

Personal Transformation #2:

Hatred of Sin & Transformation Of The Mind

GENERAL PURPOSE

The Process of Change is more readily embraced when we understand how truly dreadful sinful attitudes and behaviors are. In this lesson, we will look at the seriousness of sin and the need to be trained by the Holy Scriptures in order to experience that transformational process.

THE SIN OF IDOLATRY

Idolatry is the most frequently mentioned sin in the Bible.

1. Definition

- Idolatry is more than just the physical worship of carved images. It represents “false gods” in general. Metaphorically, it embodies anything that we wrongly worship, love, fear, crave or serve instead of, or in the place of, the real God.
- The ending verse of 1 John, (5:21), commands us: “*Beloved children, keep yourselves from idols*”.
- The question being what is the motivation for our behavior, thoughts, and feelings? And, realistically, the motivation question is the lordship question.

1 John 2:15-16

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

- Any alternative to Jesus, or any swarm of alternatives, whether inspired by the world, the flesh or the devil, amounts to functional idolatry.

With this in mind, it becomes easier to recognize the Biblical truth that ALL SIN IS AGAINST GOD.

Consider David’s evaluation of his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah:

Psalm 51:3-4

*For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in
Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and
blameless when Thou dost judge.*

2. Identifying idols in our lives.

Start by asking some questions:

- What do you Love?
- What do you Fear?
- What do you Trust in?
- What do you Crave?
- What do you Need?
- What do you Worship?
- What do you _____?

The first and second commandments are:

Exodus 20:3-4

"You shall have no other gods before Me."

"You shall not make for yourself an idol."

- When we love, fear, trust or “need” other things more than God, we put them “before” Him, and they become functional idols in our lives. And we find ourselves breaking these great & foundational commandments.

3. Common Expressions of Idolatry

- Approval of mankind.

John 12:42-43

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

- Money
Whenever we hope that money will take care of us, then we are replacing our true God with a functional idol.
- Self-centeredness
We are not so unlike Adam and Eve when they fell at the temptation of, “*You will be like God . . .*” This is a very serious offense against the Holy One and not to be trivialized.

GODLY SORROW AND TRUE REPENTANCE

Framing our sin patterns as being driven by idolatry gives us something to HATE!

1. Repentance starts with understanding the severity of sin.
 - Understanding idolatry helps us to grasp the concept that all sin is against *God*.
2. A proper understanding of sin produces a legitimate *godly sorrow* that leads to genuine repentance and change.

2 Corinthians 7:9-11

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!

THE NEED OF TRANSFORMATION

Before we can discuss how to be transformed, we need to understand why we need to be transformed.

1. We need to be transformed because we have a sinful nature.
 - The first sin occurred when Adam and Eve rebelled against God, and ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The essence of our sinful nature is the pretense that we can decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

Genesis 3:2-6

And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- Ever since our first parents' sin, our problem is the deeply-ingrained, self-serving bent which characterizes the human condition:

Romans 8:7-8

For the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

2. We need to be transformed because our minds have been formed by a sinful culture.
 - By sinning, humanity collectively has declared its de facto independence from God. Humanity has infected the earth with the consequences of our arrogance and pretention.

Romans 12:2

*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.*

- God is the only true and eternal standard in the universe. God's law is not merely a set of written rules, but rather, it is based on God's impeccable character and nature. Whatever God does is "right". Whatever God hates is "wrong". He defines what "good" is. And we are only ever "right" or "wrong" in relation to how we measure against God Himself.

THE RENEWAL OF OUR MIND

The Christian needs to learn how to think differently than his/her natural inclinations and what the world has led in the years prior to new

birth. We need to develop a whole new mindset, one that reflects the mind of God in us.

1. Jesus shows us the way.

John 5:19

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

In His humanity, Jesus did “*nothing of Himself*”. It was not only in the Garden that Jesus would express, “*not my will, but Your will be done.*” That sentiment characterized His whole life. And so it should characterize ours.

2. The Holy Spirit gives the believer Christ’s mind.

Corinthians 2:14-16

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

No transformation would be possible unless the Holy Spirit had changed our nature first. A “natural man” cannot know God or understand his ways. But we do! True, we don’t understand ALL of God’s mind. He is infinite, and we will never be that. But He’s given us enough as guidance.

