

Conforming vs. Transforming

For a long time, I was puzzled by two words in scripture that sound similar yet carry very different meanings. Most of the teachers I heard used them interchangeably, and I did the same—until the Lord spoke to me. He said, “I did not tell My church to conform into Christianity, but to transform.” This came from Romans 12:2: *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

The Lord was showing me that these are two separate paths available to every believer, one natural, the other supernatural. To conform means to comply with standards or align one’s attitudes and behaviors with a group norm. Each of us has the power within ourselves to change our own standards, and that is my concern with much of the modern church.

Many believers make good choices to live better lives and remove bad habits. Remember the saying: “Christianity is not making bad people into good people but making dead people into alive people.” God’s plan for each of us is to go beyond our own abilities and draw from the very life of God that made us born again.

You can live a good, holy life as a believer and still barely touch the true life of God within you. That is why the wording is to “be transformed”, it is something done to you. It is impossible to transform yourself. I spent years trying to better myself to be more like Jesus and never realized I was only conforming to Christ, not being transformed.

It is a powerful truth that the church world has largely forgotten. Just as a caterpillar cannot make itself into a butterfly, a believer cannot turn his or her life into Christ’s life. This is exactly what Apostle Paul is saying. He is calling all of us caterpillars whose main mission is now to become butterflies. Being born again makes you a caterpillar, not a butterfly, and now your calling is to be transformed into one.

I spent so many years trying to win the world for God and fix myself that I was on the wrong mission. My motto used to be “What can I do for God?” Now it is “What can God do through me?” The wonderful truth is that all believers have the same potential, regardless of their past.

A caterpillar cannot choose to fly. A born-again believer cannot simply choose to be like Christ. If a caterpillar wants to fly, it must build a cocoon and stay inside until it is transformed into a butterfly. When it emerges, it will have wings, and flying will be the easiest thing for it to do.

I see many believers quoting and confessing Scriptures, trying to receive by faith what also requires transformation. If we want to see the revival and power promised in the Word of God, we are going to need some wings. We call our cocoon the prayer closet. If you desire to see the fullness of God in your life, you will not find it within your own ability.

Someone once told me I focused too much on prayer and should just accept by faith who God made me. I thank God I didn’t take their advice and continued the path I was on. When I choose to take

time to pray in the Holy Spirit, worship God, and read my Bible, a metamorphosis begins. A supernatural work of God from the very life of God in me takes place.

I've seen many good believers become discouraged during their cocoon time, wanting it to happen faster. In their impatience with the Lord's work in them, they decide to go and do it for God. This is the main difference between the two paths: in one you must let it be done to you; in the other you can go and do it for God. They don't realize they will never fly on their own.

Earlier in scripture, Paul says this: *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."* (Romans 8:29-30).

I've heard preachers quote this verse about the path, and I questioned these instructions. I then realized that the ones God foreknew were the Old Testament saints who were raised from the dead with Christ. They were conformed into the image of God instantly and even received their glorified bodies as well.

It is a good thing for us to make the right changes we know to make. It is a good thing to do everything we can to share the Gospel. However, let's not abandon the most important work of being transformed. It reads in 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:1, *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart."*

The process of transformation starts from the inside, and it is our first ministry. The modern church has focused on acting like Christ and doing good works when we need to become like Christ. This miracle is available to all believers, not just those in the pulpit. Let's not lose heart or become distracted from our time with the Holy Spirit. The metamorphosis will happen to you if you continue to stay in your cocoon. It is time for God's children to go from glory to glory, not from discouragement to defeat. Nothing is impossible through this path.

ALAN TAYLOR

P O BOX 700623; TULSA, OK 74170-0623

918-447-8951

alantaylorministries.org