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### Strengthening an Understanding and Practice of Spiritual Transformation For Sunday School Teachers of Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, Patterson Springs, NC

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STRENGTHENING AN UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF SPIRITUAL  
TRANSFORMATION FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ELLIS CHAPEL  
BAPTIST CHURCH, PATTERSON SPRINGS, NC

A PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY  
BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

IN FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
LINDA WILLIAMS LOCKHART

AUGUST 2022

APPROVAL FORM

STRENGTHENING AN UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF SPIRITUAL  
TRANSFORMATION FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ELLIS CHAPEL  
BAPTIST CHURCH, PATTERSON SPRINGS, NC  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

On a hot summer day in July 2012, while sitting under the dryer at a hair salon, I heard the voice of God say, “Go to Divinity School.” I could not imagine myself there, but out of obedience, I applied, was accepted, and now have completed my second divinity degree, the Doctor of Ministry. And for that, I give God all the glory, for he chose me for his Kingdom building business.

I dedicate this degree to the ones who would have been the proudest to call me Dr. Linda Williams Lockhart, my brother, the late James Marshall Feaster, and my sister-in-love, the late Ms. Penny Lockhart Canty.

To my husband, Ray Randall Lockhart, Jr., thank you for supporting me in completing my sixth degree. I am grateful for your love and many nights of listening to my project ideas and allowing me to cry on your shoulder when I thought the task was too great for me to complete. Thank you for believing that I could do it! I love you beyond your imagination.

To my immediate family, thank you for your support and well wishes. To Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, thank you for your prayers and support through this great accomplishment. To the Real Talk, Sunday School Class, thank you for allowing your classroom to become a laboratory of the Spirit in which I would come to test the veracity of God’s call on my life as a teacher. I love each of you.

To the control group, especially the experimental groups A/B, thank you for being willing participants in this project study. Without your participation, the execution of the project would not have been possible. To our former church clerks, Audrey Lee,

Anganette Lawrence, and Tanya Williamson, thank you for helping me collect and secure the project's data. To Dr. Ruth E. Pace, thank you for your willingness to read my papers from the MDiv to the DMin. I appreciate you taking your time and skills to ensure all my papers were without grammatical errors.

To the entire School of Divinity professors, thank you for such a rich experience in the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry programs. I am humbled and grateful for the learning I received from each of you. To Dr. Sophia Steibel, I am truly grateful for your wisdom and guidance during the MDiv and DMin programs.

I am grateful!

## **ABSTRACT**

The spiritual formation process can be clearly viewed through the lives of those who lived during the biblical era. People desire to change; however, the problem is that they do not know how because training in the spiritual formation process is not present within many churches today. This project was designed to train selected Sunday School teachers of Ellis Chapel Baptist Church through a four-week spiritual transformation process, hoping to strengthen their understanding of becoming image-bearers and practitioners of the Gospel that Jesus taught and exemplified. Through utilizing spiritual disciplines in journaling, training sessions, and assessments, selected teachers became aware of how important it is to receive training in biblical concepts and stories to awaken their hearts and minds regarding God's activities in daily life. Participants also considered the Holy Spirit's role in the transformation process.

This project engaged three different groups. Two experimental groups received training, but only experimental group B practiced the disciplines and journaled. The control group was from the larger population and received neither training nor practice. The statistical analysis indicated that the experimental group that practiced and journaled scored higher on the post-test results, strengthening the hypothesis that practices increase the possibility of spiritual transformation.



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Personal Rationale

When the Spirit of God called me to teach Sunday school, I was caught off guard and thrust into another world, one of which I knew little about. Teaching young adults every Sunday morning was way beyond my comfort zone. What could I teach people about God, one who I knew little about? There I stood before a young adult Sunday school class with no seminary training and minimal biblical knowledge. Therefore, I relied on the methods I acquired from workshops, conferences, and teachers at ECBC who had many years of experience in teaching Sunday school. I imitated their traditional way of transmitting the information published in the Urban Ministry Curricula. I continued with this mode of teaching for several years.

It was not until spending time with Father Elias at the Belmont Abbey Monastery during my first Doctor of Ministry seminar that I began sensing something was missing in my teaching and spiritual life. I discovered that I was a number in the research by Barna and Gallup that reported, “Those who claim to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior in America are not changing very much at all.”<sup>1</sup>

My character seemed untouched by my conversion, and my personal life displayed chaos and a lack of spiritual vitality. I struggled with the question: “How can I claim that Christ made a difference in my life when my life did not really look much

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 209.

different from the students I would teach?” I could not answer that question and continued to doubt the validity of the gospel I was teaching. This question prompted my research and led me to design this ministry project.

### **Statement of the Ministry Problem**

As Christian Education Director and Sunday School Teacher, I desired to grow in the knowledge of how to equip Sunday school teachers within the congregation to become involved in going from gaining information for information’s sake to gaining information for transformation. This ministry project is vital not only for our teachers at Ellis Chapel but for the community at large.

As God’s image-bearers, believers are to live a life of love, obedience, and trust. This is done by partaking in a daily spiritual transformation process. Although this process is challenging, it can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Transformer, with the participation of the believer. However, the believer cannot experience spiritual transformation on their own through church attendance, information gained from Bible study, prayer, and so forth only, because knowledge for transformation requires personal engagement at a deeper level.

God intends that *all* believers experience what he accomplished through Christ, who enables spiritual victory and freedom (John 8:31-32, 36). Although we are designed to change, there is a lack of direction, training, and encouragement, which only comes from God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chip Ingram, *The Miracle of Life Change: How God Transforms His Children* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 25.

This project aimed at strengthening an understanding and practice of spiritual transformation for Sunday School teachers at Ellis Chapel Baptist Church by engaging them in biblical studies and theological reflections in their daily lives.

### **Project Setting**

Ellis Chapel Baptist Church is the project setting. ECBC is located in Patterson Springs, North Carolina. Patterson Springs is a small town in Cleveland County. Historically, Patterson Springs was a small farming community that eventually became a manufacturing plant's locale. Unlike the neighboring communities in Shelby and Kings Mountain, Patterson Springs has not had success in forming a new identity through revitalization.

#### **Patterson Springs, North Carolina**

The small town of Patterson Springs, NC, is located at the south end of conjoined state highways 180 and 226. Originally Patterson Springs was a small farming community called “Swangs.” In 1885 with only a train depot, post office, and three springs, William George Patterson bought the land that held the three springs from the “Epps” family. The land was purchased with hopes that the supposed healing powers of these springs would heal his son, Billy, who suffered from poor health. The news of these springs' supposed healing powers spread and forced Patterson to build a thirty to forty-room resort to house travelers and merchants. People from North and South Carolina and Georgia frequented the resort. Because of the confusion the name “Swangs” caused the

railroad people, they convinced the post office to change it to Patterson Springs, and the government official agreed.

In 1915, a school building was built that housed children up to the eleventh grade. In 1923, the previous school became Number Three High school, and a new school was erected for grades one through eight. In 1960 the post office and train depot closed, and in 1970 both schools closed. Today, students in the Patterson Springs area attend Township Three (I taught there for seven years), Crest Middle School, Crest High School, or Pinnacle Classical Academy.

According to the United States Census Bureau released in the American Community Survey in 2020, Patterson Springs has a population of 624, with a median age of 27.5. The ethnic groups in Patterson Springs, NC are White (Non-Hispanic) (73.9%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (26.1%), and Hispanic or Latino (5.9%).

Patterson Springs has a poverty rate of 16.1% and a median household income of \$58,510. The percentage of people with at least a bachelor's degree is 3.62%. The major employer in Patterson Springs is Ticona, a German-based polymers maker. The company labels the facility as Shelby, but the plant is in Patterson Springs.<sup>3</sup>

#### Ellis Chapel Baptist Church

ECBC was established in 1889 under the leadership of Rev. A. Ellis. In November 1966, the church was destroyed by fire. A neighboring church, Zoar Temple, opened its door and allowed ECBC to hold worship services in their facility. Immediately

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<sup>3</sup> "Patterson Springs, NC," United States Census Bureau, accessed September 5, 2020, [springsnorthcarolina.com](https://springsnorthcarolina.com).



after the fire, rebuilding plans began to surface for rebuilding the church. However, all members did not favor rebuilding in the same location and wanted to purchase land in the Holy Oak Park community. Since a consensus could not be reached, the church suffered a split in 1967. A group left ECBC and built New Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, which is still in existence today. After the naming of New Ellis, ECBC became Old Ellis Chapel Baptist Church until 1989, ECBC changed its name back to the original name, Ellis Chapel Baptist Church.

Over the years, the church has seen its share of ebbs and flows. Currently, the average worship attendance is 210 in Sunday morning worship, and an average attendance of 186 in Sunday school, with a total membership of 434. The demographics of ECBC are generally as follows: The congregation is African American with multiple generations of former textile workers, a few educators, small-business owners, industrial workers, health care workers, and retired or nearing retirement that make up the majority segment of our congregation.

Ray R. Lockhart, Jr. serves as senior pastor of ECBC since August 2004. He is the only full-time paid staff member. Part-time paid staff includes a minister of music, church and financial secretaries, custodians, and groundskeepers. We have many volunteers who serve the congregation and community.

I serve as the Christian Education Director and teach the young adult Sunday school class. There are seven classes with two teachers in each, except for the adult class, which has three. Seminary training among teachers is very limited. Two teachers have seminary training experience. One teacher has a master's degree in therapeutic recreation, and one other has a Bachelor of Science in Engineering. The remaining teachers are high

school graduates. The majority of the teachers are willing and eager to learn new knowledge.

Presently, the church is flourishing, and congregants seem eager and ready to learn. They are very supportive of me as their Christian Education director. The Sunday school teachers possess a learning spirit and welcome new information. They understand to be the light of Christ in the Patterson Springs community, all must live a life that exemplifies God's image through a transforming life in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. My quest was to train teachers on how to engage in such a life by practicing the spiritual transformation process daily.

The teachers varied in age, a range from twenty-two to seventy. They also represented multi occupations in jobs, and some were retired. Some target groups live in Patterson Springs, but most live in the Shelby area.

