

GRACE TO CHANGE**Romans 7-8**

We all have something in life that we would like to change. It could be something that we would like to stop doing such as overeating, drinking alcohol excessively, constantly being late, worrying, etc. It could also be something that we would like to begin to do more consistently like exercising, reading our Bible, practicing more patience, etc. According to Nielsen Analytics, losing weight is the #1 New Year's resolution, but there are others that also rank high on the list including finding love, saving money, elevating my career, etc. According to statistics, only 64% of New Year's resolutions survive past the first month, only 46% continue past the first 6 months, and only 12% succeed. So, the bad news is that most of us find it very difficult to change the big things in our lives. If asked, many would conclude that the reason most people don't succeed is linked to commitment and willpower. Uuuugh! You would be wrong!

THREE NECESSARY UNDERSTANDINGS FOR CHANGE**1. Understand the corrupt and incurrigible nature of your flesh.** Romans 7:14-25

Incurrigible means that it can't be changed. If a person is incurrigible, it means that they can't be turned around. There is nothing you can do to help that person. According to the Bible, you have residing within you "fallen flesh" (sin nature) that will be with you until you die, or Jesus returns. The Bible teaches us that our "flesh" wars against us every time we try to do good. If I'm going to change, I have to wake up to the reality that there is a part of me that will not change! Every time I want to do the right thing, it's going to be there to sabotage me.

2. Understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:1-11

The power of the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to overcome the flesh and to do the things that God wants us to do. We were not designed to live without the power of the Spirit of God in us (Genesis 2:7), and God never intended for us to live that way (John 20:22). It's really not complicated. There are only two choices concerning the way we live our lives. We are either controlled by the Spirit of God or by our base nature that the Bible calls "flesh" (Galatians 5:16-23).

3. Understand the power of higher law. Romans 7:2

There is only one way to escape a lessor law. It is by application of a higher law. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 7:2). We can be free from the law of sin and death that rules our flesh and will never leave it. How? It is not accomplished by willpower or commitment to the task but by coming under the higher law of the Spirit of life in Christ as we yield to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.