

HOW CHRIST CHANGES
US BY HIS GRACE

how people change

(FACILITATOR'S GUIDE)



Timothy S. Lane | Paul David Tripp

HOW PEOPLE CHANGE
*How Christ Changes Us
by His Grace*

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp

David Powlison, Contributor

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How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace
Facilitator's Guide

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A Word of Welcome

Welcome to *How People Change*. We are gratified that you have chosen to use this course to help God's people understand what it means to be progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ. Our prayer is that *How People Change* will produce a harvest of lasting change in you and the people in your ministry or church.

How People Change has an ambitious goal. Our prayer is that God will use this course to change people's lives as he transforms their hearts by his grace. Our goal is that through this study, people will live more functionally Christlike lives, even in the middle of life's hardest challenges. We sincerely believe that when God cleans the inside of the dish, the outside will also become clean (Matthew 23:25). We have written this course to help people understand and participate in the grace-driven, Christ-centered work of personal transformation that God pursues in every situation and relationship of their lives.

Let us offer a few words of introduction to the course you are about to teach.

1. Our goal is to train you and to provide you with a resource that enables you to teach people how God works growth and change in their hearts and lives, transforming them into the image of Christ. *How People Change* is intentionally Christ-centered and heart-focused. We want this material to impact you as the leader first of all; we want you to feel that it is "yours." Accordingly, we encourage you not to view it as a script you must read or memorize word for word. At the same time, we ask you not to substantially add to or alter its content. What is here has been carefully and prayerfully included and tested.
2. Many people in our culture would call *How People Change* a self-help course because it leads people through steps of

self-examination and change. However, the Bible would use two words for this material. The first word would be *gospel*. This course is a study of what God has done in Christ to transform us from idolatry-enslaved sinners to people who are like him, zealous to do what he says is good in a world that is terribly broken. This course celebrates the truth that Jesus came to save us because we are unable to save ourselves. His work addresses the deepest and most personal issues of human experience. This course calls people to know their world, to know themselves, and to know the Lord and his grace. And it calls them to a personal commitment to a lifelong process of transformation into the image of Christ. The second word the Bible would use for this course is *discipleship*. Discipleship is walking with someone as he or she learns to walk more faithfully with the Lord. Rather than helping themselves through this course, people are being disciplined by the Lord as they are disciplined by you.

3. This material should not be treated as a compilation of abstract information. This is not a theology course, but a God-ordained opportunity for you to know, confess, repent, obey, and grow. As you humbly examine yourself, looking into the mirror of God's Word and seeing your heart, your self-disclosing example will bring authenticity and enthusiasm to this material that cannot be written onto the page. Pray that God will use this course to change you and those you teach.
4. *How People Change* systematizes God's work of heart and life transformation, but it is vital to remember that living a Christ-like life and discipling others to do so is always more than a system of change or a set of techniques. That is why this course rests not on a model or formula for change, but on the presence and power of a living, active Redeemer. Our ultimate goal is to encourage people to:
 - Look at themselves in the mirror of God's Word.
 - Know and rely on Christ's grace.
 - Step out into life with renewed faith and courage.

As they do these things, they will experience the fact that they have been given "everything they need for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3)—all that they need not just for eternal life, but for a God-pleasing life in the here and now.

Let us say again that we are excited that you are beginning this journey. Remember that we are prepared to assist you in every way we can. Our hope is that this course will be part of a long ministry partnership between CCEF and your church and ministry.

In Christ,
Timothy S. Lane
Paul David Tripp

Acknowledgments

It would be impossible to properly acknowledge the many people who have contributed to the content and development of this curriculum over the years. However, there are a few who must be mentioned. Thanks first to David Powlison, who developed the material that is the basis for *How People Change*. Sue Lutz edited this piece, making a much better training tool. Michael Breece did a great job of editing this 2010 reformatted curriculum. The faculty of CCEF has stood behind and supported us throughout its writing and have, in many ways, contributed to its content. Thanks to each one of you.

We want to offer a special word of appreciation to all the churches around the country that were willing to test this course. Your contribution is invaluable. You have challenged and encouraged us and helped sharpen the curriculum.

Our gratitude also goes to the churches and individuals who gave sacrificially to support this curriculum project. We could never have attempted a project as costly, as labor intensive, and as time consuming as this one without your help. You have been a constant source of encouragement to us. For all who will use this curriculum, for the churches whose ministries will benefit, and for the people who will grow and change as a result, we say thank you.

There are times in ministry when you are privileged to see God's "total involvement paradigm" ("as each part does its part") in operation. The writing of this curriculum has been one of those times.

About CCEF

Since 1968, the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF) has been at the forefront of the biblical counseling movement with the mission to restore Christ to counseling and counseling to the

local church. CCEF's goal is to teach people how to explore the wisdom and depth of the Bible and apply its grace-centered message to the problems of daily living. This mission is accomplished through a combination of counseling, training, publications, and conferences. These strands are tied together by a passion to equip God's people to experience Christ amid the challenges of everyday life. For more information about CCEF, go to www.ccef.org.

Facilitator's Preparation Guide

Applying the foundational, biblical principles from this course will:

1. Help participants understand why they do the things they do
2. Bring lasting change to the lives of participants by conforming their hearts into God's likeness, right in the middle of life's challenges.

The first step in preparing yourself to teach is to review this leader's preparation guide. Be sure that you understand the material yourself and make it your own, so that you can communicate it clearly and persuasively to the people you teach.

