

What YOU Can Do To See OTHERS Change

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As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

A Very Familiar Problem

Martha had a very familiar problem: she had someone in her life that really bugged her. Surely we can relate to Martha. We've all had people that have irritated us, threatened us, or have been a source of discomfort and unhappiness in our lives. They may be family members, neighbors, co-workers, or in-laws: the kind of people that have a special gift, it seems, for "getting under your skin." It's the things they do, attitudes or habits they have, that can drive you up the wall. And, at times it seems their unacceptable behavior is deliberate and purposely intended just to spite you. Virtually everyone can think of at least one person like this in their life. In fact, many of the pastoral problems that have come to me over the years involve someone wanting to know how to get along in these kinds of relationships.

The problem Martha had was with her roommate, someone she had to deal with every day. Maybe you've had a roommate at summer camp, college, out-of-town job training, or some other occasion, and can relate to Martha's struggle. Remember how they wanted to watch television or listen to the radio late at night when you wanted to go to bed? Or how they always left a dirty ring in the shower, or dirty dishes in the sink, no matter how many times you asked them not to? Or how they borrowed your CD's without asking, and never straightened the pillows back the way they were on the couch? Such minor irritations are the day-to-day experience of those who live together. And if that wasn't bad enough, Martha's roommate was also her sister, with all of the jealousies, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings of many years that such relationships often carry.

The Bible gives us reason to believe that the house they lived in actually belonged to Martha. That being so, we can speculate about some of Martha and Mary's interactions. For instance, Martha probably felt she had a right to have things more or less the way she wanted around her own house. She probably wanted things cleaned in a particular way, and arranged in a specific order. She almost certainly had some standards that she thought quite reasonable, from which Mary always seemed to fall short.

Martha's Solution

The real problem, however, is that Martha chose to stuff her real feelings about Mary's failures around the house. At first, Mary must have neglected to do something Martha asked her to do. Martha probably didn't say anything, wanting to get along, and hoping that Mary would get around to it soon. But when Mary still didn't do it, doubts and accusations probably came to Martha's mind... "Didn't she hear me?"... "Is she lazy?"... "Is she bucking my authority as head of the house?"... "What if this goes on and on? How will I keep from losing control of my own house?" Martha probably nagged Mary at this point, occasionally punctuating her barbs with a little anger to motivate her to pull her own weight. By this time, Martha's ongoing mental attitude around the house was probably, "This isn't right. It isn't fair. I shouldn't have to do so much while Lazy Mary barely does anything!"

It's very disturbing to walk around feeling trapped, out of control, and perpetually angry. It drains a person emotionally. Yet that's how many of us deal with these kinds of situations. There's always the temptation, when we're around someone whose behavior is causing emotional turmoil, to try to "help" them with "constructive" suggestions. When they don't take the hint, little comments are made here and

there, still hoping they'll see their failings. Later, you may have resorted to innuendoes in conversation that let them (and others) know just how unacceptable you find their behavior. After a while, you may even leave a magazine article about "Doing Your Fair Share" on their desk with a note, "I thought of you when I read this."

All the while, what you're doing is trying to get them to change in an area that bugs you, not them. In fact, they may be unaware that they even have a problem in that area, which just adds to your frustration and sense of powerlessness. And, no matter how much you try to "help" them, they seem to get worse...lazier, sloppier, noisier, more insensitive, etc. You, in turn, get angrier and more resentful. Finally, you resort to prayer, "God, why'd you put this person in my life? Don't you see what they're doing? Make them stop doing that to me!" Have you ever prayed like that? That's definitely not a prayer of meekness - invoking God to make people act the way you want them to.

