**TITLE: GOD’S ANSWERS TO LIFE’S DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

**SESSION SIX: HOW CAN I EVER CHANGE?**

**KEY VERSE: As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like**

 **him.**

 **2 Corinthians 3:18 (LB)**

**INTRODUCTION:**

When it comes to life transformation, what is God’s part and what is your part?

 Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God

 who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

 **Philippians 2:12-13 (NIV)**

In a physical workout, you develop what you already have—the muscles God has

 given you. To “work out” means to cultivate or develop. He doesn’t say you earn

 your salvation. He says you make the most of what you’ve already got. You work

 “out” what God is working “in.”

**THREE TOOLS GOD USES TO CHANGE US**

**1. God Uses the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach

 us what is true and what to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens

 us out and helps us to do what is right. It is God’s way making us well prepared at

 every point . . .

 **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)**

God teaches us how to live through the scriptures. If you are serious about changing your

 life, get into the Bible—you’ve got to study it, memorize it, and meditate on it.

 Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

 **Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

**2. God Uses the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 Once the Spirit. . . lives within you he will . . . bring to your whole being new

 strength and vitality.

 **Romans 8:11(PH)**

 God’s Holy Spirit in you gives you the desire

 and the power to do what is right.

 As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him.

 **2 Corinthians 3:18 (LB)**

God’s number one purpose in your life is to make you like Jesus Christ.

**3. God Uses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 To those who love God and who are called according to his plan everything

 that happens fits into a pattern for good. For G0d chose us to bear the family

 likeness of his Son.

 **Romans 8:28-29 (PH)**

 Nothing can come into the life of a believer without the heavenly Father’s

 permission.

 It doesn’t matter the source of the circumstance’ God will still use it in your life

 for his overarching purpose---to bear the family likeness of his Son.

 Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.

 **Proverbs 20:30 (GNT)**

 **THREE WAYS I CAN COOPERATE WITH GOD**

1. **I Can Choose What I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Be careful how you think [because] your life is shaped by your thoughts.

 **Proverbs 4:23 (GNT)**

 Yours thoughts not only shape your life, your thoughts are your life.

 The battle against sin always starts in the mind.

. . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .

 **Romans 12:2 (NIV)**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But this delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

 **Psalm 1:1-3 (NIV)**

The key to success is meditating on God’s Word. A synonym for meditation is the word “rumination” ---what a cow does when it chews its cud. That cow is training every ounce of nourishment it can out of that grass.

* Meditation is thought \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and

 lovely, admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of

 praise.

 **Philippians 4:8 (NLT)**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly . . .

 **Colossians 3:16 (NIV)**

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to

 your word . . . Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I not sin

 against You.

 **Psalm 119:9-11 (NKJV)**

1. **I Can Choose to Depend on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 “Take care to live in me, and let me live in you. For a branch can’t produce

 fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from me. Yes, I

 am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him shall

 produce a large crop of fruit.”

 **John 15: 4-5 (LB)**

The branch is totally dependent on the main vine. Fruit is an inside

 job.

 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

 Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

 **Galatians 5: 22-23 (NIV)**

1. **I Can Choose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

You cannot control all the circumstances in your life, but you can

 control how you choose to respond to them. It’s not what happens to us

 that matters; it’s what happens in us that makes the difference.

 . . . we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles . . .

 these very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop

 a mature character . . .

 **Romans 5: 3-4 (PH)**

* Don’t ask why, ask \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**DISVOVERY QUESTIONS:**

1.) You may have seen the sign that reads, “Please be patient; God isn’t finished with me yet.” If you are worried about whether or not you can ever change, how does our key verse (2 Corinthians 3:8) reassure you?

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2.) Dig a little deeper---who does this verse say ultimately influences both our will and our actions? To what end?

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3.) The Bible says, “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jessus” (Philippians 1:6 NIV). How does this truth further reassure us that change is possible?

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4.) Rick said, “We must work out what God is working in us” (Philippians 2:12-13). At this stage of your life, what do you think God is working in you, and what are you doing to work it out?

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