WEAVER STUDY GUIDES

The Theology of Change

Study Guide

Old Testament Studies

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A lesson-by-lesson companion for reading, discussion, and written responses.

Downloadable classroom edition | 8.5 x 11 inches

Name / group

Date

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Using this guide

Read the corresponding chapter, then work through the themes, arguments, and Scripture references.

Write your responses before discussing the questions with others. Use the application pages to identify a practical next step.

The study material is retained from the existing lecture study guides. Added writing prompts provide space for your own response.

Print at Actual Size / 100% on US Letter paper. Single-sided and double-sided printing are both suitable. Lessons begin on the next available page; no blank pages are inserted.

Reading assignments refer to the October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition of the companion book. Online lecture links and QR codes are collected at the end.

LESSON 1

The Theology of Change - 1

July 21, 2018

Read Chapter 1 in the companion book, pages 5-20 (October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition).

Major Themes

God's Immutability

Only God is unchanging because He is perfect; humans are creatures of constant change.

Lecture support: Malachi 3:6: 'For I am the Lord, I change not.' Only God is immutable. He does not change. He does not need to change since he is perfect.

Preferences vs. Convictions

Preferences are changeable likes; convictions are deep-rooted beliefs based on biblical authority that do not yield easily.

Lecture support: A preference is something that we desire above and over something else... A conviction is a deep-rooted belief or standard that has been impressed upon our minds by our authority.

The Test of Pleasure

Pleasure tests whether one's morality is a preference or conviction; many fall like Samson and David.

Lecture support: Mighty men have fallen at the throne of pleasure... Convictions will not bow to pleasure. Preferences will.

The Test of Profit

The love of money leads many to compromise convictions, as seen in Balaam's error.

Lecture support: Money is not the root of all evil. It's the love of money that is the root of all evil... Balaam... loved the wages of unrighteousness.

Preaching the Whole Counsel of God

Pastors must declare all of God's Word without compromise; failing to do so brings bloodguilt.

Lecture support: Paul said, 'I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'

Doctrine as Foundation for Convictions

Knowing Bible doctrine is essential to develop convictions that withstand tests.

Lecture support: Since our duty is based upon our doctrine, it should be obvious how absolutely necessary it is to understand doctrine, because it is doctrine that gives us our convictions.

Key Arguments

Human change is inevitable and can be biblical

Everyone changes doctrinally; the key is whether the change is for biblical reasons.

Lecture support: If you have not changed, then you've basically ceased learning... did you change for a biblical reason?

Preferences are not inherently sinful but must not violate Scripture

Preferences are choices or likes; they become problematic when they lead to sin.

Lecture support: There is nothing wrong with a preference as long as it does not violate the Word of God.

Convictions are tied to biblical authority

A conviction is based on what God declares right or wrong; it changes only through further biblical understanding.

Lecture support: In the case of a conviction, the choice is tied to what God declares is right and wrong... the only way I'm going to change my mind is if I see from study... that I have misunderstood.

Pleasure reveals whether morality is a preference or conviction

Those who sacrifice principles for pleasure show they have mere preferences, not convictions.

Lecture support: When you have a man who professes to be a Christian, and yet he is willing to sacrifice his honor and his principles for a little pleasure, he does not have a conviction. He has a preference.

Profit leads many to compromise convictions

The love of money causes people to abandon biblical standards, as Balaam did.

Lecture support: When it comes to money in any shape, form, or fashion, men quickly lose all of their convictions that they previously held.

Pastoral compromise for financial gain is like Balaam's error

Preachers who dilute God's Word to keep donations are cursing people and have blood on their hands.

Lecture support: When we refuse to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, we are cursing people. Are we any better than Balaam?

Preaching the whole counsel of God frees from bloodguilt

Paul declared himself pure from all men's blood because he declared all of God's counsel.

Lecture support: Paul looked the preachers in the eyes and he said, 'I am pure from the blood of all men.' How did he do that? ... 'For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'

Doctrine is the source of convictions

Without knowing Bible doctrine, one cannot have true convictions because the authority is not properly understood.

Lecture support: An individual who does not know Bible doctrine cannot have a conviction because he does not have his source of authority correct.

Scripture References

Malachi 3:6

God's immutability: 'For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

Psalm 137:6

Preferring Jerusalem above chief joy, meaning to highly value.

John 1:15, 27, 30

Jesus is preferred before John, meaning He existed before him.

Romans 12:10

In honor preferring one another, meaning showing deference.

1 Timothy 5:21

Without preferring one before another, meaning without prejudice.

Galatians 5:13

Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word to exhort and convince gainsayers.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Weapons of warfare are not carnal but mighty to pull down strongholds.

2 Timothy 4:10

Demas forsook Paul, having loved this present world.

2 Timothy 3:4

Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Titus 3:3

We ourselves were sometimes serving divers lusts and pleasures.

Proverbs 6:23-35

The commandment is a lamp; warning against adultery and its consequences.

Proverbs 7:24-27

Warning against the strange woman; her house is the way to hell.

