

A 60-day plan of transformation into the image of Jesus Christ

Day #4: A look at the six-fold transformation that Christ offers

1. Jesus Christ makes you the single greatest offer you will ever receive in this life—a transformed life of following and becoming like Jesus Christ as He takes you out of the darkness of this world and into the light of an abundant, transformed life:

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

2. To follow Christ is to become a disciple of Christ. To become a disciple of Christ is to become like Christ. To become like Christ is to be transformed in His image. To be transformed in His image is to find it very easy, natural, and pleasant to think and feel the way He did about God, life, and all human beings. To be transformed in the image of Christ includes a six-fold transformation of the person.
3. Let us note the six parts of a person that need to be transformed. Let us begin by noting our state of darkness before the transformation that Christ offers.
 - a. #1: The mind. The mind includes 4 elements: images, ideas, information, and reasoning patterns. In darkness, as an unbeliever or a believer who is not following Jesus, the mind rarely thinks about God, let alone His goodness, mercy, and grace. In darkness the mind is focused on self and comparing oneself to others. It is lost in the sea of human opinion and generally evaluates itself based on human factors such as looks, accomplishments, and the circumstances of life. In many cases if someone brings up God, there is an attitude of dismissal or disdain. Because God is not part of the thinking, the person is often controlled by ungodly images related to basic senses of sex, food, alcohol, or human approval. In sum, the mind of those who have not been transformed into the image of God is ungodly and often proud of its autonomy. It is antithetical to the mind of Christ. On a philosophical level, the darkened mind lives disoriented because it is disoriented to the four ultimate questions of life: (1) What is ultimate reality? (2) What is the blessed life? (3) Who is a good person? (4) How does one become a good person? Unfortunately, this darkened mind is not restricted to the unsaved. This is also true of believers who, for one reason or another, are not following Jesus Christ and His transformative plan. It is not like the godless mind is always filled with evil thoughts of harm or lusts. Rather, it simply does not think about God very much. God is simply irrelevant to the daily details of life—He is not worthy of one's thought life.
 - b. #2: Feelings. This is the area of experiences. It includes affections, emotions, attitudes, and dispositions. Our feelings have enormous influence over our thoughts. For example, we tend to have good thoughts about those we love and very critical of those who do not like. Prior to transformation into Christlikeness,

feelings are pretty much self-centered. How you feel about yourself is more governed by how others treat you, your appearance, acceptance by others, and a lot of factors that have nothing to do with God's eternal plan for your life. It is all about your human context. You are up when people appreciate you, and you are down when people do not appreciate you. Prior to regeneration, your feelings are defined by your surroundings, your spouse, family, country, looks, etc. Christ has nothing to do with it. In spiritual darkness, it is all about you. You do not think about the poor, the ugly, the marginalized, or the helpless. It is all about your own kingdom. Because your feelings are so tied into yourself, you are easily outraged at what you perceive as injustices committed against you all the while callous toward injustices perpetrated on others. This is the untransformed life that Christ has come to deliver us from. In sum, when our feelings are not secure in God and His grace, we become self-centered, self-righteous and defensive.

- c. #3: The heart. The heart is the area of choices. This is also known as volition. This refers to the choices one makes in life. The darkened heart does not choose the better ways of Christ. Instead, it chooses the world. It lives for the values of the world: acceptability, beauty, money, fame, and power. It chooses the secular path: no daily Bible study, no daily prayer, little to no church, no peacemaking, no love for the poor, no praising God. All energy is tied up on the secular journey to nowhere.
- d. #4: The body. The body of the untransformed person generally controls the person's life. Because the secular life does not find fulfillment in God and His transcendent gifts, it often seeks to quench its eternal thirst by the body senses. This can range from obsession over how one's body looks to fulfilling the senses of the body in food, alcohol, drugs, entertainment, etc. However, there is never enough food or sex to fill the aching emptiness that only God can fulfill. Moreover, actualization of illicit sense desires of the flesh establish addictive patterns that are hard to break.
- e. #5: The social life: The social life of the untransformed person is pretty much summed up in loving those he loves and even hating those who do not like him. It is strictly a quid pro quo relationship. The idea of loving your enemies and being good to those who mistreat you borders on repugnance to idiotic. Social life is all about who likes and admires you. You seldom think about the poor, the suffering, the ugly, the fat, the old and those whom the world has no use for. Moreover, your standards are formed by your social group. Whatever they think is OK, like illicit sex or drugs, become your standards.
- f. #6: The soul. Your soul is the life force that brings unity to all attributes. David speaks of God restoring his soul in Psalm 23:3. When the soul is not right with God, the person lives with a certain uneasiness. He is never comfortable with

others or in solitude. He is anxious and can seldom really relax because deep down he knows he is not right with God.

