

Today, we continue our series, **Life Reset** with part three. We're looking at Biblical principles for personal change, for the better.

Making the hard changes in your life and personality that seem to resist all efforts to change.

The stuff you don't like about you, but it's stubborn. They're persistent problems in your life. Parts of your life that rebel and resist any time you try to change them.

I want us to consider **two (2) very important questions**. **①First, why is it so hard to change some stubborn areas in my life that I don't like about me?**

②And number two, what does God say it takes to change them? And then, we're going to look at how.

First, let me give you four **(4) reasons why it's difficult to change** some of those stubborn **①patterns, ②habits, and ③defects** in your life that you don't like.

①Number one, some things are hard to change in my life because I've had them so long. Your patterns actually were established in childhood.

And those patterns helped you cope with trauma and stress in your early years, when you didn't know how to fight back. Some of your self-defeating patterns were actually survival tactics, as a little kid.

Today, you may realize those don't work. They were self-defeating. They only make the problem worse. But you still have them in your life. Why? Because they're familiar. You know they're not good for you and they don't work, but you're used to them.

②Second reason some things are hard to change in my life because I identify with them.

We often confuse our **1**identity with our **2**defects. We'll say, "**I am a 1workaholic.**" Or "**I am 2passive.**" Or "**I am 3aggressive.**" Or "**I'm an 4overeater.**" Or "**I'm 5lazy.**"

But those defects are not your true identity. They are hiding your true identity.

Now, when you see yourself in certain ways, what happens is, you set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. You say, "**I'm always nervous on planes.**" Well guess what's going to happen. You're going to be nervous on planes.

And unconsciously, sometimes we fear, "**If I change, will I still be me? Because I've been this old me for so long, will I still be me?**"

3Number three, sometimes things are hard to change because they have a payoff.

An **1**emotional payoff, a **2**relational payoff. You get rewarded for that defect. You get rewarded for that bad habit in some way.

And listen, whatever gets rewarded gets repeated. That's true in **1**parenting, in the **2**workspace, in a **3**marriage. Whatever gets rewarded gets repeated.

Listen, we don't continue to do things that aren't rewarded. Anytime, any negative behavior is being repeated, there's always a payoff even if it's only temporary.

Maybe my **1**defect, **2**habit, **3**pattern, **4**that stubborn part of me is masking my real pain. Maybe it's giving me an excuse to fail.

1Maybe I'm compensating for some unresolved guilt, so I'm punishing myself by doing something I know that's not good for me.

2Maybe I'm compensating for shame or for pain or for fear or for panic.

3Maybe I've found it useful to control other people. There are lots of reasons that we often don't know why we do what we do, but when you figure out why you do what you do than it's going to be easier to change.

Sometimes we do stuff that's negative just because it gets us attention. And if I can't get ①approval, at least I'll get ②attention. It's all subconscious payoffs for self-defeating behavior.

④The fourth reason things are hard to change is because Satan discourages me.

You're not in this battle by yourself. He wants to keep you stuck in a rut. He uses ①self-doubt, ②criticism, ③accusations.

Did you know Satan is accusing you constantly with ideas? The Bible calls Satan the accuser.

He's the adversary and he is constantly suggesting negative thoughts like, "①You're never going to change. ②How many diets have you been on? ③This is hopeless. ④You're never going to change your marriage. ⑤You're never going to change your relationship. ⑥It's hopeless. ⑦It's not going to work. ⑧You may as well just give up."

Where do you think all that came from? It didn't come from God. It came from Satan. These are all reasons why we have a hard time changing the hard parts in us.

Sometimes you fear, "If I rock the boat, something bad is going to happen." So, these are all things that we have to deal with, that keep us holding on to stuff that isn't helpful at all in our lives.

So, what does it take to change? All change starts with choosing and it starts in your mind.

Ephesians 4:21-27 says, ²¹Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²²throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.

²³Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

²⁵So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

I want to show you four (4) Biblical principles that you have to follow, if you are going to be serious about making changes in your life.

