

Don't Be Taken Captive

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[0:00] If you were here last week, you know that we began a study of Tim Lane and Paul Tripp's book, *How People Change*.! And I just got louder. Okay. It's a book primarily for Christians who are in need of growth and grace, whether it's a particular area that you're struggling with or you just need growth in general.

It's a book about how Christians can be growing in grace. And so if you think, well, do I fit that target audience? Is that me? You just need to answer one question. And that is, am I a Christian?

Because if you're a Christian, then you need to be growing in grace.

It's not just for some. And there's no one here that is mature and godly enough that there's not still room for growth. So if you're a Christian, then this book is for you.

We saw last week as Christians, we tend to be very good at applying the gospel truth in the past.

My sins are forgiven. And in the future, heaven is secure.

I'm going there. I'll be perfect one day. But not always is good about applying it right here in the present. How do I live? How can I grow? How can I change? How can I be putting to death my sin?

[1:12] And so we want to see in this book how to do that. How does the power of Christ help me in my day-to-day work, relationships, struggles, trials, temptations.

There are plausible ways to fill that gap of how we apply the gospel, but they fall far short of the complete gospel. And we looked at some of those last week. And then there are five basic gospel perspectives that the whole book is written from, that this class will be taught from, that should underlie our whole lives.

We touched on them briefly at the end, but I want to come back and see if you remember what they are just to make sure that we've got these five basic gospel principles. Or even if you have your handout from last week and need a little help, who remembers what one of them is?

Okay. The extent, gravity, the seriousness of our sin. Until we realize that we have indwelling sin and it's powerful, then we're not going to see a need to deal with it and be changing it.

And see our need for power until we see how powerful it is. Okay, good. That's one. Okay. Not just focusing on outward behavior, but getting to the heart of what's behind that behavior and changing what motivates us, what we worship and so on.

[2:20] Good. A third one. Okay. The present, today, right now benefits that we have in Christ. He's not just for the past and for the future. He's for right now. Good. And two more.

Okay. If we are still struggling with sin, then we need to grow and be changing. It's who God wants us to be. He wants us to be like Jesus. And if we're not like Him, then we need to be growing and changing until we are.

So that's part of what God wants for us as Christians. Good. And the last one flows out of some of these others. Okay. A lifestyle of repentance and faith. As God shows us our sin, our need for change, that means we're going to have to be repenting of what we've done, trusting God to give us that growth and change.

So, last week we looked at some of the shortcomings in addressing our need within the culture of the church. This week we'll consider how broader cultural influences can lead Christians to look beyond Scripture for alternative pathways to change.

And as our authors say, again, I'm not going to tell you every time I'm quoting them. Their material is so good. I quote them often and I won't always make note of it. But they say, nothing is more obvious than the need for change.

[3:31] Nothing is less obvious than what needs to change and how that change happens. And when what to do? We say, yeah, I've got this need for change, but we don't know what to do. We start looking, don't we?

Trying to figure out, well, how am I going to change? And the world is ready with all sorts of answers about how to change. And too often our search takes us outside of God's Word, away from the very Christ who's already dwelling in us, by whom we can truly change.

So we want to see this danger, be aware of it, and see when we're headed down the wrong path, using worldly wisdom to change our lives instead of God's wisdom. So, think with me, where do you need change?

You personally, you don't have to tell me. Maybe for you it's a specific sin. I struggle with controlling my temper, say. And that's continued for years and years.

And you've made some efforts to change and occasional success here and there. But the fact is, there hasn't been anything real or lasting in this particular struggle. And you insert your besetting sin there.

[4:34] What is it you struggle with? Okay, that's something that needs changing in your life. Maybe it's something you can't pin down to a particular sin, a particular struggle. But you're haunted by depression, for example.

And it leads to lethargy. And you give little care to your home and to your work. And your relationships start to suffer because of it. And you're not sure what exactly, but something needs to change.

So that you're not depressed. Maybe it's broader. Maybe you have an entire relationship that's in need of help. Maybe it's your marriage or your relationship with your children.

And it's not just one sin. It's lots of sins within that relationship. But something's got to change here or it's going to come crumbling down. And the relationship will be all over.

Maybe your children are out of control. They have no respect for you. They don't listen to you. And it needs to change. Our authors give an example of a couple.