Genesis 39:9

Joseph refused Potiphar's wife, saying it would be sin against God.

Hebrews 11:25

Moses chose affliction over the pleasures of sin for a season.

Luke 8:14

Seed among thorns choked by cares, riches, and pleasures of this life.

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world; the world passes away, but he who does God's will abides forever.

Romans 13:14

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.

Psalm 16:11

At God's right hand are pleasures forevermore.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Light affliction works an eternal weight of glory; things seen are temporal, unseen eternal.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between a preference and a conviction, and why does it matter?

Consider: The sermon defines preferences as changeable likes and convictions as biblically-rooted beliefs.

2. How can we tell if our moral standards are preferences or convictions when faced with pleasure?

Consider: The test of pleasure reveals whether we will sacrifice principles for temporary enjoyment.

3. In what ways might the love of money cause us to compromise our convictions today?

Consider: The test of profit warns against valuing financial gain over biblical truth.

4. Why is preaching the whole counsel of God essential for a pastor's innocence from bloodguilt?

Consider: Paul's example in Acts 20 shows that declaring all of God's Word frees him from responsibility for hearers' blood.

5. How does knowing Bible doctrine help us develop convictions rather than mere preferences?

Consider: Doctrine based on Scripture is the foundation for unyielding convictions.

6. What are some examples of preferences that Christians might mistakenly treat as convictions?

Consider: The sermon implies that many confuse strong preferences with biblical convictions.

7. How should we respond when we realize a belief we held was a preference rather than a conviction?

Consider: The sermon suggests that change should come through biblical study and illumination.

8. What safeguards can we put in place to avoid falling into the errors of Balaam - compromising truth for profit?

Consider: Balaam's story illustrates the danger of loving reward more than obedience.

Applications

Examine your beliefs: preference or conviction?

Evaluate whether your moral and doctrinal positions are mere preferences that change easily or true convictions grounded in Scripture.

Lecture support: Preferences are not convictions. You will easily, quickly, and readily yield up a preference, but you would be willing to die for a conviction.

Resist the test of pleasure

Do not sacrifice biblical standards for temporary pleasures; remember that sin's pleasures are fleeting and destructive.

Lecture support: Convictions will not bow to pleasure. Preferences will.

Guard against the love of money

Be vigilant that financial gain does not lead you to compromise God's Word or your convictions.

Lecture support: When it comes to money in any shape, form, or fashion, men quickly lose all of their convictions that they previously held.

Preach and teach the whole counsel of God

Pastors must declare all of Scripture without dilution, trusting God for results, to remain free from bloodguilt.

Lecture support: I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Ground convictions in biblical doctrine

Study Scripture diligently so that your beliefs are based on God's authority, not personal preference.

Lecture support: An individual who does not know Bible doctrine cannot have a conviction because he does not have his source of authority correct.

Be willing to change biblically

When further study reveals misunderstanding, be open to changing your convictions in light of Scripture.

Lecture support: The only way I'm going to change my mind is if I see from study and from the illumination of the Holy Spirit that I have misunderstood.

Avoid partiality in judgment

Do not prejudge or show favoritism; base decisions on facts and biblical principles.

Lecture support: Observe these things without prejudice or without prejudging, or without making a decision before you hear the facts.

Choose eternal pleasures over temporal ones

Focus on the unseen, eternal pleasures at God's right hand rather than the fleeting pleasures of sin.

Lecture support: At thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore... the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal.

Study notes

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 2

The Theology of Change - 2

July 29, 2018

Read Chapter 2 in the companion book, pages 21-35 (October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition).

Major Themes

Distinction Between Preference and Conviction

A preference is a desire that can change under circumstances, while a conviction is a deep-rooted belief based on an authority, specifically Scripture for Christians.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'A preference is something that we desire above anything else... A conviction is a deep-rooted belief or standard that has been imposed upon us by our authority... for the Christian, our authority is the Word of God.'

Tests of Conviction: Pleasure and Profit

Pleasure and profit are tests that reveal whether one holds convictions or preferences; those who compromise for pleasure or money lack true convictions.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'If you're going to sacrifice your honor... for pleasure, then you don't have a conviction' and 'if you're willing to allow your positions to be compromised for money or for profit, then you don't really have convictions.'

Test of Pressure

Pressure from coercion, peer disapproval, or slander tests convictions; believers must not give in to avoid confrontation or seek approval.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'Once pressure is put upon us, we're either going to give in or cave into the thoughts and the desires and plans of others, or we're going to hold fast.'

Test of Persecution

Persecution, from mild ostracism to martyrdom, is the most severe test of faith and conviction; true believers will endure rather than deny Christ.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'I want to suggest that this may be the most severe test of one's faith and one's convictions... Our Lord said, Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you...'

Historical Martyrs as Examples of Conviction

The martyrdoms of Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, Thomas Cranmer, and Thomas Bilney demonstrate unwavering conviction under extreme persecution.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts Cranmer's final words and actions: 'He purposely took his right hand and held that right hand in the flames... And then the old man died saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

The Necessity of Standing Firm on Scripture

Believers must not change their theology or convictions based on external pressures but must stand on the authority of God's Word, even unto death.

