



If You Could Change One Thing, What Would It Be?

Isaiah 40:31: (KJV) *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*



Happy New Year! Happy new beginning! Happy new opportunity to resolve to make changes in your life once and for all, only to be shot down later by the steady force of habit, life and expectations later...wait a minute...that's not happy! The truth is, for most of us a new year and a new beginning spells disaster and defeat. How can we approach change in a way that offers different results? Well, stay with us - we have a few ideas and a textbook (the Bible!) to back them up!

Christian Questions received an inspiring letter from a listener that influenced today's content. We will call her "Rebecca," who responded to our August 31, 2014 program entitled, "What Happens When Life Gets Broken?" She shared with us a letter she wrote to God, laying her eating disorder issues in front of Him with sincerity and the desire for change. Our personal response to her included what would become the theme for this program. Thank you, Rebecca, for sharing your story!

Today we will make six observations regarding the pathway and obstacles of change. We hope this will create a better basis for understanding how to make lasting changes in life.

**Know the focus
of what you are looking to change.
Is it an external behavior or
an internal attitude or perspective?
If our change is focused from the inside
out, then our efforts will be from a
deeper source and therefore inherently
more fruitful than those spurred by
attempts to change those things
plainly seen on the surface.**



Most of us look to change something on the outside, and most of us fail in that attempt because we are treating a symptom and not the problem. If you treat a symptom without removing the source, it eventually comes back.

We want to look at change from the inside out rather than the outside in.



Introduction, *This Year Will Be Different*, *The Skit Guys*, www.godtube.com

- *This year will be different.*
- *This year will be different.*
- *This year will be different.*
- *This year I need to eat less. You know what? I do solemnly swear that this year I will lose ten pounds...or at least five.*
- *Five is the magic number. That's how many times I want to visit my grandmother this year, which would be five more than last year.*
- *Learn to wait. I always want things instantly. I need patience...now!*

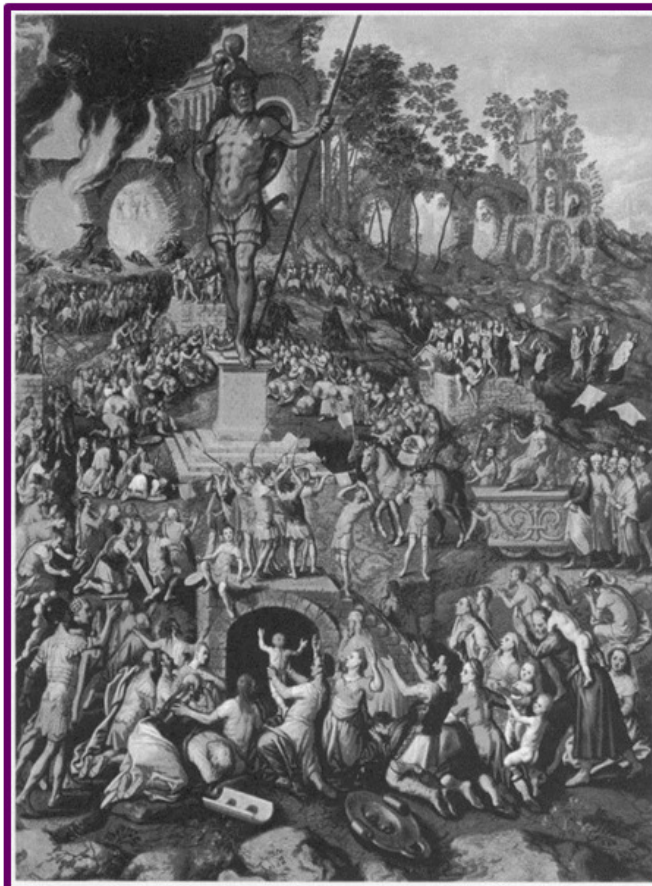
External focus does NOT get the job done, though, this is where most of us start.



An Old Testament example: King Nebuchadnezzar was king at the time of Daniel. He learned over time where to focus his heart devotion. A lifelong idolater, would he simply make proclamations about God Almighty or would he learn to truly worship Him with his very being?

