

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: BIBLICAL DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

Biblical change begins with your spiritual birth and continues throughout your life. Your purpose for living changes from a focus of living for self to one of dying to self as you learn to love God and love others in a biblical manner (*based on Matthew 22:37-39; Luke 9:23; John 3:3; Romans 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-14*).

I. The downward spiral

(*Principle 10*) God's thoughts and ways are far higher (superior) than yours (*Isaiah 55:8-9*), and His Word is truth (*Psalms 119:160; John 17:17*). If you neglect or refuse God's ways or His truth, you will experience ever-increasing problems; and the problems you have will grow worse (*Proverbs 1:25-32, 13:15, 28:13-14; Romans 1:20-32; Galatians 5:16-21; Hebrews 3:7-19; James 1:14-15*).

II. Beginnings of biblical change

(*Principle 11*) A transforming new birth is necessary for you to live victoriously and to be empowered to overcome the world and problems of life (*John 3:3-7; Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Titus 3:3-7; I John 5:4-5*).

(*Principle 12*) The whole duty of man is to fear (reverence) God and keep His commandments (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; I Peter 1:17*). You are to love God and others in response to God's love for you (*Matthew 22:37-39; John 15:9-14; I John 4:11, 19*). You are to walk in a manner worthy of God and to please Him in every area of your life (*II Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:10*) by being a doer of the Word (*John 14:15; James 1:22; I John 2:3-4*). As you obediently respond to God's love, you become mature in the Lord and are blessed with peace and joy (*John 15:10-11, 16:33*). Numerous other blessings from the Lord follow (*Matthew 6:33; James 1:25; I John 3:22*). If you do not obey God's Word, He will judge and discipline you (*I Corinthians 11:31-32; Hebrews 12:5-10*).

(*Principle 13*) To appropriate God's gracious wisdom in facing and dealing with your problems, you must ask in faith (*Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5-8*), live according to God's Word (*James 1:22-25*), and depend on His power (*II Corinthians 3:4-5; Philippians 4:13*).

III. The upward path

(*Principle 14*) You must obey God's Word consistently (*I John 2:3-6*) to grow increasingly into godliness (*I Timothy 4:7-8; II Peter 1:3-11*) and to realize true peace (*Psalms 119:165; John 16:33*) and joy (*John 15:10-11*).

Lesson 5 Part 1: The Downward Spiral

Introduction:

I. The Downward Spiral – How do people fall away?

A. Romans 1 – the heart of the pagan

1. vs. 20-21 – man w_____ rejects God.
2. vs. 21-23 – man becomes more d_____ with a darkened heart and is called a f_____.
3. vs. 24, 26, 28 – God g_____ t_____ o_____.
4. v. 32 – man sinks to his lowest and e_____ o_____ to do the same.

B. Jeremiah 2 – the heart of the Jews

1. vs. 2 – we see God's h_____.
2. vs. 5 – God lets us know it wasn't him that left. He isn't to _____.
3. Vs. 6 – The f_____ God (v. 6)
4. vs. 11-13a – we see that they a_____ God.

5. vs. 13b – we see that they turned their t_____ to something else.

6. vs. 19 – we see that they have lost their f_____ of God

7. vs. 23 – They were deceived and God describes the backslider as a frantic
c_____ i_____ h_____ looking for a mate

8. vs. 26-30 – they turn their back on God's c_____.

9. vs. 35 – they claim their i_____.

10. vs. 37 – God r_____ them!

C. A biblical example – Gen. 4:3-17

**D. Wisdom from Proverbs 1:25-32 – the result of r_____ or
n_____ His wisdom.**

E. Wisdom from James 1:13-15

F. We see examples from real life:

II. Why do people fall away? Because of a focus on S

A. They do exactly what they have p_____ in their h_____ to do instead of what God wants them to do.

1. Matt 15:3-20
2. Gen. 4:3-20
3. Matt 5:28
4. Matt 6:21
5. Mk 12:30

B. People lose their way (10 contributing factors)

III. How do people come back?

A. Jn. 3:3-7 - Have to be b_____ a_____.

B. 1 Jn. 1:9 - Confession - s_____ the s_____ t_____

**C. Rom. 12:1,2 - a "no holds barred approach" - I_____ y_____!
repentance and transformation**

D. Prov. 1:24-32 - Have to choose His w_____ and His w_____.

IV. Ok. Ok. My heart is there so, now what? – James 1**A. James 1:6 – a _____ in f _____.****B. James 1:22-25 – be o _____.****C. Phil 4:13 – depend on Him for s _____.**

Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him, and the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation. Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of the unexpressed it poisons the whole being of a person. This can happen even in the midst of a pious community. In confession the light of the gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. The sin must be brought into the light. The unexpressed must be openly spoken and acknowledged. All that is secret and hidden is made manifest. It is a struggle until the sin is openly admitted, but God breaks gates of brass and bars of iron (Ps. 107:16).