[5:35] Cindy and John have been married 20 years. They had five children when a sixth pregnancy caught them by surprise. For the past 10 years, they've put all their energy into career and family. John helps with laundry, diapers, and housework.

He even gets up in the middle of the night to help Cindy with a newborn. Wow, good for him. John and Cindy rarely argue. Their marriage is calm, but it is falling apart on the inside.

John feels that Cindy doesn't appreciate his involvement or honor his role as her husband. Cindy feels disrespected by John. He doesn't ask for input on crucial decisions. She finds out about them after the fact.

Recently, John bought a car for their teenage son. And Cindy found out about it when father and son drove it up the driveway. Fueled the bitterness she has harbored for most of their marriage.

This pattern has existed for a long time.

John thinks the marriage may be over. John and Cindy profess faith in Christ. Attend church regularly and pray together as a family. The facade is getting harder to hold together at any moment.

[6:33] It could come tumbling down. John and Cindy know something needs to change. But when it comes to knowing what to change and how that change can be done, they're stuck. We're good at recognizing the problem.

Maybe that's a little too hard for some of us to admit. We like to think everything's okay in our life. And we go to church and we pray together. And we like everybody else to think that everything's great in our life.

When we take an honest look at it like John and Cindy do, we see there's need for change. And so we see it and we feel that need.

We sense it. But don't be in so intent on change that you're easily deceived and led astray by counterfeit method. You can get so desperate. Something's got to give. I go to church every Sunday.

That's not changing me. I'm not changing. That we start to look elsewhere. And we want to have a warning this morning to not be deceived. That's the first point there. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 2.

[7:32] There's a danger of being taken captive by worldly ways of thinking about our problems. You see, we have true freedom in Christ.

He set us free from bondage to sin. And He's living in us, giving the strength to continue to fight sin. But, as our authors say, our culture has its own warnings and promises of freedom.

False solutions promised in various theories of change. These alternative theories seem appealing. They promise us that we can avoid chaos, live in freedom, and keep our own agenda and pride intact.

The world is offering you a way to change that's very comfortable. Change this without really getting too invasive and causing you discomfort. That's the world's cheap version.

And God calls it worldly wisdom. Look at verses 6-8 of Colossians 2. So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him.

[8:31] Rooted and built up in Him. Strengthened in the faith as you were taught. And overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.

It seems pretty obvious when you slow down and pay attention to what it's saying. How do we live in this present evil age? Well, we live in Him. We're built up in Him. Don't listen to the empty, hollow philosophy, traditions of men and teaching of the world rather than Christ.

And you'll begin to see this, not just in big things, but in little things. You know, worldly wisdom isn't always going to come at you like Dr. Phil does.

All of his platitudes. We see that. We can say, whatever. He's just changing our behavior. We can identify big things like that. How many people here have heard the ad for the total transformation on the radio?

For dealing with rebellious children? If you ever listen to talk radio, you've got all these rebellious kids. Within one minute, your children's attitude can change. Wow. That's amazing.

[9:44] The philosophy of the world isn't always going to be so obvious to us. It jumps out at us like that. It comes to us in more subtle ways. It pervades the thinking of so many people around us.

It comes in the way families are portrayed in sitcoms and how problems are resolved in movies and how your neighbors deal with your problems. You say, oh, that's what they did. It didn't seem to work for them. And slowly we imbibe this worldly wisdom.

It comes to us in Christian psychology books. Just because a book is in a Christian bookstore does not mean that it's Christian. A lot of times it's worldly philosophy dressed up with a few Scripture references.

Remember the warning that we heard last week from Jude, a call to arms to contend for the faith and to beware of those who have slipped in, into the church, into the Christian bookstores, into Christianity, and we're unaware of them.

And they're propagating worldly wisdom. Be aware. They're hollow because they miss the center of biblical wisdom, which is Christ. In some way, they allow the person to live independent of Christ and avoid the deep heart transformation that only Christ can bring about.

[10:52] And so how do you respond in the little moments that don't turn out to be so little? I'm preparing a lesson on how people change. I get home.

And my children are driving me crazy. And so what do I do? Well, I think about how much they need to change. And I buy into the worldly philosophy that I deserve the house that I live in.

