

## Do You *Want* to Change?

After surrendering to our cravings for awhile, *of course* we want to change. We feel guilty. Money is a problem. Relationships are worse. Misery is always knocking on the door. Lies are getting harder to remember, and it takes a genius to keep crafting more lies to cover up previous ones. Do you want to change? Yes.

But pause for a moment. Human beings want freedom. Change means putting up boundaries, and that doesn't feel very free. Add to this the fact that we crave something *because we like it*. Do you really think that a casual flirting with change will be enough? So think about it. Are you ready to change? Do you actually *want* to change? You are open to the idea of change, but what are your conditions?

- You want it, but without having to break a sweat.
- You want it because you are *supposed* to want it. Maybe you are not really thinking yet. You are moving around like a robot, just trying to please people.
- You want it, but not at the cost of saying goodbye to something you love.

- You want it—sometimes.
- You want it—tomorrow.
- You want it simply because it will make life a little easier or bring hope back to a relationship.
- You want it, but you are waiting for God to take away your cravings. Until he does, you feel as if there is nothing you can or should do, which is a convenient excuse for continuing.

If you recognize any of these mixed messages in your heart, you are blessed. God is with you. How can you know? When the light shines into areas of your life that usually prefer to stay in the dark, then you know that God is doing something. So let the light keep shining.

Start by being honest, not just with yourself but with someone else as well. Addictions thrive on privacy. They live in the shadows and don't want to be seen. They persuade you that you can do it on your own. But, here again, they lie. Don't listen to the dozens of reasons you could give for staying undercover. Think of some wise people—people who can speak the truth in love—and be open with them about your struggle. Get them to pray for you and teach you. Keep this rule of thumb: if

you are resistant to telling someone else, then you *need* to tell someone else.

Your goal is to live publicly, out in the open. Imagine a life with no more lies, no more fears of being caught, no more feeling condemned. No more looking over your shoulder. Anyway, the reality is that our lives *are* public. Not only do other people often find us out, but God himself knows the hidden places of our hearts. We already are much more public than we think. If the Holy God sees us, it shouldn't make too much difference if other sinners like ourselves know something about our hearts.

### Why Do You Want to Change?

So, let's assume that you are sitting on the fence. You want to change, but you don't want to change. Something has to get you off the fence. *Why* should you want to change? Since our motives and intentions are so important, we need a good reason. If you are trying to change because of pressure from family or friends, that isn't all bad, but it won't last. If you simply fear being caught, that *certainly* won't last. The only reason that can take us through the tough times is God.

It should be enough for God to simply say

to us, "Stop it." After all, God is God. He made us. He is not to be trifled with. But, for some reason, God speaks differently than we would expect. He is patient and speaks gently to us. He actually woos us like a bridegroom courting his bride. He tries to make a relationship with him look as attractive as it really is. He is the one who says "I love you" first. One way he does this is by inviting us to a banquet more wonderful than we could imagine.

Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without cost.  
Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labor on what does not  
satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is  
good,  
and your soul will delight in the  
richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:1-2)

*This* is reason to change.  
Have you ever received an invitation so  
beautiful? Probably not. When was the last time