This guide will give you an overview of the course, lesson by lesson. In each lesson, you will be directed to ten elements where preparation is critical to your teaching success. The ten critical elements in each lesson are:

1. *Homework Discussion.* Each lesson begins with a discussion of the Make It Real homework assignment from the previous lesson. Be sure that you do not gloss over or minimize this section. As participants share the ways they are being changed by the material, they experience change as a "community project." This discussion also gives you a weekly opportunity to gauge how well your students are understanding and applying what they have been taught. There will be times, as you seek to be responsive to the Spirit's work in your group, when this section is all you complete. Don't be discouraged if this happens. You are watching God do what this curriculum says he does in the lives of his people!

2. *Review.* The lessons in *How People Change* build on one another. To fully grasp the material in any lesson, participants need to understand what was taught previously. The review at the beginning of each lesson reinforces the connections in the truths that have been presented and shows how the new lesson fits into the curriculum as a whole.
3. *CPR.* Each lesson has three points of focus and application. These points are summarized at the beginning of each lesson. *C* stands for the central point that the participants need to understand and master. *P* stands for the way the central point of the lesson applies to the participant's personal life. *R* stands for the way these concepts set the agenda for the participant's *relationships* and ministry. Make sure that you understand each of the statements enough to present them clearly and simply.
4. *DVD.* Each lesson is introduced and developed by watching the DVD. The material on the DVD supplements what will be read for homework and is not just a duplication. The DVD series begins with a How People Change Leader's Introduction that is for you, the facilitator, and for anyone else who is helping to lead small groups. This session will help you to understand the content and direction of the course.
5. *Small Groups.* If you have a group larger than twelve, create small groups. These groups will remain together for the duration of the curriculum and will be the primary group in which discussion and personal sharing take place. Ideal groups for this program are between eight and ten people. Ask someone within each group to serve as a facilitator whose role is to encourage participants to share, to keep the group on task, and to watch the time.
6. *Lesson Content.* The main body of each lesson is built around key passages of Scripture, since what we are teaching about personal growth and change is defined by the Bible. These passages are not used in an out-of-context, proof-text manner. Rather, they summarize the important biblical themes on which the course is based. Encourage participants to take the time to read every passage mentioned in their study guide. Have extra Bibles available for those who may not have brought their own.

Each Bible passage should be studied until you have understood its meaning, can apply it to the topic at hand, and can

draw out the main point(s) that are critical to the principles taught in the lesson.

7. *Group Discussion.* Good teaching includes keeping the participants engaged and involved. Group discussion is one of the best ways to accomplish this. A meaningful discussion that moves beyond the “blind leading the blind” requires preparation on your part. As you prepare to teach, allow ample time for the assigned discussions. Do not omit these critical learning tools! Establish in advance your goal for each discussion, and then plan how to lead the discussion to bring participants to that goal.
8. *The Big Question.* Near the beginning of each lesson you will find “The Big Question.” This question is designed to help participants take the core teaching of the lesson and use it to examine themselves, their situations, and their Lord. It is our hope that God will use these questions to further the work of transformation he has begun in each of them.
9. *Expanded CPR.* At the end of each lesson, the single statement CPR from the beginning of the lesson is expanded to three statements under each category. This is meant to be the crescendo of each lesson. These statements are simple but not simplistic. Each contains truths that are potentially heart and life transforming. Study each statement to be sure you understand its meaning and implications.

Begin each lesson Review with a careful examination of the lesson’s CPR statement, helping your students to grapple with the theological, personal, and relational implications of what they have been studying. For example, when reviewing lesson 8, begin by reading together the CPR statements for lesson 8 found before the Make It Real section. As you give attention to the CPR statements at the beginning and end of each lesson, you are bracketing the lesson content with very direct, practical, and personal application.

10. *Make It Real.* Good teaching needs to be reinforced and personally applied, or it will not take root in participants’ lives. At the end of every lesson, direct your group to Make It Real. Briefly scan the section and point to one or two questions that illustrate the value in completing the assignment. Most of the homework in *How People Change* is a Personal Growth Project. Participants will be asked to pick an area of struggle in their lives and use

what they are learning to understand it and begin to change. It is our hope that, through this exercise, the course will be an actual time of personal growth, renewal, and change. The Make It Real assignments are intended to keep the course from being impersonal, theoretical, and simply the downloading of good biblical information. Instead, they give participants an opportunity to be discipled by you, and by the Lord who gives each lesson its hope.

Attention to these ten elements is critical to the success of your teaching. What follows is a lesson-by-lesson guide to prepare you to teach the principles presented in each lesson.

LESSON 1—HERE'S WHERE GOD IS TAKING YOU

The Big Question

- What hopes and goals give direction to your life?

Key Scripture Passages

- 2 Peter 1:4: Participants in the divine nature
- Philippians 1:3–11: The promise of inevitable victory
- Revelation 7:9–17: A picture of our final destination

Whole Group Instruction (total time: 80–90 mins.)

Introduction to the Course (15 mins.)

CPR

The Big Question

DVD (Show both Introduction and Session 1, 40 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

1. Introduce yourself to your group by stating your name, your occupation, and a brief description of your family (spouse, children), and share one of your “future orientations” when you were younger and how that determined your perspective, priorities, and actions.
2. Share with your group how you hope God will use this curriculum in your life.
3. Take time to pray together as a group.

Homework

Read lesson 1.