And I deserve the peace and quiet that I have worked so hard to enjoy in my house. See, the worldly wisdom filtering. I deserve it. I've worked hard. I need some peace and quiet.

And I should have it. And so in that moment, my desire for my comfort wins. And I snap in anger at my children. And our author says about a similar encounter with his daughter, the problem from my selfish point of view was my daughter.

The solution was to change her. I justified my sinful anger in the name of fatherly discipline. And while this could have been an appropriate time to challenge my daughter's choices, I had started in the wrong place.

[11:57] Her behavior, not my own attitudes and emotions. You see, I was just kidnapped by worldly philosophy. I was just taken in by the very thing we're warned against right here in Colossians 2 and didn't even see it.

In fact, thought I was justified in snapping in anger at my children. And little by little, those moments pile up. And pretty soon, worldly philosophy begins to dominate the ways we think and act about everything.

So, these things are subtle and we need to be aware. Well, what are they? What are some of the world's methods for change that we can be aware of, that we can be watching for?

They're hollow, they're deceptive, and many of them try to change the wrong thing. We need heart change. Here are some things the world tries to change to make our lives better.

And you'll see a few echoes from some of the things we considered last week. But the first is my circumstances. If I could just change the way things are in my life, then my life would be better.

[13:00] For the single person, if they were married, all of their problems would go away. For the married person, if they were only single, all of their problems would go away. Remember Andy Hamilton at a family conference talking about marriage.

He said, it's like flies on a screen door. All the ones on the outside want in, and all the ones on the inside want out. And I hope that's not the way you feel about your marriage.

But a lot of people look and they say, my spouse is the source of my problems. If I just get rid of that person, then life would be better. Change my circumstances. If I had more money, I wouldn't struggle with the sin of worry.

You don't deal with your worries. If I had more money, I wouldn't worry. If I had calmer children, I wouldn't lose my temper. If my wife showed more affection, my eyes wouldn't be so prone to wander.

If my husband just appreciated me more, I wouldn't be depressed. I think Adam tried that. The woman you gave me. The whole blame shifting.

[14:03] It wasn't his fault. He's a victim of his circumstances. So the world offers then a multitude of ways to change our circumstances. There are get-rich-quick schemes.

You can work at home and make more money than you ever dreamed of. You just change your circumstance and life will be better. There's no-fault divorce, so you can get rid of that spouse that causes all of your trouble.

There's the total transformation for your children. There are credit cards to give you the things that you think you need to make you happy. Ted Tripp's example. Ted is Paul's brother.

Paul is one of the authors here. In a counseling class, Ted Tripp gives an example. He says, a man gets home from work, pulls in the driveway, and there's a bicycle in the driveway.

He puts his car in park. He's going into the house. He's going, how many times have I told that kid not to leave his bike in the driveway? He goes in and he finds his kid. How many times have I told you not to leave your bike in the driveway?

[15:04] I got home. I need to get my car in the garage and your bike's in the driveway. I can't do it. He goes, Dad, I had to go to the bathroom. I just ran inside. I was going to come right back out. He goes, I don't care if your bladder's about to explode.

You get your bike out of the driveway. And if his circumstances would just change, if he had a child that was obedient and had listened and didn't leave his bike in the driveway, then he wouldn't lose his temper.

But Ted Tripp says, the bike in the driveway, his child's disobedience is not why he got mad. That's when he got mad. The reason he got mad is because his kingdom didn't come and his will wasn't being done.

He had set himself up and whatever he wants, he should get. And when that doesn't happen, he becomes angry. See, just change my circumstance and all will be well.

And there's a quote there on your sheet from the book. I'm just trying to give you a little flavor of what the authors have to say. So I've given you a quote for each of these. This approach to change misses my need for Christ's redeeming grace and it places the blame for my sin at God's doorstep.

[16:12] We blame God for placing the problem, person, or circumstance in our life. We question God's wisdom, goodness, and character. Obviously, with this approach, the grace of God will not be sought or received.

So the first solution that we often turn to is just change my circumstances and all will be well.

Another one, a little more plausible, change your behavior.

And this approach doesn't simply blame other people. It acknowledges our shortcomings. I need to control my temper. I need to be more considerate of my spouse. I shouldn't care so much about what other people think about me.