The conclusion of the miraculous deliverance of the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace by God:

Daniel 3:28-30: (NRSV) ²⁸*Nebuchadnezzar said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in Him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.*



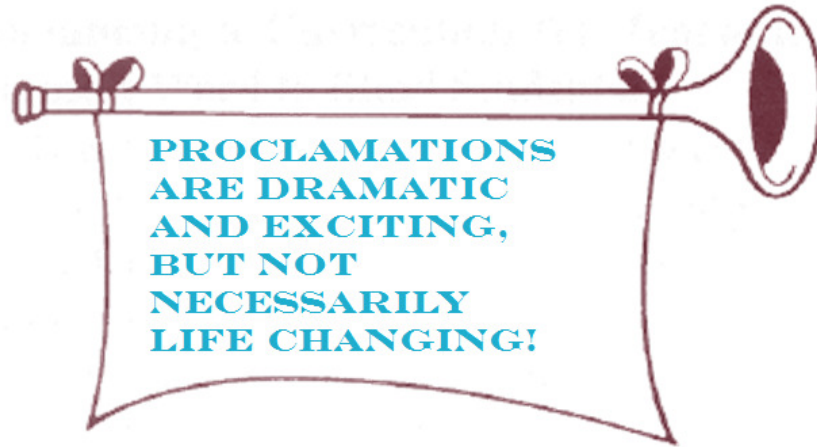
"The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace," by Pieter Aertsen
Oil on canvas – c. 1552
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam



The King sums up the courageous and active faith he has just witnessed:

²⁹Therefore I make a decree: (could this be like us making resolutions?) Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way. ³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Though astounded (again) by the power of the Almighty, *his astonishment is not a heart conversion!*



A New Testament example:

Matthew 23:1-4: (NASB) ¹Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, ²saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; ³therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

Lesson: Our words - our outward proclamations - often acknowledge that which is right and at the same time divert attention away from the core beliefs that we hold in our hearts. The King proclaimed that no one should blaspheme the Almighty, but he did NOT proclaim that the Almighty is ruler over ALL THINGS. **That which is on the surface has its roots in the heart!** If you want to change that which is on the surface, look at what is in the heart.

Is it possible and is it easy to go from external to internal focus?

 **It is toupee time, *This Year Will Be Different, The Skit Guys, www.godtube.com***

- *This year I'll be nicer to my parents. [Phone rings] What, Mom? Get off my back!*
- *(Next person) I just need peace in my life. I am just so nervous all the time. I'm twitching. Three kids! I'm a twitcher. I'm twitching. I twitch.*
- *(Next person) I just can't seem to get my pits to stop sweating! Can you see this? Look! When did I become the human leak? I mean I know I've got some stress about my future and everything, but why can't I be like everyone else and conceal it? OK. I will just have to fake it until I make it and I'll...*
- *(Next person) ...Be better than I've ever been in my entire life.*
- *(Next person) If I'm going to make this year count I have to do some things differently. It's toupee time.*



"I will be better than I have ever been in my entire life," is a wonderful thought but not a manageable change. How do you get there?

Internal focus DOES get the job done! Sometimes we let everything else divert us from this focus. When we finally settle on internal focus, amazing things can happen!



The next experience of King Nebuchadnezzar that we drop in on was many years later after he had allowed his pride to smother any potential true reverence for God. After ignoring clear warnings of the path he was on, he was punished by losing control of his faculties for seven years.

The results of a truly humbled heart:

Daniel 4:34-37: (NRSV) ³⁴When that period was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me. I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored the One who lives forever. For His sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar does not proclaim, he simply *realizes* that God is Lord over all that we build - *His* kingdom is mighty and everlasting!

³⁵All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and He does what He wills with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can stay His hand or say to Him, What are you doing? ³⁶At that time my reason returned to me; and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom. My counselors and my lords sought me out, I was re-established over my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are truth...

Nebuchadnezzar does not proclaim, he simply *personally acknowledges* that



"Nebuchadnezzar,"
by William Blake
copper plate –
c. 1795
Tate Britain, London

God is the ultimate destination of all our praise and worship.

and His ways are justice; and He is able to bring low those who walk in pride.