Lecture support: Weaver concludes, 'We cannot change because of pleasure or profit... nor can we change because of pressure and persecution... We cannot, under any circumstance, deny the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Key Arguments

Preferences are changeable; convictions are not.

Preferences can be altered by circumstances, but convictions, rooted in Scripture, remain steadfast.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'A preference will be easily changed under the right circumstances, but a conviction is not going to be changed.'

Pleasure reveals the absence of conviction.

Those who prioritize pleasure over truth demonstrate they have preferences, not convictions.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Demas: 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.'

Profit and poverty both test convictions.

Compromising for money or resorting to theft in poverty shows a lack of conviction.

Lecture support: Weaver references Proverbs 30:8-9: 'Lest I be full and deny thee... Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.'

Pressure exposes true character.

Circumstances do not create character but reveal it; pressure shows whether one has convictions or preferences.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'Circumstances never make or break a man, they just reveal him.'

Believers will face slander and reviling.

Scripture warns that Christians will be spoken against falsely, but they must not compromise.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Matthew 5:11: 'Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.'

Persecution is expected and can be severe.

From ostracism to martyrdom, persecution tests faith; true conviction endures even death.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Hebrews 11:36-38: 'Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings... they were stoned, they were sawn asunder.'

Denying Christ under pressure has eternal consequences.

Matthew 10:33 warns that denying Christ before men leads to denial before the Father.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes: 'But whosoever shall deny me before man, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.'

Historical martyrs exemplify unwavering conviction.

The accounts of Cranmer, Wishart, and others show that true conviction leads to faithfulness unto death.

Lecture support: Weaver describes Cranmer: 'He purposely took his right hand and held that right hand in the flames... And then the old man died saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

Scripture References

Malachi 3:6

Weaver opens with this verse to establish God's immutability as the foundation for the series.

Titus 1:9

Used to emphasize holding fast to the faithful word as taught, grounding convictions in Scripture.

Proverbs 11:4

Cited to show that riches do not profit in the day of wrath, supporting the test of profit.

Proverbs 11:28

Used to contrast trusting in riches with the flourishing of the righteous.

Revelation 18:7

Referenced to illustrate that great riches come to nothing, reinforcing the test of profit.

Proverbs 30:8-9

Weaver reads this passage to show that both riches and poverty can lead to denial of God or theft, testing convictions.

Psalm 41:5

David's enemies speak evil of him, illustrating the pressure of slander.

Matthew 5:11

Jesus teaches that believers are blessed when reviled and persecuted falsely for His sake.

James 4:11

Believers are forbidden to speak evil of one another, highlighting the sin of slander.

1 Peter 3:10

To love life and see good days, one must refrain from speaking evil.

1 Peter 3:16

Having a good conscience so that those who speak evil of believers may be ashamed.

Luke 21:17

Jesus warns that believers will be hated by all for His name's sake.

John 15:18

The world hated Christ first, so it will hate His followers.

Matthew 10:23

Jesus instructs disciples to flee to another city when persecuted, showing a severer form of persecution.

John 15:20

If they persecuted Christ, they will persecute His followers; persecution stems from hatred of Jesus.

Luke 21:12

Believers will be delivered to synagogues and prisons, brought before rulers for Christ's sake.

Hebrews 11:32-40

The classic passage on persecution, detailing the sufferings of the faithful, including torture, mockings, stoning, and being sawn asunder.

Matthew 10:33

Whoever denies Christ before men will be denied before the Father; this haunted Cranmer after his recantation.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding the difference between a preference and a conviction affect the way you approach disagreements within the church?

Consider: Weaver emphasizes that convictions are based on Scripture, while preferences are personal desires.

2. In what ways have you experienced the test of pleasure or profit in your own life, and how did you respond?

Consider: Weaver describes how pleasure and profit can cause compromise.

3. How can believers prepare themselves to withstand pressure from organizations or individuals that demand compromise?

Consider: Weaver discusses pressure from groups like the SPLC and the need to hold fast.

4. What forms of mild persecution (ostracism, shunning, gossip) have you witnessed or experienced, and how should Christians respond biblically?

Consider: Weaver lists mild forms of persecution and references Matthew 5:11.

5. How does the example of Thomas Cranmer's struggle and eventual martyrdom challenge or encourage you in your own faith?

Consider: Weaver recounts Cranmer's initial recantation and later repentance and death.

6. Why is it important to remember that persecution stems from the world's hatred of Jesus Christ, not just personal animosity?

Consider: Weaver explains John 15:20, linking persecution to hatred of Christ.

7. How can the church support members who are facing severe persecution, such as imprisonment or martyrdom?

Consider: Weaver mentions Andrew Brunson and the biblical warnings of imprisonment.

8. What does Matthew 10:33 teach about the eternal consequences of denying Christ, and how should that shape our daily witness?

Consider: Weaver highlights this verse as the turning point for Cranmer.

Applications

Examine your beliefs to distinguish preferences from convictions.