### **Project Resources: Literature Review**

Several resources shaped my thinking and provided a deeper understanding of the spiritual transformation process. I was particularly intrigued by books such as *The Miracle of Life Change: How God Transforms His Children* by Chip Ingram, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard; *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* by Richard J. Foster, *The Jesus Habits: Exercising the Spiritual Disciplines of Jesus* by Jay Dennis; finally, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney. A complete list of

literature reviews is included in the bibliography. These books are the core that gave me a clearer understanding of the spiritual transformation process of the heart.

Based on the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Ingram's explicit reminder is that God desires to transform the believer's desire and gives love and power to form the very character of Jesus within the believer. Ingram gives several "spiritual metamorphosis" stages, leading to spiritual reproduction and bringing the believer to encounter the change that Christ offers.<sup>4</sup>

In *Renovation of the Heart*, Willard explains spiritual formation for the Christian as "The Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Jesus."<sup>5</sup> Earlier, he said, "The perceived distance and difficulty of entering fully into the divine world and its life is due entirely to our failure to understand that 'the way in' is the way of pervasive inner transformation and to our failure to take the small steps that quietly and certainly lead to it."<sup>6</sup> This reflection assisted in giving me an understanding of the human personality and how it can be transformed into Christlikeness.

*The Spirit of the Disciplines* provided a core theology behind understanding the history of the disciplines. Willard also focused on key disciplines in two groups: abstinence and engagement. He stresses understanding what it means to be humans meant

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<sup>4</sup> Ingram, *The Miracle of Life Change*, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10.

to image God in our embodied existence. This reflection assisted in shaping my thinking concerning the importance of being God's image-bearer.<sup>7</sup>

*Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster gave insight into the three categories of spiritual disciplines: inward, outward, and corporate disciplines. He explained what the practice of each discipline entails. He gave four disciplines in each category. He calls the twelve disciplines classical because they are ancient and central to experiential Christianity. After perusing this book, I understood the importance of each discipline in the spiritual transformation process. Foster provides tools for a deeper experience of God.<sup>8</sup>

*The Jesus Habits* by Jay Dennis identifies thirty-one habits of Jesus. He says, "Approximately NINETY percent of what we do every day is governed by the habits in our lives."<sup>9</sup> He explained that if we practiced Jesus' habits, we would receive the greatest days of blessing. This book is a journey of exercising the spiritual disciplines of Jesus and confirms my conclusion concerning daily practicing of spiritual disciplines. The more we devote ourselves to emulating the thought and behavioral patterns of Jesus, the more God can bless us and use us for His purposes.

Lastly, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney details selected spiritual disciplines in the context of the scriptures. He instructs on how these

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<sup>7</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 158.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Jay Dennis, *The Jesus Habits: Exercising the Spiritual Disciplines of Jesus* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 2.

selected disciplines can foster growth in pursuing godliness. He unpacks 1 Timothy 4:7,<sup>10</sup>“Train yourself in godliness,” as the theme of the book, and ends each chapter with practical ways of practicing the disciplines.

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<sup>10</sup> All Scripture will be from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

My Doctor of Ministry project focused on strengthening an understanding and practice of spiritual transformation by engaging teachers deeper in the process. These project training sessions dates were February 27<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup>, March 13<sup>th</sup>, and March 20<sup>th</sup>. The Experimental Groups (EG-A/EG-B) met each Sunday immediately after the worship experience (11:30 a.m-1:30 p.m.) in the fellowship hall at Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, and on March 26<sup>th</sup>, the EG-B group met from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with a lunch break, to share their journaling experiences, which was the practicing component of the project.<sup>11</sup>

Before the official four-week training, all three groups attended an informational session in the church's sanctuary on Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. The teachers seemed nervous about participating in the project. Each participant received a pre-numbered folder that was used throughout the duration of the project. I covered the project's goals, format, objectives, and expectations. I shared with the teachers that this project would offer training in the spiritual transformation process that would begin with an understanding that we are God's image-bearers, which should lead us to love God totally, a synonym for loving others. The outcome would promote a possible metamorphic change of the heart. After this explanation, I noticed that teachers were more relaxed and excited to participate. Afterward, covenant agreements were signed and returned to the appointed

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<sup>11</sup> From now on experimental groups A and B will be referred as EG-A and EG-B.

former church secretary, who was the lead person collecting data for the removal of myself from any possible biases in data analysis at the end of the project.

The control group took the pre-post spiritual transformation surveys (see Appendix A) and EG-A and B on Sundays, February 20<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup>. All the groups received a to-go lunch box during the four weeks of training, although the control group did not receive the training. I did not want to favor the EG-A and EG-B groups by feeding some but not all.

EG-A and EG-B groups consisted of nine novices and seasoned Sunday school teachers. The EG-A group, five teachers, received training in the biblical material without the opportunity to participate in the practice of spiritual transformation exercises. Whereas the EG-B group, four teachers, received biblical training in addition to participating in the practice of spiritual transformation exercises through journaling (see Appendix G for a description of these exercises). Both groups were present for all four-training sessions.

Teachers met four times in a training format. Each training session included opening prayer, training from the biblical research for the project, and to strengthen their understanding, videos from the Bible Project on YouTube were viewed during the first three training sessions. EG-B was given a Likert-style pre-test before each training, a post-test (see Appendix E) and journal exercises (see Appendix D) to be returned the following Sunday in order to assess EG-B's understanding of the training theme presented that week and a teacher's evaluation was given to both groups (see Appendix B).

The control group was comprised of three current, four former teachers, and four Sunday school teacher's assistants. This group received no training in the biblical material. Their only purpose was to complete the pre-post spiritual transformation surveys (see Appendix A) so that data comparisons with both experimental groups would be made possible.

Each session for the EG-A and EG-B groups was drawn from this work's biblical and theological portion (See chapter 3). They consisted of: (1) An Introduction to Spiritual Transformation (Gen. 1:26, I Peter 2:3, Eph. 4:21-24), (2) The Spiritual Transformation Process in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:4-9), (3) The Spiritual Transformation in the New Testament (Luke 10:25-37), and (4) Paul's Metamorphic Change (2 Cor. 3:12-18, Jer. 31: 31-34, Ez. 36: 26-27). I aimed at engaging teachers in theological and biblical reflections on their spiritual transformation process, which would lead them to an understanding that eventually would transfer into their daily life (See Appendix G for a detailed description of what happened in each session, including the words I said, questions asked, things showed, or how participants engaged). As said earlier, each lesson was based on biblical passages, as Chapter 3 of this work elaborates.

As a facilitator of all four training sessions, I was very pleased with their interaction. At all times, the level of honesty was demonstrated by their responses and questions (see Appendix G). Their receptivity indicates that moving forward to a continuation of this project is a strong possibility, as I will elaborate later in this narrative.



### Project Goals

This project aimed for Sunday school teachers of Ellis Chapel Baptist Church to develop an understanding and practice spiritual transformation beyond their current understanding through training and practicing spiritual transformation exercises. They were able to glean a greater awareness of the impact of engaging in the spiritual transformation process through a reflection on the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Loving God, Loving Others portrayed in the parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10: 25-37 and Paul's interpretation of a metamorphic change based on 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. EG-B practiced spiritual transformation exercises and journaled.

The training learning outcomes were as follows:

- Define “image” and being God’s image-bearers.
- Identify the *metamorphosis* of the lifecycle of a butterfly.
- Explain Deuteronomy 6:4-9, *Shema* and Moses’ teaching of God’s expectations, statutes, and ordinances to the Israelites.
- Compare the *Shema* with the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- Identify the difference between having a neighbor and being a neighbor.
- Identify the difference between the Old and New Covenants and the importance of the new covenant in the spiritual transformation process.

### **Project Calendar**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. January 20, 2022  | Received Proposal Approval   |
| 2. February 18, 2022 | Received IRB Approval  |
| 3. February 20, 2022 | Initial Meeting with Control/Experimental Groups. All groups completed the pre-test survey.  |
| 4. February 27, 2022 | Week One: "Introduction of Spiritual Transformation"   |
| 5. March 6, 2022     | Week Two: "Spiritual Transformation in the Old Testament: Loving God with your total being." |
| 6. March 13, 2022    | Week Three: "Spiritual Transformation in the New Testament: Loving God, Loving Others"       |
| 7. March 20, 2022    | Week Four: "A Metamorphic Change," All groups completed the post-test survey                 |
| 8. March 26, 2022    | EGB Practice Group Met to Discuss Journal.   |

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

#### **Introduction to Spiritual Transformation**

The biblical witness in the lives of men and women that experienced growth from an understanding and practice of spiritual transformation is clear. Millions of dollars are spent on self-help books, making me believe people desire to change. But when it comes to average Christians, they do not know how spiritual growth and transformation occur. The biblical and theological rationale for training Sunday school teachers in the spiritual transformation process is a portrayal of the lives of men and women who can be seen throughout the canon of Scripture.

In the Old Testament, the *Shema* serves as a foundational guide for a spiritual transformation process that trained Israel to grow in a relationship of love, trust, and obedience to God. In the New Testament, Jesus is witnessed training his disciples in practicing spiritual disciplines, which illustrate how to make space for God in daily life. Paul gives directions on how to progress through the life-long process of spiritual transformation through his teachings on training for godliness. For this reason, if believers are willing to participate in the life-long journey of spiritual transformation, they will be transformed by the Holy Spirit, who grows their relationship of love, trust, and obedience to Christ.

## God's Image-Bearers

Most people will concur with the saying, “Image is everything.” No matter where you turn, images are everywhere Such as the Internet, television, cell phones, billboards, and so forth. However, Jones and Barbeau suggest, “for all the ways that images help to shape our understanding of the self and the world in which we live, images often lead us astray and distort our relationships.”<sup>12</sup> The Bible gives the basis of a perfect image created by God. Genesis 1:26 states, “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...” And yet, because of humankind’s rebellion due to sin (Gen. 3), humankind became “unfaithful bearers of God’s image.”<sup>13</sup> Humankind continues to exist as God’s image-bearers, “but the image of God is not as it should be. It is distorted, twisted, broken.”<sup>14</sup> Due to the above state of humankind, God sent Jesus to restore his image. Jesus is God’s perfect image, and restoration happens through a lifelong process called spiritual transformation.

