



March 22, 2021

Some time ago, I realized that I had a mental habit that did not align with God's Word. When faced with a challenge, in my mind's eye I was still the youngster that always messed things up. Therefore, I expected to get things wrong. This certainly did not line up with God's Word, which gives me a much better picture:

Philippians 4:13:

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I knew I had to change my mental picture of myself to one of a son of God who can always get things right. So I chose to eliminate my personal doubts and to see myself as someone who will always succeed because I have Christ in me.

Colossians 1:27:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Making godly changes may seem challenging at times, but God's Word gives us positive keys for bringing these good changes into our lives without stress or strain. Stressing and straining to change only brings frustration. Instead, we believe God's Word and act upon it. There are two great keys in believing that enable us to make godly changes—clearness and concern.

To make a godly change, our first key is to get clear on what that change will look like once it is accomplished. That involves changing our thinking about our situation and setting a dominant mental image of ourselves performing in accordance with what it is that we desire to be. Instead of thinking of ourselves as we currently are, we dwell on what we want—we eat it, drink it, sleep it, walk with it. We draw a clear mental pattern for what we DO want in our lives.

Ephesians 4:22-24:

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation [lifestyle] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

One thing that will help in setting this clear mental picture is to find scriptures that describe what our behavior will be once the change has occurred. For instance, for my desired change, I chose Philippians 4:13. I also chose Romans 8:37, which gives the following encouragement:

Romans 8:37:

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

I chose verses that describe who I am in Christ and my characteristics as a son of God to help me form a mental picture of who the Word says that I am. Then I found examples of believers in God's Word who demonstrated the qualities I desired, and pictured myself performing in the same manner.

The second great key in accomplishing our desired change is concern: getting and keeping our focus on seeing the change come to pass. If we say we want to change, but shortly thereafter have forgotten to keep our thinking changed, we will find ourselves back in our old negative rut. Therefore, we need to keep our focus on thinking and acting in a positive manner.

First, we make up our mind to see the change come to pass, regardless of any challenges.

James 1:6:

But let him ask in faith [believing], nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Having decided to change, we can then put together a plan for making the change. We can ask ourselves, What are logical steps we can take toward the change we seek? What is a reasonable time period in which we want the change to come to pass? (Certainly, we want to start seeing the change now, but it may take some time to achieve the believing steps we've identified.) What are some goals we can set that will enable us to see our progress? What scriptures will sustain and encourage us? What specifics will we daily lift to God in prayer?

Having made up our minds, set our vision, and formulated a plan, we now act. We do not stress and strain—that only brings frustration. Instead, we believe and act upon the Word we have set before ourselves, knowing that God’s Word is greater than we are and that with Christ in us, we will succeed. We simply keep moving forward, step-by-step as we have planned, keeping the vision of our changed selves clearly in mind.

What if we falter along the way? For instance, at times I realized I was seeing myself once again as the youngster who messed things up. At that point, I simply stopped myself short, reset my image of myself as more than a conqueror, thanked God, and moved forward again.

Proverbs 24:16:

For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again....

We can make godly changes, not with stress or strain or frustration, but with confidence that God will help us make those good changes. We set a clear vision from God’s Word and build the habits, behaviors, and character we want to exhibit. Holding that clear vision in mind, we patiently take the action to change, continually encouraging ourselves with God’s Word. If we falter along the way, we simply thank God, reset our vision, and keep moving forward, confident that we will see those changes come to pass in our lives.

Remember, the two great keys in believing that enable us to make godly changes are clearness and concern. The picture that we carry of ourselves with clearness and concern is what we are!