

Weekly Lesson

CHANGE SOMETHING

You can't change your mind by changing your hat. There's more to change than a hat swap. Change is uncomfortable. It feels awkward. It takes commitment. Ask anyone who has ever worn braces to straighten crooked teeth. They embrace the pain of change to acquire an attractive smile. On one hand, change is simple— with just a little pressure applied and sustained over time — even crooked teeth can be repositioned. On the other hand, maintaining change is remarkably hard. Even after two years of wearing braces, a retainer is necessary to hold teeth in their proper place. Noncompliance with a retainer likely means a relapse back to crookedness. Let's apply the metaphor of braces to the disorder in our emotional lives. We know we could improve by changing our attitudes, approaches, or actions, and yet, we must admit that we have internal resistance to change. Getting emotional braces frightens us. It's like there is an old dog inside of us lying down refusing to learn new tricks. Remember, change generally comes with pressure, initial discomfort, and sustained effort from a long-term commitment to maintain the gains.

This week, let's change something. The Bible tells us that we can be changed — transformed — when we renew our minds. This is true because change first occurs in the mind through visualization. Antoine de Saint Exupery said that “A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.” Let's contemplate some of our own rock piles, and how, through transformation, we might build something meaningful and beautiful. Seek God's wisdom. He is the master architect. Partner with God as you mentally imagine the remodeling plans. First, let's envision a reason for why we want the change. Next, think about a strategy or a process of how we might achieve a change. Write out the methods that come to mind. Be creative. Finally, add a timeframe that is reasonable to accomplish your change goal. God is outside of time, but He uses time to shape our lives. Seek His timetable. He has plans to prosper each of us. And, lastly, include a maintenance plan in your change strategy. Life is not decluttered and simplified one time. Disorder and chaos will reappear, just like teeth will resume crookedness without the pressure of braces and retainers. When we renew our minds with God's vision for us, we can change. Rubble piles can become His masterpieces. Change is possible. It first occurs in the mind's eye with a vision, and then a strategy emerges that is executed by and through the Spirit's work in our hearts. We will see the fruit of self-control when we change something. Try it this week: go ahead, change something.

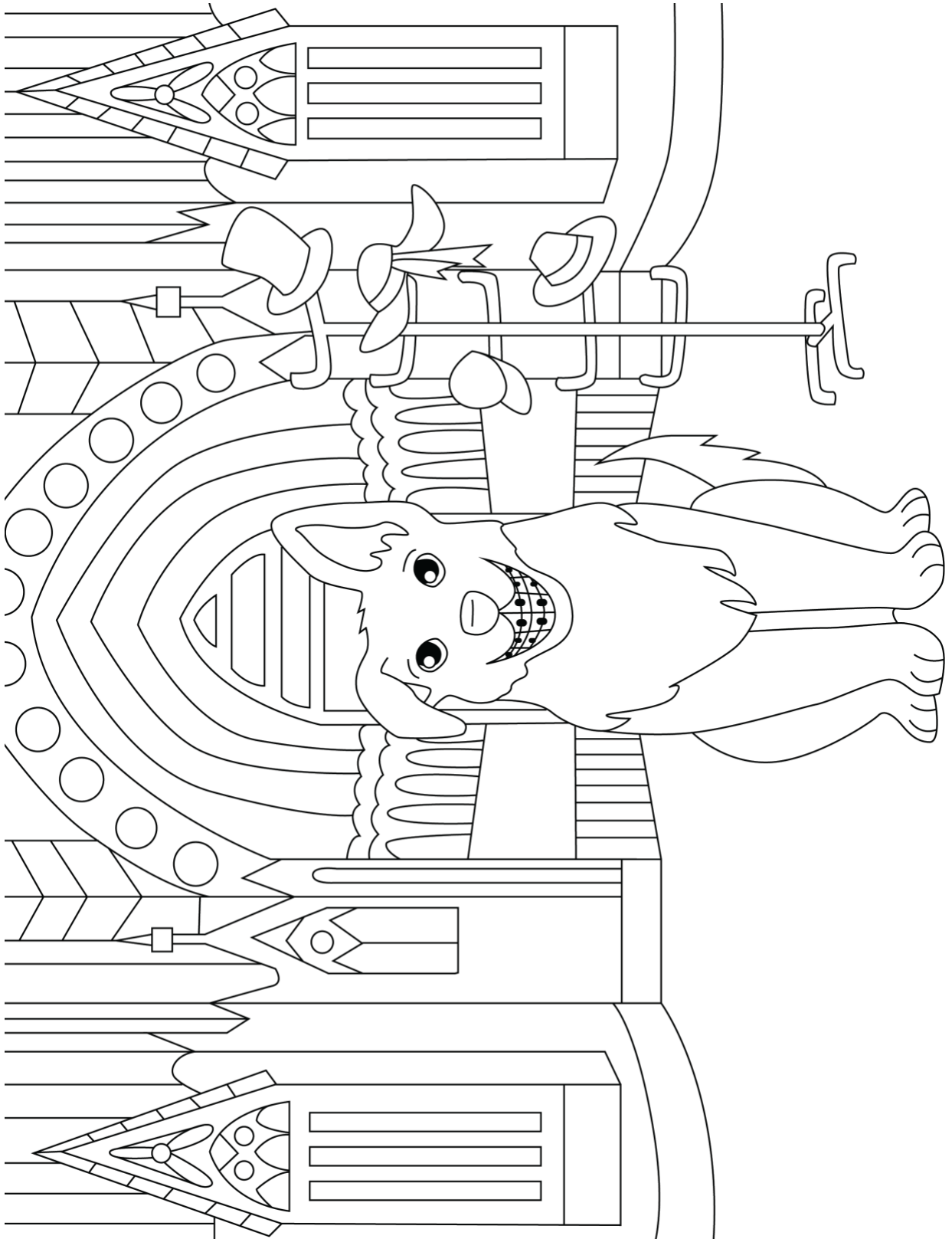
PERSONALIZE THIS LESSON

Think: I am capable of transformation. By God's grace, I can renew my mind. I commit to a program of self-discipline necessary to maintain the gains obtained by hard work.

Feel: I feel inspired to change. I feel committed to maintaining a program of changed behavior.

Do: Cast a vision for a change you wish to make. Establish the reason why you are willing to undergo discomfort during a changing process. Develop creative strategies to achieve a change in your attitudes or actions. Keep up the day-to-day effort needed to turn rocks into cathedrals.

Memorize: For we are God's masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:10, NLT).



WEEKLY LESSON: CHANGE SOMETHING

What is something you have successfully changed in your past?

How does renewing your mind change for you? (Be specific)

If you could set a vision for a new change in your life, what would that be? (Be specific)

What internal resistance to change do you have? (for example, fear, avoidance, negative thinking, quick reactive patterns).

Suggested Song: “Greater Than All My Regrets” by Tenth Avenue North (No Shame, 2019, Provident Label Group)
