

"The Mechanics of Change - Mortifying"

Change – Pt. 3

July 7, 2024

"Think of an area of your life that you'd like to change. It might be a type of behavior (such as lying, lust, overeating, excessive spending, or inappropriate relationships) or an emotion (for example, depression, envy, anxiety, greed, or anger) It might be a Christian virtue, a fruit of the Spirit that you feel is particularly lacking in your life. ...Is your change project about changing your behavior or emotions? It's no good choosing change in someone else. You can't choose 'better-behaved children' or 'a better marriage.' You must choose something about you, such as 'shouting at my children' or 'getting irritated by my spouse.'" **Tim Chester**, "You Can Change," p. 21

INTRO ...Rom 8 Brings the Announcement that— A New Day has brought a New Deal!

Rom 8:1-4

...There is Plenty of "Mystery" in This New Day/New Deal!!

Ez 36:26-27 And I will give you a new heart [?], and a new spirit I will put within you [?]. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you [?], and cause you to walk [?] in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

...There are also some "Mechanics" to this new life

The MECHANICS of This New Life

(1) There is a MINDSET (Rom 8:5-8)

- "**Mindset**" — deals with "focus & frequency" of the mind's activity ...when we go to "change our mind" about something, we will encounter unforeseen "strength & resistance"
- "**Mindset**" is wired into more than mere facts & decision making—it has a wire going to "Reasonings" (remembering, regrets, revenge, etc.) ...a wire going to "Emotions" (fear, anger, happiness, etc.) ...a wire going to "Pleasure" (ease, comfort, taste buds, dopamine, etc.) — Our Minds are "SET" on Certain Ideas or Pursuits because we've become **CONVINCED** of Some Things!
- There is a Prominent & Practical Importance Assigned to Our "MINDSET" in locating it here at the doorway of our "walking according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh"!!

For Owen the mind (nous) is the leading and ruling faculty in man, and the channel to the will and affections. It is the fulcrum of spiritual life: 'In the Scripture the deceit of the mind is commonly laid down as the principle of all sin whatever, hence the necessity for a work of renewal which is 'internal, especial, immediate, supernatural, effectual, and enlightening.'" **Sinclair Ferguson**, "John Owen on the Christian Life", p. 38

"Firstly, the power of the Holy Spirit involved in regeneration is suited to the nature of man's mind, will, and affections 'according to their natures and natural operations... Secondly, in regeneration, God 'works on the minds of men in and by their own natural actings, through an immediate influence and impression of his power'. In other words, in the process of regeneration, God addresses the mind and its abilities; regeneration is not a mindless process." **Sinclair Ferguson**, "John Owen on the Christian Life", p. 43

Rom 12:1-2 ¹ *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* ² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

v. 1 ...an appeal birthed out of the Deep Reasonings of God's Redemptive Purpose described in Chapters 1-11!!

A "Presentation" of your bodies to God IS POSSIBLE!! ...I CAN Surrender My Mind (my mental processing, thinking, reasoning, formulating, pondering and planning) **to GOD!!**

v. 1 ...Self-Surrender ("presenting yourself as a living sacrifice)—is inextricably connected to actual WORSHIP of God!

v. 2 ...This "Posture of Worship" is Directly Hardwired into Our MINDSET! ...The Mind plays a critical role in directing our affections & decisions in this world!

"If you want to overthrow a fortress, start by knocking out the watchman—if he can't warn the others, you will easily breach the wall and carry the day. The flesh plies deceit to knock out the watchman of your soul: your mind. ...If your mind is persuaded to believe a sin is good for your soul, and your affections work up an appetite for it, your will gives its consent—the dominoes fall and the flesh bears its putrid fruit in your life." **Kris Lungaard**, "The Enemy Within", p. 55-56

Col 3:1-5 ¹ *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.* ² *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.* ³ *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* ⁴ *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* ⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:*
... "Setting the Mind PRECEDES Putting to Death"

(2) There is Human Decision Making (in the Mechanics of Change) "...If we are going to change—it will always involve our Decision Making"

"...you change. 'You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God' (1Thess 1:9). We turn—from darkness to light, from false gods to the only true God, from death to life, from unbelief to faith. You ask for help because you need help. You repent. You believe, trust, seek, take refuge. You are honest. You remember, listen, obey, fear, hope, love, give thanks, weep, confess, praise, delight, walk. Notice all these active verbs; they speak of wholehearted, whole-person action. ...No one does any of this for you. You are not passive. You are not a puppet or a robot. You are 100 percent responsible, and yet you are 100 percent dependent on outside help. Any other way of putting it makes you either far too independent or far too passive. Notice, too, that none of these active verbs is a one-and-done. These are a way of life." **David Powlison**, *How Does Sanctification Work?*, p. 67

- **Rom 6 & 7 ...introduces us to the associated concepts of “presenting ourselves” (a form of decision making) and “enslavement”**

Rom 6:11-13, 16-19 ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness...¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

...Here, “Change” is connected to our “Presentation”—our surrender and making ourselves available!

(3) ...There is “Putting Things to Death” in the Mechanics of Change (Rom 8:13)

...Change involves more than rejecting passivity—it also calls for AGGRESSION!

Rom 8:12-13 ¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Col 3:5-8 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

"First, Paul meant that we should deprive our evil desires of their strength and of their power ...the Greek word translated 'mortify' can also be translated 'kill, (deaden, deprive of power).' ...Second, when the apostle Paul said that we are to consider the members of our earthly body as dead to sin, he meant that we should fight against those evil desires. In at least thirty different passages of Scripture, Paul said that we ought to fight, wrestle, and strive against evil desires. ...Indeed, the Christian life is a fight. It is the good fight of faith whereby we lay hold of eternal life. If anyone thinks that the Christian life is easy, he knows very little about it. In fact, it is doubtful that he is a Christian at all, because the Christian life from its conception to its consummation is a battle. It is a life-and-death struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil." **Wayne Mack**, "A Fight to the Death", p. 74-76

"Mortify" or "Put-to-Death" ...Is Going to Need some INSIGHTS, TACTICS & TRAINING!

"Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands" — a Course on Change! ...⁽¹⁾ What are the Mechanics of Change ...⁽²⁾ How We Help One Another Change

Matt 15:18-19 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

— a Tool for Matt 15:18-19: Situation —> Responses —> Thoughts —> Motives

(from *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, p. 188 – Fig. 10.1)

... Discipleship in Our Lives Can Never Survive on Sunday Morning Messages Alone!! ...We need a meaningful personal devotional piece!