First, ①CHANGE REQUIRES **LEARNING & FACING THE TRUTH.**

Change always starts with the truth, but there are two important parts of it, ①learning the truth and then ②facing the truth.

Proverbs 23:23 says, ²³*Learn the truth and never reject it!*

A lot of times we know the truth, but we reject it. The secret to personal change is not willpower. Willpower works for a while, but it won't work for the rest of your life. It's not about ①pills, or ②resolutions, or ③gimmicks. It's ①knowing and ②facing the truth.

Jesus said, **"When you know the truth, the truth will set you free."**

So, here's the problem. If the first step to permanent lasting change, is to learn the truth about me, then I have to face the facts about me.

What if I don't want to do that? We don't want to learn and face the truth. Why? Because the truth is often uncomfortable. It's often painful to face the truth about me and we would rather stay in denial.

Isaiah 30:10 says, ¹⁰*...They say to the prophets, “Don’t tell us the truth! Say things that will make us feel good; see only good things for us.*

You're saying, **"Tell me what I want to hear. Don't tell me the truth. Just tell me what makes me feel good."**

Anytime we don't want to hear something, it's human nature to just come up with some kind of mental barrier or excuse to procrastinate, because even when we ①learn the truth, it doesn't mean we are going to ②face it.

John 3:11 says, ¹¹*Jesus said, “...Listen carefully. I’m speaking sober truth to you. ...Yet instead of facing the evidence and accepting it, you procrastinate with questions.*

Have you ever used this tactic? We use questions to divert facing the truth. God says, **"Don't procrastinate with questions. You need to listen to the truth."**

We all make ①mistakes. We all ②sin. We all are ③imperfect. The Bible says, **"There's not a just man on the earth who always does the good thing and never does what's wrong."** We see it in other people, but we deny it in ourselves.

1 John 1:8 says, ***8If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.***

I have to admit I got a problem and the problem is me. I can't blame anybody else.

Now, if you don't get anything else I say, get this. Behind every self-defeating defect is a lie I'm believing.

This is why the **①first requirement for personal change** to reset your life is to **①learn the truth and ②face the truth about myself.**

Now, you may not realize it, but learning to face the truth about yourself is the most loving thing you can do for **①yourself, ②others, and ③God.**

Ephesians 4:15 says, ***15Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.***

Then, if our truth telling to ourselves and others is based on love, he says we will grow. **①You want to grow? ②You want to change? ③You want a new life? ④You want to reset?**

You're going to need fresh starts in lots of areas of your life, many times in life. The Bible says, **"Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ."**

If you love **①yourself, ②God, and ③other people**, you need to face the truth about you. So, then the question becomes, where's the best source for finding truth?

The only way you can know your purpose in life is either **①talk to the creator who made you, or ②read the owner's manual.** It'll tell you your purpose.

The only way to find out the truth about me, is in God's word.

John 17:17, Jesus says, ***¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.***

What does sanctify mean? It just means to **①grow up, ②to be made like Christ, ③to be different, ④to reset.** You're sanctified. ***Sanctify them by the truth***

And then the second part says, what's truth? ...***your word is truth.*** This is God's truth. The more you get in this word, the more you're going to change.

So, when it comes to personal change, a reset of your life, the Bible is the manual for resetting your life, and it's going to help you in four very practical ways.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, ***¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.***

It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

So the Bible does four (4) things. **①It shows us the path to walk on. ②It shows us where we got off the path. ③It shows us how to get back on the path. ④It shows us how to stay on the path.**

Look back at that verse, ***¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.***

This is why a daily quiet time of Bible reading and prayer is important. If you're not in God's Word, you're certainly not **①learning and ②facing the truth** on a daily basis.

Second, **②LASTING CHANGE REQUIRES NEW THINKING.**

You aren't what you think you are, but what you think, you are. And the battle for change, is won or lost in your mind.

