



## Introduction to How People Change

### DESCRIPTION

After this session you will be aware of Mars Hill's chosen curriculum for basic discipleship and shepherding, and will have been introduced to the material found in the book and workbook, "How People Change."

### WHY CURRICULUM?

- Christ-centered
- Gospel-based
- Applying the Gospel in lives through many individual and small group interactions, whether formal or informal

### WHY CHANGE?

- We need change
- Change in the heart, deep, not mere behavior, not outward appearances

### CHANGE INTO WHAT?

- Not into a "church person"
- Not "self actualization"

### COMMON COUNTERFEIT MEANS OF CHANGE

- Circumstances
- Mere behavior
- Mere thinking
- Self-esteem improvement

### TRUE CHANGE IN CHRIST ALONE

*Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*  
(Colossians 3:9-10, ESV)

- Because of the work of Christ, believers are "in him"
- The old self has been put off
- The new self has been put on
- The new self is progressively renewed to look more and more like Jesus

### CHANGE IN CONTEXT

- Christian community
- Relationship with Christ, not a system of rules

### THE BIG PICTURE

Concepts that run throughout scripture are illustrated by a word picture found in Jeremiah 17:5-10

- Heat
- Thorns
- Cross
- Fruit

## HEAT

- Where living in a fallen world intersects my life
- Suffering including, struggle, trial, pain, shaping influences like abuse, family systems, catastrophe, illness
- Romans 8:18-23 describes the groaning of creation under futility and decay because of sin
- The Psalms invite us to pour out our emotions (joy, thankfulness, trust--fear, anger, despair) to God as an act of faith. Consider even the darkness of Psalm 88—no happy ending

## THORNS

- My sinful responses to Heat
- Indwelling sin in the believer. Romans 7:15-25
- Heat may come from “out there”, but Thorns always come from “in here”
- Temptation to see Thorns as Heat and engage in “heat management” instead of repentance
- Occasions are not causes
- Causes are in the heart (Jer 17:9-13, Rom 1:21-25, James 4:1-9)

## CROSS

- Our provision and potential for change in Christ: because of Him, in Him, through Him, resulting in Christlikeness
- Galatians 2:20
  - Because of death in Christ, I am utterly different at my core, a permanent change
  - The old heart of stone has been replaced with a new heart of flesh
  - Because Christ indwells us through the person of the Holy Spirit, we actually have the potential to act, think, desire, and feel like Him.
  - (See also Romans 8:9-10)
- I am a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)
- I am justified in Christ: blameless before the Father because of the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross, on my behalf, in my place. (1 John 2:1-2)
- I am adopted: in Christ, the Father calls me a child of God, and makes me a member of his family, the body of Christ
- A Christian grounded in his/her identity in Christ will live a life of faith and repentance (The Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-31)

## FRUIT

- “Real change does not take place until it is visible in our lives and our relationships. Our understanding of something does not mean we have solved the problem.” (HPC, pg 193)
- Change happens in the heart and flows out into life; the heart is the center of the person
- Fruit trees may grow in the harsh Heat of trial in the lives of ordinary people
- Story: King David in the cave, hiding from his son Absalom who sought to kill him (2 Sam 14-18, Psalm 3-4)