

Let’s focus on the inner and outward changes that a Christian undergoes when a person becomes part of God’s family. What happens when God changes us?

METAMORPHOSIS

Have you seen a video of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly? This ex-earthbound caterpillar seizes the wind and lifts off, revealing a new butterfly. It is one of the wonders of God's world that such drastic transformation takes place. Where there was once an ugly worm, laboring to get to the next leaf, this glorious butterfly now carries no similarity to its former self.

What would it be like to go through such drastic and amazing changes? To be changed from the slow-moving existence that seems so pointless into someone who soars with purpose and joy? Think of how we have transformed all these years. Through Christ, God helped us destroy the cycle of sinning so that we experience freedom from sin. To become so much more than you once were, through the extraordinary inner work of the Spirit of God.

It is one of the wonders of God's world that such amazing transformation takes place. The Bible says that the miraculous INSIDE OUT change is the experience of every true believer! In fact, the very same word used to describe the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly is used by the Holy Spirit to describe God's work in His children. The word is METAMORPHOSIS, and God has that in mind for you.

Metamorphosis - The root word “MORPHOO” means "form" or "nature." It refers to the real inner essence of a person and thing. If the word was applied to you, it would describe the real you, the true nature of who you are, and how that works its way outward in your behavior.

Now take that root idea and add the Greek prefix “META” to it, and it means "to change the essential nature of something or someone." This is inside work that has major outcomes on outward living. This is metamorphosis. In Ephesians 4, Paul gets specific. Since God changes us from the inside out, what exactly does Christlikeness look like on the inside? And how is that expressed in my life?

WORD

Ephesians 4:1-6 - “1 I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (ESV)

In verses 2-6, Paul gives us four attitudes that show a worthy walk in Jesus - the life He means to live through us. We walk worthy of God’s calling not because we want God to love us, but because He already does. Walking worthy of His calling is driven by gratitude rather than a desire to demonstrate a reward.

Four Attitudes that Show a Worthy Walk:

Humility

Ephesians 4:1-2 - “1 I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility…” (ESV)

I challenge you to try to think about Jesus without thinking about humility. Think of the character of our Savior.  From beginning to end, humility is a hallmark of who Jesus is. In God's plan, He was born in a manger, lived a poor life, never served in public office, never wrote a book, routinely exercised restraint in the presence of pride, washed the feet of His disciples like a slave, and submitted willingly to the humiliating torture of death on the cross. That's Jesus!

And He looks at us and says in Matthew 18:4, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (ESV)." Jesus frequently used the trusting disposition of a child as an example. Why? Because a child has no power. He is not considered great in this world. He is not strong. He is not self-sufficient. The world doesn't write books about the accomplishments of a child. And here's the deal: a child isn't bothered by that. Never even crosses his mind. Instead, a child completely trusts his parents to supply his needs. He does not lie awake wondering if he is going to eat tomorrow. He does not worry in the stroller if the sky turns black. He is happy, worry-free, and confident that everything he needs will be provided. That's the part Jesus wants us to see.

Humility says, "I don't have to have my way." Humility says, "Things don't necessarily have to please me, because I can see that it's meeting the needs of others." Humility says, "The program may not go as planned or the things are not handled the way I'd do it, but that's OK, because what I want is not the deciding factor; what's good for others is." That's what Jesus did. You can tell when humility takes hold. It's when you suddenly realize that you've gone a long period of time without thinking of yourself. If you are the center of your attention, driven by your wants, pushing for your way, claiming your rights, more metamorphosis in humility is needed. Let us not forget: A humble heart is the primary requirement for redemption. Being humble is one of the evidence that Jesus is indeed our Master.

Gentleness

Ephesians 4:1-2 - “1 I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness,” (ESV) The term was used in New Testament days to describe horses that had been broken. The animal still has its strength and spirit, but its will is under the control of another. You might define the word GENTLENESS as "power under control." Practically, we could say that GENTLENESS is expressed by not insisting on your rights, not being easily offended, and not holding grudges.

Jesus comes to mind. When the crowd came to arrest Him in the garden, He could have called a legion of angels, but He didn't. When Pilate was in His face, Jesus remained silent. When His accusers lied against Him, He could have crushed them, but He did not object.

Was Jesus' show of self-control, of not fighting back really just weakness? No. He held back because He was strong. He had nothing to prove, no one to impress. With the power He used to bring the world into being at His disposal, He willingly held back any impulse to retaliate or take over. He trusted in the Father's timing. When we are gentle like Jesus, we are unwilling to provoke others or allow oneself to be provoked by others. They can stab you in the back; they can gossip about you; they can post on Facebook all they want to annoy you; but you will restrain yourself and remain gentle for Christ’s sake. The chief characteristic of a genuine follower of Jesus is humility not authority, and gentleness not power.

III. Patience

Ephesians 4:1-2 -  “1 I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience.” (ESV)

Literally, the word means "long-tempered" or as one person suggested, "long-fused". This is all about how you respond to frustrations, inconveniences, delays, people who provoke, and situations that get you angry. You don't murmur. You don't write people off. You don't turn in your resignation. You wait, knowing the damage anger does in marriages and meetings. You trust that God is in control of His circumstances.

James 1:19 lays down the rule on this: "My dearly loved brothers, understand this: everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for man's anger does not accomplish God's righteousness." Bear in mind, some of our greatest blessings come with patience. So when we are patient with other people, expect blessings of having good relationships. Jesus endured. He endured the cross and the shame. He endured hostility from sinners against Himself (Heb. 12:2-3). He did it so we can be saved. Now, we can have a relationship with Him. You want to be like Jesus? This must mark you. We must exercise patience so that the inevitable wrongs committed by members of God's family do not undermine God's plan to reconcile everything in Christ. Remember: Patience with God is FAITH. Patience with self is HOPE. Patience with others is LOVE.

BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER

Ephesians 4:1-2 -  “1 I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love.” (ESV)

Literally, this means putting up with people. How many times have you needed someone to come alongside you and bear a burden? The weight of life can be crushing at times without having someone we trust and love to come shoulder to shoulder with us. I know I’ve walked alongside friends and family who’ve suffered greatly  and had them come alongside me as well. Lost jobs, crushing financial burdens, adultery, death and sickness, loss of faith, loss of hope, mental illness. When I think of all of the burdens, I’ve had the privilege to help bear it is difficult to understand how we, as humans, can have the strength to do it all. But the key is that we aren’t doing it alone.

We should bear with one another in love. And we are doing that with humility, gentleness, and patience with the goal of maintaining peace and unity. When we break it down, it doesn’t seem so hopeless and unbearable. I want to encourage you to search for ways you can help bear someone’s burden. How can you show gentleness and love to someone in need? It doesn’t have to be complicated or extreme. Sometimes all we need is someone to say, “I see you, and I care.”

Or perhaps you’re in need of someone to come alongside you. Seek out someone you can trust to show you genuine love and stop trying to bear your burden alone. God never intended for us to plow through life solo. God made us for community, one body through one Spirit, serving one Lord with all of our own talents and gifts.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

1) What quality would you like to develop in your character?

2) Did you struggle with your attitude when you became a Christian? What were those challenges?

3) What were some of the positive changes have you noticed in yourself after accepting Christ as your Savior?