

Tyson Ziegler, Gary Ricucci, Seth Mick, Brian
Chesemore

Session 5 | *Real Change*, ch. 4: **CROSS**

I. REAL CHANGE: WISE AND SKILLFUL APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL IN OUR COUNSELING

Counseling begins with listening, asking questions, and formulating an understanding of the problem. We describe the heat and the subsequent fruit and thorns, with a view to identifying the root. We can then help the counselee know what, incrementally, needs to change.

In that process we want to discern the counselee's disposition toward change (desire for change? description of desired change? hope for real change?) The basis for that hope—the Cross of Christ, the gospel!

The gospel...is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

- A. The gospel (the Cross) tells me who I was before Christ, who I am in Christ, and who I will become through the power of the Spirit because of Christ.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
(Ephesians 2:1-3)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

COUNSEL THE WORD: PURSUING JOY AND SKILL IN PERSONAL MINISTRY

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29)

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

- B. The gospel delivers, instructs, and empowers me to think, believe, and desire differently.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

1. A new life

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, (1 Peter 1:3-4)

2. New affections

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8-9)

COUNSEL THE WORD: PURSUING JOY AND SKILL IN PERSONAL MINISTRY

3. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)

4. Motivated and empowered with new desires

So, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

C. The gospel leads me on the pathway to repentance, faith, and fruitfulness

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

1. Repentance – turning

2. Faith – believing and receiving

3. Seeing myself as the prodigal (*Luke 15:11-32*)

D. The gospel displays the infinite love of God (*1 John 1:9-10; 2:1-2; 3:1-3*)

1. The Father who forgives

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)

2. Jesus who is our advocate

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1)

3. The Spirit who empowers us to walk in obedience and purity

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

Questions to ask yourself:

What is it about God and the new life he has given you in Christ that makes you want to turn away from your old ways, loves, desires preferences, or fears?

What greater, better, deeper desires or longings or possibilities does the gospel place within you?

II. Q & A

For next time, please read: *Fruit*, chapter 5 of *Real Change: Becoming More Like Christ in Everyday Life* by Andrew Nichols and Helen Thorne.