## Understanding Spiritual Transformation

According to Chip Ingram in his book, *The Miracle of Life Change: How God Transforms His Children*, “God’s intention is for *all* believers to experience his

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<sup>12</sup> Beth Felker Jones, and Jeffrey W. Barbeau eds. *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

transforming work that he accomplished through Christ for us to live in spiritual victory and freedom (John 8:31-32, 36). We are designed to change, but we often lack direction, training, and encouragement, which only comes from God.”<sup>15</sup>

Spiritual Transformation is, according to Johnston and Brown, “God’s work of changing a believer into the likeness of Jesus by creating a new identity in Christ and by empowering a lifelong relationship of love, trust, and obedience to glorify God.”<sup>16</sup> The most profound example of spiritual transformation is found in the process from caterpillar to butterfly, known as *metamorphosis metamorphoo*, “*change after being with*” and *morpho*, “changing form in keeping with inner reality”—appropriately, transformed *after* being with; *transfigured*.<sup>17</sup>

The verb form of the Greek word *metamorphoo*, translated as “*transformed*,” provides the key to understanding how spiritual transformation occurs and is found in Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.<sup>18</sup> In Romans 1-11, Osborne suggests that when Paul explains by *mercies of God*, it means what God granted to the believer. Beginning in chapter twelve, he appeals to the believer to respond in total surrender by *presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice*, meaning to dedicate every aspect of the total being to God.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ingram, *The Miracle of Life Change*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Jay Johnston and Ronald K. Brown, *Teaching the Jesus Way: Building a Transformational Teaching Ministry* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2000), 55.

<sup>17</sup> Strong’s Greek, *metamorphoo*, accessed on August 7, 2021 [Biblehub.com/Greek/3339.htm](https://www.biblehub.com/Greek/3339.htm).

<sup>18</sup> Ingram, *The Miracle of Life Change*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 318. Accessed September 4, 2021.

Osborne continues, “Sacrificial language in the New Testament is meant to be lived out practically in daily life.”<sup>20</sup> John V. Fesko adds, “We must present our bodies, our whole being, will, actions, affections, members to God as *holy* sacrifices, as those acceptable to God. The presentation of our lives must be *holy*.”<sup>21</sup> And to live life as acceptable, holy, living sacrifices unto God, in light of one’s redemption, is certainly “reasonable service.”<sup>22</sup> Paul explains how Christians offer their bodies as living sacrifices by not being conformed to the world but be transformed by renewing the mind (Rom. 12:2). Paul’s reason for his recipients not to “be conformed to this world” is according to Galatians 1:4, “Who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age.” Quoting from the NRSV, Fesko cites Romans 1:21-23 as the marks of this present evil age: “For though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.”

Instead of the believer conforming to the patterns of this world, the believer is transformed by renewing the mind, which comes through the transformative work of the Spirit. God changes and conforms the believer to his will, to the image of his Son, Jesus

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>21</sup> John V. Fesko, *Romans*: Reformation Heritage Books (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), <https://search.ebscho.com>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Christ. The more we worship God in Spirit and truth, the more he will transform and renew our minds, and we will become more like the God we worship.<sup>23</sup>

*Metamorphoo* is also revealed in 2 Cor. 3:17-18, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” George H. Guthrie explains, “God shares his glory with us as his creatures; he enables us to live as fully human image-bearers of the living God.”<sup>24</sup>

The symbolism of the life cycle of a developing butterfly, from egg to larva to pupa to adult, serves as a foundation for an understanding of a believer’s spiritual transformation process. Rod and Ken Preston-Mafham suggest that once the caterpillar lays the egg, it begins the butterfly’s life cycle.<sup>25</sup> As a natural life begins with a birth, the spiritual life begins with a new birth, according to Jesus. One must be born of the spirit (John 3:1-8). Once the spiritual birth takes place, a new identity is formed according to Colossians 3:10, “And have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.” Smith suggests, however, that even though there is a new identity, the person still lives with the same old person with the remnants of sin, old narratives, old memories, and old habits.<sup>26</sup> The Spirit and the flesh

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>24</sup> George H. Guthrie, “Corinthians” in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 228.

<sup>25</sup> Rod and Ken Preston-Mafham, *Butterflies of the World* (New York: Facts on File, 1988), 38.

will be in conflict with one another (Gal. 5:17).<sup>27</sup> John Wesley explains, “Every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin; yet not entirely. It remains, though it does not reign... We are ‘reconciled to God through the blood of the cross.’ And in that moment... the flesh has dominion over us.”<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, the Reformer, John Calvin, writes similarly, “For so long as we remain cooped up in this prison of our body, traces of sin will dwell in us; but if we faithfully hold fast to the promise given us by God in baptism, they shall not dominate or rule.”<sup>29</sup>

The temptation of the flesh will always be present. James Smith points to Jesus, saying, “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Now that the believer is a new person, a new creation, he or she must live in a new way. Smith implies that in utter dependence on God, in a deep intimate relationship

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<sup>26</sup> James B. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 156.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>28</sup> John Wesley, “On Sin in Believers,” in *The Works of John Wesley* 3.4.3, 7, ed. Albert Outler, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), quoted in James B. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 157.

<sup>29</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.15.11, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), quoted in James B. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 157.



with him, believers fully rely on God and not their own willpower live the Christian life.<sup>30</sup> The believer is now a partaker and participant in the divine nature of Christ (2 Peter 1:4). This participation occurs through the Holy Spirit by developing an appetite for God's Word, much like the next stage of the caterpillar-to-butterfly.

In this stage, Rod and Ken Preston-Mafham say, "The basic function of the caterpillar is to feed voraciously and to grow as quickly as possible."<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the believer must also feed on God's Word if growth occurs. According to 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation." Jobes indicates that Peter instructed the Christians to crave the things of God even as newborn babies crave milk, "instinctively, eagerly, incessantly."<sup>32</sup> Achtemeier outlines 1 Peter 1 as the process for continued growth for those who have faith and hope in God (1:21b) and have, as a result, sanctified their lives by such obedience (1:22a) by moving to mutual love (1:22b), and putting off the vices listed in (2:1). Now they are ready for the next step, which is making the word "their consuming desire (2:2a), so that they may continue to grow toward salvation, a salvation that they already know is based on the goodness of the Lord (2:3)."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God*, 159.

<sup>31</sup> Preston-Mafham, *Butterflies of the World*, 41.

<sup>32</sup> Karen H. Jobes, "1 Peter" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 132.

<sup>33</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 143.

Once the caterpillar reaches the pupa stage, it undergoes the transformation from caterpillar to pupa, or chrysalis as it is often called in the butterflies.<sup>34</sup> During this stage, the butterfly will become completely free of the old cuticle, and internally, great changes take place in the pupa in the transformation from the caterpillar to the adult butterfly, a process referred to as *metamorphosis*, which takes about one month from egg to adult butterflies, such as growing wings, legs, antennae that make up the butterfly, and the goal for the newly formed butterfly is to reproduce other butterflies.<sup>35</sup>

As the believer matures, Paul says in Ephesians 4:21-24, “For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” And once this happens, the evidence of spiritual transformation God expects in a believer’s life is characterized by love, trust, and obedience. According to Johnston and Brown, the outward evidence of the inner spiritual transformation into the likeness of Christ is to love God and love others (Matt. 22:37-39; John 13:34-35) and to bear the fruit of the Spirit (John 15:8; Gal. 5:22-23).<sup>36</sup> Like the butterfly, the believer will do as Jesus commanded to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:19).

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<sup>34</sup> Preston-Mafham, *Butterflies of the World*, 44.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>36</sup> Johnston, *Teaching the Jesus Way*, 59.

## Holy Spirit, the Transformer

The believer cannot experience spiritual transformation on their own. Once believers are justified in their sin, they cannot reproduce the character of Christ in themselves. Transformation does not occur because of one's church attendance; regardless of the amount of information one accumulates, or even one's Bible knowledge, one cannot transform life on their own.

Insightfully, James W. Thompson says that Paul reminds his churches that the Spirit is active in their transformation. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2) or "We...are being transformed into the image with ever-increasing glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Paul also speaks of aching "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Thompson indicates that in each case, the verb form translated "formed" or "transformed" is used in the passive voice, showing that Paul viewed formation as something that was happening to the Christian, not something being done by the Christian. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms the Christian.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, Averback highlights that the Holy Spirit is involved in spiritual formation by working in, among, and through disciples of Christ.<sup>38</sup> The Holy Spirit works *in* Christians to transform them into the image of Christ. The interaction of the Holy

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<sup>37</sup> James W. Thompson, "Paul and Spiritual Formation," *Christian Studies* "24" (2010): 8.

<sup>38</sup> Richard D. Averback, "Spirit, Community and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008):30.

Spirit with the human spirit produces a profound and inexplicable change that cannot be manufactured independently. In other words, the mere practice of spiritual disciplines does not transform Christians. Instead, the power of spiritual disciplines is found in the Christian's dedication to creating space and time exclusively for the Holy Spirit to work on his or her own spirit.<sup>39</sup> This understanding is of profound importance when seeking to be transformed through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Thompson emphasizes that the Holy Spirit also works *among* disciples of Christ. Ephesians describes the church as a holy temple with disciples "being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). The type of love lived out by the self-emptying Christ is to be lived out in a community in which members do not look to their own interests but to the interests of others.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Richard Hays implies this type of community is possible only through the Spirit and the importance of the Spirit's work among the disciples in the church. In his words, "Paul understands the church to be God's new covenant people, those who bear God's name and disclose his true will and character."<sup>41</sup> The fruit of the Spirit is best seen in the context of relationships between disciples, making the church community a true "city...on a hill" for all to see (Matt. 5:14).

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul describes Christian maturity as a group concept. "So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>40</sup> Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul*, 50.

