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## **The Power of Transformation from His Word**

*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. Romans 12:2*

**Nehemiah 8; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 3:12-13; 4:1-2; 5:11-6:3; James 1:22-25**

## **The main reason we are to engage the Bible is to be transformed representatives of Christ's Message and Work!**

The Bible is our prime platform for our encounters with Jesus Christ; we can know the Sovereign Creator God of the Universe Who loves you and has something precious to say to you. We need to be eagerly ready and able to hear it, know it and apply it! We are to read God's Word because it is all about His plan and manual for Christian life and liberty, for relationships, and doing church right. This is where we learn His principles, calls, will, and plans for us to know, grow, and prosper in our lives and churches are in its pages. We must do our best to connect with Him by submerging ourselves to know Him, to know His principles, to internalize His precepts; then, we are to live them out for His glory and our reciprocal benefit. Therefore, we read the Bible to be transformed and renewed, so we must listen, learn, and do (Matt. 6:33; James 1:21-27).

God sent His Son to live and die for us, and He gives us His Word to nurture our relationship, in person to His Person. We learn and apply this all by reading the Bible, studying His precepts, worship and praying amongst other spiritual disciplines. Why? To know and do God's will! God wants us to know Him, and, to do this, we need to convene with Him, as you would with building a relationship with a close friend. God wants you transformed and renewed. We get to know and grow in Him by our passionate gratitude with by listening so that we will be learning His directions, history, even His poetry--all from in the Bible, in His structure of instruction. To do this, we learn to trust and grow to follow Him; this is the essence of being a growing committed Christian and communally as an effective church!

## **How do we get Transformed?**

First, we believe. We accept. We have faith. We exercise our trust. When we read the Bible, we are actually meeting with Christ as LORD. We can better live out our faith and obey by cultivating the application of our faith as real and effectual. The Bible shows us to His Gospel as our cultivation tool. His Holy Spirit is our Guide. The Bible shows how we shall live in faith—from doctrine to duty—from what we glean, learning and living. This is the cultivation process of getting to know God. This translates our faith to the practical aspect of the Gospel. As Christians, we have received the greatest gift conceivable. We have been saved, not of any effort or reason on our part except by faith. What do we do to live fully in Christ? We get to know Him! We do this not by just becoming a Christian, or watching someone on TV, it is not our entitlement; rather, this faith—this beautiful and complete relationship with our Father—is cultivated by our due diligence in connecting with our Lord, building relationships and increasing trust—just as we would do with any trusted friend (Eph. 2:8-9).

The answer for Transformation is simple: get into the Word! Read the Bible. Study the Bible. If you want to be an effectual Christian and if you think you are called to be a leader or minister of the Word, this is a necessity! We meet with God to know Him; we open the Bible and read its words with

anticipation and wonder as we commune with the Creator King of the universe who wants us to know Him. The relationship building doesn't stop with heeding the simple glorious message of the Gospel; we must continue on, delving into God's Word. It is through this intentional learning that we capture His principles, letting us ponder His Truth and begin to apply ourselves to Him, conforming to His Word. Literally in John 6, we are called to 'feed' on Christ; we are to consume His work and principles both for living now and for eternity. This helps us have real meaning and a purposeful life by building our new life (2 Tim. 2:15).

Connecting with Our Lord is so important; it is how we are to grow in Christ! It is how we build our faith and spiritual formation in order to be our best for His Glory. To do this, we must think beyond ourselves, beyond our past hurts, beyond past experiences and move from perception to concrete, living in the present. If we remain in our material thinking, only seeing what affects us personally or what hinders us or not seeing above and beyond where we are, we will remain in the world of selfishness and absurdity; life will not make sense, and we are left with only stress, despair, anxiety, and boredom. All this will be attributed to our alienation from God and/or our refusal to put our faith into a real able practice when we do know Him. When we 'feed' on our Lord, we will live an abundant and fulfilling life; only then, we can cross the obstacles and overcome life's ills and sin (John 6:52-71; 14:17; 16:1-15; Rom. 5:4-5; 7:21-25; 8:14, Gal. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:18).

We commune with God to give Him our burdens and concerns. We are enabled to grow By the Holy Spirit when our lives are transformed because we feed off Christ's precepts and life and get away from ourselves and the distractions that block our nurture of Him in order to apply ourselves to Him as He applied Himself for us (Neh. 8).

### **Why survey the Bible?**

Do you believe that the Bible is an important Book? Essential? The most important Book ever written? If so, is the Bible the most important Book in your life? If not, why not?