Make It Real

- What dreams and expectations get you through the day and give you hope for your future? Do you ever feel hopeless? What produces that sense of despair? What were you hoping for and not getting?
- How do the things you hope and work for shape your responses to people and circumstances? When people threaten your hopes and goals, how do you react?
- Pick one place of opportunity or pressure, difficulty or blessing, where you need to view yourself as changed and carried by Christ. How will that perspective change your response to that situation?

LESSON 2—SO, YOU’RE MARRIED TO CHRIST

The Big Question

- What daily benefits are yours because of your marriage to Christ?

Key Scripture Passages

- 2 Corinthians 11:1–3: Married to Christ
- Colossians 1:15–23: Christ the Bridegroom
- Colossians 1:21–23; 2:1–15: The blessings of our union with Christ
- Philippians 3:4–7: Assets and liabilities

Whole Group Instruction (total time: 80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

Philippians 1:3–11 questions; Make It Real (especially question 2); reread CPR; and share which item is most relevant.

CPR

The Big Question

DVD (Session 2, 18 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

1. Our relationship to God is the heart of the Christian life. Describe what you think this relationship should be like.
2. What prevents Christians from having the close, intimate relationship God has made possible?

3. How do you typically think of your relationship to Jesus? As a marriage? As an employee and boss? As friends? As neighbors? As a student and teacher?

Consider the following questions on your own:

1. How is your relationship with Jesus? Is your relationship close and intimate as a bride and groom?
2. What is hindering the close relationship as God intends it to be?

Homework

Read lesson 2.

Assets and Liabilities

Make It Real

- Have you thought about Christianity as a marriage? How is that different from the ways you have tended to view your faith?
- The core issue of 2 Corinthians 11:1–3 is spiritual purity. Where are you most tempted to commit spiritual adultery?
- What attracts you to these “lovers”?

LESSON 3—CHANGE IS A COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Big Question

- What daily resources are yours because you are part of the community of Christ? Are you taking advantage of these resources? What resources and gifts do you bring to the body of Christ?

Key Scripture Passages

- Ephesians 2:14–22: Belonging to God’s family
- Ephesians 3:14–21: Being loved as a family
- Titus 2:11–14: Purified as a family
- 1 Corinthians 12: Unity and diversity within the same family

Whole Group Instruction (total time: 80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

Colossians 1:15–23 activity; Assets and Liabilities activity; How Being Married to Christ Should Change the Way We Respond to Life; Make It Real (especially question 1); reread CPR, and share which items is most relevant.

CPR

The Big Question

Opening Discussion Question (5 mins.)

“Can anyone give an example of a time when you experienced the love of Christ through your church, small group, or Bible study? Can anyone share an example of a time when God used someone to expose, grow, or change you?”

DVD (Session 3, 26 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

1. Share your thoughts, feelings, concerns, or encouragements when you consider “Christians cannot grow to the fullness of God by living independently of others.”
2. Who is someone you trust to reveal the truth to you?

Write a question to ask this person that will allow him/her to speak honestly into your life to help you to grow and change:

-
3. Is there someone you think God wants you to confront and help in his/her Christian walk? Pray and think carefully about how to lovingly and gently approach this person.
 4. Pray together as a group.

Homework

Read lesson 3.

Make It Real

- How does your life reflect your commitment to meaningful relationships that help you grow and change?
- What opportunities for redemptive relationships are already in your life?
- If you do not have this kind of relationship in your life, what is God calling you to do so that you can participate in a redemptive community?

LESSON 4—LIFE AS GOD SEES IT, CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

The Big Question

- How does “The Big Picture” help you to understand and respond to the grace of God as he works through the details of your life?

Key Scripture Passages

- Jeremiah 17:5–10: The Big Picture
- 1 Corinthians 10:1–14: Life with the Redeemer in the wilderness
- 2 Corinthians 1:2–12: The example of Paul
- Psalm 1; Romans 12:1–2; Matthew 18:15–35; Galatians 5—6; James 3:13—4:12

Whole Group Instruction (total time: 80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (40 mins.)

Ephesians 4:4–6 questions; Ephesians 2:14–22 questions; Ephesians 3:14–21 questions; using gifts in the body; Make It Real (questions 1–3).

CPR

The Big Question

DVD (Session 4, 18 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

A Biblical Model for Change—1 Corinthians 10:1–14

A Biblical Model for Change—2 Corinthians 1:1–12

Homework

Read lesson 4.

Model for Change diagram practice

Make It Real

- Identify a difficult situation or a big opportunity in your own life right now. Sort out the situation and your responses to it using the four elements of this model (HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT). Use diagram provided.
- What aspects of the HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT model do you tend to emphasize to the neglect of the others?

LESSON 5—HEAT 1: THE REAL GOD IN THE REAL WORLD

The Big Question

- What is your situation? What are your burdens, pressures, joys, hardships, temptations, responsibilities, opportunities, and pains—both actual and potential?

Key Scripture Passages

- Psalm 88: God understands our deepest struggles of life in a fallen world
- James 1:1–18: Pastoral realism in the face of trial

Whole Group Instruction (80 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In your small groups, go over one or two of the charts (figs. 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7) and the diagram participants created using their own personal situation. Also read Review, CPR, and the Big Question.

Opening Discussion (10 mins. whole group)

(Leader, write responses to be seen and referred back to.)

What are some possible ways to respond to suffering? and What assumptions do people make about suffering?

DVD (Session 5, 17 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

What is your response to there being a psalm like Psalm 88 in the Bible?

Homework

Read lesson 5.