<sup>41</sup> Richard B. Hays, "Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1 Corinthians," *ExAud* 10 (1994): 32.

pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-13). Stanley Hauerwas interprets Paul’s admonition to maturity not only to the individual but to the community. Maturity is achieved in the community in the context of relationships by the power of the Holy Spirit. Maturity in Christ has been described as a “craft” that needs to be developed under the tutelage of a teacher mentor.<sup>42</sup>

The Holy Spirit also works *through* disciples of Christ. As Averback states, “The Holy Spirit has always used prophetic voices, both persons and communities, as a means for the world to hear and see the gospel.”<sup>43</sup> In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus likens his disciples to salt and light. Through the “light” of disciples, others are drawn to glorify God. The work the Spirit does *in* and *among* the disciples becomes a testimony that speaks *through* them. “Alignment with the Holy Spirit both in the individual and communal life of disciples will align them with a growing relationship in love, trust, and obedience in Christ.”<sup>44</sup>

### Spiritual Disciplines

1 John 3:2 says, “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.” However, until

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<sup>42</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, “Discipleship as a Craft, Church as a Disciplined Community,” *ChrCent* 108, no. 27 (October 2, 1991): 883.

<sup>43</sup> Averback, “Spirit, Community, and Mission,” 53.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

Christ returns, Christians must be actively involved in the pursuit of Christlikeness. According to Hebrews 12:14, Christians must, “Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Every Christian then must be in pursuit of holiness. Many examples throughout Scripture show that Christians disciplined themselves in obedience by practicing spiritual disciplines toward the goal of holiness. Spiritual disciplines were crucial and imperative then and continue to be today in the spiritual transformation process. Donald S. Whitney points out that “the Spiritual Disciplines are the God-given means we are to use in the Spirit-filled pursuit of Godliness.”<sup>45</sup>

R. Paul Stevens defines disciplines as “Christian practices that encourage spiritual growth and spiritual formation. They are the life patterns that direct us to God and disciple us more fully into the likeness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>46</sup> Disciplines are not the means of sanctification, God’s work, but rather ways of making ourselves available to God in spiritual growth. Stevens quotes E. Stanley Jones’ explanation, “Conversion is a gift and an achievement. It is an act of a moment and the work of a lifetime. You cannot achieve salvation by disciplines, it is the gift of God. But you cannot retain it without disciplines.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> R. Paul Stevens, “Spiritual Disciplines,” in *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-to-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life*, eds. Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 932.

<sup>47</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Conversion* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1959), 210, quoted in R. Stevens “Spiritual Disciplines,” *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-to-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 933.

Richard Foster pointed out that “God has given us the Disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace.”<sup>48</sup> By practicing them, we place ourselves before God for him to work in us.

Calhoun suggests that “everything Jesus taught he practiced.”<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Donald Whitney interprets Jesus’ practices as follows, “He applied his heart to discipline. He disciplined himself for the purpose of Godliness. And if we are going to be Christlike, we must live as Christ lived.”<sup>50</sup> Jay Dennis implies that “many leaders throughout the centuries have been held up as worth emulating, but no one in history is more-worthy of imitation than Jesus Christ.”<sup>51</sup> Jesus said, “For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you” (John 13:15).

In *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard states:

My central claim is that we *can* become like Christ by doing one thing, by following him in the overall style of life he chose for himself. If we have faith in Christ, we must believe that he knew how to live. We can, through faith and grace, become like Christ by practicing the types of activities he engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the activities he himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of his Father.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 2.

<sup>50</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 18.

<sup>51</sup> Dennis, *The Jesus Habits*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, ix.

There is a plethora of spiritual disciplines we can observe in the life of Jesus, but for this project, the four spiritual disciplines highlighted were: studying of Scriptures, prayer, silence and solitude, and journaling.

Donald S. Whitney says, "...the most transforming practice available to us is the disciplined intake of Scripture."<sup>53</sup> One way to intake Scripture is by hearing it. According to Luke 11:28, Jesus says, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." The purpose of all intaking of Scripture is obeying, which leads to Christlikeness.<sup>54</sup> Nothing is more important than hearing and obeying the word of God (Matt. 7: 24-27).

According to Jay Dennis, Jesus' use of Scripture "was to be victories in all life situations."<sup>55</sup> Jesus' knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures guided his life (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10-11; 26:24-32; 47-54).<sup>56</sup> Paul explains the role and purpose of Scripture in the spiritual transformation process as he stated, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Foster connects knowing and obeying scriptures with becoming "the kind of people from whom goodness flows like an increasing stream of water."<sup>57</sup> He elaborates, "The discipline of studying the Scripture is to replace old destructive habits of

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<sup>53</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Dennis, *The Jesus Habits*, 198.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 182.



thought with new life-giving habits.”<sup>58</sup> This can be accomplished by not conforming to this world and renewing the mind (Romans 12:2).

Whitney says that of all the spiritual disciplines, “prayer is second only to the intake of God’s Word in importance.”<sup>59</sup> Scriptures clarify that Jesus expects us to pray (Matt. 6:5-7, 9; Luke 11:9, 18:1).<sup>60</sup> It is witnessed throughout Scripture that prayer is vital in the spiritual transformation process; therefore, Christians must devote themselves to prayer. Colossians 4:2 says, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” Whitney interprets, “So praying without ceasing means you never really stop conversing with God, you simply have frequent interruptions.”<sup>61</sup> Blanchard cited Martin Luther when he expressed God’s expectation of prayer this way, “As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.”<sup>62</sup> To pray as expected, to pray as a maturing Christian, and to pray effectively, we must say with the disciples in Luke 11:1, “Lord, teach us to pray.” The best way to learn how to pray is to pray.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>59</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 63.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> John Blanchard, comp., *Gathered Gold* (Welwyn, Hertford, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), 227, quoted in Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 64.

Whitney believes the spiritual disciplines of journaling “blends biblical doctrine and daily living.”<sup>63</sup> He continues, “Although the practice of journaling is not commanded in Scripture, it is modeled. And God has blessed the use of journals since Bible times.”<sup>64</sup> Whitney sees the psalms as chronicles of David’s spiritual journey, and Lamentations are Jeremiah’s recordings.<sup>65</sup>

A journal, synonymous with a diary, is a book in which a person writes down various things. In the spiritual transformation process, journaling is used for recording prayers, charting progress in other spiritual disciplines, and accountability for setting goals.<sup>66</sup> According to Stevens, “Keeping a journal is like writing a letter to God or writing out our prayers or speaking to our own soul in the presence of someone greater than our own experience.”<sup>67</sup> Journaling is a way to allow thoughts and feelings to flow without editing and self-criticism. Stevens concludes, “We have a God to whom we can pour out the darkest and deepest things within us.”<sup>68</sup> Journaling gives knowledge of self, and according to John Calvin, “Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God.”<sup>69</sup> In the spiritual transformation process, the practice of journaling is necessary for the growth process of the believer.

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<sup>63</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 195.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Stevens, “Spiritual Disciplines”, 935.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 936.

In conclusion, Mark Twain once said, “The only person who likes change is a wet baby with a wet diaper.”<sup>70</sup> But Jesus says, “...unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Although a change is needed, a baby will at times resist change. This is also true for many people because change can be difficult regardless of the area(s) that need changing. Believers are participants in the change, but ultimately, the change comes through the Transformer, the Holy Spirit, who has the power to change us from our sinful nature into the image of Christ.

Just like the metamorphosis in the butterfly's lifecycle is a step-by-step process, the same is true in the believer's life. Enduring the spiritual transformation process reveals the glory of God. As the caterpillar endures the transformation process, God's glory is seen through producing a beautiful butterfly; likewise, the believer's inner beauty is witnessed outwardly for all to see. The spiritual transformation journey is a difficult lifetime process, but because Christ gives us hope through the Word and promises of God, we can partake of this hope, which is made available to us through the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, and through the power of His Holy Spirit.

One promise is that we will experience transformation in its fullness upon Christ's return as children of God. One hope of his promise is that upon his return, we know, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

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<sup>69</sup> John T. McNeil, trans. And indexed by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), vol. 2, 35, quoted in Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 197.

<sup>70</sup> David M. Shedd, “You’re your Company Forward” Accessed on December 1, 202, 2010/07/033/quotes-on-change.

## **The Spiritual Transformation Process in the Old Testament**

### Something about Deuteronomy

The fifth book of the Hebrew Bible is ascribed to Moses. The title derives from the Greek (Septuagint, or LXX) text of Deuteronomy 17:18 indicates a “second law or more precisely a second giving of the law.”<sup>71</sup> It describes the law given by Moses in the plains of Moab immediately prior to the crossing of the river Jordan and Israel’s entry into the land promised to its ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 1:1 gives evidence that the words recorded in Deuteronomy are the words Moses spoke to all of Israel, and later biblical books quoted from Deuteronomy and attribute the words to Moses (Matt. 19:7; Acts 3:22; Rom. 10:19).<sup>72</sup>

Walter Brueggemann describes the Book of Deuteronomy like this:

In broadest sweep, the book is a formulation of covenant theology, whereby YHWH and Israel are pledged to exclusive loyalty and fidelity to each other, YHWH is to assure the well-being of Israel, Israel is to live in trust in and obedience to YHWH.<sup>73</sup>

From Brand, Draper and England is understood that the teaching of the commandments that Israel is to obey is a command that is repeated in 4:1, 6:3, and 9:1,

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<sup>71</sup> Ronald E. Clements, “The Book of Deuteronomy,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 2: 271.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>73</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *Deuteronomy* in Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 17.

which signifies the importance of Israel hearing and obeying. If Israel is to prosper, it must adhere to the commandments and ordinances and be fully committed to God.<sup>74</sup>

In Deuteronomy 6, Israel is on the brink of entering the Promised Land after their forty-year journey from Egypt. Moses gathered them to equip them in the spiritual transformation process through the *Shema* to be practiced in the Promised Land. These teachings would assist Israel in growing in a relationship of love, trust, and obedience in the one true God who led them out of Egypt to their redemption. Walter Brueggeman states, “Obedience [exemplified by these teaching] is the way to teach obedience.”<sup>75</sup>

#### The *Shema*: Deuteronomy 6:4

The first word *Shema* is the name of the passage, meaning to *hear*.<sup>76</sup> This is not just a call to the act of hearing but a call for Israel’s undivided loyalty to YHWH.<sup>77</sup> The meaning behind the decrees and the statutes or the ordinances that the Lord commanded Israel to obey, according to Mann, “Defines both divine and human identity and is the connection between who we are (identity) and how we behave (responsibility) results in ‘righteousness’” (Deut. 6:25).<sup>78</sup> Mann defines righteousness as, “Being in right

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<sup>74</sup> Brand, Draper and England, “Deuteronomy” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 416.

