The Power to Change

No doubt it's a bull market for books dealing with the topic of HABITS. But make room for pastor and best-selling author Craig Groeschel's *The Power to Change: Mastering the Habits That Matter Most.*

It is an easy and compelling read, full of insights, and full of stop-you-in-your-tracks statements like:

- Discipline is choosing what you want most over what you want now.
- The path to public success is always paved with private discipline.
- The small things no one sees can lead to the big results everyone wants.
- Successful people do consistently what other people do occasionally.

As a leader, you will be inspired to look carefully in the mirror for a time of personal reflection and mid-course adjustment.

Take a look at these **Book Notes** to see what I'm talking about.

Chuck Olson
Founder | Lead With Your Life

Title: The Power to Change: Mastering the Habits That Matter Most

Author: Craig Groeschel

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Book Description:
Few things in life are more frustrating than knowing you need to change, wanting to change, and trying to change, but not changing. Craig Groeschel knows what it's like to be caught in that demoralizing cycle. That was his own story–until he discovered practical principles for experiencing lasting change. Since then, Craig has helped countless others find true change in their relationships, habits, and thoughts.

In *The Power to Change*, Craig helps you understand:

- How God's power, not your willpower, leads to true transformation
- The real reasons you do what you do
- Why falling isn't failure
- The power of creating small habits that lead to big change

- How to choose what you want most over what you want now

Book Quotes:

There are few things in life more frustrating than knowing you need to change, wanting to change, and trying to change, but not actually changing. LOCATION: 315

To experience change that lasts, focus on who, not do. *For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.* —Isaiah 43:19 NLT LOCATION: 385

Here's a truth you need to embrace if you're ever going to change: you do what you do because of what you think of you. LOCATION: 395

In Proverbs 23:7, God says, "For as he thinks within himself, so he is" (NASB). What does "for as he thinks within himself" mean? We choose the story we believe…What does "so he is" mean? Who we are—our character—shapes our thoughts about ourselves and others. What we think is a reflection of who we are. That then shapes our lives. We have no choice but to live out who we think we are. What we think within ourselves, we are. We make decisions based on our self-identification. LOCATION: 420-425

You do what you do because of what you think of you. LOCATION: 439

The problem is trying to change our "do" is behavior modification. And behavior modification never works. LOCATION: 474

If you try to change your behavior without changing your identity, you're pulling up a weed without getting to the root. LOCATION: 477

Motivation and willpower are both limited resources that you will deplete quickly. Behavior modification does not equip you with the power to change. LOCATION: 490

Romans 12:1–2 is one of the most popular passages from Paul's letters because the "living sacrifice" reference gets a lot of attention. But in verse 2, the apostle shares the key to transformation—real, lasting, eternal change. "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think" (NLT). Paul says you'll experience transformation not by changing what you do but "by changing the way you think." Boom! LOCATION: 500

So to change what you do, you need to first change what you think of you. LOCATION: 505

Who you think you are drives your behavior. LOCATION: 535

You are not who Satan says you are. You are who God says you are. LOCATION: 557

You change by God-empowered spiritual transformation, which happens when you embrace your true God-given identity. LOCATION: 571

Experiencing true change is about not only understanding your identity but also believing it is your identity. LOCATION: 573

If you have ever felt called to more, it's because you are called to more. LOCATION: 683

When most Christians hear that they are called, they tend to think about do, not who. They wonder what task,

ministry, or job God might be calling them to. Or if God has a specific place for them to live. Some worry they might even miss their calling. LOCATION: 684

Yes, you are also called to a ministry, to a do, but that is secondary. Who comes before do. God has called you to a holy life, to be faithful to him, to realize nothing else compares to "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:8) and so to live, first and foremost, for Jesus. LOCATION: 692

Your calling is more about who you are becoming than what you are doing. Let me repeat—your calling is more about who you are becoming than what you are doing. You are called not only to serve Jesus but also to become more and more like him. The more is discovered in the becoming. LOCATION: 697

For you to do what you need to do, for you to change, you first need to think the right thing about yourself. You need to know your true identity, understand your true identity, and start with your identity. You start with who, not do. Why? Because your identity drives your behavior. If you don't start with your identity, any behavior change you make won't last. LOCATION: 822

It's time to change, to become the person God created you to be. God is already doing that in you. He will continue until the job is done. You can partner with him by choosing the change you most need to make now. But to see that change happen, you've got to start with who. Not do. LOCATION: 847

