

Devoted Disciple

Discipline of Refusal – Part 1

The Transformation of the Believer

A three-part article to explore and determine simple tools to help all of us work out our salvation with fear and trembling each day (Philippians 2: 12 – 15). **Part One** looks at the reasons and scripture on why we refuse to be transformed to this world as Paul admonishes every one of us (Romans 12:2). **Part Two** continues with the believer's refusal to conform to the world system. Paul again says that the believer is to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God (Romans 12:1). **Part Three** concludes the series on the believer's refusal to give into the schemes of the devil. Paul stated to the Corinthian church that they were to not let Satan outwit us . . . not being unaware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11).

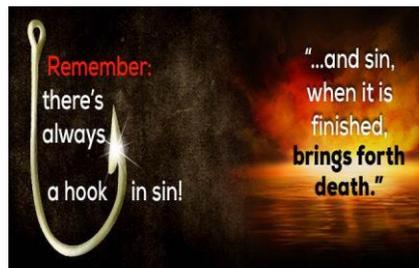
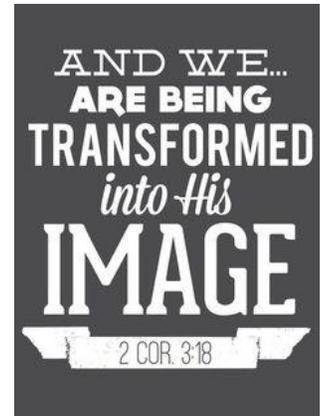
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The Transformation of the Believer

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I have been enjoying the time with my future son-in-law reading through 'Disciplines of a Godly Man'. Their wedding is set for some time in May (keeps changing due to this virus thing we are having to deal with). Our relationship has grown immensely due to studying the Word together. This book has assisted our growth with the many truths Kent Hughes presents as absolute necessities to be a godly man. I was intrigued by three words in the following quote – "So we must lay down as fundamental to our Christianity this truth: a Christian mind demands conscious negation; a Christian mind is impossible without the discipline of refusal."ⁱ The discovery of being transformed into the image of Christ, must include this **'discipline of refusal'**. What does it mean for a Christian to discipline themselves to refuse things to be godlier? I found that there is a plethora of scripture that shows how a Christian is to be transformed so that the renewing of our mind stays away from the worldly system and the schemes of the devil.ⁱⁱ Our transformation is a process theologians term as 'sanctification'. I love how Noah Webster's 1928 Dictionary defines 'sanctification'; the act of God's grace **by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world,**ⁱⁱⁱ Chuck Swindoll in a recent rebroadcast stated that "Integrity is not about perfection, it is about authenticity"^{iv}. For the believer to have integrity they are to welcome scrutiny, be verbally and financially responsible, privately pure, ethically sound, have intellectual veracity, moral excellence, and be



personally consistent.^v *Therefore, transformation is not about perfection, it is about the process of not conforming to this world and to renew your mind.*

Transformation is about the process of sanctification, where men are purified or alienated from sin. Transformation will continue

throughout our time here on earth as we are to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12, NASB).

Those who believe are “being transformed into the same image” of Jesus, from this earthly dwelling we call the body, into the resurrected body we will receive in heaven (2 Corinthians 3:18). The process requires the believer to think on the things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, things of good reputation, things of excellence and worthy of praise - - It is these things that the believer is to “let your mind dwell on these things”.^{vi} Awaken this morning with the clear message related to 1 Peter 1:14 - 16 –

“¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”^{vii} I clearly see four parts to the last part of verse 16, a) the “You shall”; b) “be”; c) the demand to holiness; and d) and God’s holiness. Breaking down each part will help us understand more about this transformation process that Jesus started, and Paul elaborated on. *First*, “You shall” comes from Leviticus 11:44 where God says to the Israelites to “you must not defile yourselves”. *Second*, the word “be” is an action word, which means to take place; happen; occur; or to continue or remain as before.^{viii} Enduring Word commentary reminds us that “The main idea behind *holiness* is not moral purity but it is the idea of *apartness*.” The idea is that God is *separate*, different from His creation, both in His essential nature and in the perfection of His attributes. But instead of building a wall around His apartness, God calls us to come to Him and share His apartness. He says to us, “**Be holy, for I am holy.**”^{ix} *Third*, the demand to be holy is in alignment with God’s standard of operation. *Lastly*, this falls in line with verse 16, “As I am holy”. God has a standard of operation – holiness. His holiness does not tolerate sin to be in close proximity to Him. Paul reminds us so clearly that “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”.^x I was reminded recently that for the believer we do sin, but we do not need to beat ourselves up over and over. We are to confess our sin with the assurance that Jesus is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us.^{xi} Transformation allows me to ask for forgiveness and then move on for it is through that forgiveness that I have the assurance that I can go before God for once again I am ‘holy’. My holiness before God never changed, for Christ covers it and I can boldly approach the throne of God and call him Abba Father being an heir through God.^{xii}



