



EQUIPPING U

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION/APRIL 2014

Galatians 5:15-24

[15] But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. [16] But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

WALK BY THE SPIRIT AND YOU WILL NOT GRATIFY THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH

[17] For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.



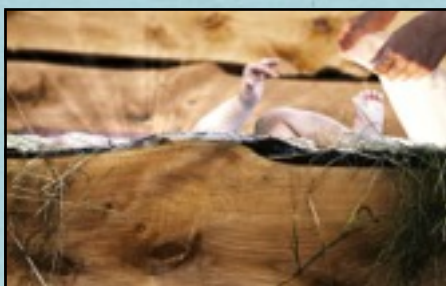
Waiting for Change

by Bryan Craddock

The Bible speaks a lot about people changing. Various passages refer to repenting, growing, and maturing. It even indicates that every Christian should play a role in helping people around us change. In fact, church leaders are particularly responsible to press for change. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul tells Timothy, "Preach the word...reprove, rebuke, and exhort." Each word he uses in that verse talks

about pressing someone to change.

If we only read that part of the verse, then the process of change sounds like verbal hammering. Most of us are good at that. We persuade. We nag. We beg. We wield guilt like a hammer to drive the nails of change into someone's heart whether they like it or not. We try to force people to change by being manipulative.



TEACHING TIP. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. As you teach, incorporate the truth that the Word, who is with God, and who was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1, 14)



TEACHING TIP. The sacrificial death of Christ demonstrates God's love for us. If your students are wrestling with God's love and goodness, point them to the cross. (Romans 5:8 and 1 John 3:16)



TEACHING TIP. Is the resurrection of the dead something that you're teaching your students? Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits of the resurrection that is to come. Teach your students the hope of future resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15)

And we take this approach in all of our relationships: marriage, family, work, and of course, church.

We need to read the second part of 2 Timothy 4:2. There Paul says that these actions should be carried out “with complete patience and teaching.” Strong words do need to be said at times, but we shouldn’t keep hammering away. We have to wait for change. Elsewhere Paul likened helping people change to farming. He said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

God brings about true change in someone’s life through the work of his Holy Spirit.

God brings about true change in someone’s life through the work of his Holy Spirit. He is the one who brings true conviction (John 16:8). He is the one who produces spiritual fruit in someone’s life (Galatians 5:22-23). Are you willing to trust that the Holy Spirit will bring about change in someone in God’s time?

Scripture shows us two ways to wait for change in someone else’s life. First, we wait by being an example. Jesus called us to examine ourselves before we speak to someone else. He said, “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” (Matt 7:5). But that focus on our own obedience must continue beyond the encounter. Peter spoke of this when he said, “Likewise, wives, be subject to

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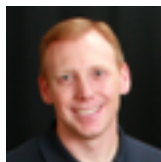
Rev. Everett & Cheryl Thomas

ICEA is a volunteer staffed ministry. Each month Equipping U highlights and honors one of our faithful volunteers.

The spotlight this month shines on Rev. Everett and Cheryl Thomas. Rev. Thomas provides leadership to ICEA as a member of the board of directors and together, Cheryl and Everett, graciously provide hospitality and refreshment to the exhibitors and teaching facility at our Equipping U conferences each October. Thank you for faithfully serving and encouraging others.

your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives” (1 Peter 3:1). Though this is addressed to women, the principle applies to all of us.

Finally, we wait by praying. Paul began most of his New Testament letters with prayers for change in the lives of his recipients. Study those prayers. Follow his example. Don’t try to force people to change. Speak the truth in love and then trust God to work.



Bryan Craddock is the pastor at Calvary Bible Church East in Comstock, Michigan.

FROM THE EDITOR

Have you been wielding a hammer in your efforts to see change in your students? Waiting and resting in the timing and ways of the Holy Spirit can be difficult for us. Our God uses time, significant time, to bring about His work of sanctification in our lives.



As you consider your students, think of Paul’s words in Philippians 1:6, “I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” and drop your hammer.

Rejoicing with U,

Kimberly von Oeyen

SAVE THE DATE

The Equipping U Church Ministries Training Conference is scheduled for October 18. Save the date in your calendar and watch for details and registration information this summer!

PERMISSIONS

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EQUIPPING U

ISSUE no. 4
VOLUME 3

*Equipping U is a publication of the International Christian Education Association
16130 Northland Drive • Southfield, MI 48075
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