Evaluate whether your strongly held positions are rooted in Scripture or personal desire, and be willing to adjust preferences while holding fast to biblical convictions.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'So many people want to think that they are men and women of conviction, when in reality we are men and women of preference.'

Guard against compromise for pleasure or profit.

Recognize the temptation to sacrifice truth for enjoyment or financial gain, and choose to suffer affliction with God's people rather than enjoy sinful pleasures.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Moses who 'chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

Prepare for pressure by grounding yourself in Scripture.

Anticipate slander, ridicule, and coercion, and resolve like Luther to have your conscience captive to God's Word, not human approval.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Luther: 'My conscience is captive to the word of God.'

Expect and endure persecution as part of Christian discipleship.

Understand that persecution, from mild ostracism to severe suffering, is promised by Christ, and prepare to stand firm even unto death.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Truthfully, as Christians, we should expect persecution.'

Do not deny Christ under any circumstance.

Remember Matthew 10:33 and the eternal consequence of denying Jesus; let the examples of martyrs inspire unwavering faithfulness.

Lecture support: Weaver concludes, 'We cannot, under any circumstance, deny the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Trust God's grace to sustain you in trials.

Like Thomas Bilney, rely on God's protection and strength to endure suffering, knowing that He can give peace and courage beyond human ability.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts Bilney's words: 'As my Lord has protected my finger from pain tonight, He'll protect my body from pain tomorrow.'

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 3

The Theology of Change - 3

August 05, 2018

Read Chapter 3 in the companion book, pages 37-52 (October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition).

Major Themes

God's Immutability vs. Human Mutability

God alone is unchangeable because He is perfect, while humans are inherently changeable and must undergo change to align with God's will.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'Changelessness belongs to God alone. He alone is immutable. He is unchangeable. Immutability belongs to the Creator. Mutability belongs to the creature.'

Repentance and Conversion as Foundational Changes

Repentance (a change of mind) and conversion (a turning to God) are necessary for salvation and are ongoing processes in the Christian life.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Repentance is a change of mind, which results in a change of direction... Conversion is a change... Repent ye therefore and be converted.'

The Necessity of Divine Grace for Change

Humans cannot change spiritually on their own; change is enabled by the Holy Spirit as believers behold Christ and are transformed.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'There is no change apart from beholding Christ, and there is no change apart from the Spirit of the Lord.'

Resistance to Change Due to Tradition and Idolatry

People resist biblical change because they are comfortable with traditions and customs, and they idolatrously view themselves as unchangeable like God.

Lecture support: Weaver notes, 'It is very difficult to deviate, to discontinue, and to turn from traditions and customs... there is an aspect of idolatry, because we do not want to change because we think that we're right and we're changeless like God.'

The Inevitability and Direction of Change

Change is inevitable; believers will either change for the better by conforming to Christ or for the worse by conforming to the world.

Lecture support: Weaver asserts, 'You will change one way or the other. You'll either become more godly, more holy, more obedient, more biblical, or you'll keep going backwards and becoming more and more conformed to the world.'

Key Arguments

Fallen man cannot change spiritually without God's grace.

The natural man is at enmity with God and lacks the ability to please God or understand spiritual truths, as shown in Romans 8:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Anyone that is in the flesh does not have the ability to please God in and of himself... the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.'

Repentance is a commanded change of mind leading to a change of direction.

God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30), which involves a change of mind about sin, God, and Christ, resulting in a turning from sin to God.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'Repentance is a change of mind, which results in a change of direction... God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.'

Conversion is a turning to God that accompanies repentance.

Conversion (epistrepho) means to turn to God, and it is linked with repentance as two sides of one coin, as seen in Acts 3:19 and 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'Repent ye therefore and be converted... you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.'

Change is only possible through the Holy Spirit as we behold Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 shows that believers are changed into Christ's image by the Spirit as they behold His glory; the Spirit guides into truth (John 16:13).

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'But we all... are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

Traditions and customs hinder biblical change.

The Pharisees' adherence to hand-washing traditions (Matthew 15, Mark 7) illustrates how people reject God's commandments to keep their own traditions, making change difficult.

Lecture support: Weaver notes, 'Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.'

Change is constant and inevitable; neutrality is impossible.

Believers are either progressing in faith or digressing; there is no stationary place, as Jesus said, 'He that is not with Me is against Me' (Luke 11:23).

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'If you are not going forward in the faith, you are going backwards... There is no neutrality.'

Scripture References

Malachi 3:6

Weaver reads this verse to establish God's immutability: 'For I am the Lord, I change not.'

2 Corinthians 3:18

Weaver reads this verse to show that believers are changed into Christ's image by the Spirit.

Hebrews 13:8

Weaver references this verse to affirm that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jeremiah 13:23

Weaver quotes this verse to illustrate the inability of fallen man to change his sinful nature.

2 Timothy 3:13

Weaver mentions this verse to show that evil men grow worse, indicating a negative change.

Romans 8:6-8

Weaver reads these verses to demonstrate that the carnal mind is enmity against God and cannot please Him.