4. Satan has an elaborate plan that revolves around enslaving man in his kingdom of darkness in each of the six areas outline above: he wants to control (1) your mind so that you do not think about God and His grace; (2) your feelings so that you only care about gratifying yourself; (3) your choices so that you will pick the secular wide road of destruction; (4) your body so that you will be enslaved to its lusts (food, sex, pleasure); (5) your social life so that you will hate your enemies and not associate with Christ followers or the kingdom of God, and (6) your soul so that you will live in anxiety and frustration.
5. However, one does not have to live in the kingdom of darkness. Christ has come to deliver you into the kingdom of God that includes inner transformation of all 6 areas of your life. This is not behavior modification. This is inner transformation whereby one finds it easy, pleasant, and natural to do the things of Christ because one becomes the kind of person that finds the things of God easy and natural to do. Now let us consider what the transformed life looks like in all six areas.
 - a. #1: The mind. When one is transformed into the image of Christ, one finds it very easy and natural to think about God and His marvelous, matchless grace. As a matter of fact, it would be very difficult for a transformed person not to think about the wonders of God throughout one's day—just like Jesus Christ.
 - b. #2: Feelings. Under the transformative power of Christ, one enjoys positive emotions. He feels good about Himself in the grace of God and part of an eternal plan. When he does feel down, he knows how to change those feelings by reflecting on the ideas and images of grace, like Christ and the Cross. As far as destructive emotions—anger, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, vindictiveness—he finds it increasingly difficult to engage in them. In other words, he finds it hard to hate his enemies—just like it would be very difficult for Jesus Christ to hate His enemies.
 - c. #3: Choices: The believer who enjoys the transformative yoke of Christ is thrilled to live for God and His Kingdom. The secular world of meaninglessness, sin, enslavement, and nihilism is not a temptation. As a matter of fact, he would find it very difficult to live for this world just as it would have been difficult for Jesus Christ.
 - d. #4: Body: The believer who becomes like Christ is master over his body and its senses. Because he is in control of the body appetites, he can enjoy them more. The idea of the body ruling the life is repugnant to the Christ-follower. Because the Christ-follower is not filled with emptiness, he has no void to fill with food and illicit sensual pleasures. As a matter of fact, he would find the idea of eating

too much or engaging in illicit sexual activity a very difficult thing to do—just as it would have been for Jesus Christ.

- e. #5: Social life. The believer who Christ transforms enjoys reaching out to all people: the poor, the rich, the beautiful, the ugly, the intelligent, the ignorant, those who like him, those who reject him, conservatives, liberals, the moral, the immoral. He sees all made in the image of God. He defines people according to God's values, not worldly values. What would be hard for such a believer is not to care about and help the poor—just like it would have been very difficult for Jesus Christ not to care about the poor.
 - f. #6: Soul. The believer who has accepted Christ's invitation of transformation enjoys a peaceful soul. He echoes David's "God restores my soul" of Psalm 23:3. Because he is right with God and lives in the promises that God will provide for every need, he is relaxed about all of the "pressing" issues of life. He lives a thriving and robust life in the kingdom of God. As a matter of fact, what would be hard for the transformed believer to live a chaotic, frustrated, and meaningless life—just as it would have been very difficult for Christ to live a frustrated and meaningless life.
6. Read Psalm 23 very slowly and outloud several times. Note how each of the 6 areas of David's life have been transformed by pre-incarnate Christ.
 7. Reflect on the 6 areas of your life. Pick the one area that you have the most trouble with—the one area in which it is easy to do evil (godless mind, emotion, volition, body, social life, soul) but wish it were hard to do that evil. Go to the Lord with your specific request. For example, regarding the mind "Lord, please change me into being more like Jesus Christ so that I naturally think, love, and feel like Jesus Christ—so that it would actually be hard for me not to love You, love my enemies, or let my body control me." Of course, this is going to require feeding on the Word of God—more on this later.
 8. Take steps to actualize the desire you wish. For example, if food controls your life, fast for a day before the Lord. If you despise the poor, stop and visit/help a poor person or shop in a grocery store in a poor part of town. If you have an enemy, call or write him in an effort to reach out. Apart from actualization of desired desires, all knowledge will just remain in your head. They will never transform your life. Virtues must be actualized. Right thinking alone is only to have right propositions bouncing about in your head and even vice-ridden people can have right thinking. A glutton or an alcoholic can know very well how wrong it is to eat and drink too much but knowing that does not make him less a glutton or alcoholic
 9. In sum, Christ offers an abundant life to all of those who will come to Him. The road is discipleship. As far as I can tell, there are only 2 reasons for rejection: either one does not

want such an abundant life, or one does not believe Christ can do it. My guess is that the second is probably the biggest problem.

The 60-day transformation of the mind, heart, and emotions into Christlikeness

Day 1 – A life that lacks nothing (Psalm 23).

Day 2 - Satan, the enemy-Part 1 (Eph 2:1-3; 1 Jn 3:8; John 8:31-44; 1 John 2:15-16),

Day 3 – Review, reflect, journaling and Psalm 19.

Day 4 – A look at the six areas of transformation: the untransformed vs. the transformed.

A disciple of Christ,

Pastor Don