

Extreme Makeover: Athlete Edition

Ready:

*“But the **LORD** said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have rejected him. Man does not see what the **LORD** sees, for man sees what is visible, but the **LORD** sees the heart.’”*

-1 Samuel 16:7

Set

You have to admit that the TV show “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” has a fantastic concept. The show should be called “Extreme Transformation” because they identify a huge need and then, not only fill the need, but also go way beyond it. When they finally tell the driver to move the bus no one ever casually says, “That is exactly what I thought it would be. Thanks for meeting my expectations. Not bad work.” No, their expression tells it all. They are blown away. And, it’s hard for those of us watching not to tear up a little when we see their responses.

I wish this same thing would occur in sports. We could call it “Extreme Makeover: Athlete (or Coach) Edition.” We could bring in a team of experts to fix their problems. At the end, we’d just say “Move that bus!” and a newly transformed athlete or coach would be standing there. Unfortunately, when real transformation takes place in a person’s life, it is less physically visible than when it happens to a house. If the bus moved, you’d still see the same athlete or coach standing there. If the transformation is done right, the change first happens on the inside, not the outside. It happens in the heart.

I always wonder what happens to families in “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” after a few years go by. Did any real change take place? Did it actually help in the long run? Fixing the outside doesn’t change the circumstances that created the problem. Providing an awesome house is a blessing, but if there are deeper issues, the house won’t be the cure. Attitudes of the heart will still need to be changed.

In Romans 12, Paul challenges us that we can either be a conformer or a transformer. Conforming involves changing only behavior. Transforming involves a change of heart and mind.

The truth is that REAL change only happens from the inside. You can change the outside all you want, but until you do the inside work, change won’t happen. But that is hard work. Most people would rather just deal with the surface issues because they are easier to handle. For example, if you need to clean up the words you speak, you need to tap into God’s power (Eph. 6:10) and ask Him to cut out the filth in your heart because that is ultimately where language comes from. People say, “Hey, clean up your mouth!” But, instead, they should be

saying, "Hey, clean out your heart!"

There is always that desire for our external life (the life that everyone sees: our wins and accomplishments) to be greater than our internal life (the life that no one sees: our thoughts and desires). We don't want others to see us as we really are. Afraid that our gaps will be exposed, we work overtime to change our appearance so that nobody discovers the real us. We are embarrassed and ashamed of that person. This approach causes us to live desperate and hypocritical lives.

God, however, desires the exact opposite. He wants us to bring the dark (the things that we have buried in our hearts) into the light so that He can purify us. That is transformation. We have to dig out the junk in our hearts and lay it before the Lord. That is when He will change us, forgive us, heal us and transform us. As the Lord said to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7, we do not see what He sees because we see only the outside. He, however, sees the inside. And that's the place He wants to get to in your life.

We must live from the inside and pursue the life God desires. It may go against everything we have been taught and told, but just looking good is not our goal. Transformation is our goal. Becoming more like Jesus Christ is our goal. That tension in our life is the gap between the outside and the inside; public vs. private; external vs. internal; physical vs. spiritual; what they see and what we know. Living with gaps will not bring life-change, it will bring inner torment.

If transformation is about life-change, then we need to let the power of Christ close those gaps. Stop playing around, and get going with your extreme makeover. Christ desires to do some heavy duty work on the gaps in your life. Are you willing to let Him and begin that transformation? What are you waiting for? Let's do life His way and live from the inside out!

Go

1. If people knew the true you, how would they respond?
2. Why is it so hard to live inside-out and so easy to live outside-in?
3. Do you agree with the statement: "The only real change is the inside change"? Why or why not?
4. What are some gaps in your life that God needs to close (some areas He needs to transform)?
6. What steps will you make today to let God deal with those gaps?

Workout

Romans 12:1-21

Overtime

"Father, I desire a gap-free life. I want an extreme makeover on the inside not the outside. You already know my gaps. You already know where you need to touch me. Cleanse me. Heal me. Forgive me. Do Your work and make me more like Jesus Christ. In His name I pray. Amen."

Bible Reference:

Ephesians 6



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