

CHRISTIANS ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO HIS LIKENESS

(Part #3)

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A COMPETITION TO SEE WHO IS THE “MOST RIGHTEOUS” OR “WHO IS THE MOST TRANSFORMED”– EACH CHRISTIAN IS UNIQUE AND EQUALLY LOVED BY GOD.

It is sometimes tempting for Christians who have been transformed to a more mature state (or who think they are) to judge those who are not as far along in their development as those who are “stronger”. This, of course is not right! The more mature must remember their journey and that they were, at one time, in a similar state (if not worse). In fact, Paul, through the Holy Spirit gives instructions to the more mature as to how they are to respond to the weaker Christian. **Romans 14:1,13 (NIV) 1 “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”** The context of these passages has to do with eating certain things. Under the Old Covenant certain meats were forbidden. During the Old and New Testaments idol worshippers offered up sacrifices of meat to their false gods and then it was sold in the market place. Some who had worshipped idols and had eaten meat offered up to the idol later became Christians and their conscience would not allow them to buy and eat meat that had been offered up to an idol as they felt this would be partaking of idol worship. More mature Christians knew that there was nothing wrong with buying and eating meat sold in the market place. Since there was only One God, the meat offered up to idols was not contaminated with the idol. **However, they were not to eat the meat if it offended weaker Christians as this might be a stumbling block to them.** (Read Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10). The stronger has a responsibility to love and care for the weak. We should teach and encourage the weaker Christians without being judgmental or looking down on them.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians are told in **Romans 12:1-2 (NIV) 1** Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. **2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
2. And again in **2 Corinthians 3:12-18 (NIV) 12** Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **13** We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. **14** But their minds were made dull, **for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.** **15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.** **16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.** **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord,** who is the Spirit.
3. Transformation takes time; In fact we are being transformed from the time we are born into the family of God until the day we die.
4. We are saved by grace through faith for good works **Ephesians 2:8-10.**
5. During our Christian walk, we will sin from time to time but the blood of Christ cleanses (Greek tense of this verb cleanses is a continuous action, **keeps on cleansing**) us from all sin.

6. During the time we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ (**2 Corinthians 3:18**), we will face trials of many kinds and these trials are used to develop us into His likeness as we submit to the teaching of Christ and put off the old man of sin. (**Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4, 12**).
7. Transformation takes time and during that time we will fall short of what God expects and encourages us to be and do, but the blood continues to cleanse us as we walk in the light (**1 John 1:7-9**).
8. When we sin, we repent, ask God's forgiveness and help, He forgives us through the blood of Christ and we continue to mature and grow. It is always our goal to yield to God and be molded into the likeness of Christ.
9. No Christian should judge his fellow Christian because, in his mind, he feels he is stronger or more mature. God is the judge of us all **Romans 2:1 (NIV) 1 *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*** **Romans 14:4 (NIV) 4 *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.***
 - a. Read **Ephesians 4:1-6**.
10. We are saved at the point of baptism into Christ, cleansed by His blood, and as long as we walk in the light, (**1 John 1:6-9**), Christ's blood continues to cleans us of sin (**1 John 1:7**).
11. God gives us time to be transformed into the likeness of His Son, keeping us saved all the time we are maturing, growing and walking in the light. Even if we sin we are covered by Christ's blood!
 - a. **1 John 2:1-2 (NIV) 1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. *But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.***
 - b. **1 John 1:7-9 (NIV) 7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all righteousness.***
12. Christians have all the reason to be secure in their Christian development as long as they walk with Christ and submit to Him; Putting off the old man of sin and putting on the new man in Christ (**Ephesians 4:22-24**).