

Inside Out

Title: *Inside Out: Real Change is Possible- If You're Willing to Start From the Inside Out*

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Book Description:

Real change may not be what you think it is. It is more than simply going to church, reading the Bible, teaching Sunday school, or being nice.

It has everything to do with facing the realities of your own internal life and letting God mold you into a person who is free to be honest, courageous, and loving.

"Only Christians have the capacity to never pretend about anything," says Larry Crabb.

You don't have to pretend you've got it all together...when you don't. You don't have to pretend your best relationship deeply satisfies...when it doesn't. You don't have to pretend your struggle with sin is a thing of the past...when it isn't.

Do you want a vital union with God, richer relationships with others, a deeper sense of personal wholeness? Then let Larry Crabb help you look inside yourself as you give God the opportunity to set you free from all that keeps you from living—by really loving—in an often disappointing world.

Book Quotes:

God wants us to become courageous people who are deeply bothered by the horrors of living as part of a fallen race, people who look honestly at every struggle, who feel overwhelmed by what we see, yet emerge prepared to live: scarred, still troubled, but deeply loving. (23)

Consider with me what is available in this life: a change of character that enables us to taste enough of God now to whet our appetite for the banquet later. (24)

Most of us make it through life by coping, not changing. (36)

The priorities of obedience and dependence are essential to real change. (39)

Call this first group *shallow copers*, people who cope with life by dealing with whatever they can handle and ignoring all the rest. (40)

Call these people *troubled reflectors*, folks who wrestle honestly with at least some of the disturbing parts of their lives for which they have no real answers. (40)

But God is most fully known in the midst of confusing reality. To avoid asking the tough questions and facing the hard issues is to miss a transforming encounter with God. (41)

Some people push me to do better by trying harder. Others draw me to be better by enticing me with an

indefinable quality about their lives that seems to grow out of an unusual relationship with Christ, one that really means something, one that goes beyond correct doctrine and appropriate dedication to personally felt reality. (45-46)

First, *people are thirsty*. Second, *people are moving in wrong directions in response to their thirst*. (58)

An inside look, then, can be expected to uncover two elements imbedded deeply in our heart: (1) thirst or *deep longings* for what we do not have; and (2) stubborn independence reflected in *wrong strategies* for finding the life we desire. (58-59)

As image-bearers designed to enjoy God and everything He has made, we are thirsty people who long for what was lost in the Fall. As fallen people who have declared our intention to find life apart from God, we devise foolish, ineffective, and immoral strategies to provide for our own satisfaction. (69)

We were designed to live in a perfect world uncorrupted by the weeds of disharmony and distance. Until we take up residence in that world, however, we will hurt. It is, therefore, not only okay to desire, but also okay to hurt. (71)

We long for both respect and involvement, impact and relationship. We are thirsty for what our soul thrives on. In the desert of a fallen world, our soul is parched. We receive neither respect nor involvement to the degree we deeply crave. (75)

Behind our irresponsible and sinful response to life is a commitment to eliminate the pain of this world. (79)

1. Think of the basic and most profound longings of the human heart, those desires that must be met if life is to be worth living, and call them *crucial longings*. Nothing can satisfy our crucial longings except the kind of relationship that only God offers.
2. I think of *critical longings* as the legitimate and important desires for quality relationships that add immeasurably to the enjoyment of living.
3. A third category of desires, *casual longings*, includes every other desire we experience, ranging from the trivial ("I hope this restaurant has my favorite salad dressing") to the significant ("I want to hear a good report from my doctor"). (87-88)

We simply must get rid of the idea that the obedient Christian is supposed to feel good all the time. (94)

To be changed from the inside out means to learn how to drink from the living water of God's unchanging love so our purpose, identity, and joy give us the courage to respond well whether our life is smooth or rocky. (94)

And pain disrupts life. It can rob us of sleep; it sometimes triggers harsh responses to people we love; it tends to drive us toward immediate relief and away from responsibility. (99)

The choice before us is rather stark: either live to be comfortable (both internally and externally, but especially internally) or live to know God. We can't have it both ways. One choice excludes the other. (99)

Sinful habits become compulsively attractive when the pleasures they give relieves deep disappointment in the soul better than anything else one can imagine. (105)

Pleasures of the body (such as sex or eating) and of the mind (such as power and applause) can be marvelous counterfeits of real life, when God has not been tasted. (105)

The mark of the Christian is a quality of love that directs more energy toward others' concerns than toward one's own well-being. (107)

The church has lost its power because it loves so poorly. (107)

The more honestly we face whatever hurt may be locked inside, the more passionately we can be drawn to the beauty of a Lover who responds consistently with all the tender strength our heart desires. (111)

