

## **LESSON 7: BIBLICAL PRACTICE ACHIEVES LASTING CHANGE**

### **II. God's promises for biblical change**

- A. In Christ, you have assurance of victory over failures.
- B. As an overcomer, you are assured of final rewards.

### **III. Perspective for biblical change**

- A. Scripture is the sole standard and authority for your life.
- B. The only lasting hope is promised in the Scriptures.
  1. Those in Christ are freed from the power and penalty of sin (Romans 6:6-7, 14, 18, 23).
  2. God will not allow believers to be tested or tempted beyond what they can bear. He gives you His grace and strength to endure every test and resist every temptation so that you never have to sin (Romans 8:35-39; I Corinthians 10:13; II Corinthians 4:7-10, 12:9-10; Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 4:15-16; II Peter 2:4-9).
  3. Our Lord Jesus Christ will grant mercy and provide grace to help in every need. As your advocate, He constantly intercedes for you to God the Father and fully understands your weaknesses (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16, 7:25; I John 2:1).
  4. Trials and testings will develop and mature you in Christ if you respond to them in God's way (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4). He never devises evil or harm for you; rather His plans for you are for your good (Genesis 50:20; Deuteronomy 8:2, 5, 16; Psalm 145:17; Ecclesiastes 7:13-14; Jeremiah 29:11-13; Romans 8:28-29; James 1:13-17).
  5. God's peace and joy are available to believers regardless of others, possessions, or circumstances (Psalm 119:165; Matthew 5:3-12; John 14:27, 15:11, 16:33, 17:13; Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:4-7; I Peter 1:6-9).
  6. Only God can change people (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Philippians 1:6, 2:13), so you cannot and are not responsible for changing them. You are accountable to God solely for your own deeds (Jeremiah 17:10; Ezekiel 18:1-20, especially verse 20; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:5-10; Colossians 3:23-25; I Peter 1:17) and are to do your part in living at peace with others (Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:25; Romans 12:9-21, 14:19; I Peter 3:8-9, 4:8).
  7. When you confess your sins, God forgives and cleanses you (I John 1:9).

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## **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR ACHIEVING BIBLICAL CHANGE**

Making biblical changes in our lives requires prayerful and purposeful action (*based on Matthew 7:24-25; Romans 6:12-13; Colossians 3:5-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Titus 2:11-12; James 1:22-25*).

### **I. Respond immediately to your need for biblical change.**

- A. Ask God for wisdom.
- B. Conduct a thorough self-examination and make a list of all the ways you have failed to think, speak, and act in a biblical manner. These are your “put-offs” as identified by God in His Word.
- C. Confess these unbiblical deeds (thoughts, words, and actions) to the Lord.
- D. Make a list of the biblical “put-ons” that are to replace your unbiblical thoughts, words, and actions.
- E. Develop a basic plan for living a changed life on a daily basis. Your basic plan should list specific steps by which your sinful “put-offs” are replaced by biblical “put-ons” and should include:
  1. Prayer (Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17);
  2. Study of Scripture, especially to find out how God’s Word relates to changes necessary in your life (II Timothy 2:15);
  3. Scripture memorization which should be focused on God’s answers to the temptation(s) in which you are prone to sin (Psalm 119:11);
  4. Avoidance of all forms (i.e., the appearance) of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22);
  5. Obedience to God in all things (Matthew 7:24; John 14:15; I John 5:3) instead of pleasing “self” by gratifying fleshly desires (Galatians 5:16-17; II Timothy 2:22a; Titus 2:12);
  6. Consistent and faithful fellowship, worship, and ministry in the Body of Christ (Hebrews 10:24-25; I Peter 4:10); and
  7. Continual biblical self-evaluation (Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:31) dealing with thoughts (II Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 3:1-2), words (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6), and actions (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:10). In biblically evaluating your thoughts, words, or actions in any situation, answer the following questions. You should **memorize** both the questions and the referenced verses.

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- a. Is this profitable (in other words, does this contribute toward the development of godly traits or help to accomplish biblical responsibilities in my life or in the lives of others) (I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23a)?
- b. Does this bring me under its power or am I controlled by it in any way (I Corinthians 6:12)?
- c. Is this an area of spiritual weakness (a stumbling block) in my life (Matthew 5:29-30, 18:8-9)?
- d. Could this lead another believer in Christ to stumble (Romans 14:13; I Corinthians 8:9-13)?
- e. Does this edify (build up) others or, stated in another way, is this the biblically loving thing to do (Romans 14:19; I Corinthians 10:23-24)?
- f. Does this glorify God (Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 10:31)?

G. Develop a contingency plan to deal immediately with temptation when it occurs (I Peter 5:8-9). Remember that sin's power over you has been broken (Romans 6:4-14) so that you can overcome temptation and live righteously (I Corinthians 10:13; I John 5:4-5, 18). Your contingency plan should include:

1. Prayer for wisdom, direction, and grace to withstand the temptation (Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5);
2. Biblical thoughts (II Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 3:2), utilizing Scripture memory (Psalm 119:11) and remembering to stay dependent on God (James 4:7);

The questions and verses to be memorized (listed above under F., point 7.) will help you gain God's perspective in your thoughts when faced with any temptation.

3. Biblical speech (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6), especially quoting Scripture (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:3-10) and giving a reason for the hope within you to others (I Peter 3:15); and

4. Biblical action: flee temptation (Genesis 39:7-12; I Corinthians 6:18; II Timothy 2:22a). If prohibited from fleeing temptation immediately, remain obedient to Scripture as Jesus did in His temptation (Matthew 4:1-11), in order for God to provide you with strength and a way of escape in which you will not sin (I Corinthians 10:13).

H. Whenever possible or necessary, obtain help from others (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12; I Corinthians 12:25-27; Galatians 6:1-2; II Timothy 2:22).

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II. **Consistently and faithfully practice your new biblical pattern for daily living** (Galatians 6:9; Philippians 4:9; Hebrews 5:14; James 1:25).

III. **If you sin and respond biblically to your failure, you can rely on God's sustaining care** (Psalm 37:24, 145:14) **as you return quickly to your obedient walk in Christ** (Proverbs 24:16; I John 5:4-5).

A. Whenever you fail, you should:

1. **Identify** your failure (Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:31) and **confess** your sin to God (Psalm 51:1-4; I John 1:9);
2. Confess your sins to those against whom you have sinned (James 5:16);
3. **Show the deeds of repentance** corresponding to this change in direction (based on James 4:7-10; Revelation 2:4-5); and
4. Reconstruct or revise your basic and/or contingency plans (Philippians 2:12-13; 3:12-14), remembering that God has promised you victory over failures (Proverbs 24:16; II Corinthians 2:14; I John 5:4-5, 18).

B. **Begin again to live God's way** (Romans 12:2; Philippians 3:13-14; Revelation 2:5), not dwelling on past failures (Philippians 3:13-14); since God has completely forgiven you (I John 1:9) and is continuing to perfect His work in you (Philippians 1:6, 2:13).

### **Putting it all together:**

I. Bible Study and Application Format

- A. List the Bible reference that you will study and apply under Biblical Reference.
- B. Teaching – What is the commandment or principle?
- C. Reproof – How have I failed to live by this principle?
- D. Correction – What do I need to do about this?
- E. Training in Righteousness – What is my specific plan? How will I do it?

II. The Think and Do List

- A. My Temptations and Sinful Thought
- B. What I Should Be Thinking in This Situation
- C. What I Should Be Doing As a Result of My New Biblical Thinking