

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Realizing the Surpassing Value of Knowing Jesus Christ Our Lord

Becoming Like Christ: What Can I Expect?

Galatians 5:16-26

Intro: It is in Philippians chapter two that Paul makes his appeal for us to put on humility in the likeness of Jesus Christ. As we considered this the point was made that humility, among other things, makes us teachable. It is a teachable spirit and the ability to admit error and bring our thinking around to Biblical truth that enables us to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Of course, we also realize that humility, like all other characteristics of Jesus Christ, must be worked in and through us by the Holy Spirit—it is developed by trusting faith and not by trying hard to be humble. Now we will consider what is possible beyond humility in developing Christ-like character.

I. A Biblical Foundation for Maturity in Holiness

- A. The term *salvation* at its root means *wholeness* or *healing*: it is a restoration to perfect health of all that was marred by the fall into sin.
- B. Full and complete healing comes through the atonement of Christ on the cross: Isaiah 53:4-6 & Matthew 8:17
- C. Salvation has three phases and for every believer is at once a completed past action, an ongoing process, and a future consummation of eternal perfection in resurrected glory: 2 Tim 1:9, 1 Co 1:18 & 2 Co 2:15, Rom 5:9 with 1 Th 5:23

II. Healing: Soul and Body, Physical and Emotional/Behavioral

- A. Bodily/Physical healing—God can and does heal miraculously here and now on the basis of the finished work of the cross...but not always
 1. Examples—Epaphroditus, Paul's thorn in the flesh
 2. There is no commandment to "be well" or to "stop being sick"
 3. We are directed to look to God as our source of healing and can expect Him to sustain our strength sufficient unto our need in His service (James 5:14-20)
- B. Soul/Emotional-Behavioral healing (progressive sanctification)
 1. Examples—John, Peter, Paul in the dramatic maturing of their character
 2. There are many commandments to (a) put away anger and bitterness, Eph 4:31 (b) do not be afraid or anxious, 1 Tim 1:7; Phil 4:6 (c) let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, Eph 4:29 (d) greed (which amounts to idolatry) must not even be named among you (neither immorality, impurity, passion or evil desire), Eph 5:3, Col 3:5
 3. We can expect transformation now, fully and completely, in the realm of Godly behavior by the power of the Holy Spirit: Galatians 5:16, 19-21

III. What Can I Expect; What Is Possible For Me Now?

- A. Bad behavior, in whatever form, is NOT a physical disease; it is a product of the flesh and manifest by those not walking in the Holy Spirit
 1. We cannot absolutely guarantee that everyone will be physically healed
 2. We can absolutely declare that the Holy Spirit can develop in us, here and now, Christ-like behavior and fully deliver us from the deeds of the flesh
- B. By abiding in Christ and walking in the Spirit we need never have another angry outburst, speak another unkind word, go to another porn site, speak another word of profanity or gossip, become drunk, or act out in any other way that is ungodly
- C. There is no need to live in the bondage of carnality—if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed! (John 8:36)

Conc: We cannot blame ungodly behavior of any type on a medical disorder. Sinful behavior is not caused by physical disease but by a failure to walk in the Spirit. God has set us free in Jesus Christ so that His character may be fully formed in us. We can and should expect this from Him.

Galatians 5:16-26 ¹

But I say, ^awalk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out ^bthe desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For ^athe flesh ¹sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, ^bso that you may not do the things that you ²please. ¹⁸ But if you are ^aled by the Spirit, ^byou are not under the Law. ¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: ^{1a}immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, ^asorcery, enmities, ^bstrife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, ^cdisputes, dissensions, ^{1d}factions, ²¹ envying, ^adrunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not ^binherit the kingdom of God. ²² But ^athe fruit of the Spirit is ^blove, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, ^aself-control; against such things ^bthere is no law. ²⁴ Now those who ¹belong to ^aChrist Jesus have ^bcrucified the flesh with its passions and ^cdesires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also ¹walk ^aby the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become ^aboastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

My Own Righteousness: Read the Law > Decide to Obey > Temptation > Ask for Help > Struggle > Pass/Fail

Righteousness from God: Abide in Christ > Tempt/Direct > Surrender > Holy Spirit Works > Christ-like Action

1. In the C&MA we speak of healing as being “in the atonement.” On what basis is this claim made and what does it mean for us? How does Isaiah 53:4-6 relate to Matthew 8:17?
2. When you think of emotional wholeness, what comes to mind? In what way(s) can we expect God to make us emotionally whole in Christ in this present life?
3. Explain in your own words what the past, present, and future of salvation is.
4. What is the significance of the fact that no passage of Scripture commands us to be physically well, but many New Testament passages command us to behave appropriately at all times and in all circumstances?
5. Looking toward next week’s message consider the following questions:
 - A. In what ways can physical illness affect our emotional and spiritual state? Do internal circumstances like illness differ from external circumstances like a difficult job or a bad relationship in terms of what kind of victory we can have over bitterness, anger, anxiety, etc.
 - B. In what ways can bad behavior and sinful habits affect our physical well being? Can anxiety actually make us ill? Can guilt make us susceptible to disease? Can bitterness cause bodily sicknesses?

NOTES

Paul R. Martin
Senior Pastor
Alliance Bible Church of McHenry, IL