Make It Real

- Take time to think about your life. What is the HEAT in your current situation? Use the questions provided to make your responses concrete and detailed.
- Do you see any themes or patterns in your answers regarding relational struggles, responsibility, certain temptations, finances, physical suffering, and so forth? In other words, what part of the HEAT of real life tends to get to you?

LESSON 6—HEAT 2: THE REAL YOU IN THE REAL WORLD

The Big Question

- As God sees me respond to the HEAT in my world, what in me does he want to change? Where is God calling me to personal change right now?

Key Scripture Passages

- Romans 8:20–22: The real world: the details
- Numbers 11:4–23: Lessons from the wilderness
- Numbers 14:1–4: Lessons from the wilderness
- Numbers 20:1–5: Lessons from the wilderness
- Deuteronomy 8:2–3: What God is doing in you in the wilderness

Whole Group Instruction (70–80 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In your small groups, discuss participant's answers to the Make It Real questions 1 and 2. Read together Review, CPR, and the Big Question.

DVD (Session 6, 15 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

1 John 1:5–10

1. How should we deal with our sin? How should we not deal with our sin?
2. What is God's response to our sin?
3. What then should be our response to the sins of others?
4. How does walking in the light lead to fellowship with God and with one another?
5. How can the truths of this passage encourage you in your Personal Growth Project?

Homework

Read lesson 6.

Make It Real

- The Personal Growth Project begins in this lesson. Go over the detailed instructions with your students.

LESSON 7—THORNS I: WHAT ENTANGLES YOU?

The Big Question

- How do I typically respond to the circumstances and relationships God has placed in my life right now? What happens as a result?

Key Passages

- Ephesians 4:17—6:18: Don't live like a Gentile
- 2 Corinthians 4:7—5:10: The promise of future glory

Whole Group Instruction (80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In your small groups, share your answers to Numbers 11:4–23 and Deuteronomy 8:2–3; and Make It Real questions at the end of lesson 6.

Opening Discussion (10 mins. whole group)

(Leader, have participants read Ephesians 4:17—6:18 and list all of the ungodly responses that Paul references.)

DVD (Session 7, 26 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

- What are some reasons why God wants to bring change to our lives?
- Do you feel you can be honest about your own heart struggles with this group?
- Do you feel the Personal Growth Project you selected is the one God wants to work on in your life?
- Pray together for each other.

Homework

Read lesson 7.

Make It Real

Continue Personal Growth Project using the questions in this section.

LESSON 8—THORNS 2: WHY DO YOU GET ENTANGLED?

The Big Question

- What has captured your heart? What cravings, desires, and beliefs rule your heart, producing ungodly reactions?

Key Passages

- Deuteronomy 5:6–21: The 10 Commandments and the sin beneath the sins
- Romans 1:25: Making good things ultimate things
- James 4:1–4: The connection between idolatrous worship and ungodliness

Whole Group Instruction (80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In small groups, share your thoughts you identified in Make It Real. Identify, if possible, what FRUIT could be produced from these situations.

DVD (Session 8, 21 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

Read together the first part of Lesson Content, below, to the end of the list of “typical responses.” Share a time when you exhibited one of these responses when something did not go the way you hoped or planned. Is there a response that tends to characterize you?

Pray together for one another.

Homework

Read lesson 8.

Make It Real

- Look for places where you evidence strong emotions.
- What things tend to function as God replacements in your life?
- Reflect on the gospel from lessons 1 and 2.

LESSON 9—CROSS 1: NEW IDENTITY AND NEW POTENTIAL

The Big Question

- In what specific ways are you failing to let the CROSS shape your situations and relationships? What would change in these areas if you lived in a more CROSS-centered way?

Key Scripture Passage

- Galatians 2:20: Your potential: the indwelling Christ

Whole Group Instruction (70–80 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In your small groups, share any themes that you identified from Make It Real question 1. Share, too, which promises and truths of God's Word have been encouraging you as you identify possible idols in your heart. If you are struggling to find a theme, share one or more of the answers you wrote down and allow your small group to help you.

Opening Discussion (10 mins.)

(Leader, ask someone to read Galatians 2:20. Ask participants to share their understanding or knowledge of this verse.)

DVD (Session 9, 15 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

(Leader, this could be done as a whole group to switch things up.)

Share ways that you have seen God transform your own heart or others' hearts.

Pray for one another, and thank God for his transforming work in us.

Homework

Read lesson 9.

Make It Real

- Where have you failed to recognize that sin's power over you has been broken?
- Where have you failed to live up to your full potential as a child of God?

- Where have you been repeatedly tempted to forget that the CROSS has fundamentally changed you?
- Where, specifically, would a CROSS-centered perspective change your relationships?
- Where is God calling you to new ways of living in the middle of the same old stuff?

LESSON 10—CROSS 2: THE CROSS AND DAILY LIVING

The Big Question

- Who are you? What is your new identity? How does believing this help you to identify and repent of the heart sins beneath your behavioral sins? How does it help you move in new directions that are pleasing to God?

Key Scripture Passages

- 2 Corinthians 5:17: The old has gone; the new has come
- 1 John 2:1–2: Understanding your justification
- 1 John 3:1–3: Understanding your adoption
- Luke 15:11–32: Your new identity will show itself in a life of repentance.
- 2 Corinthians 7:10: Godly sorrow as opposed to worldly sorrow

Whole Group Instruction (80–90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

In small groups, share your answers to Make It Real questions 1–5.

