

A 60-day plan of transformation into Christlikeness

Day #9: Solitude with God and Christ's Transformative Easy Yoke

For latest edition of this article, see <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-9.pdf>

1. Solitude: Take at least 30 minutes of solitude with God, preferably before you interact with the world.
 - a. If you can find a place that displays the beauty of nature, use this for your quiet space with the Lord. God reveals Himself through natural revelation (Rom. 1:20). Read Psalm 19 slowly and note how David goes from natural revelation, to supernatural revelation, to his plan for the day regarding the meditation of his heart and the words of his mouth. Ask God for help with thoughts and the words you use with regard to all you will encounter today. This is how we access the grace of God. Make the decision to avoid mental sins and verbal sins for the day. God will give you the strength through His grace if you want to change. Recall in Romans 12:1, we are commanded to present ourselves to the Lord, yet in 12:2 the “transformed” is in the passive voice because it is a work of God and His grace.
 - b. At this stage (day #9), solitude with God is probably the most important and most powerful spiritual discipline (read 1 Tim. 4:7b-8) for spiritual formation. One cannot go through 60 days of solitude with God and not be changed for the better *on the inside*. Solitude is a spiritual discipline practiced by saints and our Lord Jesus Christ to access the grace of God (read Psalm 119:147-157, Mark 1:35). By the way, when reading passages that I list, I do not recommend using an electronic Bible. By using a physical Bible, you will also gain the form of the text in the context of the whole Bible in a way that is more difficult to do with an electronic Bible, which tends toward presenting before your mind a cut-up or isolationistic view of the passages.
 - c. Only in solitude can one develop a rich life with God. In our busy world, it is simply too easy to have a superficial life with God that is always interrupted with responsibilities and others vying for us in one way or another. Solitude enables us to set our minds on God in a wholistic manner free from distractions. And the practice of setting our minds on God in solitude will further enable us to set our minds on God on God in the heat of the battles in life. Read and memorize Isaiah 26:3.
 - d. The practice of solitude with God will also transform the believer's character in other ways. For example, it develops other virtues like being silent when someone else is talking, making one a better listener (social virtue); read James 3:2-17 on the tongue. Note the implication for character formation. The practice of solitude with God also transforms one into being a more patient person. If one can be in solitude with God 30 minutes every morning without feeling rushed, then he will naturally develop a life

of patience and ease. Patience is not something that can be faked. It has to be developed and it is key to the spiritual life.

- e. This 30 minutes of solitude with God can be just that. There may be times when you do not look up the passages. You may want to just reflect on your life and move into intercessory prayer for your family and our governmental leaders. The point is solitude with God and reflecting on God and His graciousness to you. The point is you and God, a second person relationship. You might want to just sit on the back porch look at the glory of creation think about your whole life and your loved ones. You may want to just praise Him. You may want to just read Psalm 145 as you reflect on God and His goodness to you.
 - f. We really do not know ourselves as well as we think we do. During the time of solitude with the Lord, it is a good time to ask God to reveal to you your true nature. Read Psalm 139:23-24 where David asks God to examine his heart and guide him in His life.
2. The light burden and easy yoke of Christ's transformative yoke.
- a. I will cover this in more detail in a future lesson. I just wanted to emphasize the fact that this plan is about transformation is not behavior modification. In transformation, the commands of the Lord are easy and light because of two things: (1) we are yoked with Christ and His power; (2) we are changed into the kind of people who naturally and lovingly do the commands that would otherwise be very difficult.
 - b. The promise in the transformative yoke: *Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*
 - c. The nature of the inward transformation: **Galatians 4:19** *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you (μορφωθῆναι χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν).*
 - d. Illustration of transformation from Matthew 5:44-48: *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

- i. Christ commands that we love our enemies. We could never do this in the flesh. And to fake it is only to move into hypocritical love at best, which is condemned in Romans 12:9.
 - ii. It is transformation that makes us into the kind of people who naturally/supernaturally love our enemies. As transformed individuals, we really do become like Christ.
 - iii. When we are transformed into Christlikeness, it becomes difficult not to love our enemies.
 - iv. By the way, by being the kind of person who naturally loves one's enemies, one will avoid all kinds of mental attitude sins that spawn sin and evil in our minds, emotions, and wills.
- e. Illustration of transformation from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: *Love is patient, and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
- i. In behavior modification, one will try very hard to be patient, kind, not envious, not unbecoming, not arrogant, not rude, not selfish, not provokable, not to think evil, not to rejoice in iniquity, to rejoice in truth, to bear all things, to believe all things, and to hope all things, and endure all things.
 - ii. All of this trying and trying and trying is anything but a light burden. All of the virtues listed in the above passages are extremely difficult for anyone who is not the kind of person who is naturally so loving as to be patient, kind, not envious, not unbecoming, not arrogant, not rude, not selfish, not easily provoked, not given to thinking of evil, does not take pleasure in iniquity, rejoices in truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.
 - iii. The point is that in transformation one becomes such a person who loves God with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength with a love that produces all kinds of fruit very naturally, delightfully, and consistently. It is all about cleaning the inside of the cup and making the tree good. This is far better than all the legalistic programs that depend upon man's ability. The only ability that God looks for is availability and this starts with solitude before God.

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

Day 1 – A life that lacks nothing (Psalm 23), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-1.pdf>

Day 2 - Satan, the enemy (1 John 2:15-16), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-2.pdf>

Day 3 – Review, reflect, journaling, and Psalm 19, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-3.pdf>

Day 4 – The six areas of inner transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-4.pdf>

Day 5 – The Word of God, Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-5.pdf>

Day 6 – 2 warnings & promise of transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-6.pdf>

Day 7 - Solitude, Disciplines, Transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-7.pdf>

Day 8–VIM (Vision-Intent-Means) & transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-8.pdf>

Day 9–Solitude with God & Christ’s transformative easy yoke, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-9.pdf>

A fellow disciple of Christ,

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