

# The Inner-change

## On being changed by Jesus from the inside-out

Jesus saves us from three things:

1. *The PENALTY of sin*
2. *The POWER of sin*
3. *The PRESENCE of sin*

If you are a Christian, He *has saved* you from the penalty of sin (it's called, "Justification"); He *is saving* you from the power of sin (it's called, "Sanctification"); and He *will save* you from the presence of sin (we call that, "Glorification").

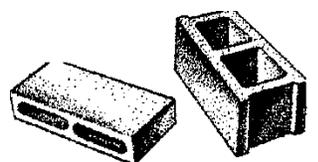
In Foundation #1 - THE CROSS, we looked at the how God saved us from sin's penalty. Now, let's talk about how He delivers us from sin's power. We come to Him full of ourselves and our sins, but He changes all that. God accepts you the way you are now, but He is not going to leave you that way! He *forgives you*, but He also wants to *transform* you from the inside-out!

We have already referred to Ephesians 2:8-10, "*For It is by grace you have been saved, through faith --and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*"

So it's not good works, but God's grace that saves us. But if we're true Christians we will eventually do good works and live a changed life. His grace immediately justifies us, and gradually sanctifies us. That is, Jesus gave you a robe of righteousness as His gift to you. What's on the inside of that robe is what He wants to straighten out now. And He will do just that as you learn to cooperate with Him day to day.

Many Christians realize that they are saved by grace, but then they think that ought to go on and live the Christian life by their *own power*. That is *not* the way it works. God's standards are way beyond the reach of human ability. There's no way you can imitate the Christian 'ethic' without having the Christian's power. You can't just do this out of your own resources. I often say that the Christian life is not *hard* to live - - it is *impossible!* Only *Jesus* can live it, and since He lives in you now, he enables you to do it! I like to say, *The Christian life is the life He lived then, lived now by Him in you!* If you are going to live to follow Jesus, it's because He's inside you, empowering you daily to do so.

In Romans 7:18, Paul says, "*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*"



I have found that our *end* is God's *beginning*. When I *give it up*, God can then *take me up* and change my life. He usually waits until I get to the end of *my* resources, before He begins empowering me. Often times we say we are not *strong* enough in the Lord, but I don't think of it that way. I think our problem is that we don't realize how *weak* we are. In other words, your greatest *strength* is to know how *weak* you are!

I hear people recite what they think is a quote from the Bible, "*God helps those who help themselves.*" But *God* didn't say that - *Benjamin Franklin* did! The truth is actually the diametric opposite of that old saying. God actually only helps those who know they *can't* help themselves! He "resists the proud and gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5)

We're made up of three parts - our *spirit*, our *soul* and our *body*. Sin brought a confusion between those parts of our being. It emptied out our spirit so that before we received Jesus, we had a vacant spirit. Our power source to live as Christians is the dynamic of the risen Jesus in our spirit. He died, rose again, and lives in you to live His sweet life in and through you.

In this, what we call, "Foundation #2", we'll look at the *dynamic* that God put in your spirit, the daily *decision* you'll be making in your soul, and the *discipline* you'll be practicing in your body.

## **You Have Dynamic in Your Spirit!**

*"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer. Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."* Romans 6:1-10

*"... you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."* Colossians 3:3

*"... work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."* Philippians 2:12-13

In other words, God has inserted His life on the *inside* of you (where it doesn't show), and now it's your job to get it on the *outside* of you (where it does show)! A little girl asked her mom, "Mommy, isn't God bigger than us?" *Of course*. "And doesn't He live inside us?" Yes. "Well, then, wouldn't He show through?" And that's exactly what He wants to do, *show through you!*

He has given you both *the power* and *the desire* to do His will. What God demands of us, he deposits *in* us. It's like when a child asks a parent for money to buy the parent a present! Anything that we can do righteously for God, He has empowered us to do.