Since the confession of sin is made in the presence of a Christian brother, the last stronghold of self-justification is abandoned. The sinner surrenders; he gives up all his evil. He gives his heart to God, and he finds the forgiveness of all his sin in the fellowship of Jesus Christ and his brother. The expressed, acknowledged sin has lost all its power. It has been revealed and judged as sin. It can no longer tear the fellowship asunder. Now the fellowship bears the sin of the brother. He is no longer alone with his evil for he has cast off his sin in confession and handed it over to God. It has been taken away from him. Now he stands in the fellowship of sinners who live by the grace of God and the cross of Jesus Christ... The sin concealed separated him from the fellowship, made all his apparent fellowship a sham; the sin confessed has helped him define true fellowship with the brethren in Jesus Christ.¹

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lesson 5 – Part 2: The Upward Path

A review: The Downward Spiral; How do people fall away?

1. Focus on s_____ in your h_____
2. Sinful a_____
3. E_____ that follow

How do we come back and grow again? Some beginning thoughts on the subject:

1. You must be b_____ a_____ (Pr. #9)
2. “No Holds Barred” approach – “I’m Yours!” – because I’ve been m_____.
3. Choose His ways and wisdom – because you’ve been choosing y_____ o_____ (Pr. #7).
4. Start being obedient without so much focus on f_____. Do what you know is r_____.

I. Where do I start?

A. Step 1 - Confession of sin

1. Proverbs 28:13; Ezekiel 14:1-11
2. Psalms 32:3-5; 2 Corinthians 7:8-10

B. Step 2 - Repent – Turn from a “Fear of man to a fear of God” – 2 Corinthians 5:1-13

1. What does it mean to fear God?

a. Defined:

- 1) An emotion which dread, veneration, and wonder are variously mingled
- 2) An admiring fear inspired by authority
- 3) A fearful reverence inspired by deity

b. Examples of reverential fear

c. What fearing God doesn't look like:

2. What 'fearing God" does look like?

a. 2 Cor. 5:1-21

- I'd rather be with God, but for now, I am not (1-8)
- So, until I am, I will make it my ambition to please Him (9)
- In view of the fact that our deeds will be judged, and driven by a love for God, I will live my life to please Him (10-15)
- And, do my best to be a minister of reconciliation (16-21)

b. 1 Peter 1:1-22

- Fix your hope
- Be holy
- Conduct yourselves in f_____
- Love one another

Some practical examples of fearing God over man:

- What others say doesn't mean so much to me. I am what I am for Him.
- When I feel like pouting, I put my head into today's activities.
- When I feel like screaming, I don't because I realize it would be for my benefit, not for His.
- Instead of going to the fridge to feel better, I'll pray thankfully and get back to my schedule.
- We put our minds on His work – the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).
- When my wife or kids won't like my decision, I stand on my decision.
- When my spouse needs to be confronted about sin, I do it.

3. Examples of fearing man (Jn. 12:37-43)

- We tell and participate in jokes at work that Jesus wouldn't participate in *because* we want to be accepted.
- We dress in ways that please self and others but perhaps not God *because* we want to impress others.
- We don't practice biblical giving *because* we want to save for retirement.
- We don't discipline our children *because* they might hate us or turn their backs on God or us.
- We fight for rights in the home (i.e., making sure husband and wife each get equal time out with friends) *because* we want things to be fair.
- We don't tell a friend what they need to hear *because* they may not like us if we do.
- We don't continue to love our spouses that God has commanded us to love *because* if we do, they might continue to run over us.

- We buy new cars and houses we can't afford *because* we "need" them.
 - We don't get into a community group because people will find out I don't know very much about the Bible
4. How do we get to the place of really "fearing God" like that?
- a) H_____ yourself – (Psalm 51:1-4, 6-10, 17)
 - b) Make a d_____
 - c) By being faithfully o_____ (Eccl.12:13-14)
5. Practically speaking, how do we make it happen?
- a) Page 85
 - b) Page 86
 - c) Gal. 6:8-10 – sowing and reaping

C. What happens when we fear God?

1. John 15:7-11 – a life full of j_____
2. Matthew 6:33 – a life free of a_____
3. 1 John 3:22 – a life of a_____ p_____
4. Psalm 37:4-8 – a life of m_____ d_____
5. James 1:25; John 13:17 – a life of b_____

Conclusion:

What is the main thing you have learned from this lesson?

As a result, what is the Lord asking you to change?

BEGINNINGS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE

Man's "solutions" to your difficulties will ultimately fail because they do not deal with the source of your problems: your heart. God's solutions, as revealed in Scripture, go to the heart of the matter where permanent change is accomplished (*based on Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 15:18-19; John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 3:19, 6:9-11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12*).

