



**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO CHANGE

When you have sinned and recognized the seriousness of your mistakes, your most crucial challenge will be to believe that you can change, that there can be a different you. To disbelieve that is clearly a Satanic device designed to discourage and defeat you. *Repentance* is not a foreboding word. It is, following *faith*, the most encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary. **You can change!** You can be anything you want to be in righteousness.

If there is one lament I cannot abide, it is the poor, pitiful, withered cry, “Well, that’s just the way I am.” If you want to talk about discouraging attitudes, that is one that discourages me. Please spare me your speeches about “That’s just the way I am.” I’ve

heard that from too many people who wanted to sin and call it psychology. And I use the word *sin* to cover a vast range of habits which bring discouragement and doubt and despair.

You can change anything you want to change and you can do it very fast. It is another Satanic falsehood to believe that it takes years and years and eons of eternity to repent. It takes exactly as long to repent as it takes you to say “I’ll change”—and mean it. Of course there will be problems to work out and restitutions to make. You may well **spend**—indeed, you had better spend—**the rest of your life proving your repentance by its permanence.** But change, growth, renewal, and repentance can come for you as instantaneously as it



did for Alma and the Sons of Mosiah.

Do not misunderstand. **Repentance is not easy or painless or convenient.** It can be a bitter cup from hell. But only Satan would have you think that a necessary and required acknowledgment of sin is more distasteful than permanent residence in it. Only he would say, “You can’t change. You won’t change. It’s too long and too hard to change. Give up. Give in. Don’t repent. You are just the way you are.” That, my friends, is a lie born of desperation. Don’t fall for it. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on March 18, 1980.