I need to stop visiting those websites. I need to do this. My behavior needs to change. And this is better, but it's still not the path to true change.

Your behavior does need to change, our authors write. But this approach only addresses external actions. It does not go after the reasons why you continue to do these things. The person believes

he just needs some skills.

[17 : 14] He doesn't want to do the time-consuming and painful work of looking at motivation. And this too can begin to take on a biblical flavor. You can use verses to show the kind of behavior to avoid and what you're aiming for.

And then, the quote that this is there on your handout. A behavioral approach to change is hollow because it ignores the need for Christ and His power to change first the heart and then the behavior.

Instead, even the Christian version of this approach separates the commands of Scripture from their Christ-centered gospel context. The Bible passages that emphasize the need for new behavior are all built on the foundation of God's grace at work to change our hearts through the power of the Spirit.

The Word and Spirit work together, enabling us to see Christ in all His power and mercy. This leads to heart change at the level of what we worship and cherish at any given moment.

This kind of radical heart change reorients me vertically person to God. Now repent of what I have cherished in place of Christ. This vertical change then leads to new behavior on the horizontal person-to-person plane.

[18 : 26] An approach to change that only focuses on external behavior is never enough. Biblical change is so much more. And there are lots of versions of this out there.

Some from the world. Some from the Christian community. You heard that what men and women need in their marriages are love and respect. Men need to love their husbands better.

Women need to respect their husbands. Men need to love their wives. Did I say husbands? Men need to love their wives more and women need to respect their husbands more.

And if we just do that, then marriage will be better. We'll avoid that vicious cycle where the woman doesn't feel loved and so she doesn't respect her husband. When he's not feeling respected, he doesn't show any love and it's a cycle that spirals down.

And so if they just showed love and respect then we would all be fine. And there are helpful biblical principles there and you can support those things from Scripture. And you should, husbands, love your wives and wives, you should respect your husbands.

[19 : 32] But, if that is all you do, then you miss the biggest problem. The solution there is Christless. Husband and wife both need to love Jesus first.

And if that's the agenda of both of them and they're consciously living in His power, then they will be thinking less about what they need. I need some more respect.

I need some more love. And more about what God wants of them. And more about the needs of the other instead of themselves. You see, simply talking about love and respect misses the problem of self-centeredness and self-love that the husband and wife both have.

They're more concerned with their own needs than the other's needs or what God wants. So, if they just start saying, I'm going to try to love you more, I'm going to try to respect you more, you know what they're doing? They're polishing each other's idols.

I'm going to give you what you want and I'm going to give you what you want and everybody's going to be happy and they haven't realized that they've got a problem with self-centeredness in their heart. So, you can't just change the behavior.

[20 : 32] You have to go underneath and get to the heart. Another option for change that many try is just change our thinking. Education is the key to change.

I watched G.I. Joe when I was a kid and I had G.I. Joe and I played with G.I. Joe and at the end of G.I. Joe it would say, now you know and knowing is half the battle. And people that believe in just changing your thinking, changing your education think that knowing is the whole battle.

Now, it's getting closer but it's still not enough. If I didn't believe that my thinking, that our thinking needs adjusting, I wouldn't be teaching on this book. We do need to think properly.

But only changing our thinking reduces our relationship to Christ to think His thoughts and act the way Jesus would act. Here, memorizing Scripture is a good way to change. It educates us.

So, if I'm afraid I'm going to read or remember a passage about trusting God and now I know, oh, I don't have to be afraid. I just need knowledge. Or, change your perspective.

[21 : 35] Don't view your problems as obstacles. Think of them as opportunities. Just change the way you think about them. Okay, but where is the power of Christ in that? And the quote that's there on your handout, the emphasis on thinking as the solution to our problem fails to introduce the

person, notice capital P, Jesus, who has come not only to change the way we think about life, but to change us as well.

We are more than thinkers. We are worshipers who enter into relationship with a person or thing we think will give us life. Jesus comes to transform our entire being, not just our mind.

Okay? So, got to change more than just the way we think. Another popular thing that the world will offer as a way to change is change your self-conception.

