

Study 17 - TRANSFORMED INTO HIS GLORY

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Introduction

We do not change into the likeness of Jesus because we are disciplined people who pray a lot, give tithes, and attend church every week. All these things are good, and we should continue to practice them. However, what really changes us is seeing God face-to-face in His manifest glory!

Many people resist transformation because they have conformed to the world. They are in bondage to man-made traditions and are afraid of change because they believe it could affect their position, status, respectability, finances, or other aspects of their life. On the other hand, they are also greatly dissatisfied because they know God has something more for them, but they do not know how to define or describe it, much less reach it.

We must seek to be transformed as we spend time in the presence of God—through private and corporate worship and by reading and meditating on His Word—all which continually make us into His image. We can no longer stay the same. When we enter into God’s presence, we will be changed and ignited with spiritual passion to do the work of spreading His kingdom throughout the world.

Study Questions

Part I: From Glory to Glory

How does the book of Proverbs describe the “path of the just [“righteous” NIV]”? (Proverbs 4:18)

(a) As we behold the glory of the Lord “as in a mirror,” what happens to us? (2 Corinthians 3:18b)

(b) Who effects this change in us? (Verse 18b)

(c) What may be found where the Spirit of the Lord is? (Verse 17b)

(d) What word in the verse below indicates that our transformation into the image of Christ is an ongoing process? Complete the following:

1 Corinthians 3:18a: “We are _____ transformed into the same image from glory to glory...”

What changes a person is not time spent in church, as such, but time spent in God’s presence.

KEY DEFINITION: “Liberty” in 2 Corinthians 3:17 is translated from the Greek word *eleutheria*, which means “freedom without restrictions, regulations, norms, laws, or traditions.” The freedom we receive from the Holy Spirit is not the freedom to do as we please. Rather, it empowers us to do the right thing in the presence of God.

For what purpose was Christ made to “be sin” for us? (2 Corinthians 5:21b)

(a) What did the apostle Paul “press on” to lay hold of? (Philippians 3:12b)

(b) In doing so, what did he purposefully “forget,” and what did he “reach forward” to? (Philippians 3:13)

(c) What did he “press toward”? (Verse 14)

(a) What are we to “lay aside” in order to run the spiritual race that is set before us? (Hebrews 12:1b)

(b) Whom must we focus on in order to reach the finish line? (Verse 2a)

Part II: Renewal and Transformation

(a) What is one means by which we are transformed into the image of Christ? (Romans 12:2a)

(b) What does this process enable us to “prove”? (Verse 2b)

No transformation is permanent until the mind has been renewed.

REFLECTIONS ON TRANSFORMATION

The Greek word translated “transfigured” (Matthew 17:2) in relation to Jesus’ transfiguration is the same word used in Romans 12:2 for “transformed”: “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” That word is metamorphoo, and it means “to change into another form,” “to transform,” or “to transfigure.” The main idea of the verb is to die to one form of life in order to be born into another. When Jesus was transfigured, He reflected the reality of the world to come and manifested His glory. The disciples had seen Him live and walk under the anointing, but on that day, for the first time, they saw His true glory—the glory He had left behind when He came to the world. And, as we renew our minds according to His nature, we will reflect the reality of His glory. The Word says we are “transformed... from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). This truth enables us to understand that we are transformed from “one place to another,” or that we advance from one dimension to another. If we want to move with the glory of God, we cannot do so with a mentality of settling down in one place and of having “arrived.” Rather, we are to have a mind-set of constant movement, so we can go from one dimension of glory to another.

The renewed mind is the essential tool needed to bring the reality of the kingdom, the power, and the glory to earth.

What aren’t we to be conformed to? (Romans 12:2a)

What did Peter say to the religious officials who wanted the apostles to conform to their way of thinking, which was contrary to God’s? (Acts 5:29b)

What did Paul say he would not be, if he still desired to please men? (Galatians 1:10b)

Key Definition: The Greek word for “conformed” in Romans 12:2 is suschematizo. This term comes from two root words: sun, which means “with,” and schema, which means “figure,” “form,” “shape,” “appearance,” or “external condition.” Thus, “to be conformed” refers to adaptation and accommodation, or taking the form, shape, or appearance of the pattern of this world. Suschematizo highlights a change in external—not internal—appearance. Sometimes, this term is translated as “disguise.” The idea here is that the world is pushing to give us form according to its pattern, similar to wearing new shoes that rub against the natural shape of our feet—giving us an external and transitory appearance that does not transform us from within. It does not remove sin, depression, or bitterness, nor does it give abundant life. In essence, what the world gives is only a disguise; it is not what we are meant to be or can be in Christ.

When we conform to someone or something, we stop being transformed.

(a) Those who are born again have “put off the old man” (Colossians 3:9) of sin and have “put on the new man” (verse 10). In what way is the new man renewed? (Verse 10b)

(b) What specific qualities are we to “put on” in relation to the new man? (Verse 12)

(c) How should we conduct ourselves in relation to others? (Verse 13)

(d) What is the most important thing we need to “put on,” which Paul called the “bond of perfection”? (Verse 14)

(a) What is continually happening to the “inward man” of believers, despite the fact that their physical bodies are growing weaker and “perishing”? (2 Corinthians 4:16)

(b) What can an affliction in our lives “work” for us, if we respond to it with faith and hope in God? (Verse 17b)

(a) What character trait does tribulation produce in our lives, if we allow it to? (Romans 5:3b)

(b) What other qualities are produced as a result? (Verse 4)

(c) How are we to respond to our tribulations? (Verse 3a)

(d) What must we avoid doing in the face of trials and persecutions, something God takes no pleasure in? (Hebrews 10:38b)

(a) If we are persecuted for the name of Christ, what rests upon us? (1 Peter 4:14a)

(b) As a result, what occurs on behalf of Christ, on our part? (Verse 14b)

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, fill us once again with Your Holy Spirit, so that we may be like the sun that “shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” Impart to us the knowledge of You, enabling us to be renewed in that knowledge every day according to the image of Christ in His glory. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Action Steps

Ask yourself these questions: Since I became a Christian, have I remained the same, or have I been growing more like Christ? Have I stopped being transformed? Why? Are the power and presence of God active in my life? If not, when did the life of the supernatural diminish for me? Have I become irrelevant in the advancement of the kingdom of God? When did the services at my church seem to become routine? Have I conformed myself to my worldly surroundings or to my sickness, poverty, or sin? Answer each of these questions honestly. God calls every believer to change because He wants to take us to another level in Him. Ask Him to deliver you from everything negative to which you have conformed, so that the Holy Spirit can begin to transform your life, your family, and your ministry, starting within you.

Make a decision not to dwell on your past failures or to become self-satisfied with your past successes. Seek to develop the attitude of Paul: “Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14).