1 Corinthians 2:14

Weaver reads this verse to show that the natural man cannot receive spiritual things.

Psalm 55:19

Weaver quotes this verse to indicate that those without changes do not fear God.

Psalm 110:3

Weaver references this verse to show that God's power makes His people willing.

Philippians 2:12-13

Weaver reads these verses to explain that God works in believers to will and to do His good pleasure.

Philippians 1:6

Weaver quotes this verse to affirm that God will complete the work He began in believers.

Hebrews 12:2

Weaver references this verse to call Jesus the author and finisher of faith.

Mark 1:15

Weaver quotes Jesus' command to repent and believe the gospel.

Acts 17:30-31

Weaver reads these verses to show God's command for all men to repent because of the coming judgment.

John 5:22-23

Weaver reads these verses to explain that the Father has committed all judgment to the Son.

Acts 3:19

Weaver reads this verse to link repentance and conversion.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Weaver reads these verses as an illustration of turning from idols to God.

Luke 22:32

Weaver references Jesus' words to Peter about being converted and strengthening brethren.

James 5:19-20

Weaver reads these verses to show that a Christian can be converted from error.

John 15:5

Weaver quotes Jesus' statement that without Him we can do nothing.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding God's immutability affect your view of personal change?

Consider: Weaver contrasts God's unchangeable nature with human mutability.

2. In what ways have you experienced repentance as a change of mind and direction?

Consider: Weaver defines repentance and its ongoing role in the Christian life.

3. Why is it impossible to change spiritually without the Holy Spirit's work?

Consider: Weaver explains the necessity of divine grace for change using Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 2.

4. What traditions or customs in your life might be hindering biblical change?

Consider: Weaver discusses the Pharisees' traditions and how they rejected God's commandments.

5. How can we cultivate a habit of beholding Christ to facilitate ongoing transformation?

Consider: Weaver emphasizes 2 Corinthians 3:18 and the role of beholding Christ in change.

6. What are some signs that a person is changing for the worse rather than for the better?

Consider: Weaver warns that change can be negative, leading to conformity to the world.

Applications

Embrace repentance as an ongoing practice.

Believers should continually repent as God reveals sin in their lives, not just at conversion.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'I've done far more repenting since I've been saved than when I got saved.'

Seek change through beholding Christ and relying on the Spirit.

Change comes by focusing on Christ and depending on the Holy Spirit, not by self-effort.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'There is no change apart from beholding Christ, and there is no change apart from the Spirit of the Lord.'

Examine and abandon unbiblical traditions.

Believers must be willing to let go of customs and traditions that contradict Scripture.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'It is very difficult to deviate, to discontinue, and to turn from traditions and customs.'

Pursue constant spiritual growth.

Christians should strive to progress in faith, moving from glory to glory, rather than stagnating.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'We should be going from strength to strength and from faith to faith and glory to glory and grace to grace.'

Avoid drawing back from the faith.

Believers must not look back or draw back, as this displeases God and indicates unfitness for the kingdom.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Hebrews 10:38 and Luke 9:62 to warn against drawing back.

Study notes

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 4

The Theology of Change - 4

August 12, 2018

Read Chapter 4 in the companion book, pages 53-66 (October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition).

Major Themes

Renewal of Knowledge in Salvation

Salvation brings a renewal of knowledge, changing believers from a corrupt state to a new life, with continual growth in understanding God's will.

Lecture support: Colossians 3:10 says 'have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.' The Greek word anakainoo means to renew, cause to grow up new, change from a corrupt estate.

Adam's Original Knowledge and Its Loss

Adam possessed intuitive, theological knowledge of God's purposes, demonstrated in naming the animals, which was lost and perverted after the fall.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Genesis 2:19-20 and commentators like John Trapp and Adam Clarke to show Adam read God's will from the creatures. Romans 1:21-28 shows the perversion and rejection of that knowledge.

The Danger of Prideful Knowledge

Knowledge pursued for its own sake puffs up with pride, which God hates; true knowledge is humble and edifying.

Lecture support: 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 says 'knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' Proverbs 6:16-17 lists a proud look as an abomination. Weaver warns against being a 'Mr. Know-it-all.'

Maturity and Growth in Understanding

Believers are called to grow from spiritual infancy to maturity, not remaining children in understanding but becoming mature men and women in Christ.

Lecture support: Ephesians 4:11-15 speaks of growing up into Christ, no longer children tossed to and fro. 1 Corinthians 14:20 says 'in understanding be men.'

Transformation Through Mind Renewal

Change occurs by not conforming to the world but being transformed through the renewing of the mind, leading to proving God's will.

Lecture support: Romans 12:1-2 commands believers to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. The word 'transformed' relates to metamorphosis.

Progression from Gnosis to Epignosis

Christians start with elementary knowledge (gnosis) and must progress to a fuller, more precise, and applicable knowledge (epignosis) of God.

Lecture support: Weaver explains the Greek terms gnosis and epignosis, using Luke 1:77 (gnosis of salvation) and 2 Peter 1:2 (epignosis of God). Mark 8:22-25 illustrates seeing clearly.