Just change the way you think about yourself. This view says you're a pretty good person on the whole and you just need to remind yourself of that every morning and any time when somebody makes you feel like you're not so special, does something to hurt your feelings, just remind yourself that I'm special, I'm valuable, I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and well, doggone it, people like me.

The source of little Johnny or Susie's problems at school is that they simply don't have a high enough self-esteem, they need more affirmation. Somebody help me out, what's the problem with that approach to our problems.

[23:01] You're not good enough. Exactly. It sort of views us as something or someone that's empty and we just need to be filled up with the right thing. And the Bible does not view us that way, God does not view us that way, but rather, we're full of sin and wickedness from the womb.

You remember what Jesus said. Out of the heart. Out of your heart. This is in other people's hearts. This is you, okay? Out of your heart. Come evil thoughts.

Murder. Adultery. Sexual immorality. Theft. False testimony. Slander. These are what make a man unclean. There's not just a God-shaped hole in your heart that only He can fill.

It's that your heart is full of garbage and God needs to empty it out and then come fill it by His Spirit.

It's not just that you're good enough. You're not. You're okay.

You're not. You're full of sin. It's true that if we carry around a burden of guilt, we will be ineffective in our Christian lives, but the way to get rid of that guilt is not to affirm what a good person I am.

[24:11] That tramples all over the work of Christ. He says, you know what, Jesus? I don't need you to be a good person. I'm okay. I don't need to feel this guilt. Not because you took it away at the cross, but because I'm okay.

It really, it makes Christ peripheral at best. So when we get up in the morning, we need to remember that He is good. That He is special.

That He is valuable. And only in Him do we have true value and worth. Yes, we have value and worth because we're created in God's image. I understand that. But we're talking about people who think they're sinners or know they're sinners but say, I'm okay anyway.

Only because He died from my sins can I be happy and free from the burdens that entangle me.

Again, a quote on your handout about changing your self-perception.

The cross reminds us that though we are made in God's image, we are deeply flawed and bent towards loving ourselves above all. It is the self-love that creates such guilt and shame. Deep down, we know we don't measure up.

[25:15] We feel small because we are small. But false teaching encourages us to reject those thoughts of smallness by affirming our own greatness. This may work for a while but it rarely lasts.

Reminders of our smallness and our failures bring us back to where we started. But the cross of Christ shows me how glorious, merciful, and forgiving God is and how great His love is for me in Christ.

This recognition of my guilt and God's glory is the only thing that can eradicate shame and self-loathing. And it is found outside me, not within me. I am called to esteem God, not myself. Changing your self-conception isn't going to cut it. One last thing. Just trust Jesus more. And that sounds good. And if you mean the right thing by it, it is good.

But if you mean, if you remember what we said last week about treating Jesus as your therapist instead of your redeemer, then it's not so good. A quote on your handout or at least the first part of it.

[26:18] If He is my therapist, then He meets my needs as I define them. If He is my redeemer, He defines my true needs and addresses them in ways far more glorious than I could have anticipated.

If all Jesus is, is someone to shower us with love in whatever we think we need, then we have turned Him into something that He is not. We've missed the fact that we're sinners and we don't deserve that love.

We've missed the fact that we need to deal with our sin by repentance and faith. This too eviscerates the work of Christ and renders the cross meaningless. Yes, God loves us, but He loves us enough to show us our sin.

To discipline us and to humble us before His glory and His greatness. To give us things that we don't necessarily want that will be for our good. So He sent His Son.

The second part of your quote there. Jesus came to cleanse us, fill us, and change us. He does not do this according to our agendas. He will not serve our wayward needs. He loves us too much to merely make us happy.

[27:22] He comes to make us holy. There will be many occasions when He will not give us what we think we need, but rather He will give us what He knows we need. Something like your role as a parent.

Some children view their parents as someone that's there to give them whatever they need whenever they need it. Whatever they think they need. But your job as a parent is not just to affirm your children, to make them feel good, and to meet all of their felt needs.

You know better than they do what is good for them. And so true love will not give them whatever they want and tell them whatever they want to hear. True love will correct them.

It will point out the need for repentance. It will show them their motivation, their idolatry. It will shepherd their heart and point them to Christ. And so God does the same with us.

Not just giving us whatever we want, whatever we think we need. And so beware of these empty, hollow, worldly, deceptive philosophies.