- I. **Commit yourself to God's sovereignty and rule in your life.**
 - A. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (*John 1:12; Romans 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-10*).
 - B. Determine to live each day in a manner that pleases God (*2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 3:17*).
- II. **Determine specific ways you have sinned against God and confess these sins to Him (1 John 1:9).** Repent of your sinful ways, since they are contrary to Scripture and displeasing to God (*Proverbs 28:13; Acts 26:20; Revelation 2:5, 3:19*).
- III. **Ask God for wisdom to know what changes to make and how to make them (James 1:5).** Ask with faith that He will answer (*Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5-8*).
- IV. **Confess your specific sins to those against whom you have sinned by your words or actions (James 5:16).** Forgive those who have sinned against you (*Mark 11:25-26; Ephesians 4:31-32*) and reconcile with them if at all possible (*Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18*).
- V. **Diligently study God's Word on a regular basis (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17) and memorize Scripture to store His truth in your heart (Psalm 119:11, 16).**
- VI. **Pray unceasingly, at all times, and in everything (Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).**
- VII. **Do what God says to do in His Word (Matthew 7:24-26; James 1:22-25) regardless of your feelings (Genesis 4:6-7; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16-17; 1 Peter 4:2) in order to glorify Him (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31), staying under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:13; Romans 8:14; Ephesians 5:18-20).**

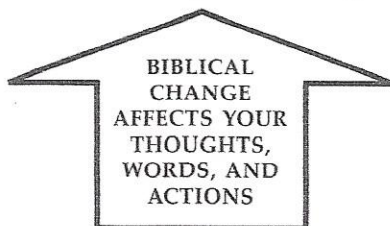
Problems That Need God's Solutions (A Sample List)

Adultery, outbursts of anger, anorexia, arrogance, bitterness, bulimia, ineffective or evil communications, depression, lack of discipline in specific areas, drunkenness, fear, financial problems, fornication, frustration, gluttony, greed, guilt, homosexuality, impatience, interpersonal disputes, jealousy, laziness, loneliness, lust, lying, marriage problems and failures, parent and child difficulties, pride, procrastination, rebellion, self-pity, stealing, substance abuse, suffering, unforgiving spirit, and worry.

THE UPWARD PATH: WALKING GOD'S WAY

NOTE: This page should be read from the bottom to the top. Living God's way means putting away your self-centeredness and committing yourself to follow God's Word in spite of any feelings to the contrary (based on Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:17). If you do this, God will bless you (based on John 14:27, 15:11; Galatians 5:22-23; James 1:25).

- Realize abundant life, filled with God's peace and joy (John 10:10, 14:27, 15:11, 16:33)
- Experience Christlike character development through God's Spirit working within you (II Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23)
- Rejoice always (Philippians 4:4; I Thessalonians 5:16), giving thanks in all things (I Thessalonians 5:18) and for all things (Ephesians 5:20)
- Pray unceasingly about everything (Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17)
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:9)
- Work heartily as unto the Lord (Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24)
- Do everything without grumbling or disputing (Philippians 2:14)
- Continually live in a manner consistent with your calling in Christ (Ephesians 4:1)
- Count all trials as joy since God uses your trials to develop Christlike character in you (Romans 5:3-5, 8:28-29; James 1:2-4)
- Practice forgiveness and reconciliation (Matthew 5:23-24, 6:14; Mark 11:25-26; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-13) and return a blessing for any evil you might receive from others (Romans 12:17-21; I Peter 3:8-9)
- Continually show deeds appropriate to repentance (Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20; Revelation 2:5; 3:3, 19)
- Be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient (Colossians 3:12)
- Learn to love God's way (John 3:16, 15:17; Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 13:4-8a; I John 4:11, 19)
- Dwell in your thoughts on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8-9) and set your mind on things above instead of on things that are on earth (Colossians 3:2)
- Regard others as more important than yourself, as did Jesus (Philippians 2:3-8)
- Continually judge yourself biblically (Matthew 7:5; I Corinthians 11:31)
- Be controlled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20) and the Word of God (Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:16)
- Be obedient to the Word out of your love for the Lord (John 14:15, 21)
- Commit your ways to God unreservedly (Proverbs 3:5-8; Matthew 22:37; II Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 3:17) and deny self to follow Jesus (Matthew 10:24-26; Luke 9:23-24)
- In faith, pray for wisdom in all matters (James 1:5-8)
- Repent (Proverbs 9:6, 28:13; Acts 26:20; II Corinthians 7:9-11; Revelation 2:5)
- Confess specific, recognized sins (Psalm 51:1-4, 6-10, 17; James 5:16; I John 1:9)



(While a commitment of discipleship to Jesus Christ will be evidenced by specific and measurable steps of obedience to God's Word, the description of biblical living highlighted on this page is not intended to be exhaustive nor in a rigid sequence).

The UPWARD PATH (Comprised of Biblical Understanding, Hope, Change, and Practice)