The problem between Martha and Mary finally came to a head one day when Jesus visited their home. He may have sent some of His disciples ahead to let the two sisters know He was coming. From the moment she heard the news, Martha was in a whirlwind of activity. There was so much to do! The house had to be straightened and cleaned. The food had to be prepared. Certain items would need to be bought or borrowed from the neighbors. "I'll get Mary to help me!" she must have thought. Mary may have helped some, but probably not as much as Martha wanted. Oh well, she was used to that. But it was probably just too much for Martha when her guests arrived and Mary sat down with them, right next to Jesus. Who did Mary think was going to serve all of these people? Martha probably returned to the kitchen, half thinking that Mary would come to her senses and shoulder her fair share of the responsibilities of hospitality.

But, as the minutes ticked off, one by one, Mary didn't come back to help. Martha could hear the voices in the next room, talking, laughing and sharing news and stories. She probably began to hear less of the others' voices and more of Jesus' voice as he began to speak to their hungry hearts of the Kingdom of God. "And I'm going to miss it!" Martha must have thought angrily, as she banged a pot down on the stove. "Nobody even misses me. Don't they realize what I'm doing for them?" SLAM! She shuts a cupboard much harder than necessary. In the other room, Jesus pauses for a moment and looks at the kitchen door; Mary rolls her eyes. "They don't even notice," mutters Martha to herself, "but Lazy Mary isn't going to get away with it this time. I'm going in there to get Jesus to tell her to help me out." She must have thought that telling Jesus about her sister's laziness would get Him to rebuke her, but she was in for a big surprise.

WHAM! She burst out of the kitchen, leveled her accusation and waited, face flushed, tears of rage and frustration close to the surface. With one glance, Jesus could discern the entire situation...the unresolved conflict, judgments, frustrations, intimidation, control, hurt feelings, resentment, sense of injustice, and tension between the two sisters. Her words to Him told the whole story. In two short sentences she accused the Lord of being unfair and not caring about her, accused her sister of being negligent in her household duties, and demanded that God in the flesh do something to satisfy her sense of justice.

Jesus never responds favorably to those who approach Him with such an attitude. "You, Martha, are the one with the problem. Mary may have a problem with being lax about her household duties," the Lord may have said to Martha, "but when you come to me with a bitter, accusing attitude, all I'm going to speak to is your judgment and resentment toward your sister." For all of Martha's being "anxious and troubled," Mary still had not changed, and Martha got herself rebuked by the Lord.

Is There Something We Can Do?

"OK," you may be saying, "I can see that. I don't need to go to God to try to get Him to change people in my life. But - what can I do? How can I go about helping others change apart from a selfish motivation?" Well, the good news is there is a solution, and it works! There are indeed things you can do to see others change. However, the solution is not at all what you might think, and that's why so many miss it.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8)

This passage in Isaiah gives us the foundational truth to all relational problems. That truth, however, is diametrically opposed to our natural inclinations. Why? Because God's thoughts and ways are totally different from ours. Wouldn't you agree that it takes Almighty God to change some people? How about to change you? Unfortunately, most of us have no idea what it takes to really change. That's why so many are stuck in relationship problems, just like Martha and Mary.

But God has given us revelation in his Word, if we will just accept and apply its truth. Read carefully, because His ways always work. Psalm 25:4 says,

"Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths."

The problem is that few people really understand His ways. Most are too spiritually blind and dull, spending their time struggling with fleshly indulgences and the cares and affairs of this life, not seeking to understand God's ways. And, even when they do understand, they're often unwilling to walk in them, because to do so always involves the CROSS.

Nevertheless, God truly does have a way to fix relationship problems of any kind. There is a way out - God's way - and His ways always work.

In a moment, we're going to look at six clear steps that you can do to see others change. I'm convinced that they'll work in almost every relational situation. Do you understand what I am saying? I am making the claim that by simply applying the six simple steps written in the next few pages, you can come to a place of peace in virtually all of your relationships that have caused you emotional stress and mental anguish! If you will take these six steps, understand them, and walk in them, they will work for you.

However, knowing people as I do, having been in the ministry for quite some time, I also know that only a few who read these words will really apply these principles with any consistency. By the end of this booklet, I trust you will be persuaded that these steps work. But, if you're like most readers, this booklet will, within a few weeks or so, be on your shelf with all the other books you thought were "inspiring," and you'll continue to struggle and be frustrated in those relationships you desperately want to see changed.