Restoration of Knowledge in Christ

What was lost in Adam is restored and surpassed in Christ, who renews knowledge and brings believers back to God.

Lecture support: Psalm 69:4 says 'I restored that which I took not away,' applied to Christ. 1 Corinthians 15 calls Christ the last Adam. 1 Peter 3:18 says Christ brings us to God.

Conformity to Christ as God's Will

God's ultimate will for believers is conformity to the image of His Son, achieved through the Spirit and Word, resulting in holiness and obedience.

Lecture support: Romans 8:29 says we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. Weaver states we are to be pressed into Christ's image, not the world's mold.

Key Arguments

Change is continual and necessary for believers

Believers cannot remain stationary; they either progress or digress in the faith, and change should be constant and continual.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'We're going to change whether we want to or not. We are either going to be going forward or we're going to be going backwards.'

Salvation renews knowledge, not just imparts facts

The renewal of knowledge in Colossians 3:10 is a change from a corrupt state to a new life, implying a restoration of Adam's pre-fall theological knowledge.

Lecture support: Weaver explains anakainoo means 'to be changed from one kind of life to another' and links it to Adam's knowledge before the fall.

Adam's knowledge was theological and practical

Adam's naming of animals was not arbitrary but reflected an intuitive understanding of God's will and purpose for each creature, demonstrating his original perfection.

Lecture support: Citing Adam Clarke: 'Had he not possessed an intuitive knowledge of the grand and distinguishing properties of those animals, he never could have given them such names.'

Knowledge without application and relation to God is worthless

Scholarship and knowledge for their own sake lead to pride and are condemned; true knowledge must be applied to life and understood in relation to God's will.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Knowledge just for knowledge's sake is worthless. Scholarship just for scholarship's sake is worthless.' 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 supports this.

Pride is the inevitable result of knowledge pursued selfishly

Knowledge puffs up, creating arrogance and a need to demonstrate superiority, but such a person truly knows nothing as they ought.

Lecture support: 1 Corinthians 8:1-2: 'Knowledge puffeth up... if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.'

Spiritual maturity requires growing up in understanding

While believers may remain childlike in malice, they must become mature in understanding, not remaining infants tossed by false doctrine.

Lecture support: Ephesians 4:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:20 are cited to show the call to maturity and stability in doctrine.

Mind renewal is the mechanism of transformation

Transformation into Christ's image occurs by not conforming to the world but by the continual renewing of the mind through God's Word.

Lecture support: Romans 12:1-2: 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

Believers must progress from elementary to precise knowledge

The Christian life begins with general knowledge (gnosis) of salvation but must advance to a fuller, more accurate knowledge (epignosis) that enables application.

Lecture support: Weaver distinguishes gnosis and epignosis, using Luke 1:77 and 2 Peter 1:2, and illustrates with the blind man in Mark 8 who first saw men as trees, then clearly.

Scripture References

Colossians 3:10

Introduced as the primary text: believers have put on the new man renewed in knowledge after the image of the Creator.

Ephesians 4:24

Parallel verse to Colossians 3:10, stating the new man is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Colossians 3:11

Cited to show that renewal in knowledge applies to all believers regardless of background; Christ is all in all.

Ephesians 4:17-19

Describes the darkened understanding and ignorance of the Gentiles, illustrating the loss of knowledge after the fall.

Genesis 2:19-20

Adam naming the animals, demonstrating his intuitive knowledge of their natures and God's purposes.

Romans 1:21-23

Shows how humanity perverted the knowledge of God, becoming vain in imaginations and changing God's glory into images.

Romans 1:28

Humanity did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

1 Corinthians 8:1-2

Knowledge puffs up but love edifies; if anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought.

Proverbs 6:16-17

Listed among the seven things God hates is a proud look, connecting to the danger of prideful knowledge.

Proverbs 21:4

A high look and a proud heart are sin, reinforcing God's hatred of pride.

1 Corinthians 14:20

Believers are to be children in malice but men in understanding, emphasizing maturity.

Ephesians 4:11-15

God gave ministers to equip saints for maturity, so they are no longer children tossed by false doctrine.

Romans 12:1-2

Believers are to present their bodies as living sacrifices and be transformed by the renewing of their minds.

Mark 8:22-25

The blind man healed in stages, first seeing men as trees, then clearly, illustrating the need for precise spiritual sight.

1 John 1:1

John emphasizes handling the Word of life to counter Docetic Gnosticism, which denied Christ's physical body.

2 Peter 1:2

Grace and peace are multiplied through the knowledge (epignosis) of God and Jesus, showing the value of precise knowledge.

Luke 1:76-79

John the Baptist's ministry was to give knowledge (gnosis) of salvation to God's people.

Luke 11:52

Jesus condemns lawyers for taking away the key of knowledge (gnosis), hindering others from entering.

Proverbs 4:7

Wisdom is the principal thing; with all getting, get understanding, emphasizing application of knowledge.

