

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Realizing the Surpassing Value of Knowing Jesus Christ Our Lord

The Battle Belongs to the Lord

Ephesians 6:

Intro: In the previous study we left off with the truth from Romans 12:1-2 that the journey toward Christ-likeness begins with the renewing of our mind: believing the truth of God in place of our false ideas about life and trusting Him to do in and through us all that He shows us as right belief and behavior. In this study we will continue with that theme and delve more deeply into the process and application of faith based practice of transformation.

I. Choosing What to Believe is an Act of Faith

- A. We are always confronted with the truth of God's Word in opposition to the way that seems (and has seemed all of our lives) right to us.
1. Mostly, our wrong beliefs are oriented around what will make us happy and give us a sense of fulfillment
 2. Then they extend to what will help us to reach those goals or to sooth us when we fail
 3. When trouble comes we have developed strategies to protect our ego (self) at all costs—psychologists have named these *defense mechanisms*
- B. As the Holy Spirit begins His work in us to make us into the image of Christ, He brings us to places and experiences that expose the lies we have believed and confronts us with His truth
1. We are faced with a choice: to believe what God says is true, or to rely on our deeply rooted distortion of reality (“What is true for me?!”)
 2. These are tough choices because they almost always include recognizing that we have believed a lie (the very foundations of our life are being shaken) and are complicated by the realization that acknowledgement of the TRUTH of God will mean a new level of responsibility and personal accountability (we have no one and nothing else to blame: since we **CAN** change through Christ, we **MUST** change.)
 3. Believing God in the face of an uncertain outcome and leaving the comfort of our tried and true methods for the uncharted territory of the Spirit controlled life requires an act of faith at each and every step

II. Expect a Battle...and...Expect to Win

- A. When we are confronted with God's truth and the light begins to expose the lies we have believed we come into conflict in ways that are often surprising to us; our growth in Christ is strongly opposed by
1. The world—there is a way that seems right to a man, but it leads to death. We are strongly tempted to believe conventional wisdom and often well-meaning [Christian] friends will counsel us in the ways of the world. We feel lonely and like we are swimming against the tide.
 2. The flesh—the self or ego does not go quietly into that dark night of the soul. Giving up our cherished goals, our self preservation, our deeply held values and desires IS the death of self and that old man comes kicking and screaming to the altar of sacrifice.
 3. The devil—do not think that we have no opposition by spiritual powers of darkness. Our struggle is against principalities and powers and spiritual forces of wickedness in the atmosphere around us including familial demons, personal demons, and direct attack from new demons. Their chief weapons are lies and challenging the truth of God's Word. They marshal strong arguments against the truth of God.
- B. It is a battle that we can win by faith
1. We have the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Greater is He...)
 2. We have the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God
 3. We have the spiritual armor of provided by God
 4. We are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ

Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

¹⁵ and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

¹⁶ ¹in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

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

Examples of Defense Mechanisms:

1. Rationalization—justification of actions
2. Identification—"groupie"
3. Displacement—feelings transferred to "safer" person
4. Projection—"I'm not angry!!! YOU ARE!!!"
5. Regression—acting out in a much younger age
6. Reaction Formation—acting opposite of one's feeling
7. Repression—burying the memory or pain

Symptoms of Depression

1. depressed or sad mood most of the day most days
2. diminished interest or pleasure in most activities
3. weight loss or gain >5% over 1 month period
4. insomnia or hypersomnia nearly every day
5. psychomotor agitation or retardation
6. fatigue/energy loss nearly every day
7. feeling worthless/excessive guilt (real or imagined)
8. diminished ability to think, concentrate, remember, or to make choices (indecisiveness)
9. recurrent thoughts of death (one's self or others)
10. recurrent suicidal ideation

Personality "Disorders" / Some Examples

Borderline Personality Disorder. People with borderline personality disorder are unstable in several areas, including interpersonal relationships, behavior, mood, and self-image. Abrupt and extreme mood changes, stormy interpersonal relationships, an unstable and fluctuating self-image, unpredictable and self-destructive actions characterize the person with borderline personality disorder. These individuals generally have great difficulty with their own sense of identity. They often experience the world in extremes, viewing others as either "all good" or "all bad." A person with borderline personality may form an intense personal attachment with someone only to quickly dissolve it over a perceived slight. Fears of abandonment may lead to an excessive dependency on others. Self-mutilation or recurrent suicidal gestures may be used to get attention or manipulate others. Impulsive actions, chronic feelings of boredom or emptiness, and bouts of intense inappropriate anger are other traits of this disorder.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder. People with narcissistic personality have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, are absorbed by fantasies of unlimited success, and seek constant attention. The narcissistic personality is oversensitive to failure and often complains of multiple somatic symptoms. Prone to extreme mood swings between self-admiration and insecurity, these people tend to exploit interpersonal relationships.

<http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/personality-disorders>

NOTES

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