Take my challenge, and prove me wrong. Follow these six steps, and let them change your life, as well as the lives of those around you.

Before We Can Change Others...

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, Let me remove the speck out of your eye; and, look, a plank is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first cast out the plank out of your own eye; and then you will see clearly to cast out the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5)

In these verses, Jesus describes a person trying to change someone else. Seeing a speck in another's eye, they try their best to remove it, but can't because of a plank in their own. Of course, Jesus is speaking figuratively; the speck represents attitudes or behaviors in a person's life. Jesus here has some pretty straightforward things to say about trying to change another person's problems. What does He say? Basically, "Deal with yourself first!" To try to help someone else without seeing your own need for help is as ludicrous as having a stick in your eye while trying to take a speck out of another's. The Lord used an extreme example to make His point crystal clear....You must do something serious about yourself before you'll ever be able to help anyone else. Now, let's consider the six steps I mentioned earlier.

THE SIX STEPS TO SEE SOMEONE CHANGE

1) Ask Forgiveness of God and the Other Person

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7)

Any resentment, judgmentalism or anger toward the other person must be honestly acknowledged and dealt with for God to move in the relationship. Until you're willing to humble yourself to God, and if necessary the other person, it's likely the problems will remain. Unfortunately, many stumble at this first step. Why? Because to do this involves humility. I've never known a proud or arrogant person to be very successful in seeing others change around them (except for the worse!). It's one thing to ask forgiveness of God, but we're commanded to ask forgiveness of others as well. People often get 'religious' at this point. They may go on and on about their great relationship with the Lord, but be severely lacking in open and vulnerable relationships with others. We're told in James' epistle to, "Confess your faults one to another..."

In Matthew's gospel Jesus said, "...if you are at odds with another, leave your gift at the altar and first be reconciled to your brother." The truth is - your vertical relationship with God is only as genuine as your horizontal relationship with your those around you. We read in 1 John 4:20, "...he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" Jesus also said in another place, "Whatever you do unto the least of these my brethren, you do to me."

This is the first step – ask forgiveness of God and those around you. Unfortunately, many refuse to follow even this first step in the process of seeing others change. Why? For some reason, they would rather remain full of pride, resentment and control - trying to "fix" all of the problem people in their lives.

2) Choose to Fully Forgive the Other Person

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as God for Christ's sake forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

One reason people don't change is because they feel resentment, anger, judgment, or bitterness directed toward them from someone else. Since they feel they're going to be judged until they do change - they resist changing at all. It's just human nature to not want to get under someone else's demands and control. The irony of the whole thing is that when you want someone to change so badly that you pressure them to do so – your very control will hold them hostage against any real desire to change. As long as you demand change, you're reinforcing resistance to change. However, once you start to forgive, have mercy, and accept the other person unconditionally, something amazing occurs - setting the stage for a true change of heart inside the other person.

If you remember nothing else from this booklet, remember this step of forgiveness - it will make all the difference in your life. If you haven't yet learned to freely forgive others in your life then you're not even on first base; you're still in the dugout. In fact, you're not even in the dugout; you're still on the try-out team. They haven't even hired you yet. You're just a fan. You're still sitting at home watching the game on television, if you haven't yet learned the principle of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a choice of the will, not a feeling or an emotion. It's only after choices of forgiveness, out of sheer obedience to the will of God, that feelings and emotions often follow. You don't have to feel lovey-dovey to forgive someone. You can be very angry, and still forgive. You can act from your will regardless of your emotional state. Jesus didn't necessarily feel warm fuzzys as He hung on the cross bleeding to death. Yet, by an act of His will, He said, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." We're told in Ephesians 4:32: "...forgiving each other just as God for Christ's sake forgave you."