Psalm 69:4

Quoted to show Christ restored what He took not away, referring to the restoration of knowledge and righteousness.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding Adam's pre-fall knowledge change your view of what it means to be 'renewed in knowledge' as a Christian?

Consider: Weaver argues that Colossians 3:10 harks back to Adam's intuitive, theological knowledge. Discuss how this shapes our pursuit of knowledge today.

2. In what ways have you seen knowledge lead to pride in yourself or others? How can we pursue knowledge while remaining humble?

Consider: Based on 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 and the warning against being a 'Mr. Know-it-all.'

3. What does it look like practically to 'not be conformed to this world' but be 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' in daily life?

Consider: Romans 12:1-2 is presented as the mechanism for change. Discuss specific areas where mind renewal is needed.

4. Weaver says most Christians are like the blind man who saw 'men as trees walking.' In what areas of theology or life do you feel your understanding is still blurry?

Consider: Using Mark 8:22-25 as an illustration of imprecise spiritual sight.

5. What is the difference between gnosis and epignosis, and why is it important to progress from one to the other?

Consider: The sermon's central linguistic distinction; discuss how to move from elementary knowledge to precise, applicable knowledge.

6. How does the truth that Christ 'restored that which He took not away' encourage you in your struggles with sin and ignorance?

Consider: Psalm 69:4 applied to Christ's work of restoring knowledge and righteousness.

7. In what ways can we ensure that our pursuit of knowledge is always 'unto Him' - for His glory - rather than for our own reputation?

Consider: Romans 11:36 teaches all things are to God's glory; discuss motivations for learning.

Applications

Pursue knowledge with the goal of application and godliness

Believers should not seek knowledge for its own sake but to understand God's will and apply it to every area of life.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'if you do not know how to apply those facts... then your knowledge and your scholarship is absolutely worthless.'

Guard against pride in intellectual pursuits

Recognize that knowledge can puff up; cultivate humility and love as the proper context for learning.

Lecture support: 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 is cited: 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.'

Commit to continual mind renewal through Scripture

Daily engage in renewing the mind by thinking biblically, leading to transformation and proving God's will.

Lecture support: Romans 12:2: 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

Strive for spiritual maturity and doctrinal stability

Grow up in understanding, moving beyond spiritual infancy to maturity, so as not to be tossed by false teaching.

Lecture support: Ephesians 4:14-15: 'that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro.'

Progress from elementary to precise knowledge of God

Move beyond basic gospel knowledge to a deeper, more accurate understanding of God and His purposes.

Lecture support: Weaver explains the need to go from gnosis to epignosis, using 2 Peter 1:2.

View all of life in relation to God's will and purpose

Recognize that everything - from work to nature - has a God-given purpose and should be understood theologically.

Lecture support: Weaver reflects on hummingbirds: 'everything relates to God. It has a purpose.'

Embrace responsibility and work as part of mature Christian living

Rejecting work and responsibility is a revolt against maturity; believers should model Adam's pre-fall work ethic.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'when you and I revolt against work and against responsibility, it is a revolt against maturity.'

Study notes

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 5

Pastor John Weaver - Theology of Change

Part Five of Five

August 28, 2018

Read Chapter 5 in the companion book, pages 67-82 (October 9, 2026 opening-heading corrected edition).

Major Themes

Distinction between Gnosis and Epignosis

Gnosis is elementary, rudimentary knowledge; epignosis is fuller, more precise, and accurate knowledge that leads to spiritual maturity.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'gnosis would be elementary knowledge... epignosis means knowledge into knowledge, or knowledge actually upon knowledge... a more precise, and a more accurate, and even a fuller knowledge.'

Necessity of Spiritual Growth

Christians must move beyond basic truths to deeper understanding, just as children mature and put away childish things.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'As Christians, we are required to mature. We're required to grow. We cannot be content with just saying, "Well, I believe this, and I believe that..."'

Theological Change through Scripture and the Spirit

True change in theology comes only through studying God's Word and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, not through external pressures.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'We do not change our theology because of pleasure, profit, poverty, pressure, or persecution. We only change through the study of the Word of God and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.'

Knowledge Must Lead to Godliness

Biblical knowledge is given to make believers more holy, obedient, and righteous; knowledge without application leads to pride.

Lecture support: Weaver warns: 'If one boasts of knowledge, especially biblical knowledge, and he does not live a godly, biblical, obedient life... he is puffed up, he is full of pride.'

Knowing Christ vs. Knowing Facts

There is a vast difference between knowing facts about Jesus and knowing Him personally; true knowledge is relational.

Lecture support: Weaver emphasizes: 'Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." He did not say, "I know the facts about in whom I believe." He said, "I know him."'

Key Arguments

All Christians Start with Elementary Knowledge

Every believer begins as a spiritual babe with basic knowledge, which is necessary but not sufficient for maturity.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'We all begin as babes in Jesus Christ... There is no Christian that is converted that automatically has perfect knowledge and perfect understanding.'

Elementary Knowledge is Foundational but Must Be Built Upon

Hebrews 6:1 calls believers to leave the elementary principles and go on to maturity, not to abandon them but to build on them.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'Therefore leaving the elementary or the first stages of your understanding of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection or maturity.'