But confusion isn't bad, it's good, because in the middle of confusion we become aware of a passionate desire to know that Someone strong and kind is working behind all we see, moving things carefully toward a just and joyful conclusion. (116)

When we learn to accept people who disappoint us by no longer requiring them to satisfy us, then we're free to love them, to reach toward them for their sake without having to protect ourselves from feeling disappointed by their response to us. (117)

The mature Christian is one who is growing in his ability to love people as they are, not as he wishes them to be. (118)

The hope of Christ's return has an effect on the lives of confidently waiting Christians. It purifies us (1 John 3:3). When we know that every longing of our heart will one day be eternally and completely satisfied, we learn to live without demanding anything now. Hope is the antidote for disappointment and the demandingness it creates. (118)

If we are to change from the inside out, then we must look carefully at our style of relating. The mark of maturity is love, and the essence of love is relating without self-protection. Two more points need to be made in this chapter.

1. First, people can become moral, thoughtful, disciplined, and dedicated without deeply depending on God. But living without self-protection requires profound trust in Christ.
2. Second, when we look beneath the *details* of how we relate to the *purpose* of our relational *style*, we find something stubborn and ugly. (141)

It is possible to correct what's wrong in how we relate without ever repenting of a commitment to self-protection. The commitment itself must be exposed, looked at, and pondered. Expect a battle. We resist giving up our self-protective commitment with the desperate strength of a man fighting for his life. To move toward life without self-protection feels like suicide. (142)

God is unalterably opposed to a demanding attitude on the part of His creatures no matter how severe their suffering. His ears are opened wide to hear cries of lament and pleas for help, but He will not come to a negotiating table to consider terms from angry people. God opposes the proud who demand but He gives grace to the humble who express their hurt. (149)

Our Lord instructed us to love others as we love ourself, to be as concerned with someone else's well being as we already are with our own. The command is staggering. The more I understand what love requires, the more I realize how poorly I love, and the more awed I become by Christ's love. (158)

And that final point emphasizes a central principle of living in God's world: the necessary foundation for any relationship with God is a recognition that God is God and we are not. (163)

Desire much, pray for much, but demand nothing. To trust God means to demand nothing. (163)

We need help to see our self clearly. When we're serious about taking an inside look, God provides three sources of light:

1. The Spirit of God
2. The Word of God
3. The People of God. (170-171)

Personal integrity, a commitment to never pretend about anything, is prerequisite for change from the inside out. (192)

As we take a more specific look at how to change, keep in mind my introductory points. First, awareness of all that's within is more important to changing than a set of instructions about what to believe and do. Second, the actual process of change can never be fully explained; the work of God's Spirit cannot be packaged into our neat categories. We must expect neither precision in our understanding of change nor confidence that we're saying all that needs to be said. Third, no one is fully changed. (195-196)

The disappointment we suffer comes from *problems in our world* that *create pain in our heart*. Our culpability shows itself when we *sin in our behavior* as a result of the *sin in our heart*. (198)

When relieving pain becomes our priority, then we have left the path of pursuing God. The experience of pain has the power to harden us in our self-protective style or to drive us to deeper trust in God. (201)

Self-protection and love are opposites. Since love is the ultimate virtue, self-protection is the ultimate problem. (201)

The gospel's power today lies in its resources to help us overcome a demanding spirit and to replace it with trust as we await the full revelation of its power, the day when sinful people will enter heaven as loving worshipers of God, when further sin will be unthinkable and pain will be unknown. (211)

Every effort to change must involve at its core a shift in direction away from dependence on one's own resources for life to dependence on God. (216)

Men were designed to enter their worlds strongly, providing for their families, leading them (through servanthood) toward God, moving toward others with sacrificing, powerful love. Women were designed to courageously give all they have (intellect, talents, wisdom, kindness, and so on) to others in warm vulnerability, allowing themselves to be entered and wrapping themselves with supportive strength around those with whom they relate, offering all they are as female image-bearers for a godly purpose. (229)

But it's when we are on the brink of personal collapse that we're best able to shift the direction of our soul from self-protection to trusting love. The more deeply we enter into the reality that life without God is sheer desolation, the more fully we can turn toward Him. (234)

Yes, we are impossibly foolish, obsessively self-preoccupied, arrogantly self-sufficient, and badly hurting. To deny it ruins the wonder of what Christ did for us when He died. But we are more. By the grace of God, *we are more*. (247)

If you long to discover the energy of Christ within you, to change from the inside out by releasing the new life in

your soul, then you must do three things: (1) *surrender* to God, (2) take an inside look in the *safety* of loving community, and (3) develop the spiritual *sensitivity* necessary to recognize the promptings of God's Spirit as He stimulates the godly desires of your new heart. (248)