

The transformed life has a godly purpose

“To live is Christ.” Phil 1:21

The transformed life has a godly purpose

Christian understanding is more than head knowledge; true knowledge is revealed in a transformed life reflecting the life of Christ. In the real world alienated from God, we naturally act out what we believe is true, not what we claim to understand. The truth of God must change the heart to serve Him and His plan of salvation, or we remain fleshly in our understanding and therefore in our behaviour.

"Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Rom 12:1-2

The behaviour that needs to be transformed is the result of strongly held thoughts that remain in our minds of the flesh after conversion, as what we actually believe about ourselves and the world.

"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Rom 8:5-8

To break the ways of the mind of the flesh away from how we live, the new heart from God must be informed by faith in the word of God by denying the self of our minds to live for Him. Everything we do and say reveals how much we have been transformed into the image of Christ through a sincere commitment of dying to self in order to live for Him by the power of God.

Whatever falls short in our behaviour in revealing Christ to the world indicates what we need to continue to undertake to ride ourselves of in our sanctification with all perseverance; by actively putting off what is not of Christ in order to live by faith alone in trusting God for all things.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

“So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Rom 8:12-14

We are weak without God’s help, for it is only the Spirit of God who can change our minds if we are in submission to Him so we can live according to the image of Christ to serve Him in all we do. But this can only happen when we submit daily to His Authority and Power to renew our minds as we surrender to Him. We have the full resources of God to help us because He has given us all we need to live for Christ if we live by faith.

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Pet 1:3-4

Therefore, the ability to live according to the divine nature we have received from God in regeneration, is His will for us in the daily process of faith working through repentance from fleshly thinking, in order that we can live out the thoughts of God revealed to us by the Spirit from the word of God in the Bible.

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? Far from it! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our

body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for the one who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

Rom 6:1-8

Living for Christ is the overflow of His love in our hearts as we serve Him. *"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf... Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*

2 Cor 5:14-15, 17

We are saved in Christ with a new nature and a worldly mind

When we are delivered to Christ through the grace of God unto salvation, we retain a corrupted mind that has already been indoctrinated with the thinking of the world which is alienated from God. Even while we believe the gospel of Salvation, much of what we accept without question is from a disposition that justifies self interest and is opposed to self denial in order to live for Christ. All this fallen human knowledge we tend to naturally follow blindly needs to be put down by the renewing of our minds by the Spirit using the word of God.

The later in life we come to the light in the knowledge of God in Christ, the more there is in our thinking that needs to be undone and replaced with the mind of God in Christ. The mind retains everything we have learnt from birth. It's not what we are naturally comfortable with that determines what is acceptable to God as we negotiate our way through the trials of life, therefore, every inclination and conviction we hold to be true must be diligently measured by the scriptures if we are to know the truth of God and make progress in growing up in holiness to the Lord.

Unfortunately, most people don't bother to do the hard work of sorting out what is in our minds of the corrupted flesh so that we can live more effectively by the Spirit. As a result most who come to faith still live for themselves and what they think, even while claiming to be living for the kingdom of God. And if challenged to think biblically about their ideas,

they become defensive and insist that the challenger is not loving even though they spoke the truth is love.

Thinking the thoughts of God requires putting to death our favourite opinions and desires that fall short of what Christ desires. Which means that growing in holiness can be hard work that will take a lifetime.

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behaviour his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

James 3:13-18

And this work of sanctification in holy wisdom is a labour that must be undertaken in the context of the unregenerate nature still in the church membership even as the body of Christ. For it is only in the context of the sanctified body of holiness by the Spirit that we have the mind of Christ.

"*We have the mind of Christ*" in 1 Corinthians 2:16 is not about us as individuals by ourselves, it's about "we" first person plural. It's about us who live together as servants of Christ. In order for us to advance in holiness we need to seek out those who have gone before us in dying to the self of the world daily so that the understanding they have received can shine light on our path just as God has been the light for them.

If people cannot explain what they have learnt and demonstrate in godly service to Christ through the measure of the whole word of God, then their understanding is of no spiritual value. If any part of God's word contradicts our view of His truth, we don't have the truth, so we have believed a lie from the enemy of God who is intent on leading us astray so that we are of no use to the kingdom of God. And since the mind of the flesh cannot please God, we need a new mind.

