

In a letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul spoke about his upcoming visit with them. He had heard some bad reports about their bad behavior and sinful conduct, therefore he is almost dreading having to deal with that when he arrives. He writes:

2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

There's the problem! Some of the Corinthians, some people, some Christians, some believers today, think that “**we live by the standards of this world.**” But we don't! Our standards are different.

- In Christ Jesus we have changed.
- In Christ Jesus we are not made better, we died and have been born again. Death to Life.
- Now we think and live according to God's standards, discovered in His Word, not the standards of this world.

Transformed from the Worlds Pattern to God's Pattern

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- We as believers in Christ Jesus should not be thinking like everyone else is thinking.
- We should not be believing and saying what everyone else is saying.
- We should not be doing what everyone else is doing.
- We should not be living by or following the worldly pattern.

Too often I get disappointed in myself and I get disappointed in you, and in the church of Christ Jesus in general when like the Apostle Paul, I look at what people are saying and doing. I must draw the conclusion that “*some people... think that we live by the standards of this world*”.

Church, we should not be! If we are born again, but still trying to live according to the standard of this world we are going to be conflicted and miserable!

We are born again, recreated, and rewired to now live according to God's pattern for us.

As I prayed about where God wanted to take us this year, as I prayed about what He wanted to teach us and do in us this year, I kept getting the word “Transformation”. I feel like God is saying, I want you all to move along in this transformation process. There is too much sloppy grace, too much sin in the church, and too much of my redeemed people living and acting like the unredeemed.”

Remember what we learned in “The Light of Christmas” series, John told us that Jesus came to the world full of two things.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's right, Grace and Truth. There is ample grace upon grace, but we must embrace and live by the truth as well. God's truth exposes us. We ask for forgiveness, and we repent. What does repent mean? It means to do a 180 degree turn away from our sinful ways. We are covered with the grace and mercy of God.

“Ok, Scott, I hear what you are saying, but I'm not there yet! I'm not 100% changed. Let's be honest, I've got some problems.”

*“If I were saved and changed, born again, why are my thoughts and actions not totally correct?”
“Why do I sometimes struggle with my old ways?”*

Transformed by Salvation and Sanctification

Salvation – The moment we truly believe that God loved us so much he sent Jesus as the Christ to save us from our sins and we not only believe but we ask Jesus to forgive us and ask to receive Him:

- We receive Jesus as our **Savior**.
- We receive **forgiveness**, past, present, and future.
- We receive His **Holy Spirit** breathed into us at salvation.
- We receive **grace**, we receive the **gift of righteousness**.
- We receive **life** now and eternally in heaven.
- We receive **sonship** becoming the children of God.
- We receive **all spiritual blessings!**

That's a lot of free gifts received, and we didn't earn any of it! It was undeserved, an act of grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

So, when does all of that happen? At the moment of salvation our spirit man receives life! Made new, born again! As of that very moment if we were to die, we will go to heaven as a child of God. We are 100% saved. You can't get anymore saved than that. All you did was believe, ask, and receive.

"Well if that's the case why do I sometimes struggle with my old ways of my old sinful nature."

TRIUNE Beings. We Are BODY, SOUL and SPIRIT.

At salvation our SPIRIT MAN is 100% saved, but our SOUL, which is, our mind, will, and emotions, must be transformed into the image of Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Notice the wording "are being transformed". Hence that leads us to this big biblical word "Sanctification".

Sanctification - At the point of salvation our Soul transformation begins. The process begins!

We begin to change. Our Spirit is now saying to our Soul, "Soul, get things lined up in accordance with the truth in the Word of God. Change your thinking. Be transformed."

Your soul, your mind, will, and emotions are not totally correct yet, but the process has begun. We all may be transforming at different rates, but all of us are on this transformation path.

Working Out Your Salvation

Sometimes there is confusion when people read Paul's encouragement to the Philippian church, and he tells them to "Work out their salvation with fear and trembling".

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Some people say, "I thought salvation wasn't of works, (which it is not) is Paul saying we have to work to receive salvation?" No, this verse is talking about the sanctification process.