DVD (Session 10, 21 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

(Leader, invite someone from the study [if possible] to lead the whole group in a time of worship. The worship time can include songs, prayers of confession and forgiveness, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, reading of Scripture, and so on.)

Homework

Read lesson 10.

Make It Real

- Reflect on the Bonar quote.
- Are you maintaining a biblical emphasis on Christ for you (justification/adoption) and in you (regeneration/sanctification)?

- What about Christ do you need to see and believe?
- What about Christ is more attractive than what you have settled for?
- What in Christ do you need to worship and adore?
- What Scripture passages will help you see what you need to see about Christ?

LESSON 11—FRUIT 1: REAL HEART CHANGE

The Big Question

- What type of heart produces good FRUIT?

Key Scripture Passages

- Deuteronomy 6:4–6; Mark 12:28–31: The centrality of the heart in true obedience
- Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:24–28: Obedience that flows from a heart transformed by the Redeemer
- 1 Samuel 16:1–13; Psalm 139:23–24; Psalm 86:11: The focus on the inward disposition—the heart
- Ephesians 3:14–21: Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith

Whole Group Instruction (90 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

Share with your small group how you are able to relate to Joe in the illustration from lesson 10. Share your answers to Make It Real questions 1–3.

DVD (Session 11, 30 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

Deuteronomy 6:4–6; Mark 12:28–31; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:24–28; 1 Samuel 16:1–13; Psalm 139:23–24; Psalm 86:11; Ephesians 3:14–21

Homework

Read lesson 11.

Make It Real

- Take time to carefully explain the Philippians Bible Study. Review the questions with your participants.

LESSON 12—FRUIT 2: NEW AND SURPRISING FRUIT

The Big Question

- Where is God calling you to embrace your potential as his child and to be committed to the growth of new FRUIT that only his grace can produce? As you respond in new ways, how will your situations and relationships be changed?

Key Scripture Passages

- Psalm 4: King David's story: In the cave and okay
- Galatians 5:13—6:10: The fruit that grows because of the Spirit's presence
- Application Passages: Matthew 18:21–35; Matthew 6:12–15; Mark 11:25; James 3:13–18; Ephesians 4:25; Galatians 5:14–15; Luke 17:1–10; Gospel of John; Romans 12:1–8

Whole Group Instruction (90–100 mins.)

Review/Discuss Homework (30 mins.)

As a large group, discuss the Philippians Bible study.

In your small groups, share about how you evaluated your Christian life (question 1), as well as sharing your answers to the other Make It Real questions.

DVD (Session 12, 24 mins.)

Small Group Activity (30 mins.)

Bible Passages

DVD (Conclusion, 16 mins.)

Homework

Read lesson 12.

Make It Real

- New things you have learned about life in the fallen world
- New things you have learned about your actions, reactions, and words
- New things you have learned about the thoughts, motives, treasures, idols, desires, and purposes of your heart
- New things you have learned about Christ's work, your identity as God's child, and Christ's heart-transforming grace
- New things you have learned about where God is calling you to grow and change

Here's Where God Is Taking You

Leader, take time to welcome your group and acquaint them with the course using the following introduction.

INTRODUCTION (15 mins.)

Let's become familiar with the study guide's format by briefly looking at each section. The first thing to notice is the figure titled "At a Glance: How People Change," which is on the last page of the guide. It is a summary of the *How People Change* course. We'll be referring to it often, which is why it is in a place that is easily located. This page gives you a quick preview of the model of personal change we will be learning: HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT. The numbers in the diagram indicate the lesson that covers the topic. Next, turn to the Word of Welcome page at the beginning of your study guide. Take some time later to read this on your own. But right now turn to page iii, entitled "Course Outline." This lists each lesson that we'll cover in this course. Just like the At a Glance page, it provides a summary of the entire course. Once again, you can see that the model of personal heart and life transformation we will explore contains four elements: HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT.

CENTRAL POINT AND APPLICATION

Each session begins with a section entitled Central Point and Application—CPR for short. This section functions like a map for each lesson. It will give you a sense of where we're going. Notice that this section is divided into three parts. Central Point lists the core truth you need to

know and remember from each lesson. Personal Application helps you to see the implications of that truth for your personal life. And Relational Application points to how each truth sets the agenda for your relationship with others for ministry.

The initials of these three points, CPR, give us a way of remembering that we are focusing on heart change. The promise of the gospel is that Christ will completely change our lives by transforming our hearts by his grace. Although we would often settle for circumstantial or behavioral change, God loves us too much to settle for that. He is intent on changing us, and because all of our actions, reactions, and responses are guided by our hearts, that is where his work of change is focused. Heart change is what bears visible fruit in our daily lives, affecting our families, church body, and communities. By changing hearts, God is changing lives—yours and those around you.

THE BIG QUESTION

Each lesson will present you with the Big Question, which will help you take the core teaching of the lesson and use it to examine yourself, your situation, and your Lord. We hope that God will use these questions to further the work of heart transformation he has begun in you.

LESSON CONTENT

We will spend a portion of our time viewing the DVD, which presents the main content of each lesson. Every lesson will include a time for a small group activity related to the lesson's content. Some lessons will also have an opening discussion.

Leader, if you are not using the DVD, spend the extra time on the opening discussion and small group activities.

CPR

An extended version of CPR recaps the lesson and goes into more detail about its main ideas and applications.

