



YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES!

by Vincent M. Newfield

I believe each of us desires to see change in our lives. From the way we *think*, to the way we *speak*, to what we *do*, wanting change for the better is natural if God's Spirit is living in us. Romans 8:29 says that God has destined us from the beginning to be *changed* into the image of His Son, sharing His likeness. So our will to see change is in line with His will—He gives us the desire (see Psalm 37:4).

Where does the power to change come from? It comes from the Holy Spirit living inside you. As a born-again believer, *you've got what it takes* to change. Now don't get me wrong—we cannot change ourselves in our own strength. No matter how high our IQ is or how much will power we have—apart from Jesus, we can do *nothing* (see John 15:5). I tried for many years to *work out my salvation* in my own strength, and the only change I got was becoming more aggravated and frustrated with myself.

In His mercy, the Lord opened my eyes to Philippians 2:13 in the Amplified Bible—the verse that comes right after the one telling us to work out our salvation. It explains HOW to do it: [*Not in your own strength*] **for it is God** Who is all the while effectually **at work in you** [*energizing and creating in you the power and desire*], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. Wow! What an eye-opening, life-changing truth! God is the One who brings about change—not you and me. It is God Himself that changes us and sanctifies us through and through—spirit, soul and body (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). It is God who will *strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will...* (see Hebrews 13:20,21).

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be **changed** from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you and quickly respond to it....

—Romans 12:2 The Message

When do changes take place? The truth is, they are happening *all the time*. The fact that you and I are *in Christ* means we are changing. Change *begins* the moment we repent of our sins and invite Jesus into our heart: *When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!* (2 Corinthians 5:17 TLB). And this change that's God's begun on the inside, over time works its way to the outside—showing up in all aspects of our behavior.

Now most of the changes we experience are barely visible at first. My four daughters are constantly changing—growing bigger, taller and prettier with each passing day. Initially, the changes are hardly noticeable, until they take a new picture. When we look back over the thirteen years of our daughter Victoria's life, we can see how she was changing little by little all along. The same thing is true for us spiritually. Second Corinthians 3:18 says, *And all of us...are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. Eventually, all the little changes in us add up and show up in who we are.*

What part do you play in the process of change? Your part is to do what you *know* to do—do the things God has instructed you to do in His Word and by His Spirit. Choose to spend regular time in His presence, knowing that *...those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for and hope in Him] shall change and renew their strength and power...* (Isaiah 40:31). Choose to *not to be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned*

after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (**changed**) by the [entire] renewal of your mind... (Romans 12:2). Choose to ...walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh... (Galatians 5:16).

So if God is living in you, you've got what it takes to change! God is doing a wonderful work in you. Cooperate with Him—passionately face and embrace the changes He is bringing. *And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you!* (Philippians 1:6)

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