To change, you need to think the right thing about yourself, know your true identity, and start your identity with who, not do. LOCATION: 861

Have you defined your win? This step is so vital to creating real change. Defining your win is how you begin. But spoiler alert: defining the win is not—I repeat not—how you win. We will get to that. Defining the win is not how you win but how you begin. You create a goal, and goals are great. Why? Because goals give you direction. LOCATION: 898

Paul set a destination and knew exactly where he was going. He had a goal. That goal gave him direction. Paul defined his win. Not everyone does. It's easy to run without knowing the location of the finish line. After winning a gold medal in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, Mauro Prosperi decided to compete in the 1994 ultramarathon in Morocco—a weeklong race. Mauro disappeared on the fourth day. He ran into a sandstorm, which caused him to go 181 miles off course. He had no idea where he was going. He was completely lost but still continued to run—for nine days! LOCATION: 913

You cannot do what you don't define. LOCATION: 936

To recap—defining the win is how you begin. But defining the win is not how you win. How do you win? You quit trying. What do winners do differently? What does the couple who celebrates thirty years of marriage do? What does the healthy, fit forty-year-old do? How about the family with no debt and with savings in the bank? The sports team standing on the podium? They don't try. They train. LOCATION: 997

We are going to change. We are going to achieve our goals through training, not trying. What's the difference? To try is to attempt to do the right thing by exerting effort in the moment. To train is to commit to developing strategic habits that equip you to do the right thing in the moment. LOCATION: 1034

Here's one more definition of training that should be helpful: training is doing today what you can do today so that you can do tomorrow what you can't do today. LOCATION: 1053

Discipline is choosing what you want most over what you want now. LOCATION: 1169

The writer of Hebrews speaks of this exact concept in chapter 12, verse 11, "No discipline is enjoyable while it

is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way" (NLT). Note the words—"discipline," "painful," "right living," and "trained." LOCATION: 1205

The bottom line is you can't avoid pain. The question is: Will you choose the pain of discipline or the pain of regret? I have found the pain of regret is always worse than the pain of discipline. Pain along the way is far preferable to getting down the road and realizing you missed out on some important aspect of the life God had for you. Let's choose the pain of discipline and refuse the pain of regret. LOCATION: 1218

Desire alone won't get you what you want most, but discipline will. LOCATION: 1232

The path to public success is always paved with private discipline. LOCATION: 1238

Identify the habits you need to start and stop to achieve your goals. LOCATION: 1271

Why do we fail? Because we try. Instead, we should train by ascertaining the strategic habits we need to start and stop. What can we do to move, little by little, toward our wins? We then need the discipline to do these things, to choose what we want most over what we want now. LOCATION: 1284

Make doing your habit your win. Obsess over the process instead of the outcome. You don't get results by focusing on results. You get results by focusing on the actions that get results. LOCATION: 1334

So what are we going to do? Focus on who before do. We know behavior modification doesn't work, so we're all about identity transformation. Define our wins. We need the direction of a goal to help us begin. Train, not try. We will embrace a strategic habit and quit a habit we need to stop. Every day we'll live disciplined lives by choosing what we want most over what we want now. LOCATION: 1400

Your choices create the course and contours of your life. Your decisions determine your destiny. And your choices are less intentional and more habitual than you realize. LOCATION: 1455

What got us here is not hope. We are largely who and where we are because of our habits. We need to master the habits that matter most. This means: If you want to change who you're becoming, change your habits. If you want to change where you're going, change your habits. If you want to change your life, change your habits. LOCATION: 1462

Never underestimate how God can start something big through one small habit. The small things no one sees can lead to the big results everyone wants. Success happens not by accident but by habits. LOCATION: 1488

Daniel may not have considered praying three times a day a big deal. You might wonder why his practice of praying led to a nation-changing impact and having a book of the Bible dedicated to his life. Never underestimate how God can start something big through one small habit. LOCATION: 1533

The small things no one sees can lead to the big results everyone wants. LOCATION: 1539

Hope doesn't change your life. Habits do. Specifically, mastering the habits that matter most. LOCATION: 1542

Get intentional with what habits we want to start. Get intentional with what habits we need to stop. LOCATION: 1599

Choosing the right habits will change your life. In fact, that's exactly how you change your life. Habits, not hope. Change your habits. Change your life. LOCATION: 1600