3. The **Scriptures** reveal God’s ways.

1 Peter 1:2-3

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- God has granted us multiplied resources of Grace and Peace.
- The avenue through which this comes is “the knowledge of God”.
- God has granted to us everything we need to experience true

life and godliness.

- His “divine power” is required in order to accomplish this.
- The avenue through which we gain this “everything” is “the true knowledge of God”.

Take note that we are not merely in pursuit of God’s standards. We need to know GOD! His will and His ways are relevant, but they are not ends to themselves. They help us understand what God likes and how God thinks so that we can adopt his mindset.

A PRE-DETERMINED DECISION TO OBEY

Christians ought to have a predetermined decision to obey, rather than try to decide, circumstance by circumstance, whether to apply God’s Word to the situation we find ourselves in. In order to get to the point of absolute surrender, there are some steps we need to take.

1. We need to repent of trying to determine for ourselves right and wrong.
2. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us the mind of Christ, so that we can think more like God.
3. We need to renew our thinking daily, by reading and meditating upon God’s Word. The divinely inspired Scriptures are the principal source of our revelation about who God is; what He loves; what He hates, and how He thinks.
4. If we want to make godly choices, we need not only to know what God’s Word says, but we need to be absolutely committed to applying that knowledge in every aspect of our lives.

Psalm 119:128

Therefore I esteem right all Thy precepts concerning everything.

THE ROLE OF SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION & MEDITATION

1. The Bible commands us to meditate on God’s Word.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Psalm 119:18

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.

Psalm 119:148

My eyes anticipate the night watches that I may meditate on Thy word.

Psalm 119:97-101

O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Thy precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Thy word.

2. The spiritual discipline of Scripture memorization aids meditation. It puts God's Word inside of us, so that it can work on us, both consciously and unconsciously.

Psalm 119:9, 11

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. Thy word I have treasured in my heart that I may not sin against Thee.

The Process of Applying God's Word

1. Choose an area where we/you know we/you have a need of transformation. It doesn't have to be dramatic. In fact, we might even be well served to choose something modest - just to prove to ourselves that it can really work.
2. Find one or two or three portions of Scripture that speaks directly to that issue.
3. Memorize it.
4. Meditate on it. Over the course of days and weeks. Maybe months.
5. Role play, in your mind, how it could/should play out in a myriad of different situations. Practice it. Apply it. Do it! Keep doing it!

Homework:

Read Psalm 119.

Choose a Scripture portion to memorize, meditate on and radically apply to your life over the coming 1-2 weeks.

Appendix A**ADDITIONAL WEAPONS IN OUR ARSENAL OF CHANGE****1. Biblical Fellowship**

Proverbs 27:1 *Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

Proverbs 13:20 *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

2. Accountability: A wise man loves correction. A fool hates reproof.

Psalm 141:5 Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

There is great value in submitting ourselves to the wise counsel of spiritually mature friends & mentors. It takes genuine humility to willingly subject ourselves to constructive criticism, but we place ourselves in grave danger without it.

3. Confession / Exposing Sin to the Light

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

Sin thrives in the darkness; it harnesses the power of guilt and shame to keep us quiet about our sins. Exposing those “deeds of darkness” to the light helps us shake free from the hold that sins have on us. The act of humbling ourselves in confession helps restore us to God and to His truth, and it puts us in position to receive more of His grace.

1 John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. ESF - Experiencing Spiritual Freedom

This program, offered periodically by our church, can be a very helpful aid in overcoming the consequences of longstanding sin patterns in our lives. The emphasis is on gaining freedom from some of the damaging effects that past events and influences still exert on our lives. It involves an intensive day of instruction, introspection, confession, repentance, supportive prayer and prophetic ministry. Check it out!

Appendix B: Potential Verses for Meditation & Change

Exposing yourself to impure media? Entertaining malicious gossip?

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Egotistical?

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Need to Improve Your Speech Patterns?

Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Talk Too Much?

Proverbs 10:19: When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Correct Your Children (or Spouse) With an Angry Tone?

Proverbs 15:1-2 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable

Proverbs 16:21b: Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

Temper Gets You in Trouble?

Proverbs 29:11: A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.