[28:24] That people get desperate. They see their need for change. So they run to one of these. Be aware of them so that when you're tempted to pursue one of them, you think, you know what that sounds like?

Worldly wisdom to me. That's empty. I'm going to avoid it. Any questions or comments on any of these things? We've rushed through them and we've got a little ways to go. I want to give you the true hope in brief form.

But any comments? Stare. Stare. Well, I agree 150% what you said about our self-esteem cannot come from the world and we need to see our self-esteem.

But it is so glorious when, and you've said this, but I just have to go. That when we recognize our sins before us and we come to the cross and we know that we're given and we receive and praise Him and all the glory and we receive and we receive and then we know we know we are God's God.

We are the daughter and the King of Jesus and the Lord of the Lord. And He is our Father and the Father and that is so free when we know our sin has been forgiven.

[29:35] And then, then, you know, we know who we are. We are God's truth. Amen. Love's child. And we do have value and worth because of who we are in Christ.

Exactly. We're going to touch a little bit on that, but you're exactly right. We have this marvelous new identity of who we are in Christ and that, that does give us great hope and gladness and joy.

Good. And freedom. Absolutely. We'll talk about that too. Good. Jim. That's right.

That's right. We're going to complain all these things out that it's personal and it's true. That's right. It's similar to what we find here in Colossians. It's deceptive. You're kidnapped by it. You're taken captive by these deceitful things.

Good. So we need to be aware. Bruce. Yeah. Just this war that always goes on within us. We like the banker to learn the real money so the counterfeits is so. Mm-hmm. We all study all the counterfeits but yet we're immersed in that and we're not exhausted in the church and immersed in the real thing.

[30:43] Just a study of church history shows the great spiritual leaders struggling with the sins of their days and their doctrine and their philosophies and as you look back and just the word delivers. Yeah. And the rest of this book gives us the real thing and I think you're familiar with it and know that and just up front showing us some of the false ways to go.

I'm going to plow ahead here. We want to finish this up today and stay on track with the book. True hope for change. And again, this is what the rest of the book is about but just to give you a glimpse of it here.

We're in Colossians 2. Look at verses 9. and following with me. For in Christ, this is what you have as you do battle with sin and need to change. For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily

form.

And you have been given fullness in Christ who is the head over every power and authority. In Him you are also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature. Not with the circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ.

Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith and the power of God who raises Him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ.

[32:02] He forgave us all our sins. Having canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us and stood opposed to us, He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

You see, we have fullness in Christ. When the Holy Spirit comes, He gives us a new heart and we come to faith in Christ. Christ comes and dwells in us by His Spirit. And all that fullness of Christ comes and dwells in us.

He is there. We're a temple of His Spirit. And we become partakers of that fullness and enjoy His glory, majesty, holiness, love, grace, and power dwelling in us.

You have that. We do not become divine. But we have the divine when living in us from the moment we trust in Christ. We have everything we need to live in godly ways.

And if we listen to worldly wisdom, then we're going to pursue things that take us away from what we already have right inside of us. That's the power. And we'll start seeking our fullness somewhere else.

[33:09] I get fullness. I get satisfaction. I get pleasure from watching a good game. A baseball game. A football game. And I enjoy that. And sometimes too much.

To where if that's taken away, then I'm upset. Maybe for you, you find fullness in something else.

Maybe you find fullness in a big bowl of ice cream. And we begin to recognize that we're finding our fullness in something other than Christ when the thing that we love is taken away.

How do you respond? Remember one year, a couple years ago. It was a Wednesday. It had been a really long day. A hard day. And there was a Cubs game on that night. And I was going to get home from prayer meeting.

I was going to go and I was going to sit and watch the game. And that gives me some peace and I just enjoy that. And we got home and got however many kids we had then, two maybe, I don't remember, to bed.

and I turned on the TV and WGN was having some kind of broadcasting problem and it was blank. And I was so upset. I'd been looking forward to this all through my long, hard day.

[34:16] Poor me. And I just wanted this game and it was taken away from me. And here's this thing that I've sought fullness in other than Christ. I couldn't just say, oh well, you know what, I've got Jesus.

