



**If Anyone is in Christ, He is a New Creation;
Old Things have Passed Away;
Behold, All Things Have Become New.**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Character Transformation

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Character Transformation

Introduction

We need to make it clear from the start, that it is only by the grace of God that anybody is saved, filled with the Spirit, or able to glorify God with their life. It is God's grace that works in us to do his will (Phil 2:13), and it is his power that transformed us (Jude 24). Having said that, we have a free will and we can resist or disobey the Spirit. It's up to us to obey his promptings and work together with him, (Mark 16:20, 1 Cor 3:9).

When we draw closer to God something beautiful happens, we learn what he likes, and we change to please him. We are blessed to be under the new covenant, where God reveals himself to every one of us individually, by writing his law in our hearts and minds, (Heb 8:6). And, the better we know him, the more become more like him.

- **Hebrews 8:10-12** This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. **No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.** For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."
- **John 10:27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Character Formation

When we surrender our lives to Christ we are transformed, and we are so drastically different that it is like we have a new life, and our old way of life fades into the past. At least that's what is supposed to happen.

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

However, there are many people who never change, and there are others start well and then back to their old ways. It's sad when you see professing Christians living like unsaved worldly people, or worse. Paul wrote to a group of people who had gone back to their old way of life. He prayed that they would start over, and focus on developing the character of Christ in their lives.

- **Galatians 4:19** My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until **Christ is formed in you,**

The Father's Discipline

Children bear their father's resemblance, and spiritually speaking that would be either the character of Christ, or the devil. However, God the father will not allow us to keep an ungodly sinful character. The same way a father disciplines his child, God will correct us to make us holy like him, because he loves us. God's discipline is proof that we are his children, but those who reject his corrections are not his children.

- **Hebrews 12:5-10** And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because **the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.**" Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? **If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.** Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.**

If you are not willing to obey God, and accept his correction,

You are not going anywhere with God, until you submit to him!

===== STOP HERE! =====

Okay children of God, let's move on.

Start with the Heart

The starting point for character formation is a change in heart. We begin by a thorough house cleaning, and doing away with the stinking thinking. The environment outside our body does not make us sin, it's our thoughts on the inside that lead us into sin.

- **Mark 7:20-23** He (Jesus) went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For **from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts**, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. **All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'**"

- **2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though **our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.** (Eph 3:16)

Jesus walked through a world full of sin, yet Satan could not get inside his mind. Jesus saw and heard many things, but nothing ever got inside him.

- **John 14:30** "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world (Satan) is coming, and he has nothing in Me.
- **Isaiah 42:18** "Hear, you deaf; And look, you blind, that you may see. Who is blind but My servant (Jesus), or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the LORD'S servant? **Seeing many things, but you do not observe; opening the ears, but he does not hear."**

However, when Lot walked through the streets of Sodom, his soul was vexed and tormented by everything he saw. Lot's problem was that had been compromising, and he was like a brother to the Sodomites (Gen 19:7), and he let Sodom get into his head. Remember Lot's wife (Lk 17:32), don't look back (Lk 9:62), or think back.

- **2 Peter 2:6** ... and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (**for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard**) if this is so, then **the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials**

...

But God will help us to walk the streets like Jesus did, we can see without observing, and hear without listening. We can control what our eyes watch on the streets, in our home, or in our hands. Like a blind person, we can depend on God to be our guide, to lead us to walk by the Spirit, and we can mentally shut out the things we don't want to see or hear.

- **Isaiah 30:21** **Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"** Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.
- **Isaiah 42:16** **I will lead the blind** by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths **I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them** and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

Battlefield of the Mind

As the saying goes; garbage in, garbage out. If we watch or listen to anything that fills our minds with murder, sex, hatred, and other filth, then we are committing spiritual sin, our conscience is becoming seared, and our thought life is becoming defiled.

- **Jeremiah 7:9** "**Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely**, burn incense to Baal, and **walk after other gods** whom you do not know, "**and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'**?" "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD.
- **James 4:1** Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from **your desires for pleasure** that war in your members? You lust and do not have. **You murder and covet** and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?
- **1 Timothy 4:1** Now **the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, speaking lies in hypocrisy, **having their own conscience seared with a hot iron**,

An undisciplined mind is the devil's playground, we cannot afford to be careless and ignore the dangers of the end times. The tech and media companies are taking our personal information (data mining) and feeding it through algorithms with artificial intelligence to manipulate our minds.

Our cell phones, tablets, lap tops, TV.'s and other devices can be trojan horses for the devil to get into our minds, and through our eye gates and ear gates. These tech devices have become very powerful brain washing and social engineering weapons, and there is a strong demonic influence behind it all. The media and tech industries are being used to usher in the antichrist system, and dominate the entire planet.

Yes, these same devices can be used by God, but the window for ministry is rapidly closing, and anything contrary to the approved agenda is being de-platformed, and removed from the public.

We need to stay alert, Jesus can return at any time. Will he find us minding the Spirit when he returns? We need to take this very seriously, and be sober and diligent, because the devil is like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour! (1 Pet 5:8).

- **Ephesians 2:2** ... in which you once walked according to **the course of this world, according to the prince (Satan) of the power of the air (air waves, TV, internet, radio, etc.), the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience**, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves **in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Our thought life controls who we are, either for God or for the devil. We must determine that we will control our thought processes, knowing that the spiritual battle will only increase as we get closer to the coming of the Lord.