A habit is basically behavioral autopilot. LOCATION: 1625

A habit allows good or bad behavior to happen without your brain having to take charge. LOCATION: 1630

A habit is a behavior you automatically fall into without your brain fully participating in the decision-making. LOCATION: 1634

The cue is a trigger that alerts your brain to go into autopilot by engaging the habit. The craving is the physical, mental, or emotional need the cue leads you to want to satisfy. The response is the behavior you routinely fall into. The reward is how the behavior makes you feel. LOCATION: 1640

If you engage in the same loop—cue, craving, response, reward—enough times, the process will become automatic. LOCATION: 1647

To effectively start and stop habits, we need to understand how cues (or triggers) work and identify ours. LOCATION: 1655

A small change in what you see can lead to a big shift in what you do. LOCATION: 1723

This explains why the most effective way to overcome an addiction is to join a twelve-step program. These programs are not just about the steps. (Which, by the way, are habits.) They're about joining a group of people with the same struggle and the same goal. LOCATION: 1823

Living the right life is almost impossible if you have the wrong friends. LOCATION: 1833

Before we wrap up this chapter, let's review. Make your habit: Obvious. Attractive. Easy. Communal. Repetitious. LOCATION: 1852

This brings us to the question many ask: "If I use these five guides, how long will it take to build a new habit?" Answer? It's not about the number of days but about the number of repetitions. It's not about twenty-one days or thirty days or ninety days. What matters is how many times you do the new behavior. The more often you do it, the more it will become hardwired into your brain, which will make the behavior easier to keep doing. LOCATION: 1854

Here's our next challenge: based on who you want to become, what one habit do you need to stop? What unhealthy, unhelpful, and perhaps ungodly habit is taking you in a direction you don't want to go? You don't need to go? LOCATION: 1907

You cannot defeat what you cannot define. LOCATION: 1930

One reason we struggle to stop doing what we want to stop doing is timing. It's the flip side of why we struggle to start new habits: Good habits are difficult to start because the pain comes now and the payoff is in the future. Bad habits are difficult to stop because the payoff comes now and the pain is in the future. LOCATION: 1937

Stopping a habit now could prevent a secret from being exposed. If you don't want people finding out, or if you don't want to risk being embarrassed and ashamed or losing the respect of those you love, or if you don't want to forfeit something you treasure, like a position or influence on people, all of that will happen—later. When it does, you'd do anything to go back and stop that habit now. Well, you are at now, now. You can stop now. But to stop, to avoid that pain later, you're going to have to experience the pain of saying no to pleasure now. This moment might be the entire reason you're reading this book. For you right now, it's not about something you need to start but about dealing with something that could destroy you sooner than later if you don't stop.

LOCATION: 1965

As followers of Christ, we want goals that are not about what we are getting or what we are doing but about who we are becoming. Not getting, not doing, becoming. LOCATION: 2056

When becoming more like Jesus is the driving force of your life, success is no longer out there somewhere. You can be successful today by taking another step toward Christlikeness. LOCATION: 2060

That's the thing about our habits. We think of them as actions. But they are way more than that. Because our habits define our identities. I start a new habit of eating right. Why? Because I am becoming more like Jesus. And when I eat right, I am honoring God by being a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20). I start a new habit of waking up earlier. Why? Because I want to create time to read my Bible. Why? Because I am becoming more like Jesus. And reading the Bible renews my mind so I can take my thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). LOCATION: 2061

People succeed. They achieve their win because of countless seemingly small actions and decisions made consistently over time. That consistency gives them the power to change. LOCATION: 2100

Successful people do consistently what other people do occasionally. LOCATION: 2109

What do successful people do consistently? Habits. The right strategic habits. As we've already established: Success happens not by accident but by habits. Successful people start and maintain the right habits and keep doing them. LOCATION: 2110

For his 2008 book, Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell studied successful people. What common thread did he find to explain their success? The answer: ten thousand hours. He discovered that, across the board, people who became great at something put in ten thousand hours of practice. LOCATION: 2123

Gladwell says the common denominator with all the successful people he studied was that they fell in love with practice. Or we could say they fell in love with training. The greats don't try, they train. They commit to practicing every day. LOCATION: 2130

The life you are living right now is shaping the life you will live tomorrow. LOCATION: 2168

