

Change from the Inside Out

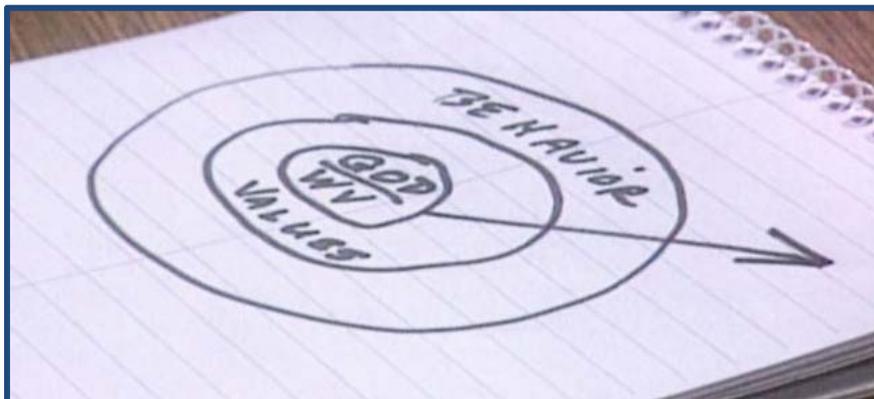
Big Idea: God wants to change us from the inside out. Behind everyone's story (external behavior) there's another story (what's happened to him or her in the past, what's happening inside him or her now). Instead of focusing on behavior (ours or that of our spiritual children) we need to focus on changing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

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

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.

Beliefs and Values of Gerry's Flesh

Example: Erik is a pain in the neck



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

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

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?

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

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

“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?

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?

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 6 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*