Ephesians 4:23 says, ***²³Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.***

What you **①think** determines the way you **②feel**. Did you know that? All feelings start with a thought.

What you **①think** determines how you **②feel** and what you **②feel** determines the way you **③act**.

So, if you want to change the way you **①act**, you must change the way you **②feel**, because **③feelings affect your actions**.

The only way you can change your **①feeling** is indirectly, by going to the root of it, which is a **②thought**. Change the way you **①act** by changing the way you **②feel**. Change the way you **②feel** by changing the way you **③think** - how you think, what you think about all the time.

Changing the way I **①think** changes the way I **②feel**, which changes the way I **③act**. It's the word, repentance. Now, most people have no idea the true definition of repentance.

The word repentance is a Greek word. It's the word **metanoia**. **Meta**, meaning to change in Greek, **noia** means mind. **Metanoia** simply means change your mind. That's all repentance means.

Why? Because if you change the way you **①think**, it'll change the way you **②feel**, and the way you **②feel** will change the way you **③act**. Repentance, change the way you think, **metanoia**, a reverse of my mindset.

Philippians 2:5 says, ***5You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.***

①Choosing is the beginning of **②changing**. When you put on the mind of Christ, you begin to think like He does, then you will start to see your defects in a very different light.

When you change the way you think and you begin to think God's thoughts, the way Christ sees you, the way God sees you -- when you begin to put on the mind of Christ and think like he does, your defects, you'll begin to see them in a totally different light.

Defects are often strengths being misused. If God has given you the strength of being detail oriented. You notice little details that can be fixed.

If you don't use it correctly, you become ①picky and ②un-pleasurable and ③high-controlling and ④finicky. Nobody wants to live with that.

If God has given you the strength of seeing the big picture, and you don't use it correctly, you're going to be tempted to overlook people and you'll march right over them. You won't pay attention to their feelings. You'll ignore them, because you're looking at the big picture.

If God has given you the strength of being amiable, you can pretty much get along with anybody and that's a strength. But misused, you're going to let people run over you.

My defects are often attempts to meet my unmet needs. You don't act the way you do out of no motivation. You have needs. Now the needs are legitimate. You're just attempting to get them met in the wrong way.

Everybody has a need for ①respect. But if you don't get ①respect, you'll go out and just try to get ②attention instead. Everybody has a need to be ①loved, but if that need isn't met, ②you'll throw yourself at people in a wrong way.

Everybody has a need to be ①valued, but if you don't feel that need to be met, you're going to ②talk too much. Everybody has a need to feel ①secure. But if you don't let God meet that need, you're going to ②try to control everything.

A defect is often an unmet need being attempted to be satisfied in the wrong way.

Third, ③LASTING CHANGE REQUIRES COMMUNITY AND COACHING.

We are not going to get well on our own. We're better together.

There are some things you're never going to be able to change in your life on your own.

You need people in your life who will support you and help you through some tough areas in your life. You need support. You need a small group.

Ephesians 4 says, *²⁵So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.*

That doesn't necessarily mean your next-door neighbor. It means your ①friend, your ②brother, your ③sister in Christ, ④somebody you're close to.

You do belong to the Church of God. We belong to each other. You can't become what God wants you to be without belonging to His family and being in a small group where you belong.

If you're serious about ①changing and ②growing and ③resetting your life, ④you're going to have to face your fear about being gut-level honest with just a couple of people.

The moment you tell one person, you get instant power you never had in any other way. You get instant relief.

Proverbs 28:13 says, *¹³You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.*

We waste enormous amounts of time and energy trying to cover up stuff that everybody sees anyway. You think other people don't see your faults? Everybody sees them. We're just pretending.

Our biggest hurdle to holiness is our desire to look good. But when you're in a small group of people, who are going to love you unconditionally, it's a small group of friends, you don't have to look good, because lasting change requires community and coaching.

