

Six Keys for Changing Yourself

The Christian mandate is to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:19). So, I think it's important to begin this chapter by acknowledging that you were created to effect change. Your desire to help improve people's lives is from God. BUT before you can rush off to help bring change to others, a great change must first take place in **you**. This great change involves yielding to your born-again spirit. Everything we do or say, for God, must originate from our spirits. Jesus said,

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Your spirit is the part of you that is directly connected to Jesus. When you were born again, Jesus silently deposited a rich inheritance into your spirit.

... "People can't observe the coming of the kingdom of God. They can't say, 'Here it is!' or 'There it is!' You see, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21

Your spirit is the part of you that actually received the Kingdom of Heaven. God is constantly filling your spirit with His love, wisdom, creativity, life, and so much more. Ephesians 3:16 says God will strengthen you with His power through His Spirit in your inner man (your spirit). At any given moment, all you have to do to receive this ocean of blessing is to turn and yield to your born-again spirit.

With so much to gain, how can we make sure we are yielding to our spirits? Scripture says we will know people by their fruit. "Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit." (Mat 7:16-17). Jesus said He is the vine and we are the branches. When we yield to our spirits, God's Spirit flows into us and enables us to bear good fruit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

The nine fruits of the Spirit are the divine attitudes and behaviors your spirit was created by God to demonstrate. So, practically speaking, you yield to your spirit by yielding to love when you are being persecuted; or peace in the midst of chaos; or self-control when you are tempted to be impulsive or self-indulgent. The nine fruits of the Spirit are actually a description of your new nature in Christ. Remember, the old has gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Your born-again spirit is forever empowered by God. When you find yourself in a disempowered state of fear and discouragement, then you'll know you have not been yielding to your spirit. Thankfully, all you have to do is turn back to your new nature, and yield once again to God's Holy Spirit. When you yield to your spirit, you are yielding to God. This allows God to fill you with His love, truth and direction all over again. Repent means to turn. With Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you can shift from a disempowered state to an empowered state in one quick turn.

God wants to use you to effect change in your social sphere, your family, your job, your neighborhood, and your ministry. God sets this process in motion by releasing His divine ideas into your spirit. Your ability to yield to your spirit is what determines whether you access God's rich deposits or not. The problem is you actually have two opposing natures within yourself, fighting over what you focus on, and how you behave. Your two natures are: your new spirit from God, and your old sin nature, which is also called your flesh. Your flesh is accustomed to running your life and actually opposes the new ways of your spirit.

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Galatians 5:17

The good news is, as Christians, we have been given unlimited access to right behavior through our new spirits. In any circumstance, your spirit is ready and able to express righteous behavior and attitudes. At the same time, your flesh is equally ready to dominate your soul and steer you in the wrong direction. You can discern which nature is winning by simply examining your behavior. Are you exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit, or the deeds of the flesh?

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh... Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:16-21

Every time you are able to override your sin nature, and express the divine leading of your spirit, you are blessed. Your spiritual nature becomes stronger and more prominent as you allow it to continually express the Kingdom of Heaven within you. The ability to yield to your spirit's leadings, especially under pressure, is the great change that God is looking for in all of us.

In the upcoming exercises, you will discover the areas and relationships in your life where you tend not to yield to your spirit. The devil can only gain a foothold in your old sin nature. If one of your relationships is in conflict, then yielding to your spirit, when interacting in that relationship, is what will bring victory. This takes discipline and humility, but it is worth it. Your spirit has access to every resource necessary for success.

“God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and for godliness. This power was given to us through knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and integrity.” 2 Peter 1:3

God is not looking for theology degrees or perfect people. Jesus is ready to use you the minute you ignore your flesh and submit to your born-again spirit, and for as long as you stay submitted to your spirit. Every time we make a choice to yield to our spirit, we are bowing our knee to God, and positioning ourselves to receive and deliver His divine blessings. Let's pray for wisdom and strength to make this great change in our lives.

PRAYER

Father God, I am so grateful for my born-again spirit. I acknowledge my spirit as my connection point to Jesus and my very supply line to Heaven. Help me to prefer my spirit and to be sensitive and open to receive Your guidance.

I pray for Your wisdom and understanding to fill me as I work through the following exercises in this chapter. Holy Spirit, please help me to be honest and thorough as I answer each question. In Jesus' precious name, I pray. Amen.

KEY – For things to change, YOU have to change.

How often are you exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit? Rate yourself, on a scale of one to ten, by circling the number that best applies in each arena or relationship listed below. The nine fruits of the Spirit are listed so you can glance at them as you consider your behavior in each arena.

LOVE JOY PEACE PATIENCE KINDNESS GOODNESS
 FAITHFULNESS GENTLENESS SELF-CONTROL

1 = “I am still led by my flesh in this arena.”
 10 = “I am led by my spirit and am consistently exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit in this arena.”
 N/A= this arena or relationship does not apply to me.

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|------------------------------|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Marriage: | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Parenting: | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Job/Career: | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Ministry: | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| School: | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Friendships: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Health: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Finances: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| W/ Your Parents: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| In your Neighborhood: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Have you found relationships or areas that need to be more yielded to God? Take a minute and focus on the areas with the lowest ratings. Think about your behavior in those areas.

