

## CREW Bible Study

### Youth XP3 Message Series – It's Personal – Week 5

#### ***The one about reaching your potential.***

- **BOTTOM LINE:** It's personal because God knows your potential.
- **GOAL:** To help students recognize that anyone can radically change – including them.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
  - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! – 2 Corinthians 5:17*
  - *When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So, he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." – Luke 19:5-10*

#### **MESSAGE**

I recently read a quote that said this: "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." So true. And it applies to so many things.

Take food, for instance. I used to hate avocados. I wouldn't eat them. Not sliced, not chopped, not mashed up into guacamole, no way. But then I started hearing about how good avocados are for you. There's a lot of health benefits to them. And it changed the way I looked at avocados. It made me want to give them a second chance. And now, I actually like them. I'm a big fan of avocado toast.

But enough about me and avocados. What about you? This quote - "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change" - how has this been true for you?

Maybe it's food, maybe it's an assignment you have to do for class, maybe it's the drills your coach makes you do, maybe it's dealing with virtual learning?

Or is it a person? Because when it comes to people, we don't always allow ourselves to see or believe that they can change. When it comes to people's bad qualities or traits or mistakes, we're skeptical that change can happen. We tend to

stay stuck seeing only those things we don't like: how messy they are, how rude they can be, how much drama they cause, or how conceited they seem. We rarely believe that they will change.

But it's not just other people that we are skeptical of. We do it to ourselves too. Think about it. Do you have something that you wish you could change about yourself but are really skeptical that you ever will? Maybe it's.....

**Changing a bad habit.** Something you think you should stop doing, but you don't feel like you can. The temptation is too great. Maybe you tried to stop and you did good for a while, but then you fell right back into that habit again. Chewing your nails, changing your diet, or something else?

**Changing your reactions.** There are people who really frustrate you and whenever you're around them, you end up blowing up and losing your temper. Or you just say the wrong things. Or you're super jealous of someone and every time you're with them you just can't help but wish you had what they have. And you don't feel like that will ever change for you.

**Changing a label.** Maybe because of who you are, what you look like, where you live, what you do and the things you're involved in, you feel like people see you in a certain way. You feel like you're in a category. And it feels like there's no way you can change that.

If any of this is true for you, you've probably found yourself saying one or both of these things:

1. It is what it is.
2. That's just who I am.

Well, this leads us right back to a guy we've been talking about for several weeks now: Zacchaeus.

Throughout this message series we've been talking about Zacchaeus, this bad guy with a bad reputation. And despite all of the bad that Zacchaeus had done, Jesus shocks everyone in town. He calls out this bad guy specifically by name and treats him like a friend. In Luke, chapter 19 verses 5-7 we hear the story like this.....

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So, he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."*

The crowd is like, "Why in the world would Jesus go hang out with THAT GUY???"

Now, imagine you're Zacchaeus. You're a tax collector who cheats your own people out of money. You've lied to them and stolen from them. Nobody likes you – and I mean NOBODY. And there's a man that has come to town who is legit famous and a massive crowd has gathered to get a glimpse of him. And this guy chooses YOU.

He doesn't yell at you. He doesn't tell you all of the ways you have to change. He knows you by name. And he's genuinely kind to you, like he sees that there's more to you and your story.

How would you feel? It would be jolting, right? And it was. And this is how Zacchaeus responded.....

*But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

It's awesome that Zacchaeus had this total change of heart and took this step to repay people. But it's because of this: Jesus saw who Zacchaeus COULD be and it helped Zacchaeus see it too. It helped him change the way he looked at things, and the things he looked at changed.

Years after Jesus died, the Apostle Paul shared this with His followers in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17.....

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!*

A new creation is found in Christ. It means that change happens when we get personal with Jesus. We can try to make positive changes in our lives, but why do it on our own when we have access to Jesus? Why not partner with Him to make changes? He sees potential in us. Why not combine His strength with yours to move in that direction?

So, here's a few things to think about.....

1. **Believe that you can change.** Believe that it's possible to stop that habit, to control your anger, to have self-control, to be more positive, to mend that relationship. Whatever it is for you that you thought could never change, change the way you look at it. Then, take one step, the first step, toward making that change.
2. **Believe that others can change.** If you believe that you are capable of change, then the next step is believing that other people are capable of changing too. Jesus saw what Zacchaeus COULD be, and it helped Zacchaeus see it too. Who do you know that needs this kind of encouragement? Who needs someone to see what they COULD be? Do your part to help them.
3. **Believe in what you see.** Sometimes people truly do change, but we remain skeptical. We keep a guard up against them. We keep our eyes fixed on the past. Remember these words from the Apostle Paul: "the old has gone, the new is here." If someone truly has changed, let them live in that.

Know this: making a change is so much more likely to happen when you have support. It was true for Zacchaeus, and it's true for you and every single human around you. Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change. Look at it the way Jesus would.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What's something you've changed your mind about over time? Food? TV shows? Music?
2. What is something you would like to change about yourself if you could, but don't think you can? What is a bad habit or a behavior you've tried to change but haven't been able to? Why can making a change in our lives be a struggle?
3. Zacchaeus changed because Jesus showed that He loved him and believed in him. He saw what Zacchaeus COULD be and it helped Zacchaeus see it too. Who do you know that needs someone to see what they COULD be? How can you encourage this person?
4. Why is it so hard for us to believe the best about those around us? Why do we remain skeptical that people can change?
5. How do you know that you can trust someone if they tell you they have changed?
6. Who is someone in your life who has seen potential in you? How did it make you feel when they encouraged you?
7. Who is someone you can reach out to and encourage this week?