

Section G

An Easier Kind of Change: Complement to the Four Steps

If you've been referred to this section of the *Sourcebook* from Step 4.5 of the process, then you've now gone through a full experience of this process of life change and spiritual transformation. It's a process for making conscious and intentional life choices that is thorough, complete, and deeply effective. It's also a process that offers all the basic ingredients you need for making and sustaining *any* life change that you want or need to make.

You also know (from a footnote on the Step 4.4 worksheet) that this particular process of life change recommends that you focus on one or two sins in your life at a time in blocks of six months to a year. If you take these recommendations to heart, it means that for the rest of your life you will have one or maybe two habits that you're working on at a time using this process.

In addition, you now know (from Step 4.5 of the process) that any time a sin recurs, your response to that sin is "I do not want this (or alternatively, "I do not *will* this") because it is a sin against God."

But in addition to the one or two sins that you're working on at a given moment in time, you may experience any number of *additional* evils that come knocking at the door of your heart and mind in a day's time, and which try to find their way into your life. The question is, what can you do to address these *additional* evils when they crop up? Obviously, you can't utilize the *full* process for every single evil that presents itself to you in a day's time.

Fortunately, there's a quick, easy way to address any of these "additional" evils that come your way. It's the same approach that's described in Section C of this *Sourcebook*. It's a kind of change that is *easier* than the full, four-step process, and which helps you see and acknowledge destructive thoughts and intentions early on—just as they're entering your mind—and prevent them from making further inroads. This easy kind of change is described in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg as follows:

When we are considering doing something evil and are forming an intention to do it, we say to ourselves, "I am thinking about this and I am intending to do it, but because it's a sin, I'm not going to do it."^{1 2}

What Swedenborg is describing here is a quick, easy way to make choices any time a destructive thought pops into your mind and a harmful intention starts to form.

As mentioned in Section C of the *Sourcebook*, this easy kind of change is especially useful for people who are having a hard time either getting started on the full process or seeing it through. But it can have value for *you* as well—a person who is already working the

¹ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity*, paragraph no. 535

² In this process of life change, the word *sin* (as far as recognizing it is concerned) refers to anything hurtful or destructive (evil) that you discover is against God's universal standards of behavior (summarized in the biblical Ten Commandments), against God's Word, and thus against God. (For more on this concept of sin, see the Step 2.1 and 2.2 worksheets of this four-step process.)

full process. For *you* this easier kind of change can be an easy, effective tool for dealing with any evil that crops up in your mind *additional* to the one or two you're focused on using the full process. Any time you are considering doing something evil and forming an intention to do it, you can take a stand against it by saying to yourself, "I am thinking about this and I'm intending to do it, but because it's a sin, I'm not going to do it."

One of the interesting things about this easier kind of change is the immediate, powerful effect it can have on your mental/emotional/spiritual state. Swedenborg writes:

Doing this counteracts the enticement that hell is injecting into us and keeps it from making further inroads.³

People who use this easier kind of change against "additional" forms of evil that crop up are often surprised at the sudden, dramatic effect it has on their state of mind. Often it has the very effect that Swedenborg describes: The enticement to do or say something hurtful or destructive suddenly stops. In fact, the shift in a your state of mind can be so immediate and complete that moments later you don't even remember what the enticement was about.

Having this easy approach to change means that any "additional" evils that present themselves to you in a day's time won't go unnoticed or un-addressed. At the same time, you won't lose your focus on the one or two "front burner" issues you're working on using the full process.

There are four points to make from all of this:

- First, each kind of change—the full process and the easier kind—is *different* from the other. Each one functions in a different way and is used for a different purpose.
- Second, these two kinds of change are *complementary* in nature. They work side by side to provide a clear, simple, global defense against evil and sin.
- Third, the easier kind of change helps you avoid *doing* and *saying* things that are harmful and destructive, but it doesn't heal you of sin on the *deeper* levels of patterned thinking and intending. Only the *full* process of change does that.
- And fourth, although the easier kind of change helps you avoid *doing* and *saying* things that are damaging and destructive, it isn't designed to move you further—into a new, different, kind, thoughtful, fully charitable life. A fully new and better way of life (which includes wanting what's best for others and treating them well) is what the *full* process is all about.

In summary, you've now experienced a *full* process of life change and spiritual transformation that can be used on one or maybe two sins in your life at a time. It can help you heal from harmful and destructive habits in your life—from outside in, and inside out. You've also learned about an *easier* kind of change that allows you to see and deal with any additional forms of evil that crop up in a day's time. These two kinds of change—the full process and the easier kind—are complementary in nature. They work together—side by side—to form a simple, complete, global defense against evil and sin. Together they help you move forward in your life in rich and deeply satisfying ways, as you cooperate with the Lord God toward positive, meaningful, and joyful goals that He has in mind for you.

³ Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity*, paragraph no. 535