

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

January 2019

Be don't conform transformed

Did you know the Bible speaks of something called transformation? It's found in these two verses in the New Testament:

But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

— 2 Corinthians 3:18

And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

— Romans 12:2

So, what does it mean for us as believers to be transformed? And how can we experience transformation in our Christian life?

The word "transformation," according to Merriam-Webster, means "a complete or major change in someone or something's appearance, form, etc." This gives us a basic definition of transformation as a kind of change.

But what does transformation mean for us as Christians? Does it mean we clean up our act, change our behavior to be more Christ-like, or live by a new set of rules and regulations? When we look more closely at the verses mentioned above, we find that in the Bible, transformation actually means something different from all of these things.

In the original Greek language of the New Testament, the word used for transformation is **metamorphosis**. The biological definition for metamorphosis, again according to Merriam-Webster, is "a profound change in form from one stage to the next in the life history of an

organism, as from the caterpillar to the pupa and from the pupa to the adult butterfly."

Although an outward change in appearance or form takes place, the change comes from within the life of the organism. A caterpillar is born with the life that causes it to become a butterfly. It doesn't put on a butterfly costume or strive to act like a butterfly. As long as it eats, its metabolism takes the nutrients it consumes, assimilates them into the caterpillar, and causes it to grow, so that eventually, the caterpillar changes and becomes a real, genuine butterfly.

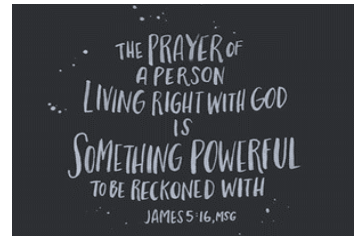
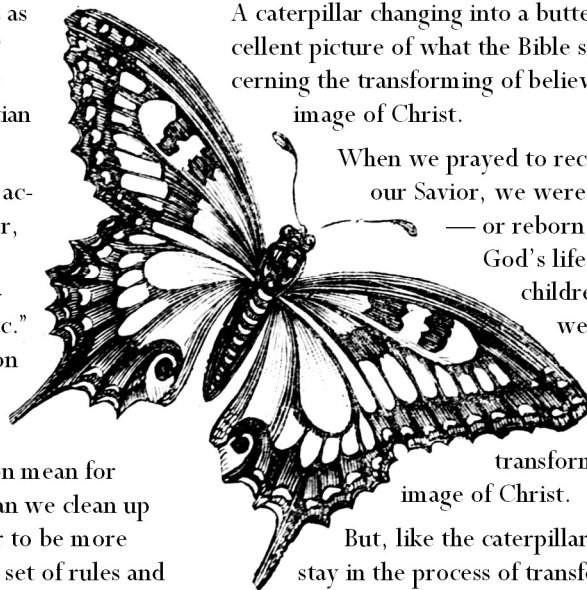
A caterpillar changing into a butterfly is an excellent picture of what the Bible speaks of concerning the transforming of believers into the image of Christ.

When we prayed to receive Christ as our Savior, we were regenerated — or reborn — with God's life to become

children of God. We were reborn with the divine life of God within. This life transforms us into the image of Christ.

But, like the caterpillar, we have to stay in the process of transformation by eating. In John 6:35, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst." The Lord wants us to take Him as our spiritual food. If we want to grow and change, we need to partake of Him every day.

Some caterpillars eat only one kind of leaf for their whole lives. In the same way, as believers,
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- Bob Bryan
- Carole Carreker
- Dot Danforth
- Sara Dean
- Mary Ann DeMaria
- Donna Hood
- Don & Terry Fincannon
- Shea Dewberry Gilbert
- Sue Peters
- Mary Roper
- Nita Tolar
- Levada Mabry
- Bill & Lynda Wester
- Steve Bowman
- Emily Alderman
- Family of John Hancock
- Family of Charles Pettett
- David Wold
- Ann Franz
- Christi Ross
- Mike Birchfield
- Charlotte Christopher (Vera Burrell's sister)
- David & Lisa Mangus (Pat Reed)
- Jenette Morris (Jerry Bramblett's sister)
- Family of Eugene Bassett (Linda Bramblett's brother-in-law)
- Steve Reed (Pat Reed's son)
- Don Roper (Mary Roper's son)
- Donna Stacy (Joe Stacy's mother)
- Jim & Dott Stroud (Marcie Millholland's parents)
- Paula Burtch



Thank you to everyone who helped with the Drive-Through Nativity, whether you were a performer or were working behind the scenes. This is a small window of time, but a big outreach to the community, and would be impossible without your dedication!

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we also are meant to eat only one kind of spiritual food throughout our entire lives — Christ. When we eat and drink of Him, we're supplied with His life for our Christian life, and we grow with that life. As we grow, we're in the process mentioned in 2 Corinthians 3:18, being transformed from one degree of glory to another, little by little, into the image of Christ. By taking in Christ as our food, more of His element is added to us and assimilated by us. We undergo a transformation that's not merely an outward change, but one that comes from our being spiritually nourished and the life of God operating in us.

Transformation is not a change brought about by simply doing good or improving our behavior. Imagine a person who is undernourished, sickly, and pale, but who puts on makeup to improve their appearance. They may look healthier, but the makeup is only cosmetic, something externally applied. What they really need is a genuine change that results from a life process within.

If that same undernourished, pale person were to eat healthy, nourishing food, a noticeable change would begin to occur. Their color would improve and their body would be strengthened. Eventually, their appearance would become healthy not because of something they did outwardly, but because of

something that changed inwardly.

Adjusting our behavior to look more like Christ is like applying that external makeup. Our inward condition remains the same, but we try to cover it by doing good things or improving our conduct. As a result, what people see is not really Christ Himself lived out of us and expressed in our lives, but spiritually undernourished people striving to imitate Christ's life the best they can.

Genuine transformation is different. An inward change takes place in our being as we take Christ in as our spiritual food and drink. As we eat, the divine life within us is allowed to operate, and our "appearance" gradually improves until we spontaneously begin to express Christ more in our daily lives.

People might remark, "That person's different than he was before. What happened to him?" The difference comes from being transformed by the life of God through our taking Christ and assimilating Him into our being until we express Him more and more.

We can't transform ourselves, but we can "be transformed," that is, we can cooperate with the Lord for this process of transformation to take place in us.

Will you be transformed?

In Christ,

Jimmy



**Sunday School 10 a.m.
3rd floor classroom**

Nursery for children 4 and younger is provided during the Sunday School hour and the 11 a.m. service

YOUR STAFF THANKS YOU!

We are so grateful for the generous love offering given to our families. It is a joy and a privilege to serve you as we work together to answer God's call in our lives, do His will and spread His love throughout our community. We wish you a happy and healthy 2019, and look forward to what God has in store for us.

NEW YEAR, NEW BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Jimmy will lead a Bible study "Transformed Lives" on Wednesdays Jan. 16-Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. and Sundays Jan. 20-24 at 6 p.m.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flower calendar is wide open for 2019! Please check the board in the breezeway or email the church office to make your flower dedications.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The monthly **men's breakfast** is **Sunday, Jan 13 at 7:30 a.m.**

The **finance committee** will meet at **7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 14.**

The Heritage Club will meet **Thursday, Jan. 18 at noon** in the **gym.** Gospel/country singer Marc Cave is the entertainer!