

Change from the Inside Out

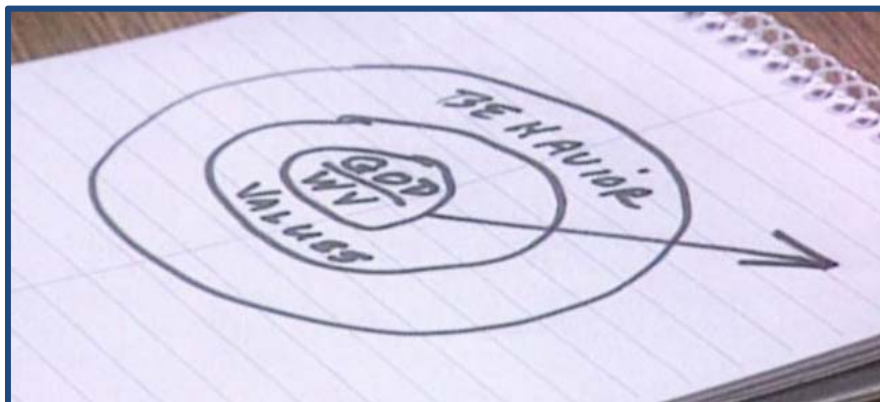
Big Idea: God wants to change us from the inside out. Behind everyone's story (external behavior) there's another story (what's happened to him or her in the past, what's happening inside him or her now). Instead of focusing on behavior (ours or that of our spiritual children) we need to focus on changing our worldview and values.

1. Write down four or five of the values that motivate your life. This is, what are the values that motivate what you actually do, not ones that just sound noble or biblical? Here are some possibilities:

- Making money
- Knowing God better
- Gaining respect from others
- Seeing people come to know Christ
- Feeling comfortable
- Feeling safe and secure
- Reaching your fullest potential
- Expressing your creativity
- Raising academically successful kids
- Raising compassionate kids
- Becoming like Christ
- Looking beautiful

For Further Thought:

A worldview is a person's answers to the basic questions of life. (Where did the universe come from? Why do I exist? Is there a God or gods? What are he/they like?) Most of us aren't conscious of our worldviews unless we are philosophically inclined, but all of us have world views that lie behind our values and hence our behavior. For instance, if Gerry values having Erik's respect (which Gerry equates with Erik's obedience) more than he values Erik as a person, Gerry gets this value from a worldview belief, such as "A man's worth comes from having others respect him."



2. Why can't Gerry change the way he treats Erik by willpower?

Gerry's behavior is apparently driven by some beliefs and values he is barely aware of. Sin has clouded his reason and feelings so that he doesn't perceive or understand reality clearly. Matt. 13:15 says that people's hearts become calloused. Softening hearts is a long process that must be done in conjunction with the Holy Spirit over a number of years.

3. Below are some beliefs and values available to Gerry from the Holy Spirit. What might be some of Gerry's selfish values that cause his rage?

Beliefs and Values from the Spirit

Beliefs: God loves Erik

- God wants Erik to love Him
- Erik is a prisoner of sin who needs to be rescued
- Gerry's self worth comes from Christ

Beliefs and Values of Gerry's Flesh

Example: Erik is a pain in the neck

- Erik is not loveable
- Erik's is disobedient and doesn't respect Gerry who provides for him
- Gerry may see his worth in his performance

Therefore...

Values: It is important to love Erik as God does

- It's important for Gerry to demonstrate Christ's grace & truth to Erik
- It's important for Gerry to forgive Erik as Christ does
- It's not essential to Gerry's self-worth that Erik respect him

Erik won't accept Gerry's love

- Erik's never going to change
- Erik's behavior toward Gerry is unacceptable
- Erik should respect whoever provides for him



4. Why must change begin with worldview and values, rather than behavior?

Often we don't have the power to control our behavior. Spiritual disciplines have value when we train our mind and emotions with Biblical truth so that truth will take control over matters instead of us trying to control our behavior with willpower. Example: Proverbs 15:1, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

5. What are some things a person can do to develop a Christ-centered view of the world?

Read, study, hear, memorize and mediate on the Word.

Get involved with a community of believers who are honestly wrestling with their own world view, values, and behaviors.

6. Read Col. 2:20-23 and Col. 3:1-4.

a. Instead of focusing on rules, Paul urges us to shift our worldviews and values. How can we practically do what Paul suggests?

We must continue to conform our minds to Christ and call upon His strength versus our own.

b. Why would believing that his life is now hidden with Christ affect the way Gerry treats Erik?

If Gerry really believed his life was with Christ rather than fragily dependent on Erik's obedience, then that belief would drain off his anger.

c. How would Gerry go about setting his mind on things above?

Gerry needs to meditate on the truth: that his worth as a person comes from being made in God's image and filled with the Holy Spirit, not from anything Erik does. His friends can help him remember this but ultimately he needs to pray for the Holy Spirit to help him live by it.

“An understanding of the interplay between worldview, values, and behavior helps us know how to minister to others. If we want to see true transformation occur, our efforts should be oriented toward affecting what a person believes and values. That helps us take wrong behavior in stride. We know that in time genuine changes in behavior will appear.

It is interesting to note that this sequence of worldview, values, and behavior could serve as the outline for several of the Epistles Paul wrote to the churches, particularly Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. They begin with the big picture. They focus on Christ and His purposes. Then they move to the implications of that picture. Finally, they get very specific on matters of behavior.”

*Jim Petersen,
Lifestyle Discipleship, pp. 83-84*

7. Why do we often prefer to focus on changing behavior rather than changing worldview and values?

Focusing on behavior is a lot easier than looking inside ourselves to figure out what's really going on. It takes time to figure out the story behind the story.

8. There is almost a “conspiracy of silence” among Christians in which we hurt but don't talk about our wrong behaviors and feelings behind them. Why don't we talk about things like Gerry's rage or Raz's struggle with pornography?

Pride, lack of safe people, gossip, not willing to give up sin (hiding).

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 6 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*