CAN PEOPLE REALLY CHANGE?

How to Change Who You Are | Character That Carries On

Chris Fluitt | November 8, 2026

Texts: Luke 6:43-45; Romans 6:1-4; Acts 2:36-39; Galatians 5:22-25

Big Idea: What you don't change, you pass on. What Jesus changes, you can pass forward.

Legacy Code Bumper Vid
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THE FACE I NEVER WANTED TO MAKE

My mom had a face...

It made me feel like...

Then I became a parent... to my horror..
THAT SAME FACE. ON MY FACE.

I never decided to imitate it.
I didn't want to repeat it.

> **SOMETIMES WHAT WE REJECT, WE STILL REPEAT.**

CAN WE REALLY CHANGE?

We all have things about ourselves we wish were different.

We promise...
won't lose our temper again...

...be more patient, loving, honest...

Something comes out that we wish wasn't there.

The hardest part... seeing the hurt...

We've apologized... Prayed. Worked on it. Promised it would never happen again.

And yet here we are.

People say: "People never change." Is that true?

What if the answer isn't just changing how we act? What if Jesus can change who we are?

Legacy Code 2: CAN PEOPLE REALLY CHANGE? | How to Change Who You Are

Welcome
God has a lot to say...

HOW JESUS CHANGES WHO YOU ARE

1. WHAT COMES OUT REVEALS WHAT'S INSIDE.

LUKE 6:43-44 NIV

> No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briers.

LUKE 6:45 NIV

> A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

You recognize the tree by its fruit.
What's inside shows up outside:
fruit, words, reactions, decisions.

Not just appearance
Jesus addresses the HEART

Here are 3 things we often confuse…

REPUTATION - What people think about you.

You can't control everyone's opinion of you.

CHARACTER - Who you are when nobody is watching.

You can take responsibility for who you are becoming.

LEGACY - What your life leaves for other people.

Those closest to us don't just experience our reputation. They experience our character.

CHARACTER & LEGACY MATTER MORE THAN REPUTATION.

If we want a legacy worth building on, we need more than the appearance of goodness. We need something within us to change.

2. JESUS DOESN'T JUST MAKE YOU BETTER. HE MAKES YOU NEW.

Christianity isn't a self-improvement program.

Jesus didn't come merely to manage our anger, improve habits, and behave better.

Our problem goes deeper. Sin separates us from God. Jesus came to reconcile us to God.

He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Paul tells us why it matters.

ROMANS 6:4 NIV

> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

SO THAT WE TOO MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE!

Jesus didn't die… so you could try harder to be a better person.

HE DID ALL OF THIS SO YOU COULD LIVE A NEW LIFE!

Not just improve the old life.
Not just manage the same problems a little better. A NEW LIFE!

And there's a group of people in Acts 2 who desperately needed a new life.

Peter preaches to a Jerusalem crowd: Jesus, His miracles, His death, and His resurrection.

> Then he confronts them: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.
> Acts 2:36 NIV

Rejected and killed the savior…

Imagine the weight of realizing that.
You can't undo it.

They were cut to the heart. "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37 NIV)

They needed forgiveness. They needed a new beginning. THEY NEEDED NEW LIFE!

ACTS 2:38 NIV

> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

THEY COULDN'T CHANGE WHAT THEY HAD DONE.
BUT JESUS COULD CHANGE WHO THEY WOULD BECOME.

And that is still the gospel today. Jesus doesn't just forgive our sins. He gives us His Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit works in us, something new begins to grow.

3. NEW LIFE PRODUCES NEW FRUIT.

If Jesus gives us new life, what does it look like?

GALATIANS 5:22-23 NIV

> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Not merely personality traits. This is the character the Holy Spirit produces as we walk with Jesus.

THE LIFE OF JESUS SHOWS UP IN YOU…

The Holy Spirit begins changing how you think, speak, and respond. You reflect Jesus, not because you suddenly become perfect, but because His Spirit is working in you.

THE LIFE OF JESUS SHOWS UP IN YOU… AND THROUGH YOU, OTHERS EXPERIENCE HIS LIFE.

When the Spirit changes you, people around you experience the difference.

Patience in you => your children experience patience.
Gentleness in you => your spouse experiences gentleness.
Kindness in you => your neighbors experience kindness.
Faithfulness in you => people can depend on you.

> **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE BECOMES A BLESSING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE.**

That is character that carries on. A legacy worth leaving.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE LIFE JESUS OFFERS?

So can people really change? YES.

Not because we promise to try harder. Jesus offers new life, and the Spirit works within us.

Remember Peter's answer: repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit.

The gospel calls for a response. It doesn't only change what we believe about eternity. It changes how we live today.

Our words. Our reactions. Our relationships. Our character.

What do you need Jesus to change in you?

What would it mean for to experience more of Jesus through your life?

What if the Jesus inside us… was seen?

Imagine…
A church where people don't just hear about Jesus. They experience His character through us.

Our children - His patience.
Our marriages - His gentleness.
Our friendships - His faithfulness.
Our communities - His love.

> **THIS IS THE GOSPEL LIVED OUT.**

Last week: build on the right foundation.

Now imagine what we build on that foundation.

I told you about the angry face.

> **THAT ANGRY FACE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE MY LEGACY.**

I don't have to pass it on to my children. Jesus has given me something better to pass forward.

> **HIS NEW LIFE CAN BECOME MY LEGACY.**

And the same is true for you.

Musicians

> **WHAT YOU DON'T CHANGE, YOU PASS ON.**

Think about that

> **WHAT JESUS CHANGES, YOU CAN PASS FORWARD.**

> **What needs to become new in your life? You have made promises, tried harder, failed, tried again. Jesus invites you into something greater.**
> **ACT - RESPOND TO JESUS**

1. RECOGNIZE AND REPENT.

What is God showing you about your character? What have you excused or defended?
Come pray. Let someone lead you through repentance.

2. TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP WITH JESUS.

Maybe you have never received Jesus. You can begin following Him today. Maybe you want to learn about baptism: buried with Christ, raised to new life.

Maybe you have followed Jesus for years, but He is calling you to another step of faith.

Take that step. Connect Card..

3. WALK BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What fruit needs to grow? Patience, gentleness, kindness, self-control? Who needs to experience more of Jesus through you?

Don't merely promise to try harder. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in you.

KEEP BUILDING A LEGACY

What Jesus changes, you can pass forward. Take your next step this week.



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