Your salvation was not an *improvement of your old life*, but the *impartation of a new life*. The Christian life is not really a *changed* life, but an *exchanged* one! Jesus exchanged His life for yours, and has put His resurrection life in your dead spirit. Now you're alive with His life to live in a way that's pleasing to Him!

**The Christian life  
is the life He lived then,  
lived now by Him in you!**

“I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Salvation is such a radical thing, it is illustrated in the Bible by life's two most radical experiences - *birth and death*. Jesus used *birth* to speak of salvation when He said to Nicodemus, "*You must be born again.*" It's also illustrated by *death* in the preceding passages of Romans 6 and Galatians 2. There it says that you died to sin when you received Jesus Christ and came to life with His same resurrected life.

When you received Jesus, you both died and rose again. You died to sin's reign in your life and received His life in new birth. Your old self was crucified, which means that the person you used to be, died! That's not to say that your *sin nature* died and no longer exists, because unfortunately you still have that old nature within you. But the person you used to be, died to sin's jurisdiction over you. Your life is written in two volumes. The first volume was *B.C.* (the old you that was *before Christ* was in your life). The second volume is after you received Him. The first volume ended with the death of your old self and volume two begins with the resurrection of your new self.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* 2 Corinthians 5: 17

Although you still have a sin nature, it's now *unemployed*, so to speak. It is not *destroyed*, but it is no longer in control of your life! In fact, you now have *two* natures - the divine nature that has been imparted to you when you were born again, and your old sin nature, which you received when you were born the first time. Galatians 5:17 talks about the battle between these two natures, "*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*" The one you feed and pay attention to will be the one that wins the battle inside you.

I often illustrate how you can tell if a person is a Christian or not by noting the difference between a pig and a sheep. If a sheep is walking along, falls into a big puddle of mud and can't get out, he cries "baaaa!" to the shepherd to pull him out. But if a pig falls into the mud, he doesn't even want to get out, he basks in it, he loves it, he feels at home in the mud! So the non-

Christian is at home in sin, but when a Christian falls into sin from time to time he calls out to the Shepherd to rescue him!

## • You Will Make a Decision in Your Soul

*"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."* Romans 6:11

The first thing you need to know is that at new birth, God put a resurrection dynamic in your spirit. Now we're being told that we must make a decision in our soul every day. The power of choice will never be taken from you. The mark of the human species is that we have this power to choose. The reason we have this power is that it is necessary for the kind of *relationship* that God wants us to have with Him. What you bring to the table has nothing to do with *ability*, it has everything to do with *availability*. It's *God* that brings the power, *you* bring the open and cooperative heart!

...the person you  
used to be, died!

Your spirit is where God lives and expresses His resurrection life. Your soul is made up of your intellect, emotion and will. In verse 11 it says to *"count yourselves dead to sin."* In other words, something has happened in your spirit which needs to be *acknowledged* and *applied* by your soul (the decision making part of you). Your soul needs to cling everyday to the truth that you died to sin and have come to life in Jesus who's inside of you! You have to remind yourself daily that Volume 1 is over, and you are now living in Volume 2 of your life (the *new life* part).

Your soul can be thought of as the 'middle man' between your spirit and your body. It is where the battle with sin is really won or lost. Now that you have received Jesus, you will tend to want sin less and God more! You have new desires and a new power that allows you to make the choice to live in victory over the sin nature. Both your spirit (where God lives) and your body (the address of your sin nature) are giving you orders. It's in the soul where you will decide between the two. It's there that you decide between the cravings of the sin inside you and the commands of God, also inside. God wants your spirit to command your soul, and your soul to command your body – to do His will.

## • You Must Discipline Your Body

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.* Romans 6:2-4

We're told here not to let sin reign. Where? *In our bodies*. Because we do have power in our spirit, and our soul is authorized to choose what we want to rule us, sin does not have to master us any longer! It's as though you were in the armed services. You had a Commander (sin) who told you to do fifty push-ups, so you did them. He told you to run 10 miles, and you ran 10 miles. He commanded you to dig a hole, so you dug a hole. You had to do everything your

Commander ordered you to do. But now you have been discharged from your old Commander - you have died to his jurisdiction. You are under the command of *Another* (a *Benevolent Leader* if ever there was one), and are no longer under the auspices of the old evil nature.