- **2 Corinthians 4:3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds** of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- **Romans 12:1-2** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Mental Attitude & Training

Athletes are committed to a disciplined training routine that controls every aspect of their lives, including coaching, exercise, practice routines and diet. They train over and over, hour after hour, day by day, to be stronger, faster, and more precise than the competition in their specific discipline. They are not spectators, **they are the sport**, and people pay to see the fruit of their training, which is a display of excellence.

Our goal should be to have a greater mental resolve and commitment in serving God, than athletes have for their sport. We should be willing to give all that we have for the Lord (Lk 14:26), and run to win this race, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, (Matt 22:37).

- **1 Corinthians 9:24** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. **Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.** They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, **I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave** so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.
- **2 Timothy 3:15-17** and how from infancy you have known **the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture** is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, **correcting and training in righteousness**, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- **1 Timothy 4:14** Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. **Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.** Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Trained by the Word

Reading and memorizing Bible verses will train our minds, to think according to the scriptures with God's thoughts, instead of our own rationale and reasoning. Notice how God links his thoughts with his ways.

- **Isaiah 55:7-9** Let the wicked forsake **his way**, And the unrighteous man **his thoughts**; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. "**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,**" says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

We are told that we can bring **every thought captive** to obedience to Christ, who is the word of God. To control our thoughts, we must train our minds, and every time our thoughts go astray, we must bring them back to the word of God. But it will never happen without a conscience effort.

- **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**

- **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, **whatever things are true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are **lovely**, whatever things are of **good report**, if there is any **virtue** and if there is **anything praiseworthy meditate on these things**.

Fruit of the Spirit

The key to victory over the sinful mind, is by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill our minds with the things of God. The Holy Spirit will give us the power to control our mind and thoughts if we yield to Him. By contrast allowing the world, the flesh and the devil control our thinking makes us an enemy of God, (1 Jn 2:15-16).

- **Romans 8:5-9** For **those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but **those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**. For **to be carnally minded is death**, but **to be spiritually minded is life and peace**. Because **the carnal mind is enmity (is hostile) against God**; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, **those who are in the flesh cannot please God**. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

When the Holy Spirit fills our thoughts, he will also influence all of our actions. Paul shared a list of character traits that are the fruit of obedience to the Holy Spirit.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**.

Peter also gave a list of different virtues that we should be adding to our faith, in essence he is speaking about building character. He also said that anyone not involved in this process is spiritually blind.

- **2 Peter 1:5-9** But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue**, to virtue **knowledge**, to knowledge **self-control**, to self-control **perseverance**, to perseverance **godliness**, to godliness **brotherly kindness**, and to brotherly kindness **love**. For if these things are yours and abound, **you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ. For **he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins**.

The Holy Spirit uses our conscience and the word of God to guide us. If we are sensitive to him, he will guide us to do what is right, which will change and form our character, (Jn 16:8, 1 Tim 3:9). When we combine Peter and Paul's list of character traits, we see the fruits that come out of obedience to the Spirit.

Diligent
Godly
Kind
Peaceful
Faithful

Virtuous
Joyful
Loving
Patient
Gentle

Knowledgeable
Self-controlled
Perseverance
Good

Ambassadors for Christ

One reason God wants us to have the character of Christ, is so we will accurately represent Christ to a lost and dying world. Many people will judge Christ by how we represent him, therefore we have an obligation to live godly lives.

- **2 Corinthians 5:18-20** Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and **has given us the ministry of reconciliation**, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
- **1 Timothy 3:14-15** . . . I write so that you may know **how you ought to conduct yourself** in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness** . . .

We want to do the right things, but sometimes we are not sure about what to do. And as we mentioned from the beginning, it is God who writes his laws on our heart and mind, so we will not suggest any laws, rules or regulations.

But we will give a sample list of questions that demonstrate how to each person can search the word of God for answers. As we pray and read the word of God, we will come to our own conclusions, and that process will change and mature us.

Questions for Different Situations

Am I Representing Christ? Am I a Good Example?

1 Peter 2:21-23, John 13:3-16, 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

Do I Offend or Stumble Others?

1 Corinthians 8:9-13, Romans 14:13-21, Mark 9:42-43

Does it look bad or inappropriate?

1 Thessalonians 5:22,23, Genesis 39:9-20

Am I Modest or Sensual?

1 Timothy 2:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 2 Corinthians 7:1

Am I Leading to God, or Being Led Astray?

2 Corinthians 6:14-17, 1 Corinthians 15:33-34, Ephesians 5:8-13, James 4:4

Am I Hiding my Light, or Hiding My Sin?

Luke 12:2,3, John 3:19-21

Am I acting Immature?

1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 13:11; Hebrews 5:12-14

Are My Words Foolish, Idle, Build Up or Tear Down?

Ephesians 5:3-4, Matthew 12:36-37, Proverbs 12:18; 15:1-4, 16:23-24, 18:21,

Is This Helpful? Building Up? God's Will?

1 Corinthians 10:23-24, Romans 15:1-6, James 4:13-15

Does this Glorify God?

1 Corinthians 10:31

Am I Motivated by Love?

1 Corinthians 13:1-8,

Am I Selfish? Considerate to Others?

Philippians 2:3-8; 2:19-22, Romans 15:1-3 Galatians 6:1-5, Luke 6:31