son replied, “Nuh, uh.” Typical of a 3 year old who is wise in his own eyes. Finally, when he made the proper adjustments, he breathed a sigh of relief.*

* 1. A person who is wise in his own eyes will fail to trust the Lord.

“So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels” (Ps. 81:12).

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

* 1. Because God knows the destructive nature of our nature, He warns us against going our own way.

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26).

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight!” (Isa. 5:21).

“Be not wise in your own conceits” (Rom. 12:16).

1. **The Power of our Nature**
   1. The flesh defies God.

“There can be little doubt that God sees our independent spirit – the very thing the world considers a virtue –as the root problem of man” (Berg 36).

* 1. The flesh defiles man. This does not mean that man is as wicked as is possible, but that the sin nature affects everything he says and does apart from God’s intervention.
  2. The flesh deceives man.
  3. The flesh destroys man.

“The toxicity of this heart is so potent that when God wants to judge a man, all He has to do is turn that man over to his own heart” (Berg 42).

1. **Application for Life Change**
   1. Recognize areas of your life where sin’s destruction is already making headway.
   2. Repent of any self-confidence and self-reliance you tend to have.
   3. Turn to God in dependence to keep you from trusting in your own heart.