HOMEWORK

1. Lesson Content: Each week at home you should read the lesson that was previously viewed on DVD.

2. *Make It Real*: Be sure to answer the questions in the Make It Real section. This may be the most important section of your study guide because it is the place where you make the course material your own. You are strongly encouraged to do the assignments so that:

- You will know yourself and your heart better.
- You will deepen your understanding of how God transforms you, right where you live every day, from what you are to the likeness of his Son.
- You will learn how he is calling you to participate in the work of change he is daily doing in you.

One thing this section will not provide is “10 easy steps to a quick fix.” Life is not like that, and we won’t insult you by implying that it is! When done thoughtfully, however, these questions will help you apply the truths of the lesson to the specifics of your own life. Take time to answer them in a way that reflects where you are in your relationship to the Lord and where you believe he wants to take you. Be honest—write what you think and feel, not what you think you *should* write. Make It Real will be useful in the change process only if you are honest before the Lord. You will not be graded or judged, so treat this material like a trusted friend who can help you face a challenge. Some of your answers may be too personal to share with the group, but we hope you will share them with at least one person. Write your answers down, complete or incomplete, and trust God to help you to find him if you seek him with your questions (1 Chronicles 28:9).

At the beginning of each session, we will discuss some of your answers to the Make It Real assignment. This discussion time is important. Through it you will learn from each other, encourage one another, and allow God to use your gifts in the lives of others.

3. *Personal Growth Project*: Another way this course will encourage change in your life is the Personal Growth Project introduced in lesson 6. You will be asked to choose an area in your life where you believe God wants to change you. After prayerful thought, you might realize that God is putting his finger on your road rage, the way you play golf or talk to your children, your relationship to money, your view of your looks, your relationship with a parent or spouse, your cynicism, grumbling, gossip—or something else entirely. Next, you’ll be asked to consider what it would look like for this specific area of your life—which is controlled by your heart—to undergo transformation. What is your goal, and how will you

get there? As you apply the truths you learn each week, our hope is that you would begin to see substantial changes by the end of the course.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Though this is a study guide with a predictable format, our prayer is that your experience with this material will be anything but predictable. We hope these lessons will instill hope and faith about what lies ahead as Christ completes his sanctifying work in you.

One of the many amazing things Christ is doing right now is changing you by the power of his Holy Spirit into someone worthy of honor in his kingdom. Someday you will receive a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, and a crown of glory from his powerful and gracious hands. “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4). “And when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

Whether you have been a Christian for a day or a decade, we pray that the Lord will use this material to show you how your heart, mind, spirit, and will are either moving you toward God or away from him at any given moment, as well as toward or away from other people, and even yourself. There are new problems to recognize, long-standing issues to face yet again, Sabbaths to take, wars to win, lusts to lose, relationships to reconcile, and more. The calling is constant and the task enormous, but you do not undertake it without supernatural resources. As long as you live, you have hope for change. Do you believe that? “Lord, I do believe. Help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). May the Lord bless your journey.

AT A GLANCE

Now let’s begin our first lesson by taking a look again at the last page, the At a Glance diagram. You will see three trees under the heat of the sun. This picture represents how God changes us in the middle of the toughest challenges of life. We all have trials, pressures, temptation, and difficulty in our lives (HEAT). As sinners we all tend, in our hearts, to respond in a variety of sinful ways to what is going on in our lives (THORNS). God meets us in our sin and struggle with his heart-transforming grace (CROSS). Finally, as our hearts are transformed by that grace, we begin to respond to the same old difficulty in brand new ways (FRUIT). This is the journey we will be taking together.

Let's pray and then we will look at our Central Point and Application and the Big Question, and view our first DVD. As you view the DVDs, you can take notes in the margins of your lesson.

CENTRAL POINT AND APPLICATION

Central Point: Living with God's ultimate destination in view gives hope and perspective in our daily situations and relationships.

Personal Application: I need to know what kind of hope directs my life. Functionally, what am I really living for?

Relational Application: I need to look for ways to help others live with the final destination in view.

THE BIG QUESTION

What hopes and goals give direction to your life?

Leader, begin the How People Change Seminar with the Introduction (27 mins.) and continue with Session 1 (13 mins.).

LESSON CONTENT

DVD (40 mins.)

Small Group Activity (20 mins.)

1. Introduce yourself to your group by stating your name, your occupation, a brief description of your family (spouse, children), and share one of your "future orientations" when you were younger and how that determined your perspective, priorities, and actions.
2. Share with your group how you hope God will use this curriculum in your life.
3. Take time to pray together as a group.

Leader, if you have more than twelve participants, divide them into small groups. The members of these groups will remain with one another for the duration of the study. Groups of eight to ten are encouraged if possible.

Explain that these will remain their groups for the whole program. Have the participants do the Small Group Activity.

Leader, clarify what is expected of the participants for homework: “Read and answer questions to lesson 1 and complete Make It Real. Be prepared to share your answers next week with your small group.”

HOMEWORK

Human beings are “meaning makers.” We are constantly searching for answers and seeking meaning and purpose for the events and activities in our lives: the shocking tragedy of terrorist actions, a cancer diagnosis, a friend’s divorce, parenting styles, the effects of sexual abuse, racial profiling, working seventy-five hours a week, and so on. As we suffer, struggle, achieve or relax, we ask ourselves, consciously or subconsciously, “*What is the point? What’s the purpose? What does it all mean?*” The answers we give ourselves—the meanings we give to our thoughts and actions—are what keep us on a certain path or move us in a radically different direction.