SIN
IT TAKES YOU
WHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO
IT KEEPS YOU
LONGER THAN YOU WANT TO STAY
IT COSTS YOU
MORE THAN YOU WANT TO PAY

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift
of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

Returning to those three words ‘discipline of refusal’ speaks to each of us that just as we discipline our body, physically, our mind intellectually, and our heart emotionally, we need to discipline our will by refusing to do the sin which so easily entangles us. Pastor Hughes points out that “Each ingredient (in Philippians 4:8) was, and is, a matter of personal choice – and our choices make all the difference in the world. We can choose a thought program that will produce a Christian mind.”^{xiii} Or, we can choose a thought program that is inconsistent with God’s Word and be tossed by the wind, double-minded man, unstable in his ways.^{xiv}

Transformation of the Believer is a process that last a believer’s lifetime and must include this effort to refuse to give in to sin and its destruction. One of my life verses is Jeremiah 9: 23 – 24, things that appear to be positives in everyone’s life are placed in the category of things that need to be refused. The prophet states that we are not to boast in wisdom, power, or strength; for each

one of these have positive and negative attributes in any person’s life. Therefore, we must refuse to give into the



Being Transformed

World Standard vs. God's Standard!

James 1:22

is that there are both natural and spiritual laws that are to be obeyed. Thus, transformation for the believer means that we are held to an even higher standard than the non-believer. By practicing the discipline of refusal, we can ensure that our walk with Christ fears and respects God and assures that we keep His commandments. Transformation is the process that James the great leader of the Jerusalem church challenges all believers to 'prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves'.^{xviii}

negative side of these areas and boast that we understand and know God his justice, lovingkindness, and righteousness.^{xv} The discipline of refusal for the transformed believer helps us to not conform to the world and renovate our mind in a constant and consistent renewed way. Solomon came to the clear conclusion that three areas of life apply to everyone, believer and non-believer. First, we are to fear God. The word 'Yare' in Hebrew can be translated two different ways. One type has to do with the emotional and/or intellectual anticipation of harm, what one feels may go wrong. The second is the positive feeling or awe or reverence for God, which may be expressed in piety or worship.^{xvi} Second, everyone is to "keep His commandments". The Hebrew word for 'keep' is Shamar; or to hedge around something, to guard, to keep safe. Solomon wants everyone to know that God's commands are to be honored and obeyed even if you don't possess saving faith in God.^{xvii} Lastly, Solomon makes it very clear that fearing God and keeping His commandments are for **everyone**. As creator of both Earth and man the expectation

ⁱ Disciplines of a Godly Man; R. Kent Hughes; Crossway Publishing; Wheaton, IL. Discipline of the Mind; pg 93.

ⁱⁱ 2 Corinthians 2:11; NASB; pg 1535; 1977 edition.

ⁱⁱⁱ Westers Dictionary 1828; <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/>; sanctification.

^{iv} Charles R Swindoll, Insight for Living, "Modeling Integrity – Part 1"; 2013.

^v Charles R Swindoll, Insight for Living, "Modeling Integrity – Part 2"; 2013.

^{vi} NASB, 1977 Edition; Philippians 4:8.

^{vii} ESV.org; <https://www.esv.org/1+Peter+1/>; 2001

^{viii} Dictionary.com; Entomology of the word "be"; <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/be?s=t>; Definitions #2 & #4.

^{ix} Enduring Word Commentary; Pastor David Guzik: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-1/>

^x NASB; 1977 Edition; Romans 3:23.

^{xi} NASB; 1977 Edition; 1 John 1:9.

^{xii} NASB, 1977 Edition; Galatians 4:6 - 7.

^{xiii} Disciplines of a Godly Man; R. Kent Hughes; Crossway Publishing; Wheaton, IL. Discipline of the Mind; pg 93.

^{xiv} NASB, 1977 Edition; James 1:7 - 8.

^{xv} NASB, 1977 Edition; Jeremiah 9:23 - 24.

^{xvi} NASB, 1977 Edition; Lexical Aids to the Old Testament; pg 1733.

^{xvii} NASB, 1977 Edition; Lexical Aids to the Old Testament; pg 1787.

^{xviii} NASB, 1977 Edition; James 1:22.