

“FREE TO BECOME WHO WE TRULY ARE”

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The Christian life is one of perpetual transformation and renewal. We are called to become new creatures. **Romans 12:**

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **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.

This is both gradual and instantaneous. Being transformed and replacing old outlooks and habits is a difficult thing.

Much Christian teaching calls us to be transformed, but doesn't tell us enough as to how to do it, and what is specifically involved in the process.

How do we change our way of thinking?

First, we must acknowledge our pain and brokenness. We do not ignore the negative nature of our experiences.

Having a positive outlook is not about putting our head in the sand or repressing our feelings.

Resilient people are realistic and lucid. They see the world as it is.

They know the world is a fallen, sinful place. Sins are committed against us. Oppression is a reality.

This **acceptance of the negative** is the beginning of emotional health and a positive outlook.

Secondly, there is another, superior principle that rules the world: Christ has come to mend this broken world, to break the power of evil. He has come to heal us both spiritually, emotionally and

physically. He has come to give us power over evil and sin. **LUKE 4:18-21**

18

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,

19

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”[f]

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Sozo: “Your faith has saved/healed you.” (Made you whole, healed, saved, preserved you, made you well.) It is an encompassing.

In the life of the believer, this is the dominant, ruling principle. We live under its banner. Christ has come

that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.

“If anyone is in Christ he/she is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here.”

Ephesians 2:6. :“6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” This is our new position.

Judicially and legally, It is not Satan or sin that now rule our life, but Christ and his goodness. We must meditate upon this until it becomes our dominant outlook and expectation.

We must therefore **reprogram our brain** and change the dominant narrative in our mind. This is our task as we seek to go from **an expectation of doom and failure** or disaster to an expectation of goodness and success in Christ.

And, by the way, what you expect in life is what you will get. This is negative faith. If you believe you are still under the shadow of your past, then it will be so.

How do you reprogram your mind after years or decades of living under a negative outlook?

First, you accept that this is possible! The Bible says that with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:26: (26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”).

Psychologists tell us that the brain is eminently plastic and flexible. We can change our way of thinking.

Accept that this is a difficult undertaking.

It will take a long time. You have to tear down old neurological structures and mental habits. You have to replace them with new ones.

Adopt a long term outlook. Even with God’s complete backing, it takes time. One reason is that God doesn’t violate your freedom. He works through it. He works in cooperation with you. He respects you.

His will in you is perfected through the zigzagging nature of the process of transformation. In the process you learn faith, patience, humility, prayer, perseverance, joy in the victory, the confirmation of God's faithfulness. You learn to help others through your own journey. And God is glorified!

Another reason why it can take long is because it is an encompassing process. It brings together every area of your being. **This is a spiritual, emotional and physical process.** But it can be done!

Feed your mind with God's Word. **Saturate your thoughts** with the positive declarations, images, paradigms of God's word. You must become an ardent consumer of the Scriptures. There's no other way! No shortcuts!

The life of an overcomer is the life of an athlete or a soldier. It must penetrate every area of your being. The Christian life is a 24-hour, seven days a week proposition. Especially if you are trying to overcome old habits and wounds, you must embrace fully a Christian way of living.

The gospels insist that Jesus' new followers "left everything and followed him." Peter left his nets and followed Jesus. Bartimeus the blind man left his cape on the floor and followed Jesus. We must leave the old crutches behind and head toward the new.

This dying to self and the old is absolutely crucial. You are aiming to wean yourself from the world. You cannot love the world and please God. You must experience a true conversion. The Christian life has to be taken seriously.

So, given the seriousness of the venture, and its challenging nature, there can be no half measures. This journey toward healing must involve all your faculties and consume your whole being.

People don't break old habits because secretly they haven't come to the point of renouncing them with their whole heart. They don't hate them enough.

Finding the key to **the mental room where complete renunciation lies** is one of the hardest challenges of the journey to overcoming any mental stronghold. We often secretly love our demons and don't want to leave them completely.

The journey to self transformation is a journey toward complete honesty and lucidity, to thorough knowledge of self. This requires the illumination of God's Word and His Spirit. We cannot do it by ourselves. **Psalms 139:**

23

Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24

See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

But this is one of the most exciting benefits of the journey toward freedom from the negative and old, destructive habits: through it we obtain one of the greatest treasures of all—the knowledge of ourselves, and self mastery, freedom from unacknowledged, ill understood compartments of

our soul, where hidden enemies are allowed to roam freely and to wreak havoc on our lives.

One last, well-known Scripture: **John 8:32:**

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

As we get to know more about ourselves through the truth of and obedience to God’s Word, we become free indeed, free to become what we truly are in Jesus Christ.