Epignosis is the Goal of Christian Learning

The New Testament repeatedly prays for believers to attain epignosis, which results in wisdom, fruitfulness, and Christlikeness.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Ephesians 1:17-18 and Colossians 1:9-10, showing that epignosis leads to knowing the hope of His calling and walking worthy of the Lord.

Growth in Knowledge is Growth in Grace

2 Peter 3:18 links growing in grace with growing in knowledge; one cannot grow in grace without growing in knowledge.

Lecture support: Weaver notes: 'You could read verse 18 like this: "But grow in grace, even in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Which would mean if you're not growing in knowledge, you're not growing in grace.'

A Form of Knowledge is Dangerous

Having a mere semblance of knowledge without true understanding or application leads to self-deception and hinders others.

Lecture support: Weaver illustrates: 'A form of knowledge is merely a semblance of knowledge. It is not real knowledge... it is such foolishness that leads to the destruction of lives.'

Scripture References

Colossians 3:10

Quoted to introduce the theme of renewal in knowledge after the image of Christ.

Ephesians 4:24

Quoted alongside Colossians 3:10 about putting on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness.

2 Peter 1:2

Referenced to show that grace and peace are multiplied through epignosis (full knowledge) of God.

Proverbs 18:15

Cited to emphasize that the wise seek knowledge.

Proverbs 19:2

Cited to warn that a soul without knowledge is not good.

Luke 1:76-79

Used to show that John the Baptist's ministry gave gnosis (elementary knowledge) of salvation.

Hebrews 6:1

Explained as a call to leave elementary principles and go on to maturity.

Acts 18:24-26

Apollos knew only John's baptism; Aquila and Priscilla expounded the way more perfectly, illustrating movement from gnosis to epignosis.

Acts 19:1-5

Disciples at Ephesus knew only John's baptism; Paul taught them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 2:14

God makes manifest the savor of His knowledge through us.

2 Corinthians 4:6

God shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of His glory.

Romans 15:14

Believers are filled with all knowledge (gnosis) to admonish one another.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands are to dwell with wives according to knowledge (gnosis).

Philippians 3:8

Paul counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Colossians 2:3

In Christ are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

2 Timothy 1:12

Paul knew whom he believed, not just facts about Him.

Romans 2:17-20

Warning against having a form of knowledge without true understanding.

Luke 11:52

Woe to lawyers who took away the key of knowledge.

1 Corinthians 8:1

Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

2 Timothy 3:7

Ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between gnosis and epignosis, and why is it important for spiritual growth?

Consider: Weaver spends much of the sermon defining these terms and showing their biblical usage.

2. How can we distinguish between a mere form of knowledge and genuine, life-changing knowledge of Christ?

Consider: Weaver warns against having a semblance of knowledge without application.

3. In what ways might we be tempted to change our theology for wrong reasons (pleasure, profit, pressure, etc.)?

Consider: Weaver contrasts proper theological change with change driven by external factors.

4. What practical steps can we take to move from elementary knowledge to a fuller, more precise knowledge of God?

Consider: The sermon calls believers to study Scripture and rely on the Holy Spirit for enlightenment.

5. How does growing in knowledge relate to growing in grace, according to 2 Peter 3:18?

Consider: Weaver explains that the 'and' in 2 Peter 3:18 can be understood as 'even,' linking grace and knowledge.

Applications

Pursue Deeper Knowledge of God

Believers should not be content with elementary truths but should diligently study Scripture to gain a fuller, more precise knowledge of God.

Lecture support: Weaver exhorts: 'We cannot continue to glory in elementary truths... Have you gone any further?'

Change Theology Only by Scripture

Any change in belief or practice must come through the study of God's Word and the Spirit's illumination, not through external pressures.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'We only change through the study of the Word of God and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.'

Apply Knowledge to Life

Knowledge must lead to godliness, obedience, and fruitfulness; otherwise it leads to pride.

Lecture support: Weaver warns: 'If one boasts of knowledge... and he does not live a godly, biblical, obedient life... he is puffed up.'

Grow in Grace and Knowledge Together

Spiritual maturity involves simultaneous growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; they are inseparable.

Lecture support: Weaver interprets 2 Peter 3:18: 'If you're not growing in knowledge, you're not growing in grace.'

Study notes

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

Online Lecture Resources

Scan a code or select the lecture link in the PDF. The original lecture identifiers and destinations are preserved.

Lesson 1: The Theology of Change - 1

Lecture JW00409

Open the formatted lecture online

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Lesson 2: The Theology of Change - 2

Lecture JW00408

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Lesson 3: The Theology of Change - 3

Lecture JW00407

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Lesson 4: The Theology of Change - 4

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Lesson 5: Pastor John Weaver - Theology of Change - Part Five of Five

Lecture JW01510

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Source information

Study material: existing Major Themes, Key Arguments, Scripture References, Discussion Questions, and Applications from the corresponding Weaver Bible College lecture records. Original lecture titles and provenance are retained in those source records.

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