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Rom 8:6-8

Therefore we have much work of sanctification in holiness to do if we are to finish well. The only way we can demonstrate we know the truth of God is by our godly works and being able to substantiate our position from the scriptures. But this is not the way of the faint hearted who often take God's word out of context to justify worldly thinking according to their fleshly indoctrination that resists being measured by God for recalibration in holiness.

We are told from God's word to be of the same mind according to the truth in Christ, but that will never happen when we are insisting we know the truth without reference to the wisdom of God in the scriptures. No wonder there are so many denominations with their favourite leanings consistent with the wisdom of the world. No wonder there are so many false teachers.

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.

2 Tim 3:16-17

Where is the wise person? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world? 1 Cor 1:20

The renewed mind is not the natural way of thinking

“Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. To Live Is Christ. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Phil 1:20-21

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

But those who are unregenerate in the sinful world that we are to witness to are without true knowledge of God, and they need to hear His will for all men if any are to receive mercy. We need to remember they are without the light of the knowledge of God. Before they can hear the good news, they need to know that the Spirit of God brings conviction of sin, knowledge of righteousness, and judgment from God. *“He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”* John 16:8

The education of a life lived without God is according to the wisdom of the world. And the wisdom of the world knows nothing of godly conviction of sin. Without conviction of sin there is no conversion from sin. The unbeliever has no God given moral compass. They may believe they are a child of God, but while God is the creator of all, He is only the spiritual Father of those who obey His Son.

“The Father loves the Son and has entrusted all things to His hand. The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” John 3:35-36

as it is written: “There is no righteous person, not even one; There is no one who understands, There is no one who seeks out God; They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, There is not even one.” Rom 3:10-12

The natural man is unable to comprehend the truth of God. *“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”* 1 Cor 2:14

“Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Rom 8:7-8

The unbeliever at whatever age, adults or children, have learnt and are learning that life is about pleasing themselves, what they want is most important. Their self-image and how they feel takes first place in all that needs to be considered. They have learnt that in order to be authentic

they are allowed to say how they feel without due consideration for the feelings of others. What they want is best according to their understanding without consideration for the needs of others.

They don't ask themselves whether their feelings honour God or not. They don't think about others before they do what they want for themselves. And no one can convince them otherwise. *“The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*
Rom 8:7-8

All this is consistent with the fallen human nature of the flesh without reference to honouring God through obedience. Unbelievers don't accept that God has given us rules we must obey if we are to honour Him and treat others with respectful behaviour. Unbelievers don't believe disobedience has serious consequences.

That nature of mankind is sinful since Adam and must come to repentance by the grace of God in order to be forgiven our sins through the death of Christ on our behalf. This identification with Christ's death in our place through self denial is so that we can be born again by the Spirit who will live in us so we can live for God in obedience and truth.

Uncompromised Biblical teaching gives us a moral compass that is needed if we are to obey God. Without the teaching of the Bible as the absolute authority of God, our personal opinions according to the flesh are considered to be our rule for life. And anything we learn from the world according to the wisdom of the world is fleshy and in opposition to the Law of God if it doesn't submit to the Sovereign Rule and wisdom of Almighty God.

This is how Jesus explains what is necessary in repentance is we are to live with Him. *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”*
Luke 9:23-24

And the Bible teaches us that all have sinned against God and are under His judgement unless we deny ourselves and believe in Christ and obey

Him in all things. Godly obedience is only possible by submission to the Spirit. The solution to self is Christ made alive in us over our death to self. *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”*
Gal 2:20

“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”
Rom 8:9

Those who have received mercy from God will be merciful

Even we who are in Christ stumble when we assert our personal opinions without bothering to measure them against the word of God. Regardless of how long since we have died to self to live for Christ, there is still a lot of the world that remains in our thinking, so our personal purification in holiness will continue until we die.

