



To be transformed into his likeness means you are becoming a different kind a person. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Metamorphosis of an Inch Worm

Three stages: 1) caterpillar, 2) cocoon, 3) moth (or butterfly)

The desire to be a different kind of person is a result of God's new creation in us. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Jesus died and rose again as our substitute, paying the penalty for our sin.

Sin has a way of damaging our relationship with God, but sin also has a way of distorting our humanity into something ugly, something devoid of life, something subhuman.

Sin has turned us into hateful people, hurtful people, lustful people, addicted people, lazy people, selfish people, gossipy people, etc.

Jesus was physically disfigured so we could be transformed into his perfected image. (Isaiah 52:14)

Jesus was the picture of perfect humanity. We were disfigured by sin. He took upon himself disfigurement so we could be transformed into his image of perfected humanity.

Inner change is a part of God's new creation project.

When Jesus comes into your life things start changing, but not everything changes immediately.

This process of INNER CHANGE is the process of spiritual transformation.

Spiritual transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform us into the image of Jesus for the joy of God the Father. He does this in the context of Christian community as we walk along spiritual pathways.

Inner change:

- The Father's joy
- The Son's image
- The Spirit's work
- In Christian community
- Along spiritual pathways

1) Inner change is the Father's joy

God wants to change us not just for our benefit, but ultimately for his joy.

Jehovah, the living God, is described as brooding over his church with pleasure. He looks upon souls redeemed by the blood of his dear Son, quickened by his Holy Spirit, and his heart is glad. Even the infinite heart of God is filled with an extraordinary joy at the sight of his chosen.

Charles Spurgeon, 1887

The Christian life is not just becoming better people. It is becoming better people for the glory and joy of our Father in heaven. (Proverbs 17:21; Proverbs 23:24)

2) Inner change is the Son's image.

We are not being transformed into just any kind person. We are being transformed into a kind of person who looks like Jesus, thinks like Jesus, talks like Jesus, and loves like Jesus. (Romans 8:29)

The world Christian means "a little Christ."

3) Inner change is the Spirit's work.

We are *being* transformed. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

The verb "transformed" is in the passive voice implying that the object is the recipient of the action.

Inner change is not a matter of willpower, but a willingness to open up to the Spirit's power. Inner change by willpower inevitably leads to some form of legalism.

The process of inner change begins and ends with the Holy Spirit.

4) Inner change is accomplished in Christian community.

One of the tools the Holy Spirit uses to change us is the challenge, encouragement, and accountability of Christian community. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Christian community is not the building or the events, but the people! Suggestions on connecting with people:

- Get here early on Sunday morning
- Walk across the room and introduce yourself to people you do not know

- Get involved in a small group
- Practice hospitality (Romans 12:13)

5) Inner change occurs along spiritual pathways.

Spiritual pathways are the classic spiritual disciplines which become tools in the hands of the Holy Spirit to transform us into the image of Jesus. (Psalm 25:4-5)

God has paths, well-trodden pathways that have been walked by Christians for centuries.

Spiritual pathways include prayer, Scripture reading, confession & repentance, silence & solitude, and reflection.

Walking along these pathways does not change us, but walking these ways puts us in a place where we can be changed.

On the ridge there is a path, the Disciplines of the spiritual life. This path leads to the inner transformation and healing for which we seek. We must never veer off to the right or the left, but stay on the path. The path is fraught with severe difficulties, but also with incredible joys. As we travel on this path, the blessing of God will come upon us and reconstruct us into the image of Jesus Christ. We must always remember that the path does not produce the change; it only places us where the change can occur. This is the path of disciplined grace.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

Galatians 4:19

