

Real Change

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. - Philippians 1:6

God the Father is always working to change his children in Christ. He engages us with his mercy to change us in the midst of this shaking world where we suffer and sin. Everyday we live in the heat of hardships, losses, trials, and temptations. We are responding to this heat from our complex hearts, and our responses are often sinful. As long as we live in this earth we will bear bad fruit. But God in his gospel of grace is changing our hearts. The cross of Jesus Christ is the power of God for the whole of our salvation. Therefore, we are enabled to respond with beautiful fruit, to the praise of his grace (fruit). Real change is happening in all God's children because he yearns jealously over them to give them more grace. But what does real change look like?



Wanting to change is not the same thing as real change. Real change means there is actual fruit in our life that glorifies his grace. Real change takes time. Paul says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18). Sometimes God's children may experience a quick change in some area of their life. However, the growing and bearing of beautiful fruit takes a longer amount of time requiring patience and endurance. Real change involves enduring through ugly fruit in ourselves and others. There will come a day when the change will be complete, but until that time real change will only occur through a daily grace filled life of repentance and faith. Finally, we can say that real change is always possible. Since all the fullness and power of God the Spirit is at work in and toward God's children through our union with Christ, as children of the Father, we are never truly stuck where we are. Real change in ourselves and others can be recognizable. We should look for it so that we may glorify God for his grace.

As followers of Jesus we should be looking for God to do real change in our lives. Think of a particular area of your life that you want to trust God to change. Now consider how God can use your life in the church to affect change in this needed area of change for you. Let me suggest three ways to do this. First, consider how the sermons, teachings in Life Group or Growth Group are addressing this particular area of your life. Reflect on this personally and prayerfully with the God who's changing you. In prayer tell God about your need of help and the change your trusting him for in your life. Ask him to use what you're learning from his Word in those particular teachings in your life. Secondly, share with someone in the church what it is you are trusting God to change in your life, and how what you heard in the sermon or in the teaching time applies to this. Then ask them to pray with you about it. Don't ask them to pray that your circumstances will change, but that God by his grace will change you in the midst of the circumstances. Finally, real change can happen in your life in the context of what God provides through his church when you are encouraged by the example of others. Take notice of what is going on in other people's lives that has to do with what you are trusting God to change in your own life. Notice how other people are acting graciously and courageously. Then encourage them by sharing with them how you see this grace at work in them, and then together with them give thanks to the Lord for his grace. Real change in us is how God is glorified for his grace.



Catalyst Prayer

Catalyst Prayer is a season (April - June) of corporate and private prayer for the Vision and Mission of CCC, and her future planning. Please pray with us privately and corporately by using the weekly "Catalyst Prayer Theme". Also, sign up to pray during the Day of Prayer May 22nd.

The Mission and Vision of Christ Covenant Church are centered in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin this week praying through our Vision: *CCC exists to participate in a movement of the gospel that will bring personal conversion and renewal, community formation, and generous lives serving others through humble cultural engagement in Columbia and beyond.* Therefore, we pray trusting God together for a movement of his gospel among us and through us.

- ❖ **Pray that the gospel itself will be rediscovered, lifted up, understood and become a dynamic power in lives.** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. - Romans 1:16
- ❖ **Pray that non-Christians will be drawn to Christ through the beauty and power of the gospel.** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." - John 4:39-42
- ❖ **Pray that "nominal Christians" (people who think they are Christians, but have not experienced the new birth) would be born again to a living hope.** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." - John 3:3; 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, - 1 Peter 1:3
- ❖ **Pray that sleepy Christians (people who are believers but who are experiencing little power and fruit of the Spirit) would be awakened.** Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. - Romans 13:11-14
- ❖ **Pray that a movement of the gospel would be expressed at CCC by: Solid teaching and preaching of the Word; Anointed worship and extraordinary prayer; Loving fellowship and thick community; Outward-facing and bold evangelism; Compassionate, vigorous and loving mercy and justice** - And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. - Acts 4:29-31