In little, everyday ways and in hugely significant moments, as we try to make sense of our lives, we are all crying out for some kind of change. We all instinctively know that things are not the way they were meant to be. Whether it is the fifteenth fight over breakfast between siblings who rarely treat each other with love or haunting memories of terrible abuse in your childhood, we all sense and experience that the world we live in is broken. Our days are mixed. Sure, we smile and laugh, but before the day is over we may also frown, yell, or cry.

We spend much of our time dreaming about what could be. If only the boss were more patient. If only my husband were more caring. If only my father didn’t drink so much. If only my son would quit arguing and listen. If only our neighborhood was more friendly. If only we had been able to get that house. If only I could defeat my despondency. If only our church understood the single parent’s plight. If only I could enjoy good health, financial stability, or the respect of friends. There is probably never a day that we don’t think about change, about things being different.

As we do, we all have pictures in our mind. We look at our lives and decide where change is needed and what it should look like. The problem is that even our best definitions of change fall short. Often our desires for change aren’t fundamentally wrong; they just don’t run deep enough. The Bible confronts us with a hard-to-accept reality: The change most needed in our lives isn’t change in our situations and relationships but in *us*.

The thing God is most intent on rescuing us from is *ourselves*. God knows that what messes up relationships and situations is people, and people are the object of his loving and lifelong work of change.

We are often at odds with our wise and loving Lord because the change he is working on is not the change we have dreamt about. We dream about change in *it*, while God is working in the midst of *it* to change *us*. What does he want to change us from and to? He wants to change us from people who “*live unto themselves*” to people who are literally *like him*. Peter says it in the most amazing way! “That . . . you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4). This is real change! My selfish, sinful nature being replaced by his divine nature! God is shaping me into his own image. In the mud and muck of life, he is right beside me and his focus is me. In the middle of it all, he is radically transforming my heart by his grace, so that I am able to think, desire, act, and speak in ways consistent with who he is and what he is doing on earth. Positive personal change begins to take place when my dreams of change begin to line up with God’s purposes for change. Leaving behind goals of personal comfort and self-fulfillment, I begin to reach out for Christ, desiring to be more and more like him each day. As I do this, I become more and more prepared for my ultimate destination—eternity with him.

Here’s the rub: it doesn’t come naturally to us to connect the ways we think, feel, and act in the midst of struggle with our ultimate destination of life in heaven with Christ. It is a work of the Spirit in our lives. But when we learn how to respond to that work, the impact on our lives is enormous. This is what this curriculum is about. It is meant to help you connect God’s transforming grace and your future in eternity with the struggles you face every day. It is designed to help you understand how God meets you and changes your heart in the middle of the greatest joys and deepest sorrows of life.

Turn to Philippians 1:3–11. Can you pick up Paul’s excitement in this passage? It is filled with reality *and* hope! Paul is clearly talking to people who need to grow, who are living in the real world with all its pressures, problems, and imperfections; yet as he thinks about them, he is brimming with confidence!

? 1. *What is the source of this confidence?*

Not his readers' ability to get their own act together or to make their relationships work or to adjust all their circumstances. Not at all! Paul's confidence is completely vertical and personal. His hope rests on a person—Jesus Christ. Paul is convinced that the good work that Jesus began in the Philippians will continue until he brings it to completion (vv. 3–5).

Paul prays with joy when he prays for the members of this church.

? 2. *What is he joyful about?*

Their partnership in the gospel; Christ's continuing good work in their lives; Paul's own love for them; their sharing in God's grace with him.

? 3. *As you look at the passage, what does Paul want them to understand about the impact of Christ's presence on their lives?*

All of the above, plus the fact that they can be as Paul is: positive, confident, expectant, and active.

? 4. *In verses 9–11, what kind of growth does Paul pray for in the Philippians?*

Paul wants them to have a love for Christ that is:

- abounding in love and discernment
- pure and blameless
- filled with the fruit of righteousness.

Paul knows something that God wants us to know too. No matter what you face today, you can be encouraged that God's good work is continuing in your life. Every step you take, God is moving you forward as you submit your heart to him. This kind of confidence and growth will change the way we respond to life. It's what moves us toward our ultimate goal—the thing for which we were made—the praise and glory of God (v. 11). Remember, Paul himself is in prison as he writes this letter of encouragement!

How does this passage encourage you? It's meant to encourage you to be full of hope in the midst of things you don't understand. You don't have to figure everything out. You just need to know and trust the One who does understand, and who has the power to help you. Do you look at your life as Paul looked at the Philippians' lives and his own? Or do you see things differently?

Imagine a house for sale that is a "handyman's special." One buyer sees the house as it is: the crumbling chimney, the overgrown shrubs, the broken windows, the 1930s kitchen, the missing shingles, the outdated wiring, and the roof that should have been replaced ten years ago. His shoulders sag and he walks away—too much work; not enough hope.

Another buyer sees the same house but looks ahead to what it will be when it is restored—with his kids playing soccer in the yard, guests laughing together on the wraparound porch, a wonderful meal cooking in the kitchen to be enjoyed by everyone around the table. Same house for each buyer? Yes. Same possibilities? Yes. But only one buyer who can see what he needs to do to make a new reality.

As you stand in the front yard of your life and look at the house you are living in, what do you see? What's got your eye? Do you only see the problems, give up, and walk away? Do you only see the problems and become so defensive that you angrily pretend they aren't there? Or do you see the problems the way God sees them, with hope in his power to change you?



5. Based on *Philippians 1:3–11*, what do you think God wants you to see?

6. *As you consider your own life in light of Philippians 1, how is this moment a step toward the destination God has in mind for you?*

A Picture of Our Final Destination

For a fuller glimpse of our future, turn to Revelation 7:9–17.

