

Grace Church of the Valley

How People Change: Sanctification & Growth in the Christian Life

Goals

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”

Colossians 1:28

David Powlison, *How Does Sanctification Work?* To be sanctified is to have your faith simplified, clarified, and _____. You need God. You know God. You love God. You see life, God, yourself, others more truly. And to grow as a saint is to grow in actually loving people. How other people are doing matters increasingly to you. You care. You help. Becoming more holy does not mean that you become ethereal, ghostly, and detached from the storms of life. It means you are becoming a wiser human being. You are learning how to deal well with your money, your sexuality, your job. You are becoming a better friend and family member. When you talk, your words communicate more good sense, more gravitas, more joy, more reality. You are learning to pray honestly, bringing who God really is to the reality of human need. And to grow in holiness does not mean you now talk in hushed tones and every third sentence quotes the Bible. It means you live in more clear-minded hope. You know the purpose of your life, roll up your sleeves, and get about doing what needs doing. You are honestly thankful for good things. You honestly face disappointment and pain, illness and dying.

- Why is change difficult?

Four Building Blocks for **Gospel Growth**

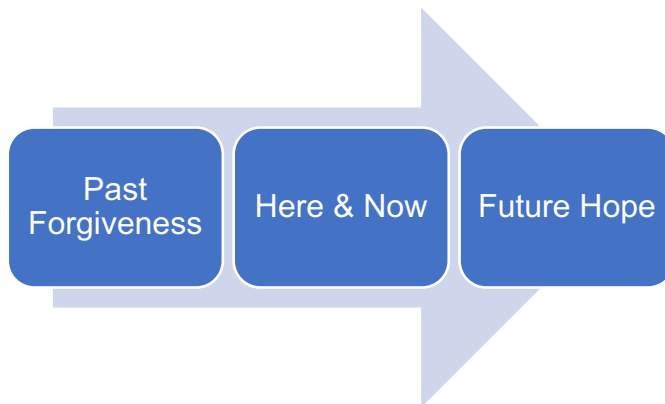
Change's Destination

- Revelation 7:9-10
- 1 Peter 1:13

Paul Tripp: Positive personal change begins to take place when my dreams of change begin to line up with God's purposes for change. Leaving behind goals of personal comfort and self-fulfillment, I begin to reach out for Christ, desiring to be more and more like him each day. As I do this, I become more and more prepared for my ultimate destination-- _____ with him.

