

The Transformed Life 1: The Process of Transformation

Dave Buehring June 5, 2022

Introduction

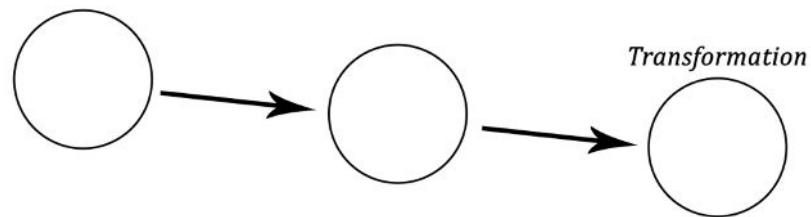
- 1) Review of Pastor Rob's "The Gospel Centered Life" – its impact on all areas of our lives. We looked together at our marriages and family, our work, our wealth, the next generation. Dylan last week focused us on the fruit of living this kind of life: spiritual maturity/wheel/parent!
- 2) And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." – Matthew 4:19
 - a. A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus.
 - b. This month we are focusing on the central piece of this – "being changed by Jesus."
 - c. We are calling this series "The Transformed Life"; our pieces include:
 - The Process of Transformation
 - The Priority of Transformation
 - The Proof of Transformation
 - The Purpose of Transformation
- 3) We'll begin **today** with **The Process of Transformation**
 - a. *I want you to pay close attention to what the Holy Spirit reveals to you – because there is a role you'll be playing in this today, and throughout this whole series!*
 - b. LET'S PRAY!
 - c. Let me start with a story
 - February 2014 – an email from a local pastor; met for lunch at J. Alexanders
 - After some chit-chat getting to know each other, then "why I asked you to lunch"
 - "My people know the Word...but they are not being transformed..."
 - My response: "The devil knows the Bible well – and he's not transformed either!"

The Process of Transformation

- 1) This shepherd is not alone in what he was wrestling with...many are preaching and teaching the Scriptures with everything they've got! They are praying for and long to see real life change in those they are leading...however, many are frustrated and disheartened.
- 2) Henry Blackaby, maybe most well-known for his book/manual, *Experiencing God*, shared with me during the filming of our spiritual father's project, that he believes that we created a huge problem decades ago when we taught pastors how to win people to Jesus – but not how to disciple them!
- 3) Because of this, we are currently dealing with the reality of a "spiritually thin" church, a lack of those willing and able to make disciples, and a scarcity of impact within our society! *A lack of referencing God's character and His ways!*
- 4) Have you noticed that we tend to measure spiritual maturity by church attendance, knowledge of the Bible, and using our gifts! All three, were functioning within my pastor friend's church! Yet no real transformation!
- 5) Jesus looked at this quite differently! He seemed to measure maturity based on:
 - a. The transformation of one's character – as evidenced by John, beginning as one of the "sons of thunder," who Jesus ended up trusting with his mom while on the cross.

- b. The transformation of one's relationships – Zacchaeus, making things right...love
 - c. The transformation of one's life: dying to self to walk in obedience to Jesus...the whole of life looked at through His lenses – not just our church or spiritual lives!
- 6) This kind of transformation does not just come from Sunday morning sermons and Bible studies alone! Jesus modeled for us that it comes through disciple making relationships.
- 7) Back to my story: with my finger I drew on the table, breaking down what we refer to as *the process of transformation*. This is not my idea – this is how God transforms in the Scriptures!

Transformation



Transformation – I offered to my friend a little of what I've learned about transformation as a disciple maker. The process of God I had observed through the Scriptures in lives like Abraham, Moses, Esther, David, Daniel, Peter, John, Paul, etc.

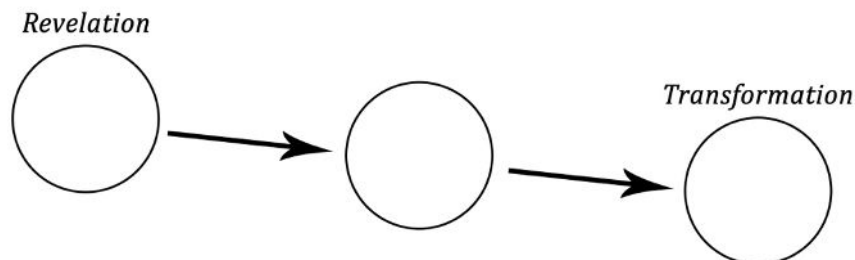
2 Corinthians 3:18

“But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, *are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.*”

Transformation is God intervening to bring His life to bear upon individuals, relationships, and communities. We cannot manufacture transformation. Because of my love for people, I wish we could, but it is a divine work of God.

Like an apple seed, the actual transformation from seed to tree to fruit to orchards belongs to God. God is the only one that can bring about genuine transformation!

Revelation



I'm not talking about the last book in our Bibles, but rather, the means by which God reveals things to us. It's how we came to Jesus in the first place: He allowed us to spiritually perceive our desperate condition and His offer of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Transformation is vastly different than information! Information provides facts, data and makes us aware – however, by itself it does not change one's heart! We live in a culture of information – the most at any time in the history of our planet – yet it has not led to the transformation of our hearts, relationships, and society!