*God brings the power,  
you bring the open heart!*

Something happened to your spirit when you received Jesus. Something miraculous and eternal! Your soul needs to acknowledge that miracle every day and make the choice moment by moment to utilize the miraculous power. Then your body can be put to proper use and function with its original purpose; the purpose that God had in mind for it from the beginning.

God gave you a body (which is really only a temporary 'tent' in which you live at this stage of eternal life) to express your spirit and your spiritual desire. Before you received the Lord, your body barked the orders to your soul and spirit. Now your body has to learn how to take orders, because it is no longer in charge. It is now the *tool of your spirit*. Your body can either be an instrument of wickedness or of righteousness. You can use your physical members to do sinful things, or you can use them to do what's right and good. Your body is a weapon that either Satan can use, or that you can offer to God for Him to use for His purposes. Your body is a gift from God to be used for righteous purposes.

**“... offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - - this is your spiritual act of worship.” Romans 12:1**

**You are under the command of Another,  
and are no longer under the auspices  
of the old evil nature!**

In summary ... God puts DYNAMIC in your spirit, power to live a life that pleases Him. He then gives your soul the responsibility to make the crucial DECISION whether or not to utilize that resurrection power. And then He calls you to DISCIPLINE yourself, to present the members of your body to Him for holy and righteous purposes. Thus, you have a life continually BEING CHANGED by Jesus Christ! And He makes that change from the inside-out. It's an Inner-Change.

I heard a story once about a man who bought a train ticket, and then slung his baggage over his shoulder and started walking down the tracks. When someone found him walking with a train coming up behind him, they yelled for him to get off the tracks. The man protested that he had every right to be walking on those tracks, because he had purchased a ticket to do so! What this man obviously didn't understand is that his ticket had bought him the right to be *on the train* and not just on the tracks! He didn't have to *walk* to his destination on his own two legs. He could sit comfortably on the train and let it do all the work!

Likewise, I think a lot of Christians feel that they have to carry out the Christian life through human grit, ingenuity and power. But the Bible says that not only were you forgiven; but that

Jesus came to live inside you and through you. He has given you the desire and the power to live a holy life. He purchased your train ticket, so you can lay your baggage down and depend on Him to get you where He wants you to go!

*Lord, thank You for so adequately resourcing us to live the Christian life. You have given us all things that pertain to life and to godliness through the knowledge of you (1 Peter 1:3). We can now do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). I pray that you reveal to my new brothers and sisters the dynamic which you have given us through Jesus. Help us daily to make the decision in our soul to apply that power, and discipline our bodies so that we become instruments of righteousness rather than instruments of sin and Satan. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

### A rehearsal...

- According to Philippians 2:12, our job is to do what with our salvation?
- According to Romans 6, what happened to our “old self”?
- Galatians 2:20 says, “I’ve been crucified with Christ, nevertheless \_\_\_\_\_”
- If God puts a Dynamic in my spirit, what do I have to do to cooperate with His life in me?

### A verse to memorize...

- Romans 6:6

(I recommend that you look up the verse, write it on a card or something, and repeat it over and over throughout the day until you can quote it verbatim.)

### Another thing to consider...

Read Galatians 5:19-22 and notice the list of what the sinful nature within you is tempted toward, plus the characteristics of the new nature (the “fruit of the Spirit”). Write down a list of things in your life that you want to overcome and things you want to incorporate in your life. Ask God to help you, and share your list with a Christian friend for prayer.

### Read it and write it...

- Take some time everyday to read the Bible (I recommend that you begin with the Gospel of John and then move to the book of Acts).
- And then journal your thoughts, feelings, and questions. Talk to God everyday out loud, in your head, and on paper (or on your computer screen). Be honest

and intimate in your conversations with Him. Expect Him to communicate with you with honesty and intimacy as well.