<sup>75</sup> Brueggeman, *Deuteronomy*, 82.

<sup>76</sup> Mann, “Deuteronomy,” in *Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 55.

<sup>77</sup> Tullock, “Deuteronomy” In *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995), 206.

<sup>78</sup> Mann, *Deuteronomy*, 52.

relationship with God, who is the primary subject of the narrative, and being in that relationship means at the same time to live justly.”<sup>79</sup>

Deuteronomy 6:4 gives allegiance to Israel’s position on monotheism that is recited daily by Jews and showed up in Jesus’ teaching to be “the first commandment” (Mark 12:29-30). These verses show that Israel is always being formed, reidentified, and reconstituted as the Israel of God, for Israel becomes Israel through hearing.<sup>80</sup> The NRSV translates this text as, “Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD alone.” Mann states that the commandment does not say, “There is no God but the Lord. It says, to Israel, and thus to us: ‘*You shall not have other gods on a level equal to me.*’”<sup>81</sup> This sovereignty of God is illustrated well by the Psalmist, “For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him” (Ps. 89:6-7).

Mann goes on to say, “The first commandment is not a call to believe in the existence of only one God; it is a command to obey only one God as the God of gods and it does not demand belief in one God; it demands *loyalty* to one God *above all others.*”<sup>82</sup>

Biddle affirms that in the spiritual transformation process, there must be a relationship with God, and this confession acknowledges first that God is God and that he

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 83.

<sup>81</sup> Mann, *Deuteronomy*, 54.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 55.

is God alone. The *Shema* lays claim to total devotion and obedience.<sup>83</sup> Wright says to say YAHWEH is one to affirm unchangeableness and consistency.<sup>84</sup>

#### Love God Totally: Deuteronomy 6:5

Brueggemann informs that love refers to the practical fidelity that a lesser party in a formal relationship must enact toward a greater party to demonstrate and implement vows of loyalty already made.<sup>85</sup> He continues, “Love must not be romanticized as if it were primarily a ‘feeling’ or even an aptitude, but viewed as practical acts of obedience in every sphere of daily life.”<sup>86</sup> Biddle shows how the *Shema* lays claim to total devotion and obedience.<sup>87</sup> Moses calls for Israel to “love” YHWH with “heart,” “soul,” and “strength.”<sup>88</sup> The heart (*lebab*) in Hebrew signifies the physical organ and the inner core of personality, soul (*nephes*) principle of life, and human beings. To love with the “*nephesh*” means to place our feelings and desires at God’s service and conform them to God’s will. Might (*me’od*) “muchness,” “exceedingness,” and “Intensity” is a single-minded, love-inspired zeal and determination to realize the whole will of God.<sup>89</sup> Mayes

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<sup>83</sup> Biddle, “Deuteronomy.” *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2003), 124.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Wright, “Deuteronomy” in *New International Biblical Commentary*, 95.

<sup>85</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 84.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Biddle, *Deuteronomy*, 124.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 125.

leads to the love of God as an attitude that can be commanded; for Deuteronomy, it is virtually synonymous with obedience.<sup>90</sup> Brown complements God in all his uniqueness and commands his children to love him with our total selves, which will lead to obedience, loyalty, and allegiance.<sup>91</sup> This verse explains that the love we give to God, if total and complete, will enhance our growth in love, trust, and obedience to him.

#### Internalizing the Word: Deuteronomy 6:6

The next step in the spiritual transformation process covered in the *Shema* is to internalize “*these words*,” which Moses taught. There are different opinions regarding the understanding of “...these words...” (Deut. 6:6). Patrick Miller explained that “these words” refer to the words in the *Shema*.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, he says, “these words” were to be implanted in the heart of the Israelites, kept in their mind, to become part of one’s very being.<sup>93</sup> In contrast, Christensen’s meaning is found in the opening words of Deuteronomy 1:1, “These are the words that Moses spoke...” He explained that the words were to be internalized and reference Jeremiah 3:31-33 as such, “I will put my law

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<sup>89</sup> Ian Cairns, “Word and Presence: A Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy” in *International Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), 85.

<sup>90</sup> A. D. H. Mayes, “Deuteronomy”, *New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers, 1981), 176.

<sup>91</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Message of Deuteronomy: The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. J.A. Motyer (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 96.

<sup>92</sup> Patrick D. Miller, “Deuteronomy” in *Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 143.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.



within them.”<sup>94</sup> Craigie pointed out that the commandments provided the framework the Israelites used as a way to express their love of God; by thinking and meditating on them as God’s word, they formed an understanding of the commandments and the path of life set down by the commandments.<sup>95</sup>

According to Eugene Merrill, “... ‘in your heart’ is to be in one’s constant, conscious reflection.”<sup>96</sup> Cairns indicates these words are the bridge between love and obedience that sets the stage for verses 6-9 and must be taught to each new generation by their parents. These words must be part of daily activities, from morning to night, work and leisure (v. 7). The impact of God’s word must guide every movement of the hand, eye, and domestic and community activity.<sup>97</sup> Once God’s Word is internalized, love, trust, and obedience are inevitable.

#### Engaging Others: Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Moses shifted the focus from those who were present to the future generation. It is known that one cannot teach what is not first understood. Cairns insists Israel had to glean an understanding of the commandments for themselves before being responsible

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<sup>94</sup> Duane L. Christensen, “Deuteronomy 1:1-21” in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 143.

<sup>95</sup> Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 170.

<sup>96</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, “Deuteronomy” in *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture NIV Text* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 167.

<sup>97</sup> Cairns, *Deuteronomy*, 85.

for teaching them to others,<sup>98</sup> to ensure that Israelites, who were present and future generations, would not lose sight of the instructions Moses gave. According to Eugene Merrill, “To recite these instructions one would be like an engraver of a monument who hammered and chiseled a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. Although the work is laborious, but once the message is engraved it is there to stay.”<sup>99</sup> The generations of Israelites to come must receive and transmit the words of the Lord’s everlasting covenant revelation. Moses instructed that future generations would learn and obey these instructions by constant repetition, whether at home or walking, lying down or rising; parents must be faithful in the teaching and transmission of God’s commandments. Merrill indicates that these activities would encompass all human efforts. Moses continued by instructing the people where to place the covenant words to qualify them as members of the covenant community.<sup>100</sup>

In conclusion, God’s will for Israel was to be transformed from the teachings and living of their former master. Likewise, Israelites were to be and become the chosen people God intended them to be. Israel was to model God’s gracious gift of his transformative power to the surrounding nations. But according to J.A. Thompson, “The history of Israel since the days of Moses was one of persistent failure to live according to the terms of the covenant. They had not merely refused to obey the law or to acknowledge Yahweh’s complete and sole sovereignty, but were incapable of such

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<sup>98</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

<sup>99</sup> Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

obedience.”<sup>101</sup> The prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, issued warnings based on Israel’s inability to keep the covenant God made with them and gave messages of God’s restoration of Israel through an internal transformation of the heart.

### The Prophets

The spiritual transformation process is evidenced in the teachings of the prophets Jeremiah (31:21-34) and Ezekiel (36: 27-28). God commissioned both prophets to prophesy the process of God’s intentional work of circumcision of the heart of his people. Because of their many failures in living up to God’s expectations outlined in the old covenant, a new covenant was needed for him to deal with the root cause of the problem. Israel needed a circumcision of the heart (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4, 9:25-26).

Jeremiah’s emphasis focused on the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant that is motivated by the Lord giving Israel a heart to know that he is LORD (Jer. 24:7) and by putting his law within them and writing it on their hearts (Jer. 31:33). The LORD intended to give them one heart and one way, that they may fear him (Jer. 32:39).

J. A. Thompson indicates that Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the only reference to a *new covenant* in the Old Testament and is deemed as the most profound in the whole Old Testament, for the LORD says, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts” (Jer. 31:33).<sup>102</sup> Elmer Martens reiterates, “It has been described as one of the

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<sup>101</sup> J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 580.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 579-580.

profoundest and most moving passages in the entire Bible. It looks back to the covenant at Sinai, and forward to the work of the Messiah.”<sup>103</sup> Because Israel could not live up to the stipulations of the old covenant due to their sinful nature, the new covenant was the solution to Israel’s need for divine intervention.

Elmer Martens gives a clear distinction between the old and new covenant. The new covenant is like the old in that God (the same God) takes the initiative.

1. God (the same God) takes the initiative.
2. The covenant is based on God’s law (the same law).
3. The goal of the covenant (the same goal) is an intimate relationship: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33).

