

CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE TRANSFORMED

Romans 12:1-2

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: When a person believes in Jesus Christ, he/she is "saved" and becomes instantly a member of God's family and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is just the beginning for the "new" Christian for he/she has also been "reborn" and has an entirely new nature within along with the old sin nature he/she has had from birth. As the Christian moves on in life, he/she is to be gradually "transformed" into a very different person than before being saved for God has plans for every believer's life and changes are needed.

I. THE MEANING OF "TRANSFORMATION"

1. The basic meaning of the word "transformation:"
 - It means to change into another form (metamorphosis)
 - It is like a change of form like when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.
 - It is what happened to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-2
 - It is what is to happen to Christians in their service to God - Romans 12:1-2
2. The concept of "transformation:"
 - Paul writes that:
 - Christians are "to undergo a complete change, which under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct..."
 - A new Christian is like a caterpillar but he/she is to make a change like a butterfly does.
 - It is something that a Christian allows to be done to him/her
 - It something which a Christian cannot do him/herself.
 - It is something which the Christian submits to God's power and His grace.
 - In doing so, the Christian is changed "into another form."
 - The Christian becomes a "new creation" - 2 Corinthians 5:17

II. THE GOAL OF "TRANSFORMATION"

1. The goal of being transformed is to become like Jesus Christ:
 - As described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18
 - As prescribed by God - Romans 8:29
 - It is the purpose of becoming a disciple in order to be like one's teacher - Luke 6:40
 - Being transformed is the goal of Christian living - Colossians 3:9-10
2. The goal of being transformed is to live like Jesus Christ:
 - To present one's body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.
 - Just like Jesus did when He was here - Hebrews 10:5
 - As Jesus did, so is the Christian to offer him/herself as a living sacrifice - Romans 12:1
 - To prove that God's will is good, acceptable and perfect.
 - Just what Jesus sought to do when He was here - John 6:38
 - Like Jesus, the Christian is to demonstrate that God's will is always right - Romans 12:2
3. Sadly, many Christians never experience the total transformation God offers. Instead they remain "caterpillars" and never make it to being a "butterfly."

III. THE MOTIVATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

1. The mercies of God motivates one to be transformed:
 - Paul encouraged Christians to become transformed because of God's mercies - Romans 12:1
 - Such as freedom from sin - Romans 6:16-18
 - Such as the gift of eternal life - Romans 6:23
 - Such as peace with God - Romans 5:1
 - Such as having access to the grace of God - Romans 5:2
 - Such as being saved from the wrath of God - Romans 5:9
2. The love of Christ motivates one to be transformed:
 - Paul reminds Christians of the motivating power of the love of Jesus Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - Such love compelled him to live for Jesus - Galatians 2:20
 - Such love should also compell EVERY Christian to also live for Jesus and be like Him.
 - There is an alternative to being transformed to the image of Jesus:
 - If not transformed to the image of Jesus, then one is conformed to the world - Romans 12:1
 - a transitory, changeable, unstable situation.
 - One becomes just a cheap imitation - copy of being like Jesus.
 - If one is not transformed, he/she will either be like:
 - the world - acting like those in the world, which brings shame to the name of Jesus Christ.
 - other weak Christians:
 - outwardly acting like a Christian, appearing like Christians, but being in reality only a cheap copy which will eventually reveal its true nature.
 - It is to bring shame to the name of Jesus Christ.

IV. THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

1. At the beginning of one's new life in Jesus - moment of salvation:
 - It is something that the Christian cannot do for him/herself - Romans 12:2
 - One cannot change him/herself by his/her own strength or good works - Romans 7:14-24
 - One must submit to God's working on him/her.
 - It begins when one believes in Jesus Christ.
 - The working of God starts at one's belief in Jesus - Colossians 2:11-13
 - Spiritually circumcised as one's sins are removed.
 - Buried and then raised with Christ (believer's baptism).
 - Made alive with Christ and forgiven all trespasses (reborn)
 - The working of the Holy Spirit brings renewal to the believer - Titus 3:5
 - The believer is saved by the mercy of God
 - The believer is washed in regeneration and renewed by the Holy Spirit
 - The believer rises to walk in newness of life - Romans 6:3-8
 - Buried with Jesus by baptism into His death
 - Crucified with Jesus that one might be free from the penalty of sin.
 - Raised to live with Jesus Christ - reborn
2. The renewing of the believer's mind begins:
 - The process of transformation continues as the believer's mind is renewed:
 - Romans 12:21; Ephesians 4:20-24
 - The mind must be renewed in order for any changes to be permanent.

- Renewing one's mind is made possible by where the believer sets his/her mind:
 - on things above - Colossians 3:1-2
 - on the things of the Holy Spirit - Romans 8:5
 - feeding one's mind on the Word of God, prayer, fellowship with other Christians - Acts 2:42
- When the believer's mind is renewed, he/she can then experience a true transformation:
 - the believer must put off the old person and put on the new person - Colossians 3:2, 5-10
 - the believer must live according to the Holy Spirit - Romans 8:5, 13
- The process of transformation is not complicated:
 - one must set his/her mind on things above in order to renew his/her mind:
 - meditate and dwell on God and His Word
 - keep one's mind in communication with God through prayer
 - involve one's mind in spiritual worship by frequent worshiping with others
 - centering one's mind on Jesus through observing the Lord's Supper
 - with a renewed mind, it is then possible to put off the old and put on the new
 - put off the old person with all the sins
 - put on the new person patterned after Jesus' example
 - a person becomes what he/she dwells upon.

3. Many Christians are hindered from being transformed:

- Many Christians remain "caterpillars" and never transform into "butterflies."
 - Saved, yes,
 - Baptized, yes
 - The promise of God's help, yes
- Many Christians fail to RENEW their minds:
 - irregular Bible study - starvation
 - trashy movies, books, conversations - junk-food
- Many Christians never experience transformation:
 - they become what they think and they don't think much about God
 - they spend time watching, reading things of the Devil than the things of the Holy Spirit

CONCLUSION:

1. Every Christian is called to be "transformed" into the image/likeness of Jesus Christ.
 - All the motivation one needs is there - God's mercies and Jesus' love.
 - Opportunity to be transformed has happened at salvation.
 - One must allow his/her mind to be renewed by focusing on things above.
2. God want every Christian to have a complete "make over."
 - God has provided everything to remove any cause of being separated from Him.
 - God has provided everything needed to make a new person out of every believer..
3. Christian are YOU allowing God to transform you? To completele remake you?