

Be Transformed¹
Romans 12:2

From Becky Pippert, in *Hope Has Its Reasons*:

“We were looking at a case study in which the therapist, using an approach called psychodynamic therapy, helped the patient to uncover a hidden hostility toward his mother. Naming the problem and understanding the mechanisms of what really bothered him seemed to make the patient feel as if a great weight had been lifted. Then the professor began to proceed to the next case.

Mustering my courage, I raised my hand and said, ‘I don’t know quite how to phrase this...but let’s say the patient returned a few weeks later and said, ‘I’m so relieved to understand what was bothering me. My mother did things that provoked my hostility. But now I’d like to get beyond my anger. I’d like to be able to love her and forgive her. How do I do that?’”

“How does psychodynamic psychotherapy help a person with a request like this?”

“There was silence. Then the professor answered, ‘I think the therapist would say, ‘Lots of luck!’ It’s accomplishing a great deal in life just to be able to get past our defenses and uncover and name the hidden things that drive us.... So to ask that his hostility magically disappear isn’t realistic. They will have to learn to live with it and hopefully not be driven by it.’

This touched off an intense exchange in the class. One student summarized what many of us were thinking [and said], ‘It’s not that I expect problems to be instantly eliminated. Forgiving is a process. But is the most that we can hope merely the ability to name and understand our problems? Can’t we ever be healed too? Isn’t loving and forgiving a better way of living than not merely being controlled by anger? If that’s the case, how do we help our clients find the power to change?’”

“...the teacher, with more candor than he may have realized said, ‘If you guys are looking for a changed heart, I think you are looking in the wrong department.’”²

“...*be transformed....*”
 (Romans 12:2)

¹ This material serves as an introduction to a breakout session entitled, “The Transformation Mindset.”

² Becky Pippert, *Hope Has Its Reasons: The Search to Satisfy Our Deepest Longings*, IVP 2001, 117-18.

Romans 12. “(1) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed**....”

10 Revelations

....manifested in Paul’s command for you to be transformed

#1 Evidently, you’re not _____ yet.

#2 It is _____ who needs to change.

A. Romans 12:2. “...(you) be transformed....”

B. Timothy and Kathy Keller, in *The Meaning of Marriage*: “One of the greatest expressions of love is the willingness to change, to make a commitment to change attitudes and behaviors that trouble or hurt your spouse. There must be an ability to take correction and to be accountable for real concrete changes. This kind of change is always hard, and nearly impossible without the grace of God, but it is also one of the most powerful signs of love in a marriage.”³

C. A transforming person is a powerful tool in the hand of God to help other people be transformed.

#3 Transformation is truly _____.

A. Inside every command of God to believers in Christ lies the promise of provision to help them keep that command.

³ Timothy and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*, Dutton, 160.

B. Matthew 14. “(28) Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. (29) And He said, ‘Come!’”

C. Romans 12:2. “...*be transformed*....”

#4 Transformation is your calling in every _____ of life.

A. Romans 12:2. “...*be (being) transformed*....” (present tense)

B. Mistakes we make:

1) We assume we have changed enough and stop growing.

2) We assume we have been transformed more than we actually have; so, we become overconfident and let our guard down.

C. You will never be transformed beyond the need for constant vigilance and moment-by-moment dependence upon God. You will never be transformed to the point where you can stand on your own without His help. And, in this life, you will never be transformed to the point where this command to keep being transformed no longer applies to you.

#5 This transformation is a _____, not a one-time event.

A. Romans 12:2, “*be (continuously being) transformed*....”

B. God was content to create the world in 6 days, calling each stage good, even when it was not yet complete.

C. Jesus did not transform His disciples overnight, but did so over the space of years.

D. The Apostle Paul still wasn't perfect after knowing the Lord for many years.

- Philippians 3:12. “*Not that I...have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.*”
- Philippians 3:15. “*Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude.*”

E. In the mind of God, the perfect Christian is the *progressing* Christian.

F. Questions to ask:

- Are you stumbling into sin less frequently?
- When you do sin, are you repenting more quickly?
- Are you grieving more deeply over your sin?
- Are you seeing sins in yourself that you didn't notice before?
- Are you moving toward deeper community and accountability with others?
- Are you feeling more desperate for Jesus?
- Are you more amazed by His grace?
- Is your love for Him, and hope in Him, growing?

#6 Transformation is _____ job, but it's _____ choice.

A. Romans 12:2. “*...(you) be transformed....*” (passive)

B. God changes us best when we obey a command like this and choose to let Him transform us.

#7 The transformation God wants to do in you is _____.

Romans 12:2. “...*be transformed* [Gr. *metamorphoō*]....”

#8 This transformation is _____, not optional.

A. Romans 12:2. “...*be transformed*....” (imperative)

B. God loves you just the way you are, but He loves you so much that He refuses to let you stay that way. God also loves the people in your life so much that He refuses to let you stay the way you are.

#9 This transformation has the goal of _____.

A. 2 Timothy 3:13. “...*evil men...will proceed from bad to worse,*”

B. Jim Newheiser, in *Help! I Want to Change*: “The change that we, as biblical Christians, seek is unique. Our goal is not merely to transform some aspect of our lives so that we will be happier or more comfortable. The goal of believers is that we would become more Christlike and that this change would be to the glory of God.”⁴

C. Romans 8:29. “*For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*”

⁴ Jim Newheiser, *Help! I Want to Change*, Shepherd Press, 11.

- D. 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.*”
- E. C.S. Lewis, in *Weight of Glory*: “We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words – to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it.”⁵

#10 God has _____ you all you need in Christ to be transformed.

- A. The command to “*be transformed*” comes after Romans 1-11.
- B. A mistake we make: We stop growing and changing because some person in our life is not changing the way we want. So, we start making excuses for our lack of transformation and begin putting conditions upon any change that others might want to see in us. Essentially, what we are saying is that Christ is not enough. We are saying that we need Christ’s righteousness *plus* this other person’s righteousness in order for us to be transformed.

Conclusion

So, what are you waiting for?

Radical transformation is not only possible for you as a Christian. It is your birthright, and it’s your destiny. God has given you everything you need to experience change; and all that God has given you is summed up in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

On your good days and bad days, keep your eyes on Him!

⁵ <https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/Lewis%20Glory.pdf>