The new covenant is “new” in that:

1. The demands of the covenant will be met through a God-given internalized provision.
2. Their experience of God will be direct and unmediated.
3. Forgiveness is the new covenant’s cornerstone. “It draws a definite, final line under all of our past life.”<sup>104</sup>

The new covenant offered an inward work of the Holy Spirit to change the sinfulness of the heart through an intimate relationship with God. Writing the law in the heart of the people prepared Israel’s heart for participation in the new covenant. Louis Stulman says, “The internalization of the law empowers Israel to love and obey God.”<sup>105</sup>

Likewise, Ezekiel focused on transforming the heart through the restoration of Israel as it related to the new covenant. In Ezekiel 36:26-27, the internal transformation

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<sup>103</sup> Elmer Martens, *Jeremiah: Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986), 195.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>105</sup> Louis Stulman, “Jeremiah” in *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 273.

came by God giving Israel a new heart and placing the new spirit within them by infusing Israel with a new spirit, his Spirit.<sup>106</sup> According to Walther Eichrodt, “In the spirit, God imparts to man a motive power pervading all that is within him and bringing him into union with God’s nature and will.”<sup>107</sup> By God removing Israel’s heart of stone, giving a new heart, and putting a new spirit in them, “He will alter their hearts (their minds) and make it impossible for them to be anything but obedient to his rules and his commandments.”<sup>108</sup> God will be responsible for Israel’s heart change to assure obedience, which will cause them to follow God’s statutes and observe his ordinances. An internal change, whereby Israel’s heart and spirit will be made new, will result in humanity following God’s will. Leslie C. Allen explains,

Yahweh would creatively endow Israel with new wills that were to be sensitive rather than stony and hard in their reactions to Yahweh’s will. Thanks to him, their lives would be governed by a new impulse that was to be an expression of Yahweh’s own spirit. He would re-make their human natures, so that they marched to the music of the covenant terms that expressed Yahweh’s nature and will. Only thus could the covenant relationship become a living actuality rather than a doctrinal truth.<sup>109</sup>

The new covenant is to resolve and cleanse us from sin by putting his Spirit in us for us to live in obedience to him. The Spirit dwells within us to assist us in doing what

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<sup>106</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 355.

<sup>107</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 500.

<sup>108</sup> Block, *Ezekiel*, 356.

<sup>109</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 180.

pleases him naturally. “Obedience is not effortless, but without God’s Spirit it would be impossible.”<sup>110</sup>

Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel gave an account of the Lord’s diagnosis of not only Israel’s sin problem but ours. God was determined to fulfill the new covenant he promised in Jeremiah 31 through Jesus’ death on the cross. The new covenant made it possible for everyone to have total access to God. Jesus made it possible that all will know the Lord (31:34). No matter the age or one’s life status, Louis Stulman says, “All will enjoy direct and immediate access to God independent of priestly mediation.”<sup>111</sup> Jesus’ fulfillment of the new covenant makes inner transformation and intimacy with God possible through an ongoing work of internal renovation.

### **The Spiritual Transformation Process in the New Testament**

The *Shema* is a model for spiritual transformation. With its origins in Jewish life, originally appearing in Deuteronomy, Moses taught Israel that God is personal and demanded their obedience and complete love towards him. In the New Testament, the Jewish Torah was learned and practiced to be shaped and formed for the Christian life. Jesus used the content of the Sermon on the Mount to teach his disciples then and now what is required to live as his follower and as image-bearers.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> The Navigators (Creator), *A Life Changing Encounter with God’s Word: Ezekiel* (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing, 2014), 83, [life-changing-wncounter-God’s-Word-Book/30324275397/bd](http://life-changing-wncounter-God’s-Word-Book/30324275397/bd).

<sup>111</sup> Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 273.

<sup>112</sup> Jesus also used the *Shema*, paralleled in Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; and Luke 10:25-28 to do likewise.

For this project, the goal is to seek an understanding of how Jesus' interpretation of the *Shema* relates to the spiritual transformation process by examining the *Shema* in Luke's Gospel and how Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 highlights a metamorphic work in the life of *all* believers through the work of Christ under the new covenant. Richard Burridge states, "Luke portrays Jesus as someone who teaches not just by word but also by action, earthing what he says in what he does."<sup>113</sup>

### Jesus Fulfilled the Law and the Prophets

It is Jesus who personifies loving God and loving others. Moses in Deuteronomy 6:5-9 taught Israel that spiritual transformation begins with loving God and them loving others. Jesus elaborates that he did not come to abolish what was established in the law but to fulfill it. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus himself makes clear his understanding of and commitment to the Old Testament by explaining:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:17-20).

Brevard Childs states, "Jesus radicalizes the law of Sinai, however, not in the sense of replacing it with another but of bringing its original intent to fulfillment. For Jesus, the

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<sup>113</sup> Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans), 108.

Messiah, the law of Sinai is still unquestionably the will of God for Israel and for his disciples.”<sup>114</sup>

In addition, according to Michael J. Wilkins, “Instead of doing away with what God had revealed about his will for his people in the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus’ purpose for his earthly ministry is wrapped up in this formula: ‘I have come to fulfill them.’”<sup>115</sup>

Fulfillment means “all is accomplished”<sup>116</sup> and refers to the bringing to fruition of its complete meaning, and Jesus’ role is that of fulfilling all of the Old Testament.<sup>117</sup> According to Ben Witherington, “To say something must be fulfilled is to say God is faithful to his promises and prophecies, and they will come to pass.”<sup>118</sup>

Jesus taught the true meaning of the scriptures by demanding a commitment to the greatest and least of the commandments, which differed from the scribes and Pharisees’ teachings. Jesus’ disciples are required to be different from the scribes and Pharisees because “the central principle of life in the kingdom of heaven, namely that kingdom righteousness operates from the inside-out, not from the outside in.”<sup>119</sup> For Jesus’

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<sup>114</sup> Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 429-430.

<sup>115</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, “Matthew” in *From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 228.

<sup>116</sup> Ben Witherington, *Matthew* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2006), 117.

<sup>117</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew” in *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture NIV Text: vol. 22* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 103.

<sup>118</sup> Witherington, *Matthew*, 117.

<sup>119</sup> Wilkins, *Matthew*, 231.



disciples to be the “salt and light of the earth” involves obedience and righteousness that exceeds lip service.<sup>120</sup> It requires a heart change that takes place within. According to Dallas Willard in *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, there must be an inward change of the heart. He says:

Spiritual transformation into Christlikeness is the process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it takes on the character of the inner being of Jesus himself. The result is that the “outer” life of the individual increasingly becomes a natural expression of the inner reality of Jesus and of his teachings.<sup>121</sup>

An example of taking on the character of Jesus in the spiritual transformation process is expressed in the following narrative highlighting the *Shema* in Luke 10:25-37, and Jesus’ message and example of loving God and neighbor in the Good Samaritan parable are also vital in the spiritual transformation process.

#### Love God, Love Neighbor

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus provides greater context for understanding spiritual formation found in the *Shema* and the Good Samaritan parable in Luke 10:25-37. Jesus had just finished speaking privately with his disciples when a lawyer stood up, a sign of honor by Jewish disciples when speaking or asking a question. However, in this particular setting, James R. Edwards suggests this lawyer who “stood up to test Jesus” was either disingenuous or demonstrated duplicity because his intention does not represent honor or respect.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Witherington, *Matthew*, 127.

<sup>121</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 159.

This particular expert of the law encounter differs from the ones in Matthew and Mark by the question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” James Edwards explains, “The verb in Greek is the aorist tense, implying a solitary past action: ‘What *thing* must I do?’ If it does not intend a single deed, it intends something that at least can be calculated.”<sup>123</sup> Jesus answered him with these questions: “What is written in the Law?” and “What do you read there?” The lawyer responded with a combination of the *Shema* as found in Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 say, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus approved the answer because the answer is an expression of total allegiance and devotion. Jesus’ reply was action-oriented, “...do this, and you will live” (Luke 10:28). The lawyer, unimpressed with Jesus’ response, pressed further, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus responded with an example that, if lived out, will not only personally transform but can lead another through the process. According to Darrell Bock, his response to a question about the law (*nomos*) is “...the expression of God’s revealed will for that time. By responding this way, Jesus identifies himself not as a radical who wishes to deny the teaching of Jewish tradition but as one who wishes to reflect on what God requires.”<sup>124</sup> Although the lawyer asks the question with an answer in mind, Jesus’ answer tossed aside the meaning of neighbor for first-century Judaism in the Old

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<sup>122</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 318.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Darrell L. Bock, “Luke”, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* vol. 2: 9:51-24:53 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1024.

Testament, “neighbor designated Israelites (including a stranger who shared the land with them [Lev. 19:34], but not Gentiles.”<sup>125</sup>

Jesus commences with a story known as the “Good Samaritan,” and ironically, Bovon says, “the adjective ‘good’ is not in the text,”<sup>126</sup> concerning an unnamed Jewish man who left Jerusalem and was going down to Jericho. He was attacked, robbed, and left abandoned. A priest was going down that same road, instead of helping the man, passed by on the other side, and likewise, a Levite. The Samaritan, a non-Israelite, an outsider, and an alien, placed his life on the line, went directly to the injured man, bandaged his wounds, poured oil and wine on them, took him to an inn, and promised to take care of all the injured man’s expenses. The inclusion of the Samaritan in the story should have sealed the human’s fate, for if a priest and Levite did not offer help, surely the Samaritan would do the same.

Jesus bypassed Jewish norms by including a Samaritan offering a Jew help. Jesus then asked, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” The lawyer replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” James Edwards elaborates,

The lawyer understood ‘neighbor’ as a noun acting as an object to whom one owes duties-burdensome duties that the lawyer desired to avoid. But for Jesus, ‘neighbor’ is a verb, a way of behaving toward people in need that gives life to both giver and receiver. Jesus uncovered in this story that one does not have a neighbor; one is a neighbor, or better, becomes a neighbor.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Edwards, *Luke*, 319.

<sup>126</sup> Francois Bovon, “Luke 2” in *Hermenele, A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 51.

<sup>127</sup> Edwards, *Luke*, 323.

Jesus ends with this sentiment, anyone who “goes and does likewise” fulfills the heart of the parable.

The lawyer, an expert in the Law, had the right information but had no idea what it meant. He did not have a relationship that exemplified loving God and neighbor. The lawyer’s reaction showed that his words had not impacted his heart. Jesus used this parable to lead the lawyer to evaluate his own heart and attitude. Jesus used the question and answer session as a teachable moment to go beyond behavior modification; his goal was to get to the root of the lawyer’s character of his inner life. The lawyer had the right to grant it, but he had no idea what his answer meant. Jesus shared the parable to transform his old habitual patterns of thought, feeling, and action into automatic responses in real-life situations.

