

Becoming Like Christ

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Gal. 4:19

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Rom. 8:29, *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

2 Cor. 3:18, *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

The New Testament clearly teaches us to be more like Jesus. This lesson will consider three texts which urge us to become like Christ.

Christ is to be formed in us.

Gal. 4:19, *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”*

The word formed “*morphoo*” is used in Gal. 4:19 in reference to “conformity to Christ.” Illustration: Paul wanted the Galatians to have Christ formed in them. We have role models into which we want to form ourselves. e.g. Sports figures, physicians, farmers, craftsmen, homemakers, etc. Above all we must be like Christ.

Some things prevented the Galatians from being like Jesus:

- Gal. 5:4, *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”* (holding to Moses’ Law).
- Gal. 5:19-21, “GAL 5:19-21
- Galatians 5:19 *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (holding to the works of the flesh).

Adultery – sexual relations with the spouse of another.

Fornication – sexual relations with another, whether the spouse of another or unmarried (Vine’s).

Uncleanness – morally unclean, sensual, lustful.

Lasciviousness – indecency, lack of restraint, shameless conduct.

Gal. 5:15, “*But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*” (biting and devouring one another).

Paul cited things which could help them to be like Jesus.

- Gal. 1:6-8, “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*” (receive the gospel in its purity).
- Gal. 5:22-24, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” (manifest the fruit of the Spirit).
- Gal. 2:20, “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” (make Christ their life).

In this way Christ is formed in us. We become like Him.

We must be conformed to the image of Christ.

Rom. 8:29, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*”

Conformed is from “*summorphos*” and is used of the conformity of the children of God to the image of His Son.

God has foreordained us to be conformed to the image of His Son. The foreordained are those who have been called by the gospel, have obeyed it, and are thus justified.

Those who are called by the gospel:

- Are forgiven and become pure as Christ is pure.
- Are called into fellowship with Christ. 1 Cor. 1:9, *“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
- They are now like him, bearing His image.

We must be transformed or changed into the image of Christ.

2 Cor. 3:18, *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Transformed is from *“metamorphoo”*, “to change into another form”.

- Matt. 17:2, *“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”*
- Rom.12:2, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

By following Christ as revealed in the New Testament we are transformed into His image.

Conclusion.

Our personal mission in life is to conform our lives to the life of Christ. We do this by forming Christ within us, by being conformed to His image and by being transformed or making whatever changes we need to make in our lives.

How can one be conformed to Christ? One must become a Christian. The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t

sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”

- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” Acts 11:18, “*... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*” If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto*

him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “for the remission of sins”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not been conformed to Christ — become a Christian, won't you consider it today?