Nebuchadnezzar does not proclaim, he simply *accepts* that God is Lord over who we are, from the inside out.



 **Character over image, *This Year Will Be Different, The Skit Guys*, www.godtube.com**

- *Make some goals this year. Just three. Not ten.*
- *Stop judging people who aren't like me.*
- *Stop snapping at my kids.*
- *Dream!*
- *Character over image.*
- *Learn that I'm loved but not entitled.*
- *God? Did you forget about me? I'm here. Just show me what to do.*
- *Give me the strength to change. What am I saying...I don't know if I want to change, God. I'm comfortable and I have a good life. I know You want the best for me... so why don't I want the best for me?*

Sometimes the “best” for us means a self-sacrificing approach that is not necessarily comfortable.

Internal vs. external compared:

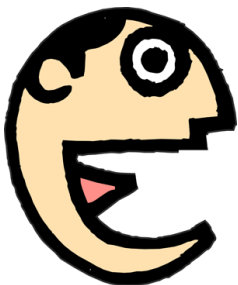
Romans 14:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Sometimes the outward “proclamations” that we make can in fact be contradictory to those that others make. The most important thing is that we are spiritually focused internally to provoke our external actions and that we are not violating scriptural principle in any way.

We can have disagreements. In Romans, some did not want to eat meat that had been offered to idols. Others said it did not mean anything, so it was okay to do. This is about standing for scriptural principle, looking at the one who disagrees with you with compassion and understanding.

Our internal conviction should direct our outward actions to the glory of God!

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) ¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.



Some people have issues with speaking without thinking. If you want to change that, you have to figure out what provokes those emotions. How can you look at those emotions from a scripturally-principled approach and create a filter to make it so you think first and do not just react?

We need to realize change on the inside provokes change on the outside.



So once we set our inner conviction, are we all set to change?

 First nugget, *New Year's Nuggets of Wisdom, The Skit Guys*, www.godtube.com

- *And the first nugget is to make some goals, but make those goals specific and obtainable.*
- *Or make them unspecific and unobtainable. Then after half-heartedly trying for a couple weeks, you can just go back to your mediocre life.*
- *Why are you telling them that? Why are you saying that to them? We're supposed to be encouraging right now.*
- *I'm just trying to give them some wisdom.*
- *That is not wisdom that is "un-wisdom." Proverbs is wisdom and Proverbs says: "The plans of the diligent produces abundance."*
- *I don't know about that. I don't have abundance of anything.*
- *...And Proverbs wins again!*



A caller from Connecticut suggests: 2 Corinthians 10:1: *I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* When we want to make a change, we often try to do it *for* God or to *show* God, to somehow prove to God that we can do it. We will go to God when we are ready. This is a mistake. 1 Corinthians 15:10: *But by the grace of God, I am what I am and His grace toward me has not been in vain.* We should allow change to happen with God. God shows us the change when we turn to Him now. We change within His love. We will never be ready, but God always is. 2 Corinthians 4:7: *But we have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.*

**Backsliding happens.
The road to true inside out change
is full of potholes and detours.
It is long and often painful,
but well worth the journey!**



Proverbs 24:16: (NASB) *For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.*

Seems like being righteous is dangerous business since we keep falling down!
We need protective gear!

Ephesians 6:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*

To be strong in the Lord is to have our inner conviction clear and focused.

¹¹*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.* ¹²*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in*

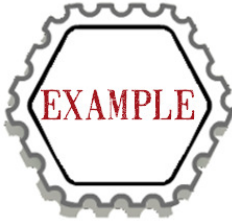


the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Because our inner conviction is clear, arming ourselves is not only logical; it becomes a life and death choice, for our enemy, the one who would have us fall - Satan - is the mighty, dark and authoritative lord of this world.

Sometimes our backsliding and weakness is predictable and can be revealed even before it happens:

Luke 22:31-34: (NASB) ³¹Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; ³²but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. ³³But he said to him, Lord, with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death! ³⁴And he said, I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know me.



We can be blessed in spite of our weaknesses.

