

How People Change

Chapter 4: Married to Christ

Introduction: Stuck in the middle? The for our past, future, AND present.

CPR preview:

Central Point: The hope of personal growth and change rests on my relationship with a person, Jesus Christ, who powerfully acts to change my heart and make it more and more like his.

Personal Application: Change takes place when I embrace the person and work of Christ in the context of my struggles.

Relational Application: To have an effective ministry to others, I need zeal to help them understand and experience the present benefits of knowing Christ.

The Person Who Changes You

- **Question:** What are some potential pitfalls of thinking of our present relationship to Christ in the following ways?
 - Employee/Boss (do as you are told and be evaluated upon performance)?
 - Friends (Enjoy hanging with Jesus)?
 - Neighbors (Mind your own business and try to get along)?
 - Student/Teacher (Master what you are taught)?
- Married to Christ (covenantally united: Is. 54:5; Eph. 5:32, Eph. 1:3)
 - The gospel has _____ benefits
 - The gospel creates a new _____
- “This is the most unique aspect of a biblical view of change. It is not less than cognitive change; it is so much more. It is not less than behavioral change; it is so much more. No other secular or religious approach to change come close to what we find in Scripture. The Bible gives us more than exhortations and rules for change, The great gift Christ gives us is himself” (p. 52).
- Connection to last year’s study: _____ is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; _____ is *not* by faith alone, but it is still by grace alone through Christ alone!

Four passages on covenantal union with Christ

2 Corinthians 11:1-3

- Scripture uses the most intimate of all human relationships as a picture of our present relationship to Christ.
 - Our relationship to Christ is not just transactional, performative, or educational; it is personal, affectionate, and jealously loyal.

- The Christ who commands our affections has fixed his affection on us!
- Three truths of this union:
 - 1. The core of my present life is not _____ but _____.
 - 2. My betrothal to Christ has a _____ structure.
 - 3. The Christian life is _____.

Colossians 1:15-24

- **Q:** Why does our galaxy hold together in orbit?
- **Q:** What weighty truths do we learn about Christ, our husband, from this passage?

Colossians 1:21-23

“This passage functions as a reality check on the eve of your wedding to Christ. If you accept the truth of the way it describes you, you could be filled with guilt and shame toward your future husband. You know you can’t be the spouse you need to be! You have two choices: You can run away, overwhelmed by the prospect of your failure, or you can comfort yourself because of the character of the person you are about to marry” (p. 60).

- The death of shame, fear, and guilt in the death of Christ
- The danger of _____/_____ thinking.
- The grace that _____ us in our sin is the grace that _____ us from our sin (2 Cor. 5:17)

Philippians 3:4-9

- **Q:** How do our perceived assets become liabilities in our relationship with Christ?
- **Q:** What might our own modern version of Paul’s “resume” look like?

CPR Revisited:

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Personal Application: Change takes place when I embrace the person and work of Christ in the context of my struggles.

Relational Application: To have an effective ministry to others, I need zeal to help them understand and experience the present benefits of knowing Christ.

Q: Apply these truths to the following situations:

- Loss of job
- Working a thankless job
- Struggles in parenting
- Chronic physical suffering
- Earthly success and blessing
- Relational conflict
- Persistent sin
- Other?