



# THE POWER TO CHANGE

## TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts, or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".

## Week 1: When You're Sick of Being Stuck

### ICEBREAKER

What type of vehicle best describes your approach to setting new goals or habits at the start of the year? (Ex. Chevy Silverado - I make so many New Year goals that I can't keep track of, and I need a truck to haul them.)

### INTRODUCTION

Every year, full of good intentions, we feel motivated to attempt changes that make us feel better about ourselves. However, self motivation is not a strong foundation for change, and most people end up abandoning their resolutions within the first 2 weeks. Many of us want to change, have tried to change, but don't even know if we have the power to change. This can result in us feeling stuck. This week, we'll take a look at what we can do through God to find the power to change.

## READ I

We have all attempted change at one point or another and failed. No matter how hard we try to get organized, workout more, diet or eat healthier, our new habits often don't stick for long and we end up going back to our old ways. We're not alone. The Apostle Paul voiced similar frustrations at his own failure to achieve the change he wanted.

*I don't really understand myself... I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway...Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin. Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. -Romans 7:15,19,24-25 (NLT)*

Like Paul, when we don't make the kinds of changes we desire, it can make us feel sick and stuck in our failures. Paul's message teaches us that the answer to achieving true, lasting change is found in Jesus Christ and not in our own efforts or know-how.

**What is one change you would like to see this year, but are afraid to try because you think you may fail? How can you take this change to Jesus for help?**

## READ I

Even when we decide to change and realize that the answer is Jesus, we can still get stuck thinking in ways that hold us back from the progress we hope to see. Here are two mindsets that miss the mark when it comes to finding the power to change:

**God, Not Me.** This mindset can leave us feeling free of any responsibility for changes in our life. When we put all of the responsibility for change onto God, we can make decisions that ultimately end up hurting us, especially when God does not do what we want. Example: "I quit my job, because I know God will give me a better one."

**God, Then Me.** On the other hand, we can adopt a mindset that puts all the responsibility for change onto ourselves. Christ saved us when we first believed and gave us a brand new start, but now it is all on us to make changes in our life. Relying on human wisdom and strength alone will quickly lead to failure and disappointment.

God wants to have a two-way relationship with each of us. He wants our connection to be based on shared love, communication, responsibility and vulnerability. Rather than leaving all the work up to God or trying to go it alone, we should look to spend time with Him daily, to honestly and openly invest in a relationship that can help us change.

**Which of these mindsets can you relate to the most? Discuss a time you attempted a change based on either of these mindsets. What did you learn from it?**

## READ I

The mindset we should really adopt for change is **God Through Me**. Real change doesn't come from our human effort and abilities alone. Lasting transformation happens by the supernatural power of God's Spirit working in and through us.

*So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. -Zechariah 4:6 (NIV)*

After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the Israelites' exile to Babylon, Zechariah had a vision from God showing how the temple would be rebuilt. God's message made it clear that the rebuilding wouldn't happen by human ability, but by the working of His Spirit. When we try to change by our own might, we tend to burn out and fail. But when we allow the Holy Spirit and His power to work through us, we gain access to supernatural power and wisdom to make change happen.

**Do you tend to rely on your own willpower and strength to change? What might it look like for you to adopt a "God through me" mindset instead?**

## READ I

To best unlock the power to change with **God Through You**, we need to find and understand our "spiritual why" behind the change. When we attach a spiritual motivation to the change we want to make, it honors God and invites in the Holy Spirit's power.

*Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. -Colossians 3:17 (NIV)*

Paul reminds us that everything we do should be done to honor Jesus. For example, if you want to lose a bunch of weight, your "spiritual why" could be to get physically fit in order to serve God at church or in ministry. Or, if you want to better manage your finances, your "spiritual why" may be to free up resources to help those in need through charity or by supporting God's work through the church.

Spend time with God and ask Him to reveal spiritual motivations behind the changes you want to see. Ask yourself: "How can this change honor God?" "How does it align with His purposes?" Pray for Him to reveal a spiritually-rooted why to fuel your changes.

**Can you think of a "spiritual why" behind one or two changes you'd like to make this year? How can you continually remind yourself of your "spiritual why", when discouragement comes or temptation strikes?**

## READ I

Now, when we are feeling stuck, we can look to our "spiritual why" for help tapping into the supernatural power to change from **God Through Me**. However, it is important to keep in mind that even if we have all the right tools, there will still be times when we will mess up. After all, we're human and experience weakness as a part of life. When that happens, we must remind ourselves that we live under God's grace.

*[God] said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."  
-2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)*

God's power works through us best when we are humble, and own our weakness. Choosing His grace for strength brings out our best, even when things are at their worst. The grace that saved us when we first believed in Christ is the same grace that gives us lasting power to change our lives. Real change isn't about behavior modification, it's about spiritual transformation that comes from living under God's grace.

**Discuss a time you looked to God to help you make a needed change. What did you do and how did it help? Where could you use more of God's grace to power change in your life this year?**

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, make it a point to choose God each day and look for the answers to change in Jesus. Read His Word, listen to worship music, or watch sermons online. Focus on God's grace in your life and where you could use more of it for the year ahead. Turn away from any "God Not Me" or "God Then Me" mindsets you might be holding onto and embrace the power of "God Through Me". Pray and ask God to help you find your spiritual why throughout the series.

Read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart, and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

## CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Father God, thank you for your grace, which is the supernatural, undeserving, never-ending love and favor you have for me. Thank you for wanting to do life with me, instead of for me or making me do this life alone. Let me choose You in all areas of my life to better receive your grace and mercy. I invite you to shift my mindset to give me renewed power from God working through me. Reveal to me the spiritual why behind the changes I desire for my walk with You. I submit to your guidance. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

### Here's an example:

**S:** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

*--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

**O:** Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

**A:** Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

**P:** Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

## SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

### **Day 1:**

***I can do all things through him who strengthens me.***

***--Philippians 4:13 (ESV)***

### **Day 2:**

***My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.***

***--Psalm 73:26 (NLT)***

### **Day 3:**

***When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you.***

***--Isaiah 43:2 (GNT)***

### **Day 4:**

***Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.***

***--Ephesians 3:20 (NIV)***

### **Day 5:**

***For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.***

***--Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)***