

Life in the Spirit

“Conformed into His Image”

Pr. Diane Waghorne

We are going to be talking about something that I believe is absolute priority on the heart of God for His children. It is actually God's ultimate purpose and goal for each one of His children.

But before we get into our message let me preface it with asking you a little something about your own goals you have for yourself this new year?

How many of you have set goals or made any resolutions for this new year?

How many are determined to see change for the good in certain areas and make progress?

It is good and helpful to evaluate our lives and see where we are presently and where do we want to go.

All of us would like change for the better. That is why many take time to set goals or make resolutions; particularly in the beginning of a new year. We may even write them down, pray over them and commit to do what it takes to make progress.

One very common resolution or goal among most women is:

I am going to lose weight! How many are committing to diet and lose weight this new year? Now, how many actually lose it and keep it off? I am going to lose 25 pounds by the end of January! Then we try starving ourselves and give up by the end of February!

Sometimes we lose sight of the goal and lose the zeal to perform it. We may set goals and fail to achieve them But God is a super achiever!

Do you realize God is a “Goal Setter” and setting goals originated with God.

How many realize that God has a set goal for you and for me. Not just an ordinary goal we accomplish in our own strength, but a supernatural one. Not just for this New Year but a goal set for eternity also!

Do you realize when God looks into your life He has one primary goal in mind. One that is above all other goals; above all other works you may want to accomplish. God is serious about it. He has written it down in His Word! He is committed and will not lose zeal in bringing it to pass!

How many think if God has a definite purpose in mind and God has a definite goal for us then we should know what it is and it should be the primary thing we are daily aiming for?

“Being Conformed into His Image”

Romans 8: 28... And we know that in all things God “Works for the Good” of those who “Love Him,” who have been called according to “HIS PURPOSE.”

He has a predetermined set purpose or goal in His mind for you and for me.

So what is this purpose, or goal He has set for me?

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew ...The ones He knew ahead of time that would believe on Jesus...that is you and me who are in Christ ... you and me who have the indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives...you and me who have been given a New Life in the Spirit..... (John 6:64)

He also predestined to be “Conformed to the Image of his Son,” that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

God desires family. His desire is that you and I are a part of that awesome family through our belief in Jesus Christ as Savior. His plan is that Jesus Christ would be the “firstborn”(Head and Ruler) over the family and all the other children would be just like Jesus! Not equal to Him, but similar and resemble Him in Spirit, conduct, obedience, virtue and holiness. What a vision!

The main goal on God's list... His predetermined resolution for you and for me is for us to be like Jesus... **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON!**
Conformed...in our Spirit, Soul and ultimately in our body.

Conformed: 4832 σύμμορφος in the Gr. – similar; showing similar behavior from having the same essential nature.

Behavior: The way one acts or conducts oneself, *especially towards others!*

God has set a goal and given us this goal! He has given us the Holy Spirit on the inside to help us grow up and be achievers and become like Christ on the outside.... to resemble, behave, and fully develop to the full stature of Jesus Christ in our life.

God desires us to make progress day by day; not in doing more things but “in becoming” more like His Son, Jesus.....“behaving”... “thinking,” “acting and speaking” more like Jesus... particularly in our relationship “Towards Others!”

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Image: 1504 εἰκὼν (from 1503 /εἰκό, "be like") – properly, "mirror-like representation"... Not like a shadow but rather a replication.

That we by the Holy Spirit may reflect the Glory of the Glorious One in all we are and in all that we do.

Isaiah 43:7 Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

He created us for His Glory, to radiate His Glory; to reflect His Glory so that the world may come to know that Jesus is alive and He can live through you and me. They are to see a mirror image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus!

1 Colossians 1:15 Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God...

God desires His children, those of us born of the Spirit, to be the visible image of His Son, Jesus Christ on this earth; revealing the Love and Power of His Holy Spirit that is resident in our lives to people.

We have all heard that we may be the only Jesus someone sees! True!

You see, man was originally created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27)

After Adam and Eve fell because of sin, all mankind was now born with a sin nature—the Image of Adam. Man lost much of that original image and glory of God through sin. The original image of God in man is skewed, distorted, marred; dysfunctional.

The wonderful benefit of being “born again” is that we might once again, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit regain the image and likeness of our Creator. *Colossians 3:10*

We are to be “mirrors that reflect the image” or glory of our Creator. This Christ-likeness is to be our goal!

We can “BECOME” like Christ in character, in virtue, in heart and then in deed. We are to “BECOME” all that God has purposed for us TO BE in CHRIST.

Quote: David Wilkerson, he states: “If I am not Christ-like at heart—if I’m not becoming noticeably more like Him—then I have totally missed God’s purpose for my life. It doesn’t matter what I accomplish for His kingdom. If I miss this one purpose, I have lived, preached and yes, strived in vain.”

And he continues, “Now, I help pastor what would be called a mega-church. I conduct minister’s conferences around the world, preaching to thousands at a time. I founded Teen Challenge, a Christian rehabilitation ministry for alcoholics and drug addicts, worldwide..... All my works—the preaching, the accomplishments, the charitable giving, the many travels—amount to nothing if my wife with pain in her heart says, “ My husband isn’t really the man of God he pretends to be.”- then every thing in my life is vain.

His character and fruits do not line up with his accomplishments and works

He finishes by saying: “God’s purpose is fulfilled in me only by what I am becoming in Him. not by what I am doing.

It is quite a mockery to the gospel to be known for great works and accomplishments and have no Christ-like love or character to back it up.