Change's Power

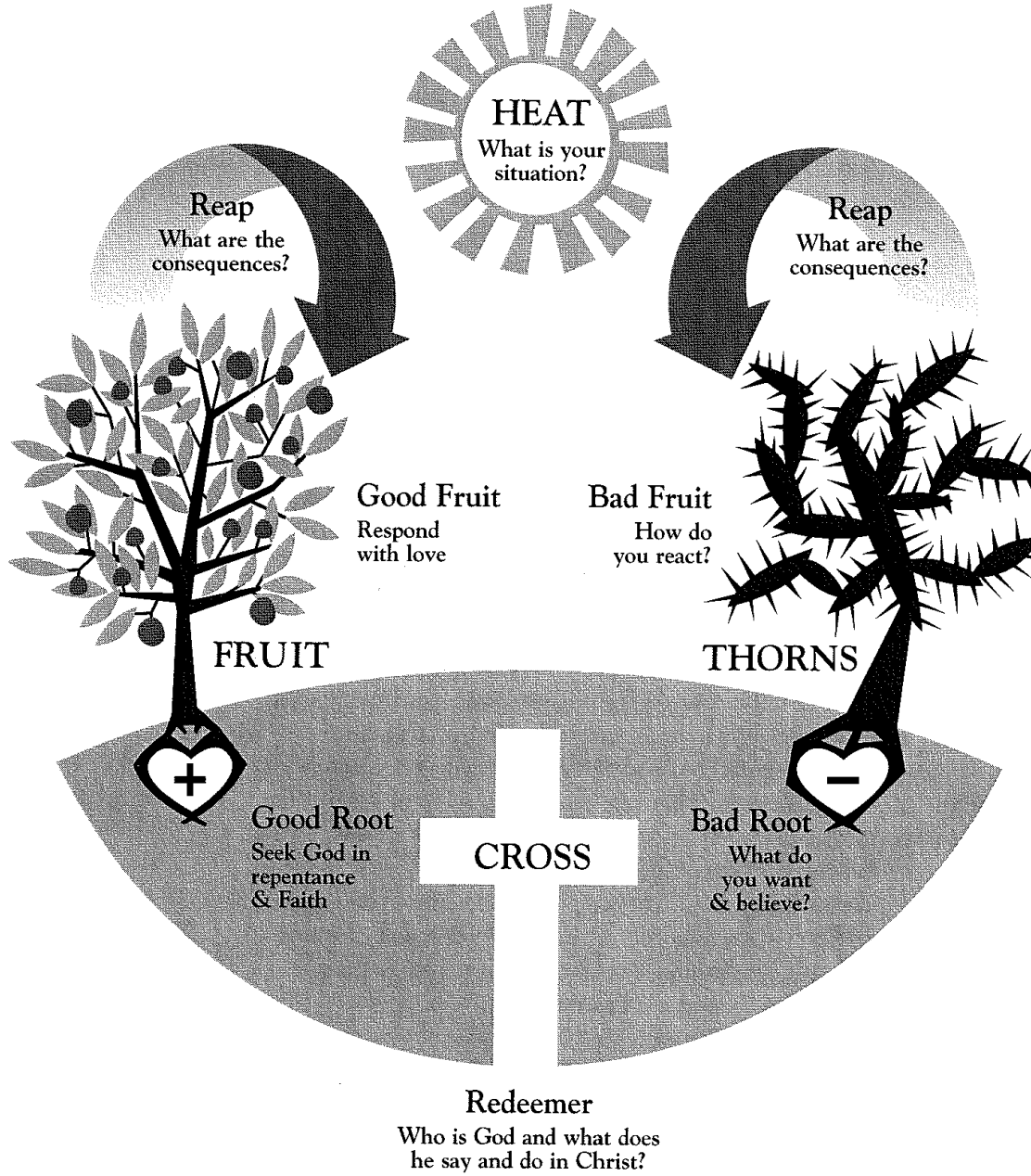
- 2 Peter 1:3-9
- The Gospel Gap



- **Paul Tripp & Tim Lane:** Many believers live a 'gospel gap' in their lives: They have some sense of the past forgiveness of our sins and the future promise of heaven but without understanding or experiencing the power of the gospel in the _____. The monotony of life lulls us to sleep, and we miss the miraculous presence of Christ.
- **J.C. Ryle:** Familiarity with sacred things has a dreadful tendency to make men _____ them.

A biblical vision for change

- Jeremiah 17:5-10



Heat: what is your situation circumstance or struggle?

- Psalm 88:1-18: Man's View of the Heat

- James 1:2-5: God's View of the Heat

Thorns: how do I respond to the heat of life?

- Paul Tripp: You and I are never really _____. We are always acting, reacting, and responding to the heat in our lives.

Cross: Who is God, and what does he say and do in Jesus Christ?

- Galatians 2:20
 - The Redemptive Fact: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live."
 - The Present Reality: "...but Christ lives in me."
 - The Results for Everyday Living: "...the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Fruit: living a life worthy of the calling I have received

- Ephesians 4:22-24

Putting it all together

- Numbers 11: Moses and the Wilderness Generation

Creating Loving **Relationships**

- “I don’t see myself as a counselor. I’m not really equipped for that.”
 - Keith Herman (1993), *Reassessing Predictors of Therapist Competence*: A therapist’s personal characteristics and character more determinative of success as a therapist.
 - Six determinative qualities:

Leon Seltzer, PhD: Research has repeatedly shown that the single most curative factor in therapy isn’t simply the technique employed, or the therapeutic approach (from psychoanalytic, to cognitive-behavioral, to humanistic), but the _____ between client and therapist that develops during the course of treatment. Whether, deep down, the therapist is providing a corrective parenting experience, an unprecedented emotional release and resolution, or (somewhat more narrowly) the knowledge or skills requisite to the change requested by the client, ultimately it’s the *relationship* that principally determines the success of this unique professional engagement.¹

- Why don’t we get involved in biblical relationships?