Revelation: Imagine yourself in a theater. Perhaps you're there to watch a family member perform as part of a play. You hear the noise of the gathering crowd while you pick out your seat. Sitting in a near-darkened room your attention is focused on those huge velvety burgundy curtains in front of you. You have absolutely no idea what's behind that curtain. As the curtain is pulled back suddenly you have a completely different vantage point as you see the dusty streets of an old western town! What you could not see only a second before you can see now! That's "revelation"!

Revelation is the parting of curtains so we see as God sees.

Consider the scene in Matthew where Jesus asks His disciples who people think He is.

Matthew 16:13-17

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 16:17

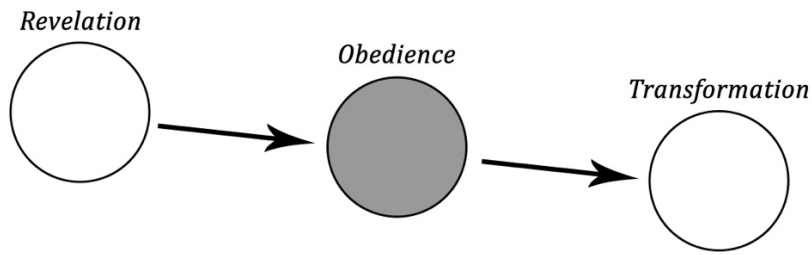
"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

Like transformation, revelation is sourced in God alone. If He doesn't part the curtains, we have a hard time seeing what He's saying and where He's leading in our lives. We can posture ourselves to receive revelation: seeking His face in worship, prayer, and the scriptures, through a conversation or a sermon – and most effectively in the context of a disciple making relationship!

Have you noticed, God is doing the heavy lifting here – revealing and transforming! What is our role in this process of transformation?

Obedience

What God reveals to us, He intends for us to obey!



Matthew 7:24-27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them {obedience} will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them {disobedience} will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

It’s obeying what God is revealing that brings about transformation!

Obedience is the engine of transformation!

If the God of the Universe, the creator of Mars and molecules, land masses and lady bugs, grains of sand and sunsets, takes the time to speak to you, don’t you think it might be important to obey Him?!

Let’s Take a Closer Look at Obedience

- 1) In John 14, Jesus said:
 - a. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” John 14:15
 - b. “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.” John 14:21
 - c. “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word...” John 14:23
 - d. Have you considered that obedience is one of God’s love languages?
- 2) Obedience out of love for Jesus – not out of “have to” or “should” or “prove it to me”!
- 3) A dozen Bible stories that we learned as kids:
 - a. Noah and The Ark
 - b. Moses and The Burning Bush
 - c. Joshua and The Walls of Jericho
 - d. Queen Esther Saving Her Nation
 - e. David and Goliath
 - f. Daniel and The Lion’s Den
 - g. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego not bowing down
 - h. Jonah and The Whale
 - i. Mary and the Angel
 - j. Peter and the Catch of Fish
 - k. Zacchaeus and Jesus’ visit to his House
 - l. Paul on the road to Damascus

- 4) In each of these stories, obedience brought transformation – either within the lives of the ones being asked to obey and/or to the people around them!
- 5) What if...???
 - a. What if **Noah** simply went with his experience and didn't build the Ark?
 - b. What if **Moses** decided it was too embarrassing to go back to Egypt?
 - c. What if **Joshua** decided the walls of Jericho were just too big to deal with?
 - d. What if **Esther** elected not to go before the King on behalf of her people, the Jews?
 - e. What if **David** hadn't obeyed his father to take cheese to the front lines of battle?
 - f. What if **Daniel** stopped praying to His God due to the pressure put on him?
 - g. What if **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** decided it was easier to just bow down to the statue like everyone else?
 - h. What if **Jonah** decided not to go to Nineveh...oh wait...he got a second chance!!!
 - i. What if **Mary** chose not to cooperate with what the angel told her?
 - j. What if **Peter** decided not to cast the nets to one side? (revelation of who Jesus is!)
 - k. What if **Zacchaeus** didn't come down from the tree?
 - l. What if **Paul** decided to stay blind, not follow Jesus after his Damascus encounter?
- 6) Jesus
 - a. Jesus learned obedience
 - **Hebrews 5:7-8**
“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.”
 - b. Jesus obeyed His Father
 - **John 5:19-20**
“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”
 - c. Jesus yielded His will to God's
 - **Matthew 26:39**
“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

Aiming for Application

- 1) Transformation comes as we respond in obedience to what God has revealed to us. Obedience is the engine of transformation!
- 2) Where in your life have you found that to be true?
- 3) What has God asked you to do – and you are sitting here today in disobedience?

Discussion Questions

1. How much time do you spend planning your vacation vs. time spent planning your spiritual maturity?
2. Have you ever thought/wished you could change/transform someone? What was the result? Discuss how genuine transformation is a divine work of God.
3. How can we posture ourselves to receive revelation?
4. What God reveals to us, He intends for us to obey! Obedience is the engine of transformation. Is there anything He has revealed to you that you have not obeyed?

NOTES