

Study 18 - TRANSFORMED INTO HIS GLORY II

“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

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.

Study Questions

From last week:

Part III: Obstacles to Godly Transformation

14. What are two main obstacles to godly transformation, which the prophet Samuel included in his reprimand of King Saul? Complete the following: 1 Samuel 15:23: “For _____ is as the sin of witchcraft, and _____ is as iniquity and idolatry.”

15. What are we warned not to do when we hear God’s voice? (Hebrews 3:8a, 15b)

Rebellion says, “I will not do it,” while stubbornness says, “I will do it my way.”

16. (a) Following the exodus from Egypt, what did the “stubborn and rebellious generation” of Israelites fail to “set aright”? (Psalm 78:8b)

(b) What deficiency was in the spirit of that generation? (Verse 8b)

17. What do we need to have in order to begin receiving wisdom and instruction from God? Complete the following: Proverbs 1:7a: “_____ is the beginning of knowledge...”

18. Another obstacle to godly transformation is the same sin for which the devil was condemned. What is that sin? (1 Timothy 3:6)

(a) List various negative outcomes of this sin. (Proverbs 11:2a; 13:10a; 29:23; 16:18)

(b) List some blessings the humble receive. (Psalm 147:6a; 149:4b; Proverbs 11:2b; 29:23b; Matthew 18:4; 23:12; James 4:6b)

A generation that does not embrace change will not impact the world.

(a) How does God respond to those who are proud? (1 Peter 5:5b)

(b) What does He give to those who are humble? (1 Peter 5:5b)

(c) What will God do for those who humble themselves under His mighty hand? (Verse 6b)

21. A third obstacle to godly transformation is to deny the need for change in one's life. (a) If we say that we have no sin, what do we do to ourselves? (1 John 1:8a)

(b) As a consequence, what key component of spiritual life is not in us? (Verse 8b)

(c) If we claim we have not sinned, what do we imply about God? (Verse 10a NIV)

(d) As a consequence, what key component of spiritual life has no place in our lives? (Verse 10b)

The glory of God, or His presence, exposes the spiritual condition of an individual.

22. (a) In study 9, we discussed the lukewarm spiritual state of the Christians of the church at Laodicea, who were reprimanded by the risen Christ in the book of Revelation. What did the Laodiceans say about themselves that showed they didn't sense a need for spiritual transformation? (Revelation 3:17a)

(b) What was their true spiritual state, of which they were unaware? (Verse 17b)

23. What counsel should we heed, in order to avoid being presumptuous like the Laodiceans? (Proverbs 3:7)

REFLECTIONS ON WHAT THE GLORY RELEASES

The glory of God releases something in the hearts of people that cannot be received directly through hearing teachings, reading books, listening to messages on CD, or receiving an anointing through the laying on of hands—even though these things are good and can point us to the glory. What the glory of God releases can be received only in His presence; there, people's vision is enlarged, and a passion for expanding the kingdom and winning souls is ignited within them. The glory of God releases empathy and love for others, as it generates zeal to do His will. Above all, a thirst for seeking the face of God and knowing Him intimately increases exponentially in people. If we sincerely want to be changed and transformed, we must dare to enter into His presence and stay in His movement, from glory to glory, without stopping or becoming stagnant.

24. A fourth obstacle to godly transformation is having a spirit of "religion" and legalism. (a) Instead of living in their newfound freedom in Christ, what were the Colossians subjecting themselves to? (Colossians 2:20b)

(b) On what were the regulations based? (Verse 22b)

(c) What did these regulations have an appearance of? Complete the following: Verse 23a: "These things indeed have an appearance of _____, _____, and _____, _____, _____, and _____..."

(d) How useful were the regulations in overcoming the fleshly nature? (Colossians 2:23b)

When Christians cease to be changed, they lose their power and return to religion and formality.

25. (a) What did the Lord say about the Israelites, who had fallen into religion and legalism? (Isaiah 29:13a)

(b) What was the faulty foundation of their instruction on the “fear,” or reverence, of the Lord? (Verse 13b)

The greatest tragedy in life is to lose the presence of God and not even know it.

26. (a) By what—and through what—are we saved, if not by religion? (Ephesians 2:8a)

(b) What two things is salvation not a result of? (Verses 8b–9a)

(c) How does salvation come to us? (Verse 8b)

27. What has Christ done to the “handwriting of requirements that was against us,” since we have all failed to obey the holy law of God in our own strength and abilities? (Colossians 2:14)

28. False religion, having only a “form of godliness,” often shows its counterfeit nature by what it “denies.” Complete the following:

2 Timothy 3:5: “...having a form of godliness but _____.”

29. Recall in what way the Lord confirmed the reality of the apostles’ preaching. (Mark 16:20b)

Without the manifestations of the supernatural power of God, Christianity is like any other religion.

Part IV: The Final Transformation in Glory

30. (a) What will happen “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” to believers who have died, and to believers who are alive, when Christ returns? (1 Corinthians 15:52b)

(b) What will be the nature of the change that will occur for all believers? (Verse 53)

What transformation will take place in its fullness when Jesus is revealed, and we “see Him as He is”? (1 John 3:2b)

What analogy did Peter use to describe how, in the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:16), we will be completely transformed into His likeness? Complete the following: 2 Peter 1:19b: “... until _____.”

Conclusion

Since we need to be continually transformed from glory to glory, there is a problem when we are not in the process of being changed—it means we do not currently walk in the glory of God. This is the reason for the lack of transformation we observe in the lives of many believers: they are not being regularly exposed to the glory of the Father.

Surely, no change is easy; it is usually difficult and painful. But if that is what it takes to enter into a greater dimension of God’s glory, we need it. Are you willing to be transformed? If your answer is yes, God will take care of everything because He does not want you to waste your time following religious norms. He wants you to enjoy the highest dimension of His glory.

Moreover, being in the glory is not just an “experience” for us to bask in; it brings about a transformation that allows us to minister to others in remarkable ways. Jesus came to earth to show us how to reach out to others with salvation, healing, and deliverance, just as He did. Let us be transformed into His image “in ever increasing splendour” (2 Corinthians 3:18 AMP).

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).