Because your habits today are telegraphing your future. The life you are living right now is shaping the life you will live tomorrow. LOCATION: 2170

We all have the best intentions, but intentions don't determine direction. Actions do. We all have hopes. But hoping for a different future doesn't lead to a different future. Hope doesn't change your life. Habits do. LOCATION: 2171

Remember: the small things no one sees can lead to the big results everyone wants. The issue with small things is that they are easy to do but also easy not to do. They never seem significant. Ignoring or skipping them always feels acceptable. But you sculpt your life with the small stuff. LOCATION: 2179

The same is true for us. We will change our lives one small habit at a time. I'll say it again: getting the life you want will be the result of countless seemingly small decisions, done consistently over time. LOCATION: 2213

You will trip. You will fall. Your journey won't be perfect. But keep moving in the right direction. Your goal is not perfection, it's progress. LOCATION: 2245

I believe you will see significant change in your life if you consistently (remember, not perfectly, consistently)

do your strategic habit. LOCATION: 2253

The next words are, “A man reaps what he sows.” That’s what we need to understand and not be stupid about. What does that mean? You will harvest what you plant. You will get out what you put in. Your outcomes will be determined by your inputs. The results of your life will be based on the decisions you make, the habits you stake, and the habits you break. LOCATION: 2300

If you plant good habits, you’ll get good outcomes. If you plant bad habits, don’t be deceived and expect good outcomes. LOCATION: 2321

If you plant good habits, you’ll get good outcomes. If you plant bad habits, don’t expect good outcomes. You reap what you sow. LOCATION: 2335

You don’t just reap what you sow. You reap more than you sow. LOCATION: 2357

The cumulative effect is the powerful outcome produced by an action that happens, even if it’s small, over and over across a long period of time. LOCATION: 2364

The second powerful factor we need to understand is the compound effect. This is typically called “compounding interest,” used in reference to finances. This is the interest you get on the interest. LOCATION: 2373

Who you are today is because of cumulative and compound effects. LOCATION: 2385

That’s how life works. What you do every day is turning you into the person you will become and leading you into the life you will live. What you do occasionally does not make a difference. What you do consistently makes all the difference. Because of the cumulative effect and compounding interest, a small change can change everything. LOCATION: 2438

Your hard work, your discipline, your sacrifices, and your faithfulness are never wasted. Your efforts are just being stored up. LOCATION: 2484

We stay stuck because we rely on willpower instead of God’s power. LOCATION: 2603

Years of research all point to the same conclusion: Willpower is a limited resource. Willpower wilts. LOCATION: 2623

God loves us in spite of us, not because of us. He loves us not because of what we do but because of who he is. LOCATION: 2717

Past tense speaks of something that has already happened. Present tense describes something happening right now. Future tense refers to something that will happen eventually but hasn’t yet. Perfect tense speaks of something that has happened in the past, is still happening in the present, and will continue in the future. It draws attention to the continuing effects of something that has happened in the past. Paul wrote “saved” in perfect tense! You were saved by God’s grace in the past, but the effect is still happening. His grace is always going to impact your life. God will continue giving you new life in your dead places until his work is complete in you. LOCATION: 2722

At the end of my power, I discover God’s power. LOCATION: 2761

Willpower doesn’t work, but God’s power does, and his power is: Available. Accessible. Active. Abundant. LOCATION: 2763

Choosing to walk by the Spirit is not a onetime decision or event but an ongoing, habitual way of life. From this moment, and in every moment from now on, I trust in and rely on God's power, not my willpower. LOCATION: 2785

When we allow God to change the way we think, it will change how we act. LOCATION: 2858

So we need to renew our minds. We need the truth to be embedded into our thinking. We renew our minds with God's Word so we can start thinking God's thoughts. This is the only way we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. LOCATION: 2862

If you renew your mind—before the moment—you will be ready with God's power in the moment. LOCATION: 2873

Jesus says, "Remain in me" and adds, "as I also remain in you" (John 15:4). Jesus is making you an offer. "Live inside of me, and let me live inside of you." LOCATION: 2892

Acknowledging "I can't" is the path to possessing a power you don't possess. What you need is the God of resurrection working on your behalf, walking with you, his power coursing through your veins, releasing you from what's held you back for so long. LOCATION: 2921

When you're winning, you're winning. When you're losing, you're learning. LOCATION: 3002

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.