Now that you are born again, the transformation process begins. Walk in obedience to God's Word.

Learn how salvation and your newness in Christ relates to your everyday life and interactions with others. Your life should now begin to reflect Christ likeness. In other words, work it out, work out your salvation.

Here's the good news! Jesus hasn't hung you out to dry, but He is helping you in this process.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Hypocrites?

We hear people say, "You Christians are nothing but a bunch of hypocrites!" Why do they say that? They expect us to be perfect and they don't understand the sanctification process.

They say, "Yeah, you came to work Monday and told us that you received Jesus on Sunday at your church, but I just saw you get mad. I heard you say something that you shouldn't have said, etc."

The term Hypocrite is a theatrical word, which means "to pretend to be something that you are not." or "acting", acting like you are someone one other than who you really are.

- So, a true born-again Christian can't be a hypocrite in that sense, because we are not acting. We are not pretending to be a Christian. We are a Christian or we are not.
- What the world does not understand is that, as true born-again Christians, we are all being transformed. It's the process of sanctification.

If anything, we only are hypocrites when we, as believers, pretend that we are not.

- We pretend to still be sons and daughters of Satan rather than Children of God.
- We pretend that we naturally live according to the pattern of this world, and pretend that our flesh controls us.

That's when we are hypocrites; when we don't live according to the truth of Romans 8:12-14.

Romans 8:12-14 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Transformation Is Not An Excuse to Continue in Sin

"Oh well, yes I'm living in sin, but you know, it's all a part of that transformation process." What? No!

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Transformation is not an excuse to live in sin and willfully violate the principles of God. The word itself implies that you are changing and becoming more like Christ Jesus.

Transformation Can Be Hindered or Helped

Philippians 1:3-6 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

I am confident that Jesus, who has saved you and breathed His Holy Spirit into you, the Jesus who has created you for good works, the Jesus who has begun this transformation process in you, I am confident that He CAN, and Will complete the task.

You can hinder the process, or you can submit to the process, helping it come about in your life.

Sometimes it's as if I can hear Jesus saying, "Scott, we can do this the hard way or the easy way. It's up to you. You can work with me or against me, but we are going to get this done."

Church, let's do it the easy way! Let's work with Jesus with some of the choices we are making, That's what we said all last year that we must make choices every day that lead to life or death. Therefore, CHOOSE LIFE!

Make choices that will help this transformation process, not hinder it.

As we grow together this year, let's have the same attitude toward one another that Paul had for the Philippian church.

- Let's be confident that Jesus, who began a good work in all of us, will complete it and perfect it until we go to be with Him.
- Let's believe for the best for each other, encourage one another, pray for and support each other as we go through the process of transformation.

Simple Transformational Life Steps

- Salvation (I'm receiving Jesus as my Savior today.)
- Be filled with and walk in the Holy Spirit (Today I will ask Jesus to fill me with His Holy Spirit.)
- Pray - Communicate with God (This week I will spend at least three minutes talking to God.) If you don't know where to begin, start with "The Lord's Prayer" *Matthew 6:9-13*
- Read the Bible five minutes a day, instructions that lead to continuing transformation.
- Be equipped, encouraged. Grow through fellowship with others and faithful church attendance.

In the remainder of this short series, I'm going to give you three more things to do that will produce major transformation in your life.

01-14-18 Transformational Life Groups

01-21-18 Transformation Celebration! - Identifying with Transformation through water baptism.

01-28-18 "Say Yes" to Transformation! (Baptism Sunday) This is about serving others.

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. In your own words explain the difference between Salvation and Sanctification.
2. What do we mean when we say we are "Triune Beings"?
3. What did Paul mean in Philippians 2:12 when he exhorts us to "work out our salvation"?
4. Romans 12:2 says not to conform to the world, but be transformed, implying that we can help or hinder this transformation process. What things can you do in 2018 to work with the transformation process?
5. According to Philippians 2:13, who helps us in this transformation process?
6. When it comes to transformation of ourselves and others, what should be our attitude? Philippians 1:3-6