**Changed Into His Image**

***Lesson Three: Identifying Your Own Way – James 1:14***

**Introduction**: As we have seen in the previous two lessons, each of us is born with the same basic sinful heart that demands to have its own way. The flesh is that part of us that tries to usurp God’s control and replace it with our own way. We are all born with certain natural desires of the body (food, water, and air); most of the other desires are learned. Every one of us wants our own way. It is therefore crucial to identify our own way, in order to see biblical change occur.

We must admit that we are naturally rebels against God (Rom. 8:7). C.S. Lewis said it well, “Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms.”

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

* Explain why the rebellion of our own way manifests itself differently in each of us.
* Recognize different kinds of rebel ways in your own life and in the lives of those with whom you live and to whom you minister.
* Know why there is hope for any of us who wish to make biblical change.
1. **Identifying Your Own Way**
	1. Our basic problem is that we try to make life work without God.

“The devil did not tempt Adam and Eve to steal, to lie, to kill, to commit adultery; he tempted them to live independent of God” (Bob Jones, Sr.)

* 1. Living independently of God can take many forms.

* 1. We learn to lust in unique combinations; we have “designer lusts.”
	2. We must now look at the nature of our nurture.
1. **The Masks of Rebellion**
	1. The assertive rebel demonstrates outward signs of rebellion.
		1. He or she says, “I won’t obey!”
		2. The assertive rebel is usually not hard to spot.
		3. Their rebellion is evident through their attitude and actions.
	2. The cooperative rebel camouflages his or her rebellious heart under the cover of obedient action. There are two basic categories for this type of rebel.
		1. A compliant rebel does what is necessary to get what he or

she wants. Obeying makes life easier. They comply, but they really don’t want to. Their rebellion is evident through their attitude.

* + 1. The cooperative rebel may also take the form of one who obeys out of a sense of duty. It is not really in their heart to obey. They do so in order to avoid getting in trouble. Others would look at them as the “good kid” or the “good church person.” They enjoy having the image.
		2. There are many of us who really try to be good, not because we are allowing God to work in our lives to produce His fruit, but because it seems that life has fewer snags when we stay out of trouble.
	1. The passive rebel plays the victim. There are basically three variations of this type of rebel.
		1. The rebel who says, “I can’t obey.” This is the person who

finds every excuse as to why it is too difficult to obey: they didn’t have good examples growing up; they are constantly too sick or tired to try; he refuses to try because of laziness or a fear of failure. “He won’t try out, reach out, speak out, or move out” (Berg 54). They find it easier to avoid problems than to deal with them.

* + 1. The rebel who says, “I forgot to obey.” They forget

responsibilities and appointments due to being distracted by other pursuits. He or she is so obsessed with that which is important to them (their hobbies, friendships, image, etc.) that they fail to pay attention to instructions that come with their responsibilities.

* + 1. The rebel who says, “I didn’t know to obey.” He or she will

plead that they did not hear the instructions or that they just weren’t thinking. They will say that they didn’t think that it applied to them. They are simply living for the pleasure of the moment without regard for the consequences.

* 1. You may be able to identify with all of these in your own life.
	2. You may see how others are struggling with these forms of rebellion.
		1. A spouse
		2. A parent
		3. A child
		4. A friend
		5. A church member
	3. You may wonder if there is any hope for change.
1. **The Reason for Hope**
	1. God has a certain kind of change in mind for all of us.
		1. If anybody was going to have a hard time changing, it would be these people in Corinth who had come to Christ out of horrible lifestyles. (II Cor. 6:9-11)
		2. Each one of us has been fundamentally changed into a “new creature.” (II Cor. 5:17)
	2. God intends to change you at the heart level.
	3. Begin by asking, “What is the ruling lust in my heart right now?”
2. **Take Time to Reflect**

A. Where there is fruit (words and actions) there must be a root (thoughts).

B. Complete the following statements to see ways of thinking that have produced the words and actions of your life.

I feel most secure when….

All I want to have / be / do is….

The thing I worry about most is….

The thing that keeps me awake is….

I go into a panic when….

I get most angry when….

I tend to get very discouraged when….

I want….

C. Deal with the issues of life at the heart level (Prov. 4:23).

“It is not even enough for the individual to see his ruling lust and acknowledge that he has a problem in that area. Unless he repents with the intention of forsaking, his fellowship with God remains broken, and there will be no lasting change.”

1. **Application for Life Change**
	1. Respond by being much more cautious of your own actions and reactions when in “hot water” situations.
	2. Respond by encouraging others who have lost hope about making biblical change.
	3. Respond by asking God to increase your awareness of your rebel ways, repenting of them, and depending upon Him to help you change.