It's because of the incredible mercy shown to me from the Lord that I can forgive others for their offenses toward me. When I recognize God's mercy to me, then I can give mercy to others. Think of mercy as the currency of the kingdom. It's "Kingdom of God" money. To the degree you give it out, to that degree you get it back. Christ said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

Some years ago, after coming down with a bad cold and a terrible sore throat, I asked some folks to pray for me to be healed. As they prayed, I had a vision of a jar filled with coins. Then, within five minutes, I was totally healed of the flu. It was probably one of the most dramatic healings I'd ever experienced. Later, I asked the Lord what the vision meant, and He whispered in my spirit, "The jar of coins was the mercy you've built up over the years. Every time you forgave someone that hurt you, went the extra mile and laid your life down for others – you were throwing coins in the jar. So, when it came time to ask for mercy for yourself – it was there waiting for you."

What a wonderful revelation! If you go to the Lord and your jar is empty, and it seems your requests are going unanswered, it may be because you're not giving out much mercy in your life. When you give undeserved mercy to others, God puts coins in your jar. Then, when the time comes for you – He'll give it back to you in abundance! "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

3) Break Any and All Unhealthy Bondings Between You and the Other Person

"...endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)

This verse describes the bond of peace that God's people should have between them – a healthy "soul tie" of like-minded believers walking in the truth. Unhealthy soul ties between two people can result in all kinds of ungodliness: anger, jealousy, lust, fear and intimidation to name a few. These ties are formed whenever God's commandments concerning relationships are compromised or violated. The third step in seeing another person changed is to sever any and all bondings of dependence, control or idolatry in the relationship. For instance, we're told in Proverbs,

"Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man you shall not go, lest you learn his ways, become like him, and get a snare to your soul." (Prov 22:24)

Compromise in this area can result in a spirit of anger on another transferring upon you, particularly if you are unwilling to stand up for the truth in the relationship. All such unhealthy bondings must be severed.

However, breaking a soul tie is not just a prayer from the mind - it takes the anointed power of the Holy Spirit to really do this. Until the ties are broken, unseen demonic forces will hinder your efforts to bring about change to yourself or the other person by manipulating the thoughts and emotions of you both. In fact, a sure way to determine if such a tie with someone exists is to see how quickly the relationship robs you of spiritual peace and joy. Instead of experiencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit, you find yourself mired in a soulish morass of mental and emotional confusion, fear, anger, resentment, hurt, lust, etc. Soul ties that result in such things must be broken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit's power!

I first experienced the power of breaking soul ties back in the early eighties. We ministered to a woman who'd had a terrible relationship with her dad growing up. He was an alcoholic who'd never shown her much affection. When she was ten, he abandoned his family altogether. When we prayed for her, she was living in Houston, and he lived in Dallas. Her relationship with him at that point was rocky and unsettling. He did keep some contact, but there was a deep wound in the lady as a result of his abandonment from years before. For most of her adult life she'd gone from relationship to relationship, seeking the emotional security and approval she'd never found from her father.

As we prayed for her, it became evident that something was blocking her from receiving from the Lord. So, we prayed in the Spirit and cried out to the Lord for an anointing to break the unhealthy tie between her and her dad. Once the anointing came we began to command the damaged tie to be cut once and for all. After a few minutes she fell back on the couch and said, "I believe the Lord did something."

The next morning she called me at my office, incredibly excited, and said, "You won't believe what happened this morning!" I said, "What?" She said, "I got a phone call from my dad in Dallas, and he was weeping!" She proceeded to tell me how he'd had a dream the night before. God woke him in the middle of the night and convicted him for the ways he had treated his daughter over the years. He told her he was going to quit drinking, and that he wanted her to come up to Dallas and spend some time with him. Apparently, our breaking the soul tie the night before released something in the Spirit for this man to receive a convicting word from God!