We all know what Jesus said would happen actually did happen. We also know Jesus, after his resurrection, helped Peter to accept forgiveness and to then accept responsibility for the brotherhood. What we sometimes do not think about is that Peter was not beyond backsliding, even after all of this...

Galatians 2:11-14: (NASB) ¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. ¹³The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

The early church came from two very different worlds: The Jews had the Law Covenant and the Gentiles had only the spirit of the Law. Peter was eating previously forbidden food with the Gentiles because he knew it was now okay to do that. He had received a specific vision from God showing approval. But when visited by Christian Jews from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew from the Gentiles and acted how the Jews expected them to. He folded under pressure.

Peter was the spokesman at Pentecost when everything changed. He was given the keys for Gentiles to follow Christ, he was called to the conversion of the first Gentile, Cornelius, and now here he went back on all of that in a moment of weakness. Backsliding happens! If it can happen to the Apostle Peter, it can certainly happen to us.

To walk the road of real, true change is to accept the concept: backsliding is going to happen. This helps us not to give up. We have to move to something that will support us.

Matthew 12:20: (NASB) *A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory.*

Sometimes we are like that smoldering wick.



The greatest relief of all is Jesus knows how easily we can trip, fall or backslide, and as long as we are still focused on him, his compassion can reign in our lives. Don't lose heart!

Faith is powerful and we must understand how it works.

Faith does not reduce the burden of our backsliding or the pain of our potholes, rather faith increases our fortitude to navigate through them. Our faith does not magically lift us to safety - instead it is a real beacon of light that shows us the path to safety! Faith in God should truly be the True North of our life compass.



We do not ask God to take away the difficulty; we ask Him for the strength to take us through the difficulty.

 **Boat or bottle, *Change Me, Change Everything*, Jenny Berube, TEDx**

- *Because you know what? Instead of being a boat sailing off to this great future, most of us are bottles bobbing around in the surface and letting the winds and waves travel us to unwanted and unlooked for, and often very unfriendly shores. And the messages in those bottles? Who cares! They're not our words anyway. They're not our thoughts. And I decided I wanted to be a boat. Now a boat is still subjected to the same winds and waves, but at least you're heading in a direction where you want to go and you've got a much better chance of getting there.*



Our boat's navigator is Jesus. Are you going to be a boat or a bottle? They are both subject to the same difficulty. Follow the navigation of Jesus and your life will be a lot better off!



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Jesus is our model. He was obsessed with pointing to the Father. James 4:8: *Draw nigh unto Me and I will draw closer to you.* I want to draw closer to God through Jesus.

Jesus makes having faith a very attractive proposition:

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

He shows us how to rest *through* our experiences and difficulties. Even though it is attractive, it is a very sobering experience to LIVE our faith. We can only truly know how to live it by taking our humanity out of the way.



1 Corinthians 2:3-5: (NASB) ³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Paul could have simply impressed the Corinthians with his eloquence, knowledge and influence, but he chose to help them with their necessary changes through the power of God instead.

Walking the walk of unshakable faith:

1 Corinthians 16:13-14: (NASB) ¹³Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be done in love.

Our own changes in life come more freely when we act out of love for others.

A perspective of faith allows us to fight the fight of necessary change by granting us a source of strength beyond our own natural resources:

1 Peter 5:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

James 1:2-4: (NASB) ²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

 **Second nugget, *New Year's Nuggets of Wisdom, The Skit Guys, www.godtube.com***

- *Second nugget: Learn from your past and don't be defined by it. God has a plan for you. God has a story in mind for you even with the mistakes you've made - and trust me, I've made some mistakes. [Early 90's rap music plays] I was trying so hard chillin', relaxin', maxin' so cool.*
- *Yeah, but you just couldn't get jiggy with it. Hey, buck up. God's mercies are made new every morning.*
- *Tell that to Facebook.*

Don't be *defined* by your mistakes - learn from them!

So we have inner conviction and faith - we should be all set - right?