Galatians 6:2 says, *²By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ.*

There are 58 One Another's in the New Testament. ①Love one another. ②Help. ③Serve. ④Pray. ⑤Encourage. ⑥Listen. ⑦Bear one another's burdens. Fifty-eight commands in the Bible say we're to do this with each other.

Now, lasting change in your life, not only requires community, a small group, a trusted group of people who love you unconditionally.

We always grow faster with a ①**trainer** or a ②**coach** -- even superstars need coaches. What will a coach do? A coach will help you ①**maximize your strength** and ②**minimize your weaknesses**.

When you go through the Bible, you see this principle everywhere. ①**Joshua** had his coach; his name was Moses. ②**Elisha** had a coach; his name was Elijah. ③**Solomon** had a coach; his name was David. ④**David** had a coach; his name was Samuel.

⑤**The 12** were coached by Jesus. ⑥**John** coached a guy named Polycarp. ⑦**Polycarp** coached a guy in the next generation named Irenaeus. He had multiple generations of great Christian leaders. ⑧**Timothy** was coached by Paul.

Every Paul needs a Timothy, and every Timothy needs a Paul.

Now, God has given five kinds of group coaches to the church.

Ephesians 4:11-13 says, *¹¹Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹²Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*

That's what's called the restart. That's what's called the transformation.

If you're serious about your life and working on the hard places that you don't like, that have been tough, patterns that were set in childhood, you need to get a coach. You need to get a training partner, a spiritual coach.

They don't have to be perfect, by the way. A coach just has to be one step ahead of you.

Fourth, ④**LASTING CHANGE REQUIRES THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Only God can make those transformations in your life.

Zechariah 4:6 says, ***“So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.***

You didn't collect your ①hurts and your ②habits and your ③hang-ups overnight, and you're not going to eliminate them overnight. It's going to take ①T-I-M-E, time. It'll be a ②slow process of ③incremental change.

1 Corinthians 3:18 says, ***18...And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him.***

As the Spirit of the Lord works within me, I become more and more like him. It's a gradual step by step incremental process. ①When God wants to make a mushroom, he takes six hours. And ②when God wants to make an oak tree, he takes 60 years.

Question: You want to be a ①mushroom or an ②oak tree? I can show you how to become an ①emotionally healthy, ②spiritually strong, ③happy, ④healthy woman or man of God. I can teach you how to do that. I can't teach you how to do it quickly. There's no such thing as instant maturity.

Let me just wrap it up by asking you these questions. ①How seriously do you want this? ②How serious are you about changing for the better in your life? ③How serious you are about finally dealing with those parts of your personality that irritate you and everybody else?

④How seriously are you interested in evicting the ①fears out of your life, and the ②worries out of your life, and the ③self-centeredness out of your life, and the ④laziness of the ⑤procrastination and the ⑥excuse making and the ⑦anger and the ⑧jealousy?

⑤How serious are you about evicting the insecurity out of your life? ⑥Do you really want to change for the better?

Then take these four steps from God's Word.

1. LEARN AND FACE THE TRUTH.

2. CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK.

3. GET A SMALL GROUP AND A COACH.

4. LET THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK IN YOU.

PRAYER Father, because none of us is perfect, we all have defective areas in our lives and some of these are honestly so painful, we can hardly stand even think about them.

And Lord, every one of us have struggled with patterns and habits and self-defeating behavior and weaknesses and character flaws and defects. Give every one of us the courage to take the first steps to healing right now.

All right, now you pray, “**Father, I'm asking you to help me ①learn and face the truth and ②change my thinking.**

To help me ③get in a community and get a coach, find a friend who will help me through the tough times in my life. I know I can't change on my own. I've tried.

And Lord, most of all, ④I need your Holy Spirit.”

If you've never opened your life to Christ, say, “**Jesus Christ, come into my life and begin the change process, little by head, little step by step, helping me to become the woman, the man that I've always wanted to be.**

I can't do it on my own God. I need your help. And Jesus Christ, I'm asking you to save my life and change my life. In your name I pray.”

Amen.

THE END