

Growth in Life through the Transformation of Our Soul for the Building Up of the Body

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 3:6, 9, 12-13; Phil. 2:2; Eph. 4:12-16

I. The regeneration of our spirit takes place in an instant, and the glorification of our body takes place in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51-52), but the transformation of our soul (our mind, emotion, and will) is a long process, a long “tunnel,” through which we must pass:

- A. Our spiritual life began with regeneration; when we believed on the Lord Jesus and called on His name, He as the life-giving Spirit entered into our spirit and regenerated it; since then, the Triune God has indwelt our spirit, and in spirit we are one with Him—John 3:6; 1:12-13; Rom. 10:12-13.
- B. Now there is the need for Him to spread from our spirit into our soul; when He as the life-giving Spirit has spread into our soul and saturated it, we are transformed—2 Cor. 3:16-18; Rom. 12:2:
 - 1. Transformation is the saturation of our soul by the Triune God.
 - 2. Regeneration is a birth in our spirit; transformation, a saturation in our soul.
- C. Transformation is a metabolic change; it is not an outward change or correction but the metabolic function of the life of God in the believers, issuing in an outward expression.

II. If the believers are willing to grow in the divine life, the element of the divine life will increase in them and bring forth a metabolic change; thus, their inward disposition will be transformed, and their outward image will also be transformed to be the same as the image of the Lord—2 Cor. 3:18:

- A. Only that which is expressed outwardly through the inward metabolism is genuine health and real beauty—cf. Exo. 28:2; Rom. 13:14, 12.
- B. When we are transformed into the image of the Lord by beholding Him, this is not the result of our self-cultivation, but it is the Lord Spirit, the life-giving Spirit, who the Lord Christ became in His resurrection, who moves within us to bring forth a metabolic change through the increase of the element of the divine life in us.
- C. When the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ spreads from our spirit into our soul, it begins the inner process of metabolism and issues in an outward manifestation; then people will see that what is manifested through us is not ourselves but Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a.
- D. We must enjoy the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and allow Him to work in us; this is transformation; if we touch the Lord day by day by turning our hearts to Him and allow His element to come into us, metabolism will spontaneously transpire in us so that we may be transformed and express the Lord from glory to glory—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- E. In order to be transformed, we need to talk with Him and confer with Him in everything—“in nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”—Phil. 4:6:
 - 1. If we have some problem, we just need to tell the Lord; He is right within us, and He is with us face to face—cf. Exo. 33:11.
 - 2. When anxiety comes, we should say, “O Lord, this anxiety is Yours, not mine; I give it to You because You bear it for me”; thus, we receive the Lord’s element into us, and metabolism will work constantly in us; this is to live Christ.
 - 3. Those who do not know this secret (Phil. 4:12, 6) consider that to live Christ is a difficult thing; actually, we just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, we will live Christ.

III. The real growth in life is the transformation of the soul:

- A. In the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), the Lord Jesus spoke of the virgins' lamps and their vessels; both the prudent and the foolish had oil in their lamps (v. 8), but only the prudent took oil in their vessels:
 - 1. Two portions of oil were needed, one for the lamp and the other for the vessel.
 - 2. Those who are saved all have oil in the lamp; that is, we have the Spirit in our spirit (Prov. 20:27); whether we have an extra portion of oil in our vessel (Rom. 9:21, 23), our soul, however, is another question.
 - 3. Whether we are foolish or prudent virgins depends not on our spirit but on our soul; our spirit has been regenerated, but our soul needs to be saturated with the Spirit; we need to have the extra portion of oil in our vessel.
 - B. This parable shows us that after we have been regenerated, we need to be transformed; that is, we need to grow in life; the life abiding in our spirit needs to spread into our soul until it is saturated; as the new elements of the divine Spirit enter into our soul, it is organically transformed, and this transformation is the growth in life.
- IV. First Corinthians 3 says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth...You are God's cultivated land [farm], God's building...But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble, the work of each will become manifest"—vv. 6, 9, 12-13:**
- A. These verses show that transformation and the growth in life are the same—we start out as plants growing on God's farm, but the end result is our being transformed into gold, silver, and precious stones.
 - B. This farm that is also a building illustrates the way that the indwelling Spirit spreads from our spirit to permeate our soul and thus to transform us.
- V. If we let the indwelling Spirit in our spirit spread into and saturate our soul, we shall spontaneously be one—we shall be "joined in soul"; the natural concepts will give place to the spreading Spirit; this is the way that we grow in life, and out of this growth in life comes oneness—Phil. 2:2:**
- A. The Philippians had Christ in their spirit through regeneration, but they did not have Christ in their soul through transformation; only by having Christ saturate and occupy their entire soul could they be made one in soul.
 - B. Will we allow the indwelling Spirit to thoroughly saturate our soul so that it is organically transformed? Will we give the Spirit the freedom to permeate our soul as well as our spirit? When our soul is saturated by the indwelling Spirit, we are one with the new man and built up in the Body.
- VI. Ephesians 4:12-16 tells us that the building up of the Body of Christ depends on the growth in life:**
- A. Our growing up into Him in all things comes about through our soul being saturated with the Spirit; there must be "the growth of the Body" for the Lord to have the new man—2:15; 4:23-24; Col. 3:10-11.
 - B. When His Body is built up, He will have the new man on earth to carry out God's eternal purpose; this is the goal that the Lord is pursuing.
 - C. Let us pray for this to be realized and offer ourselves to Him for this: "Lord, spread Yourself from my spirit into my soul. Saturate my soul. Transform me metabolically. I want to be organically changed."
 - D. After some time we shall be transformed by the growth in life; then we shall be built into the Body and be members of the new man; the coming into being of the new man is the Lord's goal; let us be one with Him in pursuing the growth in life through the transformation of the soul for the building up of the Body as the one new man.