**To change, sometimes we need help.
Whether it is from those around us who
are also about our Father's business or
from God through His spirit, our walk is
not and should not be a lonely one.**





Control three things, *Change Me, Change Everything*, Jenny Berube, TEDx

- *So, I had to make a decision about what I could control. And there's only three things I discovered, and they're not my thoughts, someone else gave them to me, about what I could control. I can control my belief system. I can decide to believe that I could win or I can decide to believe that I'm doomed to fail. I can control my attitude, and I can control my activity. What a gift that is to know that those things I can control. So now I remind myself, I can control my belief system and I try to say to myself: if this belief is good for you it has to be good for everyone else. So, if you think you can only fail, you're saying everyone else only has the right to fail.*

Our belief system is much bigger than just "success or failure." Our success is a spiritual one.

One of the dangers of Christianity can be the thought that it is "me and my Lord Jesus and we can do everything ourselves." While that personal one-on-one connection is important, we also need the fellowship of those around us.

Galatians 6:1-7: (NKJV) ¹Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, **you who are spiritual** restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ²Bear one another's **burdens <922>**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Burden: Strongs #922 baros (bar'-os); probably from the same as 939 (through the notion of going down); weight; in the New Testament only figuratively, a load, abundance, authority

We are to help one another bear the weight of the experience.

Help for our difficulties is built into the body of Christ - we just need to be willing to get the help that we NEED, which may not be the help that we WANT! It takes humility to know that we need help.

³For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

The quality of "spiritual" doesn't mean smarter or older - contrarily, it means spiritually *mature* - living and doing for higher reasons with no thought of earthly gain but only the focus of Christ-likeness. Helping others could be a temptation of personal pride and ego: "I'm better off and can rescue you."

⁵For each one shall bear his own **load <5413>**. ⁶Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Burden/Load: Strongs #5413 phortion (for-tee'-on); an invoice (as part of freight), i.e. (figuratively) a task or service

Each of us has the task of our own lives. I cannot bear your burden and you cannot bear mine. We can help with the weight of the experiences. We need support from those who have the same kind of faith and who can be compassionate on a spiritual level.



 **Third nugget, *New Year's Nuggets of Wisdom, The Skit Guys*, www.godtube.com**

Yes!

- *Next nugget: Let your "yes" be "yes." Which means say yes to... everything? I don't know. I didn't pay attention during rehearsal.*
- *That's your problem! I'll say, "Hey are you ready," and you'll go, "yes!" Can you make a resolution to come to rehearsals prepared? Can you do that?*
- *Yes.*
- *You don't mean a word you're saying right now do you?*
- *No.*
- *And that's just it, YES is a powerful word and we say it a lot and we can people please to so many people, but make your yes be YES.*

Our theme Scripture:

Isaiah 40: 31: (NASB) ³¹*Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*



Now let's look at its context:

Isaiah 40:26-31: (NASB) ²⁶*Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.*

First Point: PERSPECTIVE! Look UP to Him who is truly mighty and acknowledge His power and wisdom!

²⁷*Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.*

Second Point: Realize that His understanding and His way TAKE NOTICE of all things! Sometimes we think God forgets us or that we are overlooked. It becomes very depressing. Here is a "Rick translation:" *NEWS FLASH! The Everlasting God does not get weary or tired. He does not forget you. His understanding is beyond your ability to comprehend anything! The one doing the forgetting is YOU.*

²⁹*He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly,*

Third Point: Believe that He is an endless power source compared to those in the prime of their life and to those who are mighty in the eyes of men. The picture given is men who were trained for war, at the peak of their physical prowess - the strongest of the strong, the most disciplined of the disciplined. God NEVER gets weary.

And now we come back to our theme Scripture:

Isaiah 40: 31: (NASB) ³¹*Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*

Fourth Point: Trade in your old source of strength and put on HIS strength - for it is only then that we can mount up with wings and not become weary!



Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.*

True, deep inside out change needs two more things - what are they?

Prayer really can change things.
We must always ask God for His strength and His will. What changes will be our perspective and therefore our actions.
Circumstances need not change!