Over the years, we've seen many similar manifestations of God's Spirit as we've broken ungodly soul ties in people's lives. Another time, we ministered to a lady whose husband had died a year before. In fact, she showed up in my office on the anniversary of her husband's death. She was miserable, and in great depression over the death of her husband. There's a legitimate time for mourning, and then there's a time to put the grief behind you. It was evident her grief had turned to spiritual heaviness. So, in the name of Jesus (under the anointing), we broke the soul tie between her and her dead husband. Power, revelation, and release came into that lady's life, and she was able to begin afresh to follow Jesus Christ.

In short, wherever there is an unhealthy soul tie, Satan can wreak havoc in your soul. And, if you're wanting to see someone else change, you must first break any unhealthy ties you have with them in the name of Jesus Christ, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit!

4) Intercede for the Person with Direct, Offensive, Spiritual Warfare Prayers

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms...and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." (Ephesians 6:12, 18)

Paul gives us two clear principles in these scriptures. First, in verse 12, we're told that our battle is not with flesh and blood, i.e., with people; it is with demons, with evil spirits. Until you recognize that your brother, particularly the one that gives you so much trouble, is not your real enemy, you'll never be able to find much victory in difficult relationships. Settle it in your mind, "My brother is not my enemy; the devil is my enemy."

This is why it is so crucial that every believer seek deliverance from "the plank in your own eye." When you remove the obstruction from your own eyes, you will then see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. It takes true spiritual discernment to discriminate between your brother's offensive behavior and the demonic motivation behind it. Such discernment is hindered when your own mind is cluttered with resentments and your emotions are all stirred up by the devil. It takes the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit that comes with deliverance to see that the 'rude person' that bothers you at work really doesn't need a "piece of your mind;" he needs your mercy and your prayers.

Paul's second principle in verse 18 concerns prayer. Connecting these two verses gives us the fourth step in how to see another person change. To be effective against the enemy, spiritual warfare prayers must be prayed, not just requests to God. You have the authority to fight the demons. You have been given:

"...authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy."
(Luke 10:19)

You have been given the honor to:

"...bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron...To execute upon them the judgment written." (Psalm 149:8-9)

By the time you've done steps 1, 2, and 3, then real change will be effected in the spiritual realm when you pray at the devil and against the devil. He will flee as you resist him, when you have truly submitted yourself to God in this relationship. (see James 4:7)

The Psalmist says,

"Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate you, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against you? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them my enemies." (Psalm 139:21)

Did you know that hatred is not necessarily bad? It can be good, when it's channeled in the right direction. Think about the hurts and frustrations in your relationship with that person you so want changed. Remember how rude they've been to you. Recall the anger you may have felt...Now, vent it all at the devil, who is really the one to blame. Let all that pent up emotion fly full force at the true enemy, Satan. Bind the evil spirits at work in your brother; they are the real driving force behind the behavior you so dislike. Rebuke the devil over his heart and soul. You'll find a release of power, authority, and anointing in the spirit realm as you do this, and changes will occur.

However, be forewarned...the devil does not like this. He will not back off without a fight. I could give you many examples of the enemy's attempts to distract and dissuade one from persevering in this area. But, the promises in God's Word are sure to those who overcome. We are told to "stand firm in the evil day," and that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt 11:12) We are

in a very real spiritual war. "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small," (Prov 24:10). Fight! Fight! Fight! And you will prevail. The Lord is on your side.

For an example of how this practically works, consider the case of a wife who really wants to follow the Lord, but her husband's main goal in life seems to be to sit around the house like a couch potato. In her frustration, she tries everything to get him to change: she puts Bible tracts under his pillow, plays Christian music all day long, and leaves convicting articles out for him to read. But, in spite of all her attempts, he won't change.

So, what does she do? She goes to a neighbor to let her frustrations out. "That husband of mine, he's so shallow. All he wants to do is watch football. He won't go to church because he doesn't want to miss the kick off." Etc., etc., on and on. At home she starts to nag, "Honey, you really ought to consider the state of your soul. What would Jesus do? You know some of us around here take our spiritual responsibilities seriously." To the kids she says, "Come on kids, we're going to church. Your dad wants to act like a heathen again." To her husband she adds, "We'll be praying for you, dear. Hope you don't get 'left behind.'"