Would you go to an auto mechanic who never went to school or even took a class on engines and he is going to tear down and rebuild yours? Would you buy insurance from someone who is not licensed or can even tell you what the terms and actuaries are? Would you allow a tailor to mend your wedding dress before your wedding, but they do not know how to sew, but they are just passionate about doing it? Good idea? Why not? These people would be infective—perhaps, even dangerous. Imagine your engine rebuilt with lots of pieces left over or a wedding dress that was crooked or an insurance policy with a bad company that will only take your money and never payout? Such is a Christian who does not know their Bible! A Christian who doesn't read the Bible will not know God well, or what He is about, what He calls us to do or what life is even about.

Allow me to ask you this: how do you make decisions? What do you chose and why? How do you know what is the right way that is best and pleases the Lord? By knowing the Word. Great political and social issues are in the Bible, and the right answers on dealing with them, like abortion, divorce, marriage, child development, politics, loneliness, health, wealth, to name a few. Then, we find the nature of God, the nature of humanity, philosophy, religion, thought, space, time and reality. Who we are in relation to God, others, environment and self, is all spelled out in the pages of the Bible.

To effectively begin, may I suggest to start off reading through the Bible each day. Start off with just 10 minutes, 1/3 of a TV sitcom, and watch your life become renewed and transformed. You will see an amazing correlation between what you learn and how you respond and mature in life and faith. He first knows us and we must respond to know Him and have our confidence in Him as well.

The more time you are in Christ, the more effective and worthwhile your life will be. The more of an impact you will have and the stronger your church will become.

Try to start with *baby steps*—10 minutes a day for a month. Then, in the second month, increase it to 15 minutes, the third month, 20 minutes, and so on. Your goal is to spend at least one hour a day in devotions, Bible reading, and prayer—free from distractions and a wandering mind. If this is too much and your mind wanders, just remember to break the time up throughout the day—one-third in the morning, one-third during the midday, and one-third before bed.

How is this done? Simply put, it looks like this: as we read, we also are in prayer; we fill our minds on Christ and His precepts, our life's causes and concerns are put to the Lord in prayer, and we commune and communicate with our Lord in focused prayer. We read the Bible and pray to Christ as Lord—and we can do this simultaneously. We seek to engage His presence in prayer, and study to learn His instruction and practice our faith in concert. In so doing, we allow the peace of Christ to rule our hearts and minds and that translates into our actions. It is all about our spiritual growth impacting us so it impacts others positively and in love.

So, enlarge your world of life and faith by your journey into His magnificent Word, the Bible. Build your faith, expand your love, increase your fruit, and build your life effectually by your growing understanding of His Word and the application thereof.

### **You can be Transformed!**

When we convene with God—separately by devotion or collectively—for worship, the church is no longer “just a place to go,” rather the place to be. Church becomes the training and worship center. To use a football term, we are the “huddle.” In the huddle with Our Father, we receive His instructions, review the plays, and go forward for victory in our Christian lives upon receiving the Word from Our Coach.

To make this take hold of us, we must let the reality be a total dependence on Christ's Work and sacrifice so we can have union with Him, a personal relationship for now and eternity. Our devotion to Christ must be rooted in our mind and then let His principles translate to our heart and then feet and the rest of our bodies, the body of us as a human being and a body of believers in relation to all those around us, as our duty, from our gratitude. This is what ‘being’ in Christ means: He is Forever, Everlasting, unbreakable, and real—a contrast to what is fleeting, temporary, and shallow. Our due diligence in His Word transacts to how we think, how we relate and what we do. If in doubt, consider what Jesus gives is far more important.

## Questions to Ponder

### Read Nehemiah 8; Romans 12

1. What is the outcome of being a Christian if we never read the directions to know what we should be doing?
2. What is the outcome of doing church if we do not equip the people to learn what we are about and what we are to do from the Bible?
3. What outcome is there to the Christian life without the life-changing transformational life we can have through His Word, Work, and Holy Spirit?
4. How do you achieve transformation? If so, are we applying it in our lives so it also echoes to others around us?
5. We are called to meet with Him daily, are you responding? How are your efforts going?
6. Does God need to stir you up? Are you spiritually lazy or apathetic? Why? What can you do about it?
7. Does your Christian activity line up to His revealed truth or is it based on your plans and agenda?
8. Think about these questions as you seek to deeper connection with the principles of God's Word into our lives, thinking, and behavior.
  - a. Seek Him and ask, What is my problem?
  - b. What am I doing wrong?
  - c. How can I be corrected?
  - d. What must I learn to grow in Christ?
  - e. We have to ask: do I hunger for God's Word? If not, why not?