

The Five R's – Part 5: Replace

Replacing Wrong Character with Godly Character

Key Scripture: Matthew 20:27-28

"Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant... just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."

This teaching is based on the fifth part of the Five R's series and focuses on the fourth stage: **Replace**.

Introduction: Working Properly

The purpose of this series is to help us become believers who are functioning properly and are vessels God can use. Just as a car may have many problems that make it ineffective, believers can develop spiritual issues that hinder their usefulness. The goal is not merely to identify problems but to repair them.

The question remains:

"How do we fix what is not working properly in our lives?"

God's answer is found in the Five R's.

Review of the First Three R's

1. Reveal

Before a problem can be fixed, it must first be exposed.

The Holy Spirit lovingly reveals areas that need attention.

Why Reveal?

- To identify areas where work needs to be done.
- To prevent unnecessary problems and struggles.
- To bring hidden issues into the light.

Prayer

Psalm 139:23-24

"Search me, O God, and know my heart... see if there be any wicked way in me."

A mature believer welcomes God's examination rather than avoiding it.

2. Repent

Once the problem is revealed, repentance must follow.

Repentance is more than feeling sorry.

It involves:

- Confession
- Turning away from sin
- Demonstrating a changed life

Scriptures

Proverbs 28:13

He who confesses and forsakes his sins shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 3:8

Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance.

Repentance is proven by changed behavior.

3. Remove

After repentance comes removal.

Wrong attitudes, habits, and character flaws must be driven out.

Scriptures

- Luke 6:42 – Remove the plank from your own eye.
- Ephesians 4:31 – Put away bitterness, anger, and malice.
- Colossians 3:8-9 – Put off the old man.
- Romans 13:12 – Cast off the works of darkness.

God does not reveal things merely for us to acknowledge them.

He reveals them so they can be removed.

Three Things That Stop Spiritual Growth

Before moving forward, we must recognize three attitudes that can shut down all five stages.

Negative Responses

1. Disobedience

"I don't want God telling me what is wrong."

2. Rejection

"I reject what God is showing me."

3. Unwillingness

"I am unwilling to change."

Acts 7:39 shows that Israel rejected God's leadership and turned back toward Egypt in their hearts.

Positive Responses

1. Obedience

2. Acceptance

3. Willingness

Isaiah 1:19 says:

"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land."

Spiritual growth begins when we become willing for God to reveal, correct, and change us.

A Personal Example

The teacher shared how God revealed a root problem of **self-centeredness**.

One day, after agreeing to pick up his wife outside a grocery store, he parked in a location where she could not see him. He became preoccupied and forgot about her while she waited outside wondering where he was. Eventually she had to call him.

This seemingly small event exposed a deeper issue.

The Root Problem

Self-centeredness.

The Surface Problem

Forgetting and neglecting someone who was depending on him.

This illustrates an important principle:

Surface problems often reveal deeper root problems.

Why Removal Matters

Numbers 33:55 teaches that if Israel failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land, those inhabitants would become:

- Pricks in their eyes
- Thorns in their sides
- Sources of continual trouble

The lesson is clear:

If we do not remove root problems,

We will continually battle surface problems.

Many believers spend years fighting symptoms while ignoring the root.

God wants to remove the root.

Stage Four: Replace

After something wrong is removed, something right must replace it.

Nature abhors a vacuum.

If we remove a wrong attitude without replacing it with a godly attitude, the old behavior can return.

The teacher removed self-centeredness, but then asked:

"What should replace it?"

The answer:

Availability

Availability vs. Self-Centeredness

Definition of Availability

"Making my own schedule and priorities secondary to the wishes of those I am serving." (IBLP)

Self-centeredness says:

- My time
- My plans
- My schedule
- My priorities

Availability says:

- How can I serve?
- How can I help?
- What do others need?
- How can I be useful?

Jesus: The Perfect Example of Replacement

Jesus did not merely avoid selfishness.

He replaced self-interest with servanthood.

Matthew 20:27-28 teaches:

"Whoever wants to be great must become a servant."

The world's path to greatness is power.

God's path to greatness is service.

The Kingdom of God measures greatness differently.

Serving in Marriage

A practical application was given specifically to husbands.

Question:

Who should a husband be serving?

The answer:

His wife.

A husband who desires greatness in marriage must become a servant.

This means:

- Being available
- Being attentive
- Being considerate
- Being present
- Being helpful

Great marriages are built by servants, not by selfish people.

Serving Others Through Prayer

Jesus gave His life in exchange for those who were captive.

Believers are called to follow His example.

One way we serve others is through prayer.

Matthew 21:13 declares:

"My house shall be called a house of prayer."

Prayer is one way we make ourselves available to God and to those who need His help.

The Principle of Replacement

Notice God's pattern:

Remove	Replace With
Self-centeredness	Availability
Pride	Humility
Anger	Patience
Fear	Faith
Laziness	Diligence
Bitterness	Forgiveness
Selfishness	Service

Victory is not simply removing darkness.

Victory is replacing darkness with light.

Practical Questions

Ask yourself:

1. What has God revealed in my life?
 2. Have I truly repented?
 3. Have I removed the root problem?
 4. What godly character quality should replace it?
 5. Am I willing and obedient enough to let God complete the process?
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Conclusion

The fourth stage of the Five R's is **Replace**.

God does not simply remove negative traits; He replaces them with Christlike character.

The lesson of this teaching is simple:

If self-centeredness is removed, replace it with availability.

Just as Jesus was sent into the world to serve, we are sent to serve others.

When we become available to God and to people, we become vessels that work properly and bring lasting results for the Kingdom of God.

Key Statement

"Whatever God removes from your life, replace it with a Christlike quality that reflects the character of Jesus."

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