



Becoming Christian in a Post-Christian World

APPETIZER: Transformations

In our world today we tend to place more energy into conditioning our bodies on the outside than we do forming ourselves on the inside.

Spiritual formation: In partnership with God we engage in the process of intentionally forming our inner thoughts, motivations, and desires to become like Jesus over time.

DINE IN: Shaped by being with Jesus

Romans 12:1-2

Transformation refers to a change in form after being with. Spiritual formation is the process of becoming Christian (being with Jesus leads to becoming like Jesus).

We are all in the process of becoming something over time. Who are you becoming?

Who you are today is the product of the choices made, attitudes harboured, patterns of thinking, the desires cultivated, and things loved over the course of your life. Who you will be in 5 years from now is being determined by who you are today.

Vs. 2 - 'Renewing' means to cause to grow or to take something old and make it new.

We don't think our way into new ways of living, we live our way into new ways of thinking – Richard Rohr.

The love of God for us is the most reliable source of strength, significance, worth, security, purpose, and satisfaction in the world.

The gospel of Jesus means that in God's love we already have everything we ultimately need. We don't need to go looking somewhere else for what we already have. Spiritual formation is the process of waking up to what we already have.

TAKE OUT: Spiritual practices

1. **Fasting forms us to rely on Jesus.** – Jesus fasted – Matt 4. The early Christians fasted – Acts 13:3

There are three ways we deal with stress and anxiety apart from reliance on Jesus' love for us. Things that numb us (alcohol, drugs), things that fill us (food, shopping, relationships), and things that thrill us (sex, porn).

2. **Ordinary intentionality** – Colossians 3:17
Turn something ordinary into a spiritual practice. We don't ooze our way to Christ-likeness. We choose our way.
3. **Gratitude** – Colossians 3:16-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18
Gratefulness makes us aware of God's goodness and love in our lives and in those around us.

Pointers in transformation

1. Be honest with yourself. "Living sacrifice" means we are honest about our self-deceptions, justifications, and our need for God.
2. Spiritual practices always feel awkward, forced, and weird when starting out, that's how you know they are working.
3. Your transformed life is God's gift to you and is your gift to the world.

NEXT WEEK: WE RETURN TO OUR FAITHFUL ONE SERIES

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. Have you practiced any of the spiritual practices that we learned about on Sunday? Share your experiences if applicable.
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's message?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

3. Read **Romans 12**.
 - a. What raises your curiosity or stands out to you from this passage?
 - b. What does **verse 2** tell us is a result of our transformation? What do you think testing and approving God's will looks like in your home church community?
 - c. How does the message of not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought in v.3, and our interdependence on each other in the analogy of the body (**v.4-8**) push back against the message of our culture? What are some of the healing benefits of embracing this message for us personally and for our communities?
 - d. A sincere love is a love that is for both our friends and our enemies, and the ongoing practice of prayer, generosity and hospitality. What are some ways we can fuel ourselves to continue to "be devoted to one another in love"?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

4. Are there any distractions (media, hobbies, pursuits) that draw too much time and energy away from the loving life you are called to live?
5. Go Deeper: Do some research on the following Spiritual Practices: Solitude, Silence, Forgiveness, Giving / Generosity, Worship, Scripture Meditation, Contemplative Prayer, Acts of Service, Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, Gospel Contemplation