Therefore, we must submit daily to being renewed by the Spirit in our minds so that we can know what is acceptable to God and our responsible worship. The mindset of the redeemed is merciful first of all humble and able to be molded by God into His likeness. *“For we do not presume to rank or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they have no understanding.”* 2 Cor 10:12

When dealing with others, whether believers or unbelievers, we are always to contend for the faith we have received. But we do this in submission to the Spirit. *“Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.”* (Eph 4:15) Because we should know, in the ongoing struggle we all have with putting off the stain of sin and life in the flesh that remains in our thinking, we have received mercy. *“So speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.”* James 2:12-13

To expect a godly life from someone who has not died to self to live for Christ is futile, and will not only end in frustration, but can be the cause of our own stumbling as we may attempt to lord it over others with

constant nit-picking. But regardless of the difficulties we face, we must contend for the faith by the grace we have received from God so that we don't fail to love our neighbours as ourselves. *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."* Matt 5:7-9

Mercy has a price. Jesus is the giver of mercy, and He paid a price as our example. Obedience to the will of God in following Christ's example means that we will also face opposition wherever God's will is resisted. *"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."* Phil 1:29

All who will live a godly life as faithful witnesses to Christ in contending for His faith and pursue His salvation work will suffer with Christ. *"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."* 2 Time 3:12

Opposition may even come from family as we stand firm for the faith. *"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household."* Matt 10:34-36

And resistance may be personal and abusive. In close relationships it is better to take the advice Peter gave to the wife of an unbelieving husband. *"Even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behaviour of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behaviour."* 1 Pet 3:1-2

But we don't neglect to speak up when we should, but there has to be a balance between our verbal witness when the opportunity presents itself and our daily example in the way we live by grace in the mercy of God. We are not left without ability, we who are servants of Christ have all His graces at our disposal. And it is in Him we have access to all wisdom and knowledge through His Spirit revealing to us all that is pertaining to Christ so that we can have confidence in fulfilling His purpose for our life.

Remember we have received everything we need for a godly life.

2 Pet 1:3-4

The scriptures are God's rule or measure for a godly life. All our experiences in the world are ordained by God so we can measure ourselves against the scriptures given by God, in order that we are more able to grow in holiness by putting off what doesn't measure up to the image of Christ's example of faithfulness and devoted obedience revealed to us in the scriptures. *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”* Rom 8:28-29

Thank God His Grace and mercy are continually multiplied to us, because He never stops working for our divine goodness, so that we can glorify Him through obedience to His Son who lives in us by His Spirit, in order that we can do the work of God, with the result that all things in the heavens and on earth can ultimately be reconciled in Christ.

We must ask ourselves, does our behaviour glorify God? When our children misbehave, we should ask them if their behalf glorifies God, and if not, then they need to stop and seek forgiveness. Therefore do we set them a good example? Does our behaviour honour God who is Lord over us? Do we love others as God loves? If we are honest, we say, not always. Then we know that we still sin and need to repent by dying to sin to live for Christ.

Are we actually involved in the mission of Christ to go into all the world to make disciples, teaching them to obey all He has commanded? A renewed mind is the product of a new spiritual creation that replaces the old creation with its old mind of the flesh. The new spiritual creation is designed to think Biblically, which only comes as a result of actually taking action to ensure that dying to the mind of the old self of the flesh is continually accomplished by positive confirmation with the word of God.

How easily do we misstep in our dealing with others because we still have aspects of the fleshly darkness lurking in our thinking that we are

often unaware, even as we supposedly walk as ambassadors of God who is unapproachable light?

This is why we need each other in whom the Spirit of God has come to dwell so that we can grow together in the image of Christ, for we are One Body of Christ living as a collective people called the Church of the living God.

No one, no one person should presume to know it all, as if they can always walk by the Spirit without stumbling sometimes; if this were true it wouldn't be necessary to obey God and confess our sins to one another.

We are called to be mature in our thinking, but that doesn't mean we have individually achieved the mind of Christ. We are part of the immortal collective who are incomplete without each other. Only the old mind of the flesh thinks with the pride of self satisfaction.

We who are born of God need each other to live for Christ in order to carry out His overriding mission to make disciples amongst every people group of the world. This is way we need to be renewed in our minds. The more we are conformed to His holiness in our minds, the more we will be able to effectively carry out His dying purpose, and the less we will stumble according to the flesh. When we speak, we should remember there is always opportunity for confusion, for we don't always speak as the person we think we are in Christ, but the person we really are with work to do, and the one listening to us has their own different concept of who we are according to the fleshly thinking that remains in them.

Any personal ambition we have that takes the place of the dying purpose of Christ to make and train disciples to obey His every commandment is a denial of His life made evident in the Church. Everything we do is to be done as to Him. And all we do is to be secondary to His purpose, and only serve as a means to support His dying will and testament to us.

Let Christ be glorified in our bodies.

Living Water Resources

www.cometothestream.com