Romans 8:29 “that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

Conformed into His Image OR Christ-likeness isn’t about what works I do in His Name.. although we are created in Christ Jesus for good works. ***Ephesians 2:10; John 14:12***

Christlikeness is a matter of the heart not works or accomplishments. It is a heart filled with the love of God towards others. It is a heart attitude of humility, servanthood, willing sacrifice and readiness to forgive,

Colossians 3:12 describes Christlikeness or Conformity to Christ beautifully when Paul tells us to Put on the New Man...or as **Romans 13:14** tells us to Put on Christ.

Colossians 3:12 *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 is a Scripture that perfectly describes the “PROCESS” to achieve God’s goal.

2 Corinthians 3:18 *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 from the Lord, the Spirit.*

Unveiled Faces: Nothing separating us from God anymore. All sin is forgiven through Jesus blood. We can with confidence come before God.

Beholding as in a mirror: As we look into the Word of God (a mirror reflection of Christ) and behold His glory ... Beholding who He is and what He has done and what He says... Looking unto Jesus (Hebrews 12: 2) ...

As we daily take time with Him in His Word. As we contemplate upon His Word with a believing heart, beholding Him in all His glory then the Lord Himself effects a transformation! We “are changed into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord!”

The Glory of the Lord

The Glory is who Jesus is and what He does. The Glory is the sum total of His person, character and works. It is this we are to behold as we behold His Word with all His wonder.

Are Being Transformed Greek 3339 **metamorphóō** ... A beautiful Holy Spirit word for Christians! from “metá,” meaning "change after being with" and “morphóō,” meaning "changing form in keeping with inner reality" – properly, transformed after being with! Transfigured! Hallelujah! All this points to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in our life as we spend time with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit will work a metamorphosis in us. He changes us from a caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly! Praise God!

The closer we keep to Him the more rapid and evident the transformation will be!

From “Glory to Glory” This is a spiritually progressive change and an ongoing process ... From one level of Christ-likeness to another... One level of godliness to another... One degree of sanctification and glory to another... Becoming more like Him!

Prioritize your life:

We must prioritize and form a habit of beholding that glory; loving that glory; desiring that glory; wanting Him and wanting to be more like Him.
(Just as Mary did sitting at his feet... **Luke 10:38**)

What the apostle intends is a habitual and daily contemplation of the "radiance of the Father's glory" that is revealed in Jesus. We then begin to reflect the brightness of that glory! *Hebrews 1:3*

The Transforming power of Beholding Him:

Bible Commentary: This proceeds on the well known principle that, whatever we look upon with frequency and with good feeling, stamps itself on our minds and characters. He who associates with the wise grows wise. He who admires the good himself becomes good. So likewise he who beholds the pure and gracious image of God in the face of Jesus Christ is changed insensibly into that image, learns to think the thoughts of God and to exhibit the mind of Christ through the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

You become a different person. Your life begins to yield fruit: it will blossom with stronger faith; a deeper life of love; a greater compassion for others; a submission to the will of God; a confidence in God's presence and purpose. That's you, friend as you spend time "Beholding Him!"

He transforms us with out laborious work and sweat!

Our work is to "Behold Him."... to keep our eyes on Him...We can rest in His transforming power. We can be assured of knowing His voice, having His guidance, receiving His instruction; receiving His correction. He will reveal Jesus to us and "t hrough us."

"Beholding Him" continually and "Abiding in Him" can be somewhat synonymous terms, This is a life that continually sets Jesus before it and clings to Him. Jesus is the focus of our devotion. This life keeps its eyes and heart set on Jesus. John 15:3-5

We will know we are changing. The VIRTUES of Christ or FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT are increasing in our life. As we put His Word and Jesus first and center the Word says we are changed from "Glory to Glory."

Galatians 5: 22, 23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The Love of God is more paramount in our life. Living for self is not as exciting as it use to be!

The Joy of the Lord is more evident. We are not always in a downward spiral emotionally.

God's Peace is the umpire in our heart. We are able to cast our burden on the Lord; and learn how not to be constantly anxious and worried.

Patience is increasing. We do not as easily blow up with others.

Kindness characterizes our personality. People may even think we are sweet!

Goodness and righteousness guide our thoughts. We want to please God and do what is right.

Faithfulness... We are growing not only in the Word but in our trust in God?

Gentleness... People see us as strong in the Lord but caring in nature.

Self-control... The Holy Spirit helps us exercise more dominion over our flesh and we are not letting the desires of the flesh dictate how we will behave?

Philippians 2:13 for it is God WHO WORKS IN YOU both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Glorious Promise of God is this!

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus!

Totally and completely!

Yes, the transformation into the “image of Christ” takes place now and will be completely finalized in the future glorification of our resurrected bodies!

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

God will bring it all to pass!

Let's keep God's primary goal first in our life... "Christlikeness" - "Becoming more like His Son Jesus"- "Conformity to the Image of His Son."

Let's make it our priority to "Behold Him" - Beholding His Glory day by day; keeping our eyes on Him, that we do not strive, and stress and labor and fret in glorifying God. But it is the blessed fruit of believing, beholding and being in His presence. He will take us from "glory to glory."

Let's desire above all accomplishments "To Become" "A mirror-like representation" inside and then out... spirit, character and conduct like Jesus. Let us be conduits of the love, the power and the glory of God showing the lost world there is a living Savior who transforms lives and loves them. May God use us mightily on the earth to accomplish great things to the Glory of His Name as we become more like Christ.

Amen

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