



## CHANGE

*“one thing we can count on”*

Have you ever gone back to a place where you used to live and noticed how many people, places, and things that have changed? (response) How fast do children grow up? (response) What happened to the gas prices? (response) What broke this week that needs to be fixed? (response) Perhaps one of the only things we can count on is that changes will daily occur in our lives. **Frequently we don't choose the changes that come into our lives, but we always do choose how we respond to the changes.**

Many times God uses us as change agents to help people around us to grow and develop. More often, the changes and people we experience in life are God's tools to help us mature. Since God has our good in mind, you would think we would welcome changes into our lives. However, we tend to be creatures of habit that resist change.

In his book, Deep Change, Robert Quinn pointed out that when we are under stress, we tend to return to our most deeply ingrained habits and deny the need for change. In other words, we stubbornly go back to what we are used to thinking and doing whether it's healthy or not. We do it because “it works” for us. By nature of being human, we like to have a sense of control of our lives. Yet in order to grow and develop, we must allow someone or something into our lives to influence us to choose a new thought, or a different path.

The Bible is a book about God's desired plan for change in our lives. In Romans 12:2, Paul wrote these God-inspired words to help us to understand the process of change:

**“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”**

We can strive all we want to “change ourselves,” but most times we cannot change ourselves. In his book Invitation to a Journey, Robert Mulholland put it this way:

“There is nothing we can do to transform ourselves into persons who love and serve as Jesus did except to make ourselves available for God to do that work of transforming grace in our lives...Spiritual formation is the great reversal: from being the subject who controls all other things to being a person who is shaped by the presence, purpose and power of God in all things.”

In other words, we don't change and transform ourselves, God transforms us by changing the way we think as we surrender the control of our lives to Him.

As we are experiencing changes, let's remember that every time a person leaves our group or is added to our group, the dynamics of our group will change. In healthy groups, people talk about these changes. We grieve the loss of those who are leaving, and we welcome new people with all their experiences, ideas, and talents. The more open and flexible we become, the more we will bless people as God sends them on their way, and the more welcoming we will be to newcomers who enter our groups.

- **What are some of the changes we've been experiencing in our group?**
- **How have you been dealing with these changes?**
- **What changes can we make so we become a stronger group and stronger people?**

“*Health Talks*” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.