All that stuff is really going to make him change, right? No, it won't. In fact, it'll do the opposite. The husband will sense her judgment and control and dig in his heels. His thoughts are, "Hell will not only freeze over, but they'll build an ice rink on it before I do what that woman is telling me. I'll be #\$/&% if I'm gonna' go to church with her!"

Let me share with you what I've told ladies in similar positions. "I understand your frustration. It's difficult to live with someone so stuck in his ways. And, I understand that you've got to do something with all the emotion and anger stuffed down inside. You need to vent those feelings, but nagging or gossiping with others isn't the answer. The problem is, you're venting in the wrong direction. Why don't you vent at the demons that have your husband bound and deceived? Get into your prayer closet and say, 'Satan, I'm going to vent at you. You're the one that has my husband bound. I bind you over my husband. I rebuke you over his soul. Let him go!!!' Let out your frustrations on the devil!" This really works.

Here's another example. Years ago, I was single, and had just purchased my first house. To help with the mortgage, I took in a roommate from the church I was attending. I believe he genuinely loved the Lord, but he was extremely effeminate. He was not a practicing homosexual, but he was still nauseatingly effeminate, with limp wrists, swiveling hips - the whole nine yards. I had just started ministering in the area of deliverance in those days, and was trying to help this guy. But, after a few months, he seemed to be losing interest in the things of the Lord. We had a weekly Bible study at the house with deliverance ministry afterwards, and I noticed that he would go into his room and shut the door whenever the Lord's anointing would come in power. After a few months, I saw that things were not working out. Every time he came home or came out of his room, I felt something in my gut, a heaviness in my spirit. We hardly communicated, and I had no idea what was going on in his life, or even in my own house. I suspected that the world was pulling him away, but he still lived in my house. Worse, he was bringing demons home with him; I could feel them.

Well, I was just learning these spiritual warfare principles, and I decided to try them out. Every night, before I went to bed, I would stand in front of his door praying in tongues for a few minutes under my breath. Then, I would whisper, "In the name of Jesus, I bind you, Sexual Perversion! I rebuke those homosexual spirits and bind them!" Then, I'd pray, "Lord, bless him. Bless him; bring him peace." I did this for eight days, and on the eighth day, I felt something break in the spirit realm.

The next morning, I heard a noise from the next room. I looked around the corner, and my roommate was standing on a stool throwing everything in his closet into boxes. "What are you doing?" I asked. He said, "I'm leaving. I have to go!" I went into the kitchen to have some breakfast. By the time I was finished, he had almost loaded his car. He came in to grab one last thing, and said, "I'm out of here. See ya'," jumped in his car, and drove off. He never called me or came back to that church, and I've only seen him one time in the years since, walking through a shopping mall. He had lived with me for four months, but, when I attacked the demons, something quickly changed.

These principles of spiritual warfare prayers are real, and they will work for you, too. We have a saying, "It's not how loud you pray, or how long you pray, but that you pray every day." Consistency is the key,

battering away at the devil, day by day. Diligence and commitment to hammer at the gates of Hell will cause them to fall. The fifty-yard dashers do not intimidate the devil, but he must yield when confronted by those who will discipline themselves to be obedient marathon runners in the Kingdom of God.

Now, because you've vented all that pent up frustration, hurt, and anger at your real enemy, the devil, you can move to step number five.

5) Ask God for Specific Opportunities to 'Love On' the Person

"Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)

When you make choices to be loving, you're truly allowing God to do the work in that person's life. I've told those wives mentioned earlier, "Look, if your husband's a couch potato, sitting there watching football while you go to church, do this: go into your prayer closet and take authority over all the demons that work on him keeping him in bondage. Release all your frustrations toward the enemy, and not toward your husband. When you come out, you'll be far more inclined to say something like, "Honey, what would you like?" Bring him a cup of coffee, and ask if there's anything else you can do for him, like get his house shoes, the sports section, or the remote control. He'll look at you in confusion, and not know what's going on. Quit telling him he needs to go church! Just say, "I'm going to church, honey. Is there anything I can get for you before I come back? I'll see you later." He'll say to himself, "What's going on here? She always bugs me and tells me I should be going with her."