The parable demonstrated what loving God by loving others looks like. Jesus defined the Great Commandments to love regardless of one’s race, status or need. When one is filled with God’s love, one will be moved to love others compassionately. In the spiritual transformation process, one will be moved to act from the mercy of the God he or she loves with all of his or her self.<sup>128</sup>

These are the greatest commandments because they go to the essence of the way God has created humans to live: giving oneself to God and others to fulfill his purposes for us as the crown of his creation by displaying in our lives the glory of God’s kingdom on earth. Persons who love God with all of their being, heart, soul, and mind are transformed into the image of God and are more like what God intended for them to be

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<sup>128</sup> Richard B. Vinson, *Luke* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2008), 343.

like. Furthermore, loving neighbor as oneself means that giving oneself to other humans is the same as helping them live as God designed life to be lived. This selfless giving assists one in their own transformation.<sup>129</sup>

The *Shema* expresses what is most important for spiritual formation, i.e., God is God alone, and persons must love God with every essence of their being and love others as themselves. His teaching of the Shema shapes everything about spiritual formation for Jesus. The spiritual transformation will be seen now and permanently when we enter God's eternal presence.

#### Paul Teaches a Metamorphic Change

No better witness and teacher is assisting in strengthening and practicing God's transforming power than the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul's life is a testimony to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, so much so that he states, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1Cor. 11:1). On the Damascus road, he came in contact with the risen Savior.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul outlines the differences between the ministries of the old and new covenants. He uses as his backdrop Exodus 34:29-35 to detail how the old covenant ministry brought death due to the sinful heart of the people, Israel. He presents the new covenant as a metamorphic work accomplished through Christ intended for *all* believers. For this project, the focus will be 2 Corinthians 3:12-18,

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 726.

which gives an account of the spiritual transformation of an internal change that reflects the character of Christ that merits external evidence.

Paul begins 2 Corinthians 3 by establishing that he did not need letters of recommendation to defend his apostolic ministry of Jesus Christ because the Gospel was evident in the lives of the Corinthians (3:1-3). George H. Guthrie states, “Using the image of ‘letter’ metaphorically, Paul suggests that the Corinthians, as the fruit of his ministry, provide the only authenticating credentials he needs (1 Cor. 9:2).”<sup>130</sup> When hearts change, others will notice, and the Corinthians were the proof of God’s transforming power because their proof “was written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor. 3:3). Paul’s confidence as a minister of the new covenant was not due to his own competency, but he states that his competence came from God. Paul did not take credit for the heart change in the Corinthians and credited the Holy Spirit with that power (3:4-6).

Paul denotes the difference between the ministries of the old and new covenants and considers himself a minister of the new covenant. The Old Testament scriptures revealed God’s promises of a new covenant with his people. The old covenant written on stone brought death, and because the new covenant would be written on the heart, it brought life. The old covenant resulted in condemnation and death because the Mosaic law was met with Israel’s rebellion of the heart. The new covenant brought the transformation of the heart because the Spirit was able to change the heart.

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<sup>130</sup> George H. Guthrie, “2 Corinthians” *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 187-88.

In verses seven through eleven, Paul's main focus is on contrasting types of ministry rather than contrasting old and new covenants. Guthrie explains that the two covenants offer two contexts for ministry (3:6-9), the contrasts between the ministry of the letter versus the ministry of the Spirit (3:6), the ministry of death (3:7) versus the ministry of the Spirit (3:8), and the ministry of condemnation versus the ministry of righteousness (3:9).<sup>131</sup> The word "ministry" is defined as speaking of "aid," "service," "support," "an office," "an assignment," or "mediation."<sup>132</sup>

Guthrie says Paul is focused on "his new-covenant form of ministry" of the "proclamation of the Word of God under the power of the Spirit."<sup>133</sup> He called Moses' ministry "a ministry of death" (3:7). Furthermore, "whether the genitive form is understood as an objective genitive, a ministry that produces death; or an adjectival genitive, a ministry associated with or characterized by death; his point is that the 'law engraved in letters on stones' was deadly..."<sup>134</sup> The law presented humanity as guilty sinners before God. The new covenant enables us toward resurrection. As stated by Paul, "While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (Rom. 7:5-6). Thus, the new ministry ensures boldness in hope.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 207.

The new ministry offered confidence that the Spirit is at work for the change from the hearts of stone to a heart of flesh, which brings life and righteousness to all who believe. The law is no longer needed on tablets of stone but on the inner being, the heart, for transformation to happen. The Holy Spirit creates changed hearts that will obey his Word, and the glory will one day become permanent.

In 2 Corinthians 3:12, “Since, then...” connects Paul’s message from the previous verses with, “We have such a hope...” This hope is based on God fulfilling his promise of removing the heart of stone to now the heart of flesh according to Jer. 31:33, where Jeremiah anticipates the divine laws written on the hearts of people.<sup>135</sup> George Shillington explains that while Ezekiel envisions God changing stony hearts to hearts of flesh, in Ezekiel 36: 26-27, the message is, “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes.”<sup>136</sup>

According to Luke 22:19-20, Jesus gave the practice for the new covenant by saying, “Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” Shillington reiterates, “The new covenant

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<sup>135</sup> V. George Shillington, “2 Corinthians” in *Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1998), 69.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.



is heavenly; the old one is earthy. God has made the first earthly covenant (as in Judaism) ‘obsolete,’ soon to disappear in the presence of the new (Heb. 8:13).”<sup>137</sup>

According to Scott J. Hafemann, “Paul’s confident expectation is that through his own life and message as a minister of the new covenant (3:6), the glory of God is being mediated to God’s people in the Spirit (3:11).”<sup>138</sup> Because he has this “hope,” Paul is therefore very bold. Hafemann continues that bold (*parresia*) can be defined as a “technical term from the political realm that was associated with freedom and truth. In moral contexts such as this, it refers to a shamelessness in one’s behavior that leads to a free, courageous, and open manner of speech.”<sup>139</sup>

Because of the power of the Spirit in Paul’s ministry (3:8), he became fearless, courageous, and bold in preaching and teaching the Gospel. Hafemann concludes, “Ultimately, this boldness arises from his assurance that his life and labors derive from God’s grace in his life, that they are being carried out in God’s presence, and that they will be vindicated before God’s judgment.”<sup>140</sup>

Paul illustrates his boldness in his ministry by contrasting his ministry with Moses veiling his face. He explains that Moses put a veil over his face because “their minds were hardened” (2 Cor. 3:14). In other words, according to Hafemann, “That Moses had

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>138</sup> Scott J. Hafemann, “2 Corinthians” in *The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text—to Contemporary Life*. The NIV Application Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 154.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 54.

to veil himself as an act of judgment toward a rebellious people, Paul need not ‘veil himself’ before a people whose disposition toward God has been radically changed by the Spirit (3:3-6).”<sup>141</sup>

The old covenant revealed humanity’s sinfulness and an awareness of their inability to accomplish God’s will of living righteous, which led to a lack of confidence before God. Through the new covenant, humanity placed confidence not in themselves but Jesus and are no longer required to be veiled. This hope brings humanity to right standing with God, who keeps his promises. Therefore, the veil is removed through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul adds, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).

The context of “freedom” (3:17) implies freedom from the veil of hard-heartedness that cannot enter into the Lord’s presence. Paul’s use of “freedom” in this concept is “having been ‘set free from sin’ (Rom. 6:16-23, 1 Cor. 7:39; 9:1; 10:29).”<sup>142</sup> Paul closes his argument in 3:18 with an understanding that the Lord is the Spirit, as demonstrated by the freedom from the veil for obedience that the Spirit creates. “We all” that are members of the new covenant community, both Jews and Gentiles, “are being transformed into the same image” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In conclusion, God’s transforming work through Christ is intended for *all* believers. Spiritual transformation is an internal change with evidence that the character of Christ is reflected externally. Believers are not responsible for transforming

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 160-61.

themselves but are participants in the transformation process. Paul states that we “are being transformed” (2 Cor. 3:18). Moses went into the presence of God, and believers, too, must allow space for God’s presence in our lives. Moses did not achieve God’s glory on his own, and it was only through being in God’s presence that the glory of the Lord was reflected.

As believers, we, too, can experience God’s glory through the powerful work manifested through the Holy Spirit. Unlike Moses, believers can experience the Lord’s glory with unveiled faces. It is through the believer’s participation in making space for God that a metamorphic transformation is evident. Believers “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18). When believers come close to the glory of the Lord, we resemble him “as though reflected in a mirror.” This process is ongoing, but once we enter God’s heavenly dwelling place, our metamorphosis will be complete and everlasting.

This process is ongoing, but our metamorphosis will be complete and everlasting once we enter God’s heavenly dwelling place. In other words, by the power of the Spirit, we are experiencing in a progressive sense more and more of this freedom to obey God, and as a result, we are being changed into God’s own image by becoming obedient to his will. We can now reflect Christ’s glory because it is no longer hidden under a veil but shines bright in a dark world.

### **The Spiritual Transformation in the Early Church**

In the book of Acts, the author gives an account of the story surrounding the early church. Their desire to know and love God fueled the disciplines found in Acts 2:42.

John Stott believes the spiritual disciplines can be seen in the narrative of the church's desire for more of God that led to intentional practices, relationships, and experiences that give people space in their lives to "keep company" with Jesus.<sup>143</sup> As stated in Acts 2:42, They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

John Stott emphasizes that the narrative reveals the spiritual growth of the church by giving evidence of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. These new converts sat at the apostles' feet, hungry for the teaching; the Spirit of God leads the people of God to submit to the Word of God.<sup>144</sup>

Furthermore, Stott explains the spiritual discipline of fellowship (*koinonia*) in two senses. First is the sharing of God himself because fellowship is with "the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."<sup>145</sup> Secondly, *koinonia* expresses what we share out together, what is given and received.<sup>146</sup> Luke describes how the first Christians shared their possessions with one another, "All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44-45).

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<sup>143</sup> John R. W. Stott, "The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the World" in *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 81.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 83.