Paul Tripp: We want ministry that doesn’t demand love that is, well, so _____. We don’t want to serve others in a way that requires so much personal sacrifice. We would prefer to lob grenades of truth into people’s lives rather than lay down our lives for them. But this is exactly what Christ did for us. Can we expect to be called to do anything less?

Steven E. Hyman, MD: We psychiatrists have been given an impossible task. Our medications are sometimes able to alleviate symptoms, though they often come with side effects. But we cannot give people what they really need. People need _____ and _____.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolution-the-self/201312/can-your-therapist-be-your-friend>

What does it mean to know people?

3 aspects of knowing people: LISTEN WELL, ASK GOOD QUESTIONS & WAIT FOR ANSWERS

- Listen well (*Psalm 116:1-2; Isaiah 59:1-2*)

David Augsburger: Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.

- Listen with your _____
- Listen with eagerness and expectation
- Listen with _____ and self-control
- Listen for _____ words
- Listen for _____ words
- Listen for _____-talk
- Listen for _____-talk

Donna Tartt, *The Goldfinch*: But though our talk was casual and sporadic there was never anything simple about it. Even a light "How are you" was a nuanced question, without it seeming to be; and my invariable answer ("Fine") he could read easily enough without my having to spell anything out. And though he seldom pried or questioned, I felt he had a better sense of me than the various adults whose job it was to "get inside my head."

- Ask good questions
 - Ask _____ questions
 - Use a combination of survey and focused questions
 - Remember that certain kinds of questions reveal certain kinds of information (What? How? Why? How often? Where? When?)
 - Ask a _____ line of questions, in which each question is based on information uncovered in previous questions
 - Ask people to clarify what they mean with concrete, real life examples of the terms they have used

- Wait and interpret their answers
 - Answers about _____
 - Answers about _____
 - Answers about the _____ process
 - _____ answers

- John 4: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman
 - #1: Start with what's in front of you

Kevin Huggins: Jesus faced the same obstacle that threatens to _____ all counseling relationships from the outset: conflicting goals between the person wanting help and the person offering it. Conflicting goals often pit hurting people and their would-be helps against each other in a fruitless struggle of wills.

Kevin Huggins: When pressed, hurting people can usually put into words their _____ goal for coming for help—get the person or things that's causing their distress to change. But few can tell you what they hope these changes will ultimately accomplish for them—the ultimate difference they think it will make in their lives. They've spent little time thinking about what their souls thirst for even more than these things.

- #2: Take people as they come, not as you want them to be
- #3: Listen and learn their ultimate concern use it to build a gospel bridge
- #4: Speak truth in love

Speaking truth in **love**

Ephesians 4:15-16

Proverbs 27:5-6

Paul Miller: Love moves toward people, even if that means _____. It doesn't leave them alone in their suffering or in their selfishness. Sometimes people are so paralyzed that unless we intrude, unless we break through both of our natural reserves, we can't love them

- **David Powlison**, *How Does Sanctification Work?* The _____ of a human being never comes via pat answers or quick fixes.

- Examination of Mark 7—11

David Powlison: You can't say everything all at once—and you shouldn't try. Say one relevant thing at a time. When Jesus talks with people, He is astonishingly _____, direct, and specific. By saying one thing—not everything—He is always challenging, always rearranging our life, always nourishing to those who are listening.

