

Transformational Living 2 Cor 3:12-18

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday March 30th

Our expectations & experiences affect our perspectives. They predispose us to view life through the lenses of our personal interests, effecting the way we view God and His ways. (Exodus 32)

Satan knows this, and so seeks to distort God's nature and character. His purpose is to separate us from God so he can spoil us, isolating us from God's will and purposes. (Col 2:8-10)

Satan has an ally in our own selfishness! When confronted with God's will

1. We redefine or recreate God (and His Word) to suit our perspectives

(remake Him in our image) and Preferences. (justify what we want!) (Jer. 17:9; Jn 16:1-3)

A. This was Satan's original plan. Notice how he went about this in Gen. 3:1-4

- 1) Question God's word/will. Vs 1 "*Yea, Hath God said?*"
 - 2) Question God's motives. 5a "*God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened,*
 - 3) Appeal to our Pride (Self interest) 5b "*ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*"
- He takes the same approach with all of us. 1 Jn 2:15,16

B. Romans 1:18-32 reveal the effects of this universal process.

Vs 21 "*Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, (dialogismosL ability to reason) and their foolish heart was darkened.*"

- 1) Self absorption obscures our reasoning, keeping us from focusing on God's purposes. Ro 1:22 "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ...*" (Mōrai'nō: insipid, weak, moronic)
 - a) This is the same word Jesus used in Lk 14:34,35 and Mt 5:13 about self absorbed people.
 - b) This affects our ability to reason objectively. Ro. 1:28a "*as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind*"
 - c) Our reasoning affects our behavior. Ro. 1:28b "*to do those things which are not convenient;*"

C. Notice the Consequences of this "stinking thinking", even among believers.

- 1) It focuses on what God does (or should do) for us; de-emphasizes what we should do for God.
 - a) Many behave as if God exists to serve our goals; Or get us out of a bind. (trouble)
- 2) It Produces a "Fire Escape" mentality, rather than the Fulfilling Faith Jesus desires. (Jn 10:10)
 - a) Modern evangelism often plays to this view presenting the gospel as the answer to an unhappy life, and a miserable death.
 - b) The focus seems to be on getting people to just accept (acknowledge) certain Bible truths, then they can expect God to bless them with Forgiveness, Happiness and Peace.
- 3) It focuses on getting people to just accept (acknowledge) certain Bible truths, then they can expect God to bless them with Forgiveness, Happiness and Peace.
 - a) When God doesn't "Bless" this hybrid Christianity, Their faith is challenged. (Pr. 19:10)
 - (1) Jesus warned of this type of "shallow faith" in Mt. 13:21,21 "*He that receiveth the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*"

D. This emphasis on a type of belief (faith) that doesn't affect our behavior is inconsistent with the clear teaching of God's word. (Eph. 2:10; Jms 1:22-25; 2:20)

- 1) This is at the root of the "Falling away" that the Bible repeatedly warns us of.
(2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Heb 10:25)

2. God's focus isn't only about Information, But Transformation!

Ro. 12:1,2; 2 Cor 5:17

A. A faith (belief) that changes our eternal destiny, should change our behavior!
Mt 5:16; Ro. 6; 2 Cor 5; Gal. 2, 5; James 1 (actually, the whole Bible!)

B. This type of Transformation is a byproduct of:

1) Pure Information. (Truth) (1 Jn 4:1-6; Ro. 12:1,2; 2 Pt 1:2-4

2) Persistent Mediation. (Focus) 2 Cor 3:18 *"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, by the Spirit of the Lord."*

a) Meditation is mental digestion. We will become "transformed" by what we digest!

Joshua 1:8; 2 Tim. 2:15

b) That's why it's critical that we focus on truth!

3) Practical Application (Faith) 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:5-8

C. This process of Transformation involves a Partnership. (1 Cor 3:9-15; Jn 15:1-15)

1) The word "Believer" is only found 2 x in NT. (Acts 4:14; 1 Tim 4:12)

a) Believers (pistos) means not only trusting, but also trustworthy!

Do you think modern believers are actually trustworthy when it comes to the things of God?

(1 Cor 4:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 3:17-20; Heb. 10:25; James 1:20-27; Jms 2:20)

2) The word "Disciple" is found 255 times! Mt. 5:1 is the first reference.

a) Disciple (Mathētēs) means a learner, *someone who seeks to understand so they can apply truth.*

b) Disciples have to follow Jesus in order to accomplish this. (John 15:1-8)

c) Jesus clarified the importance of this in Mt. 13:11-16

d) Discipleship requires Discipline! Discipline requires Self-denial. Mt 16:24,25

(1) We like the picture of the Shepherd of Ps 23 and draw comfort from the "the good shepherd" that comes to give "abundant life" and "gives his life for his sheep". Jn 10:10,11

Jesus makes it clear however that: *"My sheep hear my voice, ...and they Follow me."* (John 10:27)

Conclusion:

Satan's goal is to seduce and spoil us (our minds) so as to keep us from God's Goal which is to transform us *"into the image of His Son"* (Ro 8:28,29) Through:

1) Pure Information/Truth Ps 119:105; 1 Jn 4:1-5)

2) Persistent Mediation/focus (2 Cor 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15)

3) Practical Application (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:5-9)

Partnering with God's Purposes will require discipline and self denial but will produce a fruitful life in both time and Eternity. (2 Pt 1:8-11; Joshua 1:8,9; 1 Tim. 4:8; 2 Tim. 4:6-8)

Failure to partner with God means we're actually cooperating with Satan's plan of obscuring our mind, ultimately resulting in a frustrating, fruitless life. (2 Pt 1:9; Mt 7:13,14; 24-29)

Application:

Where are you in the process of pursuing God's goal of your transformation?

Are you even a (born again) "believer"?

Are you only a (born again) believer?

Are you committed to developing the disciplines necessary to become a fruitful follower of Jesus Christ? (aka: His disciple) (Mt 4:13)

Habakkuk 3:19 *"The LORD God is my strength, he will make my feet like hinds' feet, he will make me to walk upon high places."* Are willing to begin "Climbing with Christ?"