

12-3-1967

# God Can Change You, Too!

John Allen Chalk

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot\\_audio](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_audio)

---

## Recommended Citation

Chalk, John Allen, "God Can Change You, Too!" (1967). *Herald of Truth Audio*. 162.  
[https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot\\_audio/162](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_audio/162)

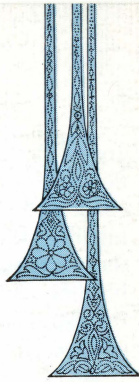
This Audio is brought to you for free and open access by the Herald of Truth Records at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Herald of Truth Audio by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

# God Can Change You Too!



Number 827  
TRANSCRIPT OF THE

**Herald of Truth**  
..... radio programs



HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST  
*radio program*

P. O. Box 2439      Abilene, Texas 79604

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION



# God Can Change You Too!

**I** don't see any way that God can use me," a burly factory worker told me not long ago. "My life's been too mixed-up for God to be able to work anything out for me," an anxious young woman recently said to me. "I lose my temper with my family and employees, I am selfish and hard with my business associates and friends," the owner of an insurance agency confessed.

It's true, isn't it, that in a time when individual unrestraint and "the philosophy of excuse" are rampant, that it doesn't take one long to escape the realities of his life, publicly and privately! Many of us say, "I'm too bad to be changed, by anything or anybody." But then there are also those of us who ask heatedly, "Who are you to be talking to me about changing anything in my life?"

I think most of us can admit, as Helen Keller is reported to have said in her first public speech, "The world is full of troubles." But how many of us are ready to immediately change the emphasis of that statement, as Miss Keller did in the very next sentence of her speech, "The world is full of the overcoming of troubles."

There's a wealthy, ambitious, intolerant, easily-provoked, vindictive man in the New Testament whose life was changed by God. From selfishness to selflessness, from

arrogance to humility, from self-centered ambition to devotion to God, from hate to love, from vengeance to profound concern for others—all these and many other changes in his life. He's called a "Son of thunder" by Jesus in one of their first meetings. But over a period of almost three years his "thunder" turned to a compassion that has made John the Apostle known through the centuries as "the Apostle of love."

Now we shouldn't overlook a very significant point that often discourages those who try to live Christian lives—John's change didn't occur overnight. Even after accepting Christ's call he urges Jesus, on one occasion, to reprimand an individual who was working for Christ without having been formally appointed to do so. Jesus calmly replied to His intolerant disciple, "Forbid him (the unauthorized teacher) not: for he that is not against you is for you" (Luke 9:49, 50). When a certain village in Samaria would not permit Jesus and His group to pass through their town on the way to Jerusalem, John suggested, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (Luke 9:54). Our Lord turned and rebuked him, Luke tells us in his *Gospel* (Luke 9:55). John, and his brother James, are also the two disciples who ask for positions of prominence in what they erroneously thought would be Christ's earthly, materialistic Kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28). Courageous and zealous, this "son of thunder" did not control his great strength because his heart and life were still too full of himself, of his plans, of his own aims, ambitions, and selfish goals.

This is why we say that the greatest event in John's life (and for that matter in our lives) was meeting Jesus. The greatest decision of his life was the one to follow Jesus as the Christ. The greatest influence in John's life was his relationship with the Lord Jesus!

First, there was his call to follow Christ. Matthew's account is the most picturesque. After challenging Peter and Andrew: "Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19), Jesus approached James and John who were "in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them" (Matthew 4:21). They responded as quickly and as decisively as Peter and Andrew had done, leaving the boat and their father, to go with Jesus (Matthew 4:22).

Every indication suggests that John was comfortable, if not wealthy, materially. Mark tells us that Zebedee worked "hired servants" in his fishing business (Mark 1:20). John was an industrious person. Jesus found him, even when not out to sea, mending his nets (Matthew 4:21, 22).



The very fact that John's mother could visit her sons during their travels with Jesus, as we learn in *Matthew*, chapter twenty, says something about the family's financial position (*Matthew* 20:20-28).

John answered Christ's call and thus began a life-changing personal relationship between himself and Christ. John became a member of Jesus' "inner circle" composed of Peter, James and John. This is the group that watched Him heal Peter's mother-in-law (*Mark* 1:29-31). These three witnessed the transfiguration and Christ's conversation with Moses and Elijah (*Matthew* 17:1-5; *Luke* 9:28-36). They were permitted to accompany Him to Jairus' house for the healing of the ruler's daughter (*Mark* 5:21-24, 35-43; *Luke* 8:40-42, 49-56). The Lord explained His predictions and descriptions regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world to Peter, James, and John (*Mark* 13:3). This same group went with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane and heard Him describe His "soul burden" on the night before His death (*Matthew* 26:36-46; *Mark* 14:32-42).