- How do you *speak truth in love*?
 - Prepare your heart and _____ (*Psalms 139:23-24*)
 - Remove any logs in your own eye (*Matthew 7:1ff*)

- Know the _____

- Remember you're in it for the long haul (*Galatians 4:19*)

- Remember you are an _____ and mouthpiece, not the change agent (*2 Corinthians 2:16*)

- Practical helps

- Jesus & the Seven Churches (*Revelation 2—3*)

Appendix A

“Life only has meaning/I only have worth if...

- I have power and influence over others.” (Power Idolatry)
- I am loved and respected by ____.” (Approval Idolatry)
- I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” (Comfort idolatry)
- I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ____.” (Control idolatry)
- people are dependent on me and need me.” (Helping Idolatry)
- someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” (Dependence idolatry)
- I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone.” (Independence idolatry)
- I am highly productive and getting a lot done.” (Work idolatry)
- I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work.” (Achievement idolatry)
- I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.” (Materialism idolatry)
- I am adhering to my religion’s moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” (Religion idolatry)
- This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me.” (Individual person idolatry)
- I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality.” (Irreligion idolatry)
- My race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior.” (Racial/cultural idolatry)
- A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in.” (Inner ring idolatry)
- My children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” (Family idolatry)
- Mr. or Ms. “Right” is in love with me.” (Relationship Idolatry)
- I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt.” (Suffering idolatry)
- my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power.” (Ideology idolatry)
- I have a particular kind of look or body image.” (Image idolatry)

Appendix B

Dear believer,

The body of Christ needs you. It needs your words and deeds. That is simply part of the deal when you follow Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote, “encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). You are already speaking encouraging words and building people up. Now keep doing it, more intentionally, more skillfully, more prayerfully—when a child scuffs her knee, when a friend is separated from a spouse, when depression strikes a person you know, or when someone has been diagnosed with cancer.

If you feel inadequate to help others in need, especially those with more complicated problems, that is a perfect qualification. The Lord specializes in using people who feel weak in themselves, and your sense of inadequacy will probably protect you from saying something unhelpful. We are usually unhelpful when we are confident that we know what another person needs to hear.

You already know the basics of help and encouragement. First, you have to move toward the other person, which is sometimes the hardest thing to do. You have to talk together and hear what is important to the person. Next, let the person know that you have them on your heart—you are with them and are moved by what they are going through. That might be enough for one day. You have built up the body of Christ.

If there are awkward silences or if you are inclined to go further, you can ask, “Could you suggest ways that I could pray for you?” If you are concerned that such a question could sound like a spiritual platitude, remember that it is only trite if you are not really interested or are not actually going to pray. If the person is on your heart and you are praying for them, you have given them a great gift.

Sincerely,

—Ed²

² <https://www.crossway.org/articles/an-open-letter-to-those-who-feel-unqualified-to-offer-counsel-or-help/>

Appendix C

Biblical Counseling Organizations

- Care Leader: <https://www.careleader.org/>
- Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF): <https://www.ccef.org/>
- Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC): <https://biblicalcounseling.com/>
- Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC): <https://christiancounseling.com/>
- Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC): <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/>
- Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD): <https://ibcd.org/>

Biblical Counseling Blogs

- Paul David Tripp: <https://www.paultripp.com/>
- CCEF: <https://www.ccef.org/resources/blog>
- ACBC: <https://biblicalcounseling.com/blog/>
- ABC: <https://christiancounseling.com/blog/>
- BCC: <https://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/>
- Faith Lafayette: <https://blogs.faithlafayette.org/counseling/>
- Tim Lane: <http://timlane.org/blog/>
- Robert Kellemen: <http://www.rpmministries.org/>
- Dave Dunham, <https://pastordaveonline.org/>
- Kevin Carson, <https://pastorkevinsblog.com/>
- Julie Ganschow, <https://bc4women.org/blog-2/>
- Brad Hambrick, <http://bradhambrick.com/>
- Mark Shaw, <http://www.histruthinlove.com/>
- Paul Tautges, <http://counselingoneanother.com/>

Robert Kellemen, “465 Biblical Counseling Resources” (\$5)
<https://www.rpmministries.org/2018/08/465-biblical-counseling-resources/>