I think I'll be okay. I was mad. I was upset. And you get to the freezer and you go, somebody ate the rest of the ice cream. Didn't tell me.

Didn't replenish it. And you're mad. And it ruined your evening. And you found fullness in something other than Jesus. But we've got everything we need in Him.

You say, Aaron, I need help with big things. I don't need you to talk about ice cream today. I like my ice cream. I need help with something really big. My whole life has fallen apart.

And our authors say, if the blessings of Christ do not change us in little moments like these, the chances that they will change us in more difficult moments are slim. It is in the everyday details that the grace of Christ must be applied.

[35:19] So we've got fullness in Christ. We don't need to seek it somewhere else. We've got a new record. A new power. This is not new to you all, but what fullness this is. It's part of what Daryl was talking about.

Our sins are forgiven. The slate is wiped clean. They're not held against us. We have Christ's righteousness. God accepts us because of what Christ has done. That is mine. I treasure that and find joy in it.

But it doesn't stop there. We've also got a new power. We have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us.

And we can know His power to grow in holiness. The power that He's given us.

God had just given us that new record. All my sins are forgiven. And He hadn't given us the power to live according to His Word. Then we couldn't change. We couldn't grow in grace. We would be

needing to look for some other method for change.

But we don't need to because He has given us that power. We're not just new people. We have new power to deal with our sin. And so our salvation, our life of change are in Him.

[36 : 17] And they're in Christ plus nothing else. So don't just look back to Him for that new record. Look to Him now for the power to change. We're free in Christ. We were once slaves to sin.

But if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8.36 True freedom from the enslaving power of sin, the condemnation that flows from it, is found in Christ.

We're free to not give in to Satan's temptations. Free to not use the cheap substitutes that the world offers us. Because we have the real thing dwelling in us. Jesus dealt the death blow to Satan at the cross anyway.

Why would you want to fight for a defeated foe? That's good news. It's the reality for all who are in Christ. There's freedom. You say, I live in the real world.

I still struggle with sin. And so do I. Look over at Colossians 3. This is helpful to me. Paul's just talked about the fullness that they have in Christ to live in Him and the strength in Him.

[37 : 22] But that doesn't make all of your problems go away. Because look what he has to say to those same people. Look at verse 5. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways. If they used to walk in them, you used to, past sins, why is he telling them to be done with them? Well, because they still struggle with it.

You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these. Anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language from your lips.

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge and the image of its Creator. You've got this fullness of Christ, but you've still got this present reality of sin.

So you need to be putting these things off. That's the real world that we live in. But don't divorce, don't just read Colossians 3, read it with chapter 2. Remember that those commands come to you couched in the promises of Christ and His fullness being yours.

[38 : 33] So that you're not encountering these things in your own strength, but you're looking to Christ every day. The struggle doesn't start with your strength. It starts with conscious dependence on Christ.

Dwelling in Him in all His fullness. Get up every morning and say, Lord, I can't make it through today without You. Help me. Express that conscious dependence in prayer. Our authors say, trials and temptations abound, but we respond to them from a new vantage point.

Active reliance upon Christ is necessary for our sanctification. You go through the day conscious that you can't do it, but you're doing it in the power of Christ and His help.

So, go to Christ, not just initially for salvation, but every day for deliverance from ongoing struggles with sin to become holy. Remember, it's only as we abide in Him and He in us like a branch and a vine that we can produce fruit, the fruit of holiness.

And so in Christ, change is possible. The goal of this book, they say, is to help you grasp the implications of the good news of Jesus Christ for your identity and the daily trials and temptations you face.

[39 : 46] Don't be led astray by all of these false conceptions of ways that the world thinks that they can help you change. You turn to Christ. And so we talked about Cindy and John at the beginning and we come to them again at the end.

Cindy and John don't have to drift apart. Remember the ones having trouble in their marriage? They don't have to drift apart believing nothing will ever change. They do not have to define themselves in terms of their struggling marriage.

Jesus, the true bridegroom, is with them now. And He brings past and future blessings into the center of their marriage. This is true for you too. Christ bridges the gap between struggle and change with a new identity, new record, and new power His salvation brings.

So, go with hope today. You have everything that you need to change dwelling in you right now if you're a believer in Christ. You look to Him for that help and that strength.

Amen.