

Joyce Meyer: Real Change Starts With This Basic Step

We all have areas where we would like to see growth and change. And we all have weaknesses just as we all have strengths. But if we're trying to change in our own strength, we're just going to have frustration.

Psalm 127:1 (NIV) says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." This scripture is saying that it is not just by our effort, but by the grace of God through the work of His Holy Spirit, that we change and grow in life.

It doesn't really matter what our strengths or weaknesses are, because we will always need God. The truth is, we're desperate for God all the time whether we feel like it or not. And God promises us in 2 Corinthians 12:9a, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." God wants us to give Him everything we are—and everything we're not—so His strength can be made perfect in us.

The First Step to Real Change

When we're ready to experience change, we usually set our minds to do something about it or make something happen. But in John 6:28-29, when the disciples asked Jesus, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus told them, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

The first thing we need to do is just believe, because it's not by our own effort that we are changed. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit living in our spirit. And He will do in us and through us what needs to be done if we will just stop trying to do it ourselves.

Believing is spiritual activity, and the level of peace and internal rest we experience reveal how much we're living by

faith in God. Hebrews 4:3a (AMP) says, "For we who believe [that is, we who personally trust and confidently rely on God] enter that rest."

God's rest is a rest in our soul that says, "I'm not worried ... I'm not frustrated ... I'm not upset ... I've entered the rest of God." It's not a rest from work; it's a rest we have in work.

Follow God's Lead

Next, do what God leads you to do. As you do your part, God will do His part. For example, if you've hurt someone and He prompts you to apologize, do it. Then trust Him with the results. That person might not be willing to forgive, but that's not the point. Your part is to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life. The way the other person chooses to respond is between them and God. Do what He tells you and leave the results to Him.

Obedience to God is critical to having breakthrough when we're facing issues in our lives. We just need to make sure we're following God's plan, not our own. We can only do what He empowers us to do, and it's pointless to try to do what only God can do. All things are possible with God (see Matt. 19:26), but we have to get out of His way and let Him be God.

We also need to spend time with God and study His Word. The Word of God is the medicine we need for every problem we face, and the greater the need, the more time we need to spend with God. When I made a firm decision to pray and study the Word in areas I was weak in until the truth made me strong, God's grace then gave me the power I needed to overcome the things I needed to overcome.

Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word of God is alive and full of power. When we receive teaching from the Word of God, it's like medicine for our soul.

Approach the Word of God with your heart wide open to Him,

believing His Word has the power to change your soul. Second Corinthians 3:18 says that as we look into the Word of God, we are changed into His image—we are changed by the grace and mercy of God.

It's so amazing to know that God wants to help us change by His grace because He loves us and He wants us to be everything He's created us to be. All we have to do is ask Him for His help and exchange our trying for trusting Him.