 Fourth nugget, *New Year's Nuggets of Wisdom, The Skit Guys, www.godtube.com*

- *Our final nugget is: Whatever you commit to, honor God with it. The truth is we all have things we need to stick to committing, like saying no to chocolate bars.*
- *After 8pm...on Wednesdays.*
- *Or it could even be more realistic and your commitments are to pray more, to spend more time with your family. Figure out a way to connect your life with God and make Him famous with your life.*

Make God the famous one in your life!

Jesus showed us he was the conduit through which we could be blessed:

John 16:24: (NASB) *Until now you have asked for nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*

Matthew 7:7-11: (NASB) ⁷Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

This sounds like a way to receive everything we really want. But that is not what Jesus is saying. We have to always look at the whole context and not just the part that is most appealing. The end result here is so *your joy may be made full*. We are to go through Jesus to get to God - seems like a fool-proof plan for change...so, why doesn't it always work? What could get in the way?

James 4:1-4: (NASB) ¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. So, our inner focus needs checking to keep our backsliding at bay so faith can direct our requests... ⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.



Here is where we need to seek the *right* help from the *right* kinds of sources. Our motivation must be godly. We are not just to fulfill our own desires. We are not to ask for change for the sake of appearance to others.

We should not be commanding God or demanding of God in our prayers. We should plead for His will. The throne of grace is not where we are to place our demands. We are seeking blessings we do not deserve but that God's mercy will give us anyway. Our motivation must be in the right place for prayer.

Never give up!

The hardest trials, the most painful experiences really do provide us with the greatest growth and maturity as followers of Christ.

Jesus bore the burden of the world's sin.

Surely we can bear the burden of our own experiences with Jesus as our example and guide!



 **Success through failure, *Change Me, Change Everything*, Jenny Berube, TEDx**

- *Let's make a commitment to be people and not just circumstances breathing. Let's make a commitment to celebrate life by living it - by the joy of it all and even the failure of it, because I had to learn that failure was not what I was addicted to. Failure was not here and success there, and I always seemed to choose failure somehow. I had to learn failure was here and success was beyond it. Just like the only way a child learns to walk is by falling. I had to realize that when I failed, it was one step closer to success.*

Find true deep spiritual inspiration to help in your battle for true inner change:

Hebrews 12:1-3: (NASB) ¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Be prepared for the difficulties, even the tragedies in life, with an attitude toward and a focus on the big picture:

Habakkuk 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹The Lord GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places...



Even if everything around us falls apart, we can still rejoice in God's blessing. It is not necessarily reflected to us in physical abundance; it is more often reflected to us in spiritual growth and maturity. True change in our lives needs to lead us down the road of spirituality.

It has to start from the inside out. It has to be with the understanding that we are going to have backsliding - and that is okay. It is a beacon of light to navigate through circumstances and not to change them. We need help sometimes. We need to continue to pray without ceasing. Never, never, never give up!

We want to put ourselves in a position so our lives can be more fruitful to the glory of God.

*So, if you could change one thing, what would it be?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



A few more tools for making that serious inner change...

What makes a compelling vision?

Lots of inspiration...

Hebrews 12:1-3: (NASB) ¹Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

...and a clear destination:

²*fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ³*For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

An understanding of the course:

Hebrews 12:4-8: (NASB) ⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; ⁶For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives ⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

A clear grasp of the end result:

2 Timothy 4:6-8: (NASB) ⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.



What thoughts tear us down?

Covetous thoughts:

Exodus 20:17: (NASB) *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

Lazy thoughts:

Proverbs 6:6-9: (NRSV) *⁶Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. ⁷Without having any chief or officer or ruler, ⁸it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest. ⁹How long will you lie there, O lazybones? When will you rise from your sleep?*

Idolatrous thoughts:

Romans 1:21-25: (NASB) *²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

What thoughts build us up?

Humble thoughts:

Romans 12:3-5: (ASV) *³For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. ⁴For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.*

Informed thoughts:

Psalms 25:4-5: (NASB) *⁴Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.*

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NRSV) *¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.*

Serving and sacrificial thoughts:

Romans 8:35-39: (NASB) *³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written, For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. ³⁷But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Philippians 1:21: (NASB) *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Righteous thoughts:

Philippians 4:8: (NASB) *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*