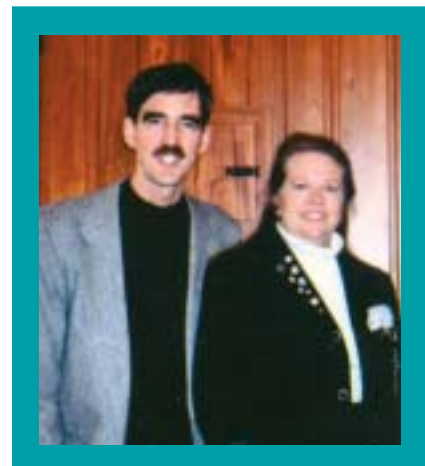


Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:1-2).



L'Joy and her beloved husband, George, live in Colorado where she works as a patent attorney.

Today we read a lot about spiritual growth and becoming mature in our Christian walk. For years we've missed a very important point—that Christians will not and cannot grow effectively in isolation. We need a spiritual community.

I once heard a Christian leader say that all each one of us needs to become more Christ-like is our Bible and the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, this is not a correct biblical statement. Paul clearly taught that we grow in Christ when we function as "members of one another" (Romans 12:4-5). We all become more like Jesus when "each part does its work" and we all speak "the truth in love" to one another (Ephesians 4:15-16).



Don't misunderstand! We do need God's truth to grow—the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2) and we certainly need the Holy Spirit's illumination (Ephesians 3:16). But again, God has designed the church—the body

of Christ—so that the Holy Spirit does His most impactful work in the context of Christian community!

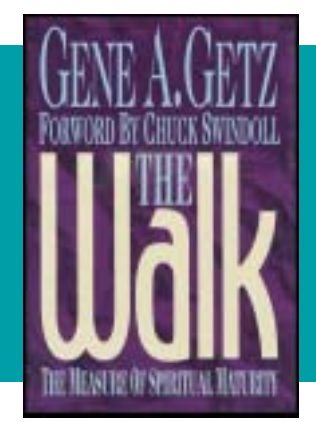
L'Joy (in her excellent *Extreme Spiritual Makeover* article) is right. Real and progressive transformation takes place when we minister to one another.

Dr. Gene A. Getz
Host & Teacher, Renewal Radio
President, Center for Church Renewal



EXTREME SPIRITUAL MAKEOVER

by L'Joy Griebenow



The Walk by Dr. Gene A. Getz

"I am grateful he [Gene Getz] has the guts to stand against the tide as he turns our heads, points to the statements and the principles of scriptural truth, and exhorts us to re-examine The Walk that God intended for His people."—Chuck Swindoll

Check out our other resources on our website at

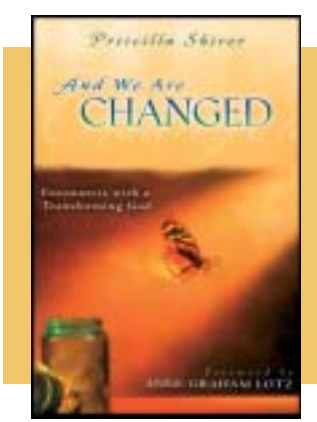
www.renewalradio.org where you can also listen to Renewal anytime during the day or night and sign up to receive our *Renewal Newsletter* and the *Encourager* online. You can also join Gene anytime through video streaming as he walks through the Bible in his "Principles to Live By" study.

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And We Are Changed (Encounters with a Transforming God) by Priscilla Shirer

Using the compelling biblical accounts of the children of Israel, Ruth, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the author (Priscilla Shirer) shows you what happens when you meet God, the obstacles that keep you from changing, and the ways to experience a miraculous transformation in your life.

Every week millions of viewers watch heart-warming "reality" TV stories of well-meaning people performing good deeds for specially selected, less fortunate people. Sadly, while enjoying these entertaining stories, viewers are unwittingly being conditioned to accept three reality-damaging propositions: 1) that an extreme or radical makeover is permanent, 2) that it is complete and 3) that it is quick. These propositions are "reality-damaging" because we are lured into believing what we know in reality is not true. We cannot forget that God's Word is the true definition of reality. Let us consider:

World View Versus Reality: Are Extreme Makeovers Permanent?

