

Don't Try to Change
July 11, 2010
Romans 6:1-11
Dr. Jeff H. McCrory Jr.

Synopsis:

You don't have to be a Christian to desire change in your life. We all want transformation! How does this happen?

Most of us would answer that we need to try harder. This is not the Bible's answer. Let me give you the Bible's answer and see if then we can unpack it together.

1. Jesus has died for the sins of the world
2. Jesus has been raised in victory over sin and death.
3. Jesus' victory-over-sin-and-death life is available to us NOW.

We don't need to try harder to change. We only need to live the life of Jesus, to be "in Christ" "abide in Jesus" as the New Testament puts it, to change.

I.

Change is Hard

Romans 6:1 Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?

Have you ever tried to change something in your life?

- lose weight
- lose a bad attitude
- start exercising
- *goes well for a while, and then we crash
- *Just need to try harder

This is the typical human way to change.
It doesn't work very well

Bible's diagnosis:

1. Human beings are broken
 - trying harder with a broken tool doesn't work
2. Can't fix themselves
 - trying even harder leads to frustration

3. Need someone to fix us before we can change
-get a new tool, and things will work

II.

The Strategy for Change

Romans 6:4 Just as Christ was raised . . . so we too might walk in the newness of life

Romans 6: Pay attention to the tenses of the verbs!
READ through emphasizing the verbs

Here's the logic of change/transformation:

What has happened? PAST TENSE

- v2 died to sin
- v3 baptized into Christ's death
- v4 buried with Christ
- v4 Christ has been raised
- v5 have been united with Christ in death
- v6 old self has been crucified
- v6 body of sin has been destroyed
- v6 no longer enslaved to sin
- v9 Christ has been raised
- v10 Christ has died for all

*If all this is true, why do I keep on sinning?
Why can't I change?

What will happen? FUTURE TENSE

- v5 will be united with Christ in resurrection
- v8 will live with Christ

*We have not yet been raised from the dead as has Jesus. When that happens we will be free, always able to do the right thing.
Augustine: *non posse peccare*

What happens now? PRESENT TENSE

- v1 Go on sinning now?
- v4 live now, walk now

- v9 death does not have dominion now
- v10 live now, alive to God now
- *Key verse is 6:11 READ

Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus

*This is the strategy for changing our lives NOW, not later.
How does this work?

III.

How to Change Now

Romans 6:11 Dead to sin . . . alive to God

We live in overlapping time periods:

- Christ *has* died and risen PAST
- We have *not yet* died and risen FUTURE
- We live with with a dead/risen Christ NOW
(*before* we have died and risen)

When you are baptized you take on the new life in Jesus (FONT)
You die to old life, take on new life NOW

*If we keep paying attention to the *old life*, we will never change
-broken tool

*We need to pay attention to the *new life* in order to change
E.g. Martin Luther when tempted
Screamed out “I have been baptized!” = I am a new person

Here’s how to change: READ Romans 6:11

1. When you are tempted or when you want to change
2. Don’t try harder (like using the broken tool)
3. Soak in the new life of Jesus
4. Say to yourself: “That old life is dead” because it is
5. Say to yourself: “Jesus lives in me, as I live in Jesus”
6. If you fail, don’t say, “I need to try harder”
7. Say “Jesus lives in me” “I live in Jesus”

*You now have a choice to change,
where you had no choice before

1. You can live the old life, but it is broken, it doesn’t work

2. You can live the new life; it is not broken, it does work
3. The new life is the life that you will live into eternity
4. Learn to live the new life now: This is how to change