This passage allows us to eavesdrop on eternity. Do you see yourself in the crowd? We are given the privilege of hearing the praises of people who suffered under the scorching heat of the sun in a fallen world. They now stand changed, purified, and free before the throne of the Lamb who is their Shepherd. This is our ultimate destination! How different our lives here can be as we learn to live with this picture in view!

Now, ask yourself this: As this multitude looks back on all that they experienced on earth, what is it that they celebrate? What in their lives has changed for the better? They don't celebrate a good job, a nice house, friendly neighbors, or financial ease. Here they are in the palace of the Lord, standing before the throne, crowned and reigning with him. There is no more hunger, no more thirst, and no more scorching heat. There is no more reason to weep. There is no more guilt to face, no more confession or restitution to be made, no more relationships to restore, no more thoughts to correct, no more justice to be sought, and no more desires gone astray. Because now their restoration is complete. The transformation of their hearts and lives has been completed, so that they are like Jesus, in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24).

See also Philippians 3:20–21; Colossians 1:28–29; 1 John 3:1–3

This is where God is taking you. The final destination is his throne room where together, in white robes of righteousness and crowns on our heads, we will celebrate the one thing worth living for, the Lamb and his salvation.

Can you see yourself there? Does it encourage you as you look at your life?

Present Promises for That Final Destination

Think again: What are you living for? What is your goal in life? Every time you raise your voice at your child or give your spouse the silent treatment, you hope to accomplish something. What is that hope? What is that goal? If you work sixty-five hours a week, you have a purpose in mind. Certain hopes and promises are directing your life. What are they?

The question is whether those hopes, plans, goals, and promises are worthy of your true calling as a child of God. Do they reflect God's purposes to renew and refine your heart and mind to make you more like Jesus? Are they in line with your final destination? And do they draw you closer to the One who will bring you there? Christianity's change process does not revolve around a *system* of redemption but around the *Person* who redeems. We focus on Christ our Redeemer—the Word of God made flesh—who gives the pattern and power for change.

Preparing for That Final Destination

Focusing on Christ and our final destination has a major impact on our responses to problems in the present.

I can remember a conversation my wife and I had about one of our children. We were getting more filled with parental panic the longer we talked. Our fears were what we were focusing on; the things that could go wrong had captured our hearts. Things didn't turn around in the conversation—or in our hearts—until we began to help one another see the Lord, his truth, his love, his grace, and his sovereignty all clearly working in our child's life. We had to see that our hope was not in the fact that we had everything under control. Our confidence could not be that we as parents had everything tied up in a neat little bow. Rather, our confidence had to be that Christ was carrying us—and our child—through the process. We began to see that this hard moment was, in fact, a God-given step toward a wonderful destination. This prepared us to deal in a very different way with the issues that had previously produced the panic.

? 7. *Is there someone in your life whom you look at through a lens of pessimistic fear? What might God be saying to you and your fears at this moment? How does God's perspective change the way you relate to or instruct this person?*

It is crucial not only to know your end point, but to hold it constantly before you. Life is sloppy, hard, messy, shameful, at times boring, with three steps forward and two steps back. Most often change is slow. We are tempted to believe that we are powerless to change and that all the effort is meaningless.

But the hope and good news of the gospel is that Christ has conquered sin and death, and with them every meaningless and destructive end. The Bible says that Christ gives us his “fullness” (Colossians 2:9–10). That fullness is the Holy Spirit. God himself comes to live inside us, and in him we have everything we need to be progressively transformed from what we are into Christ’s own image. Because we are God’s children, this “fullness” is already inside each one of us. Think about this! You have not only been forgiven, but God has come to live within you so that you will always have all you need to conquer your biggest struggles, inside and out. Spiritually, you are never really empty because you have been given the “fullness” of the Holy Spirit! That means that you can live today as if you are full. “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” (Colossians 2:9–10).

Pray that the Lord would give you eyes to see the fullness of what you have already been given. Only then can you truly change.

CPR

Central Point

1. Living with Christ and his body is the Christian’s final, most fulfilling destination.

2. This destination adds hope to the way we see ourselves and others right now.
3. God promises to complete the transformation of our hearts into his likeness through Christ's indwelling presence and power.

Personal Application

1. I need to acknowledge the drives and hopes that direct the course of my life.
2. I need to connect my final destination with my feelings, choices, and actions.
3. I need to acknowledge where Christ is calling me to heart change, so that being like him is my final goal.

Relational Application

1. I need to see others in terms of the hope of their final destination.
2. I need to see the power of Christ's promise to transform their lives here and now.
3. I need to look for opportunities to help them live with their final destination in view.

MAKE IT REAL

1. What dreams and expectations get you through the day and give you hope for your future?

- Being accepted by a certain group of people?
- A good commission, nice bonus, increased portfolio?
- Moral and obedient children, good marriage, nice friends?
- The possibility of owning the house of your dreams?
- The hope of a life of comfort and ease?
- Survival—determination to make it through this phase of your life?
- The hope of the respect and appreciation of others?

Do you ever feel hopeless? What produces that sense of despair? What were you hoping for and not getting?

2. How do the things you hope and work for shape your responses to people and circumstances? When people threaten your hopes and goals, how do you react?

3. Pick one place of opportunity or pressure, difficulty or blessing, where you need to view yourself as changed and carried by Christ. How will that perspective change your response to that situation?

4. Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.