KEY - When the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change – you will change.

What negative emotions, attitudes, or addictions are you most tired of tolerating in YOURSELF?

What will you be like when you have allowed your spirit to rule those areas?

What will your life look like, five years from now, if you do not allow your spirit to rule over those behaviors? What will it cost you?

Key – Pray and Take Responsibility before God.

“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; But if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Isaiah 1:18-20

Holy Spirit, are there any behaviors or attitudes that you want me to turn from?

Inheritance Alert - THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many times the discipline of overriding your flesh and yielding to your born-again spirit is just plain uncomfortable. Perhaps that’s why God sent us a Comforter.

“But I say the truth to you, it is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you.”
John 16:7

Did you know Jesus has gifted you with His Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is PROMISED to all believers, but you must **ask** for Him.

“And if even sinful persons like yourselves give children what they need, don’t you realize that your heavenly Father will do at least as much, and give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for him?” Luke 11:13

If you have never received the Holy Spirit, pray and ask God to fill you with His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is an amazing inheritance of truth, guidance, resurrection healing power, and so much more. He is the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. The Holy Spirit will give you the strength you need to yield to righteousness. Draw on this inheritance daily by asking God to fill you afresh with His Spirit. You are so wealthy in God!!! Hallelujah.

KEY - If you keep doing the same thing you'll keep getting the same result.

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to express to my spouse?

What new behavior does my spirit want to express to my children?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to exhibit in my job/career?

What new behavior does my spirit want to exhibit in my ministry?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to exhibit in my school?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to express while I'm interacting with my friends?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want me to practice regarding my health?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to exhibit regarding my finances?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want me to express while I'm interacting with my parents?

Holy Spirit, what new behavior does my spirit want to exhibit in my neighborhood?

It's a good idea to write a synopsis of the type of person you are and how you **behave in the spirit**. Then pray over this truth for the next 40 days and take the time to visualize yourself exhibiting these new behaviors. I also suggest sharing your list with a loved one who will help remind you of who you really are in Christ when you start behaving to the contrary.

Holy Spirit, whom do you want me to ask to help remind me of my righteous nature whenever I start acting out of my flesh?

Key – Quit playing the blame game.

Hopefully, by now, you can see that God is not calling us to control anyone but ourselves. God has given us a spirit that divinely inspires us to right behavior, and He expects us to yield to it. We have to take one-hundred percent responsibility for our behavior and our emotional state. Like a worn-out parent, God is simply not interested in blame. It's irrelevant to Him. He is only interested in you positioning yourself to receive His blessings, which means yielding to your spirit.

Holy Spirit, whom do you want me to quit blaming for my behavior, attitudes and actions? List the names. (God, Parents, Spouse, Children, Boss, Co-Workers, Friends, Pastor, Judges, Police Officers, Banks, Lawyers.)

Have you been blaming your behavior on someone else? If so go ahead and pray the prayer below for each person on your list.

PRAYER - Lord Jesus, Thank You for giving me everything I need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). I renounce the lie that (name the person) _____ is causing me to (name the behavior) _____. I now take full responsibility for my actions. I ask for Your grace to yield to my spirit in this area. When I start acting out of my flesh, please help me to turn back to You quickly so I may be filled with Your love and power once again. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Construction Zone – SLOW DOWN

Jesus is here to haul away old works of the enemy. He wants to remove the section of the wall between you and God that contains lies regarding your past.

KEY – Our past does not determine our destiny.

Although it may be painful, please name the most devastating, destructive or sinful events in your past. You are not expected to share this with anyone.

NOW see those sins CONSUMED by the cross, once and for all.

Many people believe their past experiences are a reflection of their identity, or will determine their destiny. The truth is your identity in Christ has absolutely nothing to do with your past. In Christ, you became a brand new creation. Remember, the old has gone, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God has outstanding plans for every believer. If you're living out of your new spirit, nothing can stop you from manifesting your destiny in God.

“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

Remember it is the lies in your belief systems that distance you from God. As you pray the following prayer of renunciation, renew your mind with the truth that will set you free.

Lord Jesus, I renounce the lie that my past circumstances or behaviors have diminished my worth or have any bearing on the destiny You have for me. I am a new glorious creation, connected to You and filled with Your Holy Spirit. Nothing can stop me from accessing my rich inheritance of Your love, healing, direction and power. I know the Kingdom of Heaven is within me and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I decree that my past has been cleansed and forgiven. I now look to You as my future, Lord Jesus.

If you have just yielded to the truth that your past no longer determines your future, then you have broken through to Jesus in a whole new area of your soul. Praise the Lord! That piece of your wall is now being hauled away.

Praise The Lord.

Let's close by focusing on the Lord's goodness. Use the space below to tell Him three reasons why you are grateful to have direct access to Him through your spirit.

Private Practice

During times of conflict or stress, practice yielding to your spirit. Notice the effects it has on you and others as God's Spirit produces good fruit in you. Check each of the nine fruits of the Spirit off as you experience them flow out of you.

1. Peace _____
2. Joy _____
3. Faith _____
4. Love _____
5. Self-Control _____
6. Kindness _____
7. Goodness _____
8. Gentleness _____
9. Patience _____

Have a great week yielding to God!