So, as the wife gets into the car, he gets up and looks out the curtain, trying to figure out what's up with her. Something's starting to move in him. Why? Things that he is totally unaware of are happening in the spirit realm, because she's got the demons in him confused; she's loving on him. She comes back later with some new Bible tracts from church entitled, "How to Lead Sinners to Christ." But, for once, she doesn't stick them in his six-pack; she leaves them in her Bible. Later, he'll look in the six-pack, wondering where his weekly tract is.

Unconditional love confuses the enemy. Satan's minions cannot comprehend that kind of love. It's the very thing that'll begin to loosen their grip on the people they're holding captive. There is no greater spiritual warfare weapon than to love someone in spite of everything they do or say. God's love says, "I'm going to love no matter what. I don't care what you do to me, I'm going to keep loving you." I'll never forget David Wilkerson in "The Cross and the Switchblade" saying to gang member Nicky Cruz, "If you cut me up into a hundred pieces, every one of them is going to lie on the ground, saying, 'I love you. I love you. I love you.'" "

One more thing about love...The Lord didn't say to "put up with your enemy." No, He said to love your enemy. Most of my Christian walk I've always believed the important thing was to forgive my enemy. It's only been in the last few years that I've begun to understand that what Christ said was to love my enemy, to go the extra mile, turn the other cheek, to serve and lay my life down for them! That's threatening and scary stuff! That kind of love could mess up a person's comfortable lifestyle. But, the fact is, this is the guts of Christianity. One's true spiritual maturity can best be gauged by the degree to which they follow the command to truly love thy enemy! Finally, we come to step number six.

6) Be Willing to Wait and Trust the Results to God

"Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord."
(Psalms 27:14)

In conclusion, this whole message is a message about serious discipleship. The truth is, that person you so want to see changed is in your life for a reason; God put them there! They're your "gift" to teach you how to walk in love, how to walk in these principles. It really is God's will that those around you change, but you'll never see a whole lot of that happening until you get your fingers off the control buttons. Virtually everything the Holy Spirit is seeking to accomplish in our lives tends to be around this issue - of getting us out of the driver's seat and letting Him have utter control, even in our most intimate relationships.

Be willing to wait and leave changing the other person in the hands of the Lord. In some ways, this may be the most difficult step. But, then, patience is a much needed virtue! We're told in James' epistle to, "Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be mature, entire, wanting nothing." God will do what He will do in His own time. Trust, give thanks, and relax - and watch Him come through for you in all of those difficult relationships.

The Six Steps To See Someone Change (Summarized)

- 1) Ask Forgiveness of God and the Other Person (Eph 1:7) Any bitterness, control, judgment, gossip, etc. must be acknowledged, confessed, and renounced for God to move in the relationship.
- 2) Choose To Fully Forgive the Other Person (Eph 4:32) Remember that forgiveness is a choice of the will, not a feeling or an emotion. Often, it is only after persistent choices of forgiveness that feelings and emotions follow.
- 3) Break Any and All Unhealthy Bondings Between You and the Other Person (Eph 4:3) Any soul ties of dependence, control, or idolatry must be severed in the relationship. It takes the anointed power of the Holy Spirit to really do this.
- 4) Intercede For the Person With Direct, Offensive, Spiritual Warfare Prayers (Eph 6:12, 18) To be effective against the enemy, spiritual warfare prayers must be prayed, not just requests to God.
- 5) Ask God For Specific Opportunities To 'Love On' the Person (Eph 4:2) This way you're proving by actions that you're allowing God to do the work.
- 6) Be Willing To Wait and Trust the Results To God (Psalm 27:14)