

## Marks Of A Transformed Life #2

**Introduction.** The eight marks we are studying are necessary for Christ to be fully formed in us (Galatians 4:19). Everyday we struggle with the contrast of who they were, who they are to be in Christ, and who they seem to be in their daily lives. Once our hearts are set on Christ, our lives will then reflect Him in how we live. Romans 12 shows us how the word can work to fully form the image of Christ in us.

Transformation is not like a cherry tree trying to change itself into an orange tree. It is about a cherry tree trying to grow up into what it is meant to be -- a cherry tree. Christians are not trying to become something they are not. Christians used to be immoral, but we were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). The old has gone, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christ lives within. Transformation is living by faith in Him within us (Galatians 2:20). The first marks of surrender, renewal, service, and love were investigated earlier, and we now turn our attention to the last part of Romans 12.

### I. ***Diligence***

- A. It feels stale to say that the Christian life is not a sprint but a marathon (vs. 11). However, it is still true. The imagery throughout the scriptures shows that God's people must persist (1 Corinthians 15:58). In our culture, determination is rarely the norm.
- B. Christians sometimes need help understanding how discipleship has a lot to do with delayed gratification. In a culture obsessed with instant-everything, fervency seems to be something best left to the Puritans of yesteryear.
  - 1. Someone changed by the gospel learns to persist (2 Peter 1:10; 3:14). Transformation brings about a steadiness that eventually results in the internal fruit of maturity and the external fruit of new Christians.
  - 2. Working to spread the gospel requires patience to crack through people's indifference and unbelief. Rarely do we encounter people ready to accept gospel teaching. It requires a determined spirit.

### II. ***Perspective***

- A. How you view life is how you will carry out your work. Where vs. 11 deals with persisting in service, vs. 12 addresses moving through difficulties. These three statements all require the initiation of faith. True transformation requires faith, and faith is being convinced that God exists and cares for us (Hebrews 11:6; 1 Peter 5:7).
- B. Knowing that we are often bruised by life, the perspective of faith allows us to see beyond present circumstances (Titus 1:1-3). Faith is

the recognition among Christians that life is difficult, but not impossible. The testing of faith produces something of exceptional value for us now (1 Peter 1:6-7).

- C. Transformation requires the perspective that my strength and ingenuity will never be sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). They were not sufficient to secure my soul for eternity, and they will not be able to get me through the years of this life. However, God's grace and prayer can accomplish this task.

### III. **Fellowship**

- A. A lot of Romans 12 deals with how Christians relate to one another. The language of vs. 13-16 points to our needs of sharing, hospitality, blessing, rejoicing, and weeping. Meeting these needs for one another is where transformation shows itself.
- B. But for needs to be met, the congregation must be valued. I live in a place called a community. It has geographic boundaries and a name. But we are not all in fellowship with one another. The citizens of my community argue about how tax money is to be spent, in what order the roads should receive repair, and where the next school should be built. We are a community that is not often in agreement with one another.
- C. But as a member of a congregation, you have a unique opportunity because fellowship catalyzes change (1 John 1:3). In order to weep with someone (vs. 15), you have to be more than physically near them; you have to be in a relationship with them. We pursue transformation in order to be like Christ, who wept at the tomb of a friend (John 11:35).

### IV. **Righteousness**

- A. Vss. 17-21 teach us that evil tempts, goads, and mocks us (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). In moments of weakness, we come close to throwing our hands up and walking away. But we do not, because Christ has done too much on our behalf.
- B. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, the apostle had been given the ministry of reconciliation because of what God has done for mankind through Christ. This means that we are made righteous, or accepted or treated as righteous, in the sight of God, although we were sinners. Because of this marvelous work on my behalf, my life should show that I am interested in displaying right living (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22).

**Conclusion.** It is a great privilege to walk in the midst of those given new life in Christ and see God's constant work in their lives. As good elders lead the Christians and churches entrusted to their care, they need to do so

with the mindset that God is not hoping to initiate transformation, but that He has guaranteed it for His faithful people.