A characteristic phrase occurs repeatedly in the Gospel of John that further aids us in understanding the relationship John had with Christ. At the last supper, for instance, we read, "There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (*John* 13:23). Simon Peter asked this disciple "whom Jesus loved" to find out who would betray Christ as He had just suggested to them (*John* 13:21, 24). This disciple was so close to the Lord that Peter requested his help in getting an answer from Jesus. There is every reason to believe that John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

John's relationship with Christ is especially highlighted when one stops to ask who of the apostles was present for the crucifixion? We learn that John was there as we hear Jesus commit His mother into John's care (*John* 19:26, 27).

The disciple Jesus loved was the first man among Christ's followers to arrive at Christ's empty tomb (*John* 20:2-8). Although Peter entered the tomb first, John also entered the tomb, and his *Gospel* says, "he saw, and believed" (*John* 20:8). This is the first suggestion that any of the disciples or apostles had accepted definitely the fact of the resurrection!

John's relationship with Christ accounts for the emphasis on love in all his Biblical writings. Love is the evidence of one's discipleship, John wrote (*John* 13:34, 35). Love motivates our obedience, he also explained (*John* 14:15). When we have difficulty understanding love all we

have to do is look at Jesus, John said (*John* 15:13). Christ tells us in John's *Gospel* that love in our lives is not optional (*John* 15:12). God's love is not an ethereal concept whose meaning is reserved for the dream-world of the theologian. God expressed concretely His love in a world of hatred and injustice by the life and death of Jesus Christ (*I John* 4:8-11). Christians, therefore, must love authentically, John urged (*I John* 3:16-18).

How fortunate we are to have a man like John, a man whose attitudes we have already discussed, a "son of thunder," teach the meaning of God's love to us. John writes about love with beauty, clarity, and conviction that can only have come from a personal relationship with *the personification of God's love*—Jesus Christ!

The most important aspect of John's knowledge of Christ, however, appears in the influence He had in changing John's attitudes, which, in turn, affected his entire life. Do you remember John as the bloodthirsty disciple who wanted to call fire from heaven on a Samaritan village (*Luke* 9:54-56)? After the church's beginning, he is one of two apostles sent from Jerusalem to encourage and confer the Holy Spirit's charismatic gifts to new Christians in Samaria (*Acts* 8:14-24). This is the man who "returned to Jerusalem (after that visit to Samaria) and preached the gospel (on the return trip) to many villages of the Samaritans" (*Acts* 8:25). Something had happened to the quick-tempered John of *Luke* 9:54, 55!

Do you remember the man who petitioned Jesus along with his brother for places of prominence at Jesus' right and left hands? He's the same John who becomes Peter's *silent* partner in many early evangelistic efforts in Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection (*Acts* 3:1, 4, 11; 4:13, 18-20). This impulsive, ambitious follower of Christ in the early days had matured to a secondary role of helpfulness and mutuality. Something happened to the intolerant, assertive John of *Matthew* 20:20-28!

Jesus Christ is what happened to John. The Lord's call to John was, "Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men" (*Matthew* 4:19, 21). And that is exactly what Jesus did with John, *made* him not a fighter, but a fisher of men. As Paul knew a completely different and totally unselfish life in Christ (*Galatians* 2:20; *Philippians* 1:21), John received the eternal life, the new life—a completely different and totally new life—now and forever, from Christ (*John* 10:10; *I John* 5:11, 12). John explained the change he was experiencing in these words, "And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (*I John* 3:3). Being in Christ (*I John* 5:20) gave John an entirely new perspective on life. The

transformed John moved from "the son of thunder" to "the apostle of love" because of what Jesus Christ did in his life!

"But how can this same transformation occur in my life?" we all ask as we look at John. "Can God clear away the cobwebs in my life?" "How can I be a better man or woman, or even just a more decent human being?"

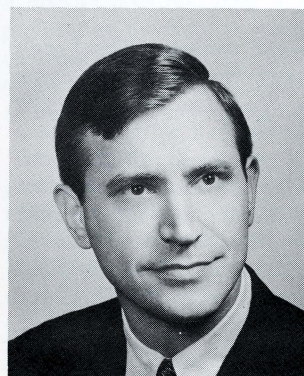
My friend, I believe it with all my heart, Christ can do for you and me what he did for John! This is why He came, according to His own words, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (*John* 10:10). "If you come to me," He promises, "I will give you rest" (*Matthew* 11:28-30).

And it isn't just that He *can* help us, He *wants* to help us! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (*Revelation* 3:20).

Open the door of your heart by trusting His claims as your Savior (*John* 3:16). Permit Christ to rearrange your values and priorities by repenting of all your own self-centered pursuits and pleasures (*Luke* 13:3). Let the world know, humbly but definitely, that Christ is the new director of your life (*Matthew* 10:32, 33; *Romans* 10:9). Receive that personal union and relationship that results from your baptism into Christ, the baptism in which God gives forgiveness of all sins (*Acts* 2:38; 22:16). Make your life, every thought and every act in every situation—important and unimportant—a reflection of Christ—the life He lived and the values He taught.







John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program.

He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, "The Praying Christ and Other Sermons" and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville's Young Man of the Year in 1963.