

Transformed Into The Image Of Christ

In my time growing up I have learned many valuable lessons, but some of the lessons I value most come from learning more about something I already knew. For example, someone understands baptism to be for the remission of sins, but later they realize that it is an anti-type of the salvation Noah had in the flood. It's lessons like this that mean a lot to me as I continue to grow. Today, I hope to share one with you.

I know personally I was raised with the mindset of being a good person, treating others respectfully, and learning God's word. All of these were great attributes that my parents worked to instill in me, as I'm sure it was with many of you. But today I want to go deeper into why we act "good" as Christians and also look at the level of "good" we are trying to reach.

Our first idea we need to understand is that God is good. When I mean that God is good, I mean that God defines what is good. He is the One who, by His word, furnishes us *"unto every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:17). Without God's determination of what is right and good, there would be no right or good. Perhaps your parents would try to give you an idea of what they view as good but without God it is only their opinion.

Now what does God view as "good"? Our passage we will begin with is 2 Cor. 3:18: *"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." The point the author is making can be illustrated in a very simple way. Did you know that our Statue of Liberty in New York is actually a copy? The first one was made in Paris on a smaller scale and there is another one in Maceio, Brazil. We received ours last!

As you can see, they are the same image and this is the same idea Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 3. Just as the sculptor has a particular image in front of him then takes a block and copies it, we take ourselves and transform ourselves into the image of Christ.

Now one other side point is that our lives are moldable or impressionable. No one is made sinful or righteous, we weren't fashioned into a particular mold before the world was formed. Also, we can change the molds we decide to be in. If we were sinners we can change and form ourselves after the life of Christ. These concepts are spoken of in 2 Tim. 2:20-21 and Paul shows clearly that if someone wants to change bad enough they can.

Now back to our idea in 2 Cor. 3. The application is that we are doing more than just casually becoming "good." What needs to be happening in your life and mine is taking the lifestyle of Christ and mimicking it. Just like the childhood game of copying what someone else says to get on their nerves, we are doing that same thing in regard to all that Christ did -- minus the getting on the nerves.

But isn't that too much to ask of someone? Isn't that too much work for the everyday person who has "*sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23)? I will completely agree that it is difficult, but didn't Jesus say that some people would be unwilling to take on the demands of being His disciple? But there are other considerations as well we must think about. First, God will not ask something of us that we cannot perform. If God asks us to live like Christ then we can. Second, the process of transforming ourselves into the image of Christ isn't something that happens overnight and God knows and understands that. Just as the sculptor doesn't conform the piece of stone into a beautiful statue overnight, the person who is in the image of the world will have to work hard and take time to become like Christ. Here is one of those concepts again that didn't ever click with me. In God's word there are directional commands and absolute commands. The absolute commands are usually one time commands such as being baptized for remission of sins. But there are also directional commands that demand we work toward a certain direction such as loving our neighbor as ourselves. Now as we connect this to our concept, God is wanting us to head in the direction of being like Christ and understands it will take time.

Finally, let's bring this concept home for our lives. How can I be like Christ today? First, pray for the strength and dedication to live the "good" life. Second, learn about who Christ is in His word. There is no reason we shouldn't understand the nature of Christ considering the New Testament discusses Christ's life and nature extensively. Third, surround yourself with people, entertainment, and influences that will help you learn and develop into being more like Christ.

This is the lesson I learned and that I hope you can see as well. That when people tell you to act right it isn't just because "it's the right thing to do." It's because it's what Christ would do and as a Christian you have chosen to

become what the name describes -- One who is like Him. Let's take this concept into our study and lives and glorify Christ in our bodies.

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