Television shows, media publications of all

kinds, and many so-called "experts" on self-improvement tout "extreme makeovers" in houses, careers, habits, appearances—you name it. However, it is not surprising that these man-made solutions do not last: houses deteriorate, careers disappear or change until they seem disappointing, once-broken habits resurface, physical appearances need ever-increasing upkeep.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a "makeover" is "an overall treatment to improve the appearance or change the image." In other words, such a change is only superficial. Although the world expects a makeover to be radical and exciting – extreme – it is still only cosmetic. However, the Bible presents a "makeover"

(continued on page 2)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Jesus Christ is God, who became a man through virgin birth, and paid the complete penalty for man's sin when He died on the cross of Calvary. Any person who repents and trusts in the risen Christ as their only hope of salvation, ceasing to trust in anything else, receives the gift of eternal life which, once granted, can never be revoked.



The Encourager is a free quarterly newsletter designed to spread the Gospel, to encourage spiritual growth and renewal, and to report current issues as they relate to the body of Christ.

Our Barnabas Team consists of people committed to pray for and financially support Renewal on a regular basis. Please consider how you can partner with us.

as a complete core transformation that occurs when a person accepts the saving grace of salvation freely given by the Lord Jesus Christ. As the apostle Paul stated,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

World View Versus Reality: Are Extreme Makeovers Complete?

Once the extreme makeover of the television show, media publication or “expert” is finished, and the cameras are put away, the well-meaning people leave. The makeover – no matter how extreme – is external...it does not last. Those who subscribe to the world view are rapidly changing channels to find out what is the latest, newest cause—what can distract them from their weary, seemingly pointless lives.

Is the extreme makeover complete? Not at all!! Where do those who benefit from the makeover go for further assistance and advice on upkeep? How do they handle the host of new issues that result from the makeover? For example, it is one thing to have an expert tell you what to wear, how to cut your hair, how to remodel your house, how to act in certain interpersonal scenarios, etc.; but what happens when things don’t work the way the “expert” said they would?



What then? What about the situations the expert never mentioned or those for which you cannot figure how to apply the expert’s principles?

However, when we experience God’s “make-over,” it’s just the beginning in our “reality experience.” Our heavenly Father will not leave us nor forsake us. He is eternal, faithful and never-changing. We are free to go to Him at any time, 24-hours a day, to talk with Him, to seek His wise counsel, to worship Him and to rest in His shelter when circumstances threaten to overwhelm us. He promised to always be there—and He is.

Better still, God is not only committed to continue the transformation process in us as we continue to seek Him and do His will, but He has promised to **complete** the work in us which He started at our salvation (Philippians 1:6). Nothing is to be left half-finished or incomplete in His kingdom...especially us!

World View Versus Reality: Do Extreme Makeovers Occur Quickly?

In 30-60 minutes, the concerns of the specially selected beneficiary of the extreme makeover appear to be resolved, which is a distortion of reality. It takes time to accomplish these changes, even on a superficial and external basis. The viewing audience is only shown vignettes as the building/makeover progresses. This is another distortion of reality.

On the other hand, as believers, our loving Father’s reality view focuses on His call to us to be like Him. Our transformation will take our entire life span to accomplish.

Think for a moment about the apostle Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. Although he was—by the world’s standards—a good man, the Lord knew he needed more than a simple makeover. Paul was a sinner and needed the same heart/soul transformation that we all need. Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus was certainly spectacular. However, it was only a jolting jumpstart to his new life. Years later, when he penned the letter to the Philippians, he wrote—

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brother, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14).

Reality Speaking

Does this mean as Christians we should stop thinking about how to change? Never! We are called to be like Him. This means daily surrendering our wills to God’s will. We are to stop trying to improve ourselves in our own power, and seek to change that which we are directed by God to change. He will provide the power and wisdom to accomplish each step in our transformation. We are to reflect on the outside the radical and ongoing transformation occurring on the inside.

Moreover, as followers of Christ, we must also come alongside other believers to encourage them as they undergo aspects of their transformation. God did not leave us

alone to endure the finishing process by ourselves, and He gave us each other for encouragement. And when we encourage others, the Lord accomplishes more of our own core transformation.

Do you know someone that needs a word of encouragement? Give them a call or write them a note today

to let them know you are also on the same road toward something much more radical and precious than any “extreme makeover” that is promoted by the world. **You are daily being transformed into all that God intended you to be!** The key for this kind of extreme make-over is summarized in Paul’s words in his Roman letter:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

(continued on page 4)



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