Stott continues that their devotion to breaking bread is the spiritual discipline of worship (2:46). They worshiped in the temple (corporate) and at home (private).<sup>147</sup> They worshiped both with glad and generous hearts (2:46). According to Stott, they worshiped “In Exultation and sincerity of heart.”<sup>148</sup> The first believers devoted themselves to the spiritual disciplines of study, fellowship, and worship, which is the “interior life of the church.”<sup>149</sup> The spiritual discipline, witnessing, is present according to Acts 2:47b, “And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

Adele Calhoun highlights that the book of Acts includes other spiritual disciplines practiced by the early church:

Acts 3-the discipline of compassion  
 Acts 4-the disciplines of witness, intercession and  
 Detachment  
 Acts 7-the discipline of service  
 Acts 3:1; 10:9-the discipline of prayer  
 Acts 14:23-the discipline of fasting  
 Acts 15-the discipline of discernment<sup>150</sup>

The example of the early church is still vital today for ECBC. These early Christians participated in the disciplines corporately and individually. Relationships are important to God, and Christians are his image-bearers. Therefore, Christians are to be connected and interrelated with one another so that all can be strengthened in their relationship with Christ. Ephesians 4:16 sums it up-“From whom the whole body, joined and knitted together

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>150</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transforms Us* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 19.

by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." Spiritual disciplines give the Holy Spirit space to be with us to birth Christlikeness within us. We keep company with Jesus by making space for him through spiritual disciplines. Our participation is to offer ourselves lovingly and obediently to God, and then he does the work only he can do.

### **Historical Characters of Spiritual Transformation**

For centuries there have been great men and women who serve as examples in the training of the spiritual formation process. Although there are many, I will only highlight a few great men and women whose teachings continue to motivate Christians today to grow in their relationship of love, trust, and obedience "in Christ." Spiritual transformation is seen through the Monastic Movement, Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, and Contemporary eras with such Christians as Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther the Reformer, John Bunyan, Susanna Wesley, and Dallas Willard.

The Monastic Movement originated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century due to the dissension in Christian living. Justo Gonzalez says, "The narrow gate of which Jesus has spoken had become so wide that countless multitudes were hurrying through it, many seeming to do so only in pursuit of privilege and position, without caring to delve too deeply into the meaning of Christian baptism and life under the cross."<sup>151</sup> This did not fare well with some devoted believers. Their desire to rid of the outside noises led them to the Egyptian

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<sup>151</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 157.

and surrounding deserts for a life of solitude. The abandonment of outside noises allowed them to develop a closer walk with God by practicing solitude, prayer, celibacy, and an ascetic lifestyle.<sup>152</sup> Monasticism continues to be an example of the importance of toning outside noise from this very noisy world to experience God's quiet peace in our lives.

It was the brilliance and intelligence of Augustine of Hippo who used Scripture to renew and exalt the faithful hearing of the Gospel of man's utter need and God's abundant grace.<sup>153</sup> Born in 354 in Tagasta, North Africa as an only son to a pagan father and a fervent Christian mother, he was known to Western Christianity as the greatest theologian from his own time to the present.<sup>154</sup>

Although Augustine penned many theological books, Augustine's *Confessions* is one of the classics of Western World literature.<sup>155</sup> Next to the Bible, *Confessions* has been the most widely read book in the world.<sup>156</sup> The central theme in Augustine's writings is "the sovereign God of grace and the sovereign grace of God."<sup>157</sup> Grace, for Augustine, is God's freedom to act without any external necessity whatsoever.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>153</sup> Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, Albert C. Outler, trans. and ed., accessed August 13, 2021, [ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.i.html](http://ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.i.html).

<sup>154</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 241.

<sup>155</sup> Gordan Mursell, *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 68.

<sup>156</sup> Augustine, and Goulven Madec, "Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings", Mary T. Clark, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 51.

<sup>157</sup> Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, 2.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 6.

Augustine discovered that free will and intellect would not bring about spiritual growth, but his submission to God and acknowledging God's sovereignty and grace contributed to his spiritual maturity. Once he realized spiritual growth only comes from God and not self, he concluded, "You have made us be toward you, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."<sup>159</sup> Through the readings of his confessions, it is clear that Augustine desired an understanding of God's grace, for it is the gift of grace that transforms the heart.

Martin Luther, a monk, and professor of Theology, opposed the Roman Catholic doctrine of indulgences which taught that individuals could purchase their own salvation. Luther made his opposition public by nailing his '95 theses' to the church's door at Whittenburg Castle. Gordan Mursell indicates that the same truth Luther taught in the 16<sup>th</sup> century remains true today, "God is big enough to change human lives and loving enough to change human hearts."<sup>160</sup>

John Bunyan was born in 1628 in Elstow, England, to Thomas and Margaret Bunyan. His occupation was that of a tinker with no university training. According to Urban, his extraordinary work, *Pilgrim's Progress*, made him known as one of history's most influential authors.<sup>161</sup> The book is a spiritual allegory "descriptive of his own journey." Bunyan viewed himself as "the chief of sinners" and at times thought "his sin had placed him beyond the reach of God's grace in the gospel."<sup>162</sup> Martin Luther's

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<sup>159</sup> Augustine, *Augustine of Hippo*, 57.

<sup>160</sup> Gordon Mursell, *The Story of Christianity*, 171.

<sup>161</sup> Josef Urban, "John Bunyan's Experiential Exposition of the Doctrine of Justification," *Puritan Reformed Journal*, no. 2 (July 2019), 129:, accessed September 22, 2021. Web-b-ebshost-com.exproxy.gardner-webb.edu.



commentary on Galatians influenced Bunyan's thinking on justification. But it was the Bible he mostly preferred for his "wounded conscience."<sup>163</sup> The Pilgrim's Progress is significant in guiding spiritual transformation as a book of devotion and meditation that has been used for many generations.

Susanna Wesley was born on January 20, 1669, in Bishopsgate, London. The mother of John and Charles Wesley was the woman behind Methodism in eighteenth-century England.<sup>164</sup> Susanna penned throughout her journals how the disciplines of prayer, self-examination, meditation, reading the Scriptures, and regular holy communion were how she engaged in holy living.<sup>165</sup> Journaling was women's primary mode of written self-expression during the eighteenth century.<sup>166</sup> Susanna Wesley's rationale for journaling was

Keep the mind in a temper for recollection, and often in the day call it in from outward objects, lest it wanders into forbidden paths. Make an examination of your conscience at least three times a day and omit no opportunity of retirement from the world.<sup>167</sup>

Susanna's display of godliness and obedience to God's will was influential in the eighteenth century and remains an example of how spiritual disciplines make room for

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>164</sup> Susanna Wesley, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, ed. Charles Wallace (Oxford University Press, 1997), 3 Accessed September 22, 2021.

<sup>165</sup> Further sources for Susanna Wesley's usage of the spiritual disciplines can be found in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, edited by Charles Wallace (Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>166</sup> Susanna Wesley, *The Complete Writings*, 198.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 197.

God in the believer's life and continues to serve as an example of the importance of the disciplines in the spiritual transformation process today.

One of the leading voices in this age in the spiritual transformation movement is Dallas Willard. One of the problem areas in spiritual formation Willard addressed in his book *The Divine Conspiracy* is the lack of training programs in our churches to show people how to live in Christlikeness. Some training may be self-administered, but more than that is needed.<sup>168</sup> Jesus modeled spiritual disciplines to his disciples; if we are to resemble Christ in character, we must also practice the disciplines. It was valid then, and it continues to be today. A few of these disciplines, according to Willard, are beneficial for us to use today: disciplines of abstinence (e.g., includes solitude, silence, fasting) and disciplines of engagement (e.g., study, worship, prayer, fellowship). These disciplines have the potential to lead us through the lifelong journey of spiritual formation if practiced.

This journey is a lifelong process that takes place through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, with the intentional participation of the believer. The teaching of the spiritual transformation process is evident through the biblical narrative and historical personalities and remains visible through contemporary voices. As teachers, we too must be transformed by the teachings of God's Word to be a witness and model of his transforming power that leads us to grow into a relationship of love, trust, and obedience so that the world can have an image of who God is.

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<sup>168</sup> Dallas Willard, *Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 313.

## **CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL EVALUATION**

The stated goal of this project was to strengthen an understanding and practice through a training program for spiritual transformation. There were three groups that participated: a control group, and experimental A and B groups. I hypothesized that the experimental B group would have a deeper understanding of spiritual transformation, because they engaged in the training sessions and practiced exercises, as compared to the experimental A group, which received only the teaching sessions, and the control group, which received neither teaching nor practices.

The evaluation of all three groups came through a pre- and post-spiritual transformation survey (see Appendix E). The survey acquired both quantitative and qualitative data. It was designed to measure the level of understanding of spiritual transformation. The qualitative portion of the pre-post test was used to evaluate a comparison of the control group and the experimental A/B groups. This qualitative assessment is validated by Table 1, which will be explained in the paragraphs that follows.

More qualitative data was collected from the experimental B group in the form of completed spiritual transformation exercises recorded in weekly journaling, and pre-post surveys based on the lesson content (see Appendix E). These surveys gave insight as to why the experimental B group's responses varied from the experimental A and the control group's responses.

The following overview will reveal the findings from the collected data.

### Evaluation Instruments

I created all evaluation instruments, and Dr. David Carscaddon, from the School of Psychology and Counseling at Gardner-Webb University, compiled the necessary test results to retrieve the outcome from data collected from the three groups. Participants responded to questions that were measured by a ten-point Likert scale, as well as open-ended questions.

To determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the pre and post tests, between the control and experimental groups, I utilized a Repeated Measures Mixed Design ANOVA. This RMMDA is a mixed design instrument that measures the same people from the different groups to assess the independent variable or that which was unique from each group's responses. Results indicated a significant interaction affect ( $F=14.338$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $df = 1, 18$ ), which means a significant difference. This finding (See Table 1) suggests that the training program had a real effect on the participants' understanding of spiritual transformation. The effect size (See Table 2), as measured by Eta2 ( $\eta^2$ ) was .139, is considered large in the social sciences.

**Table 1: Repeated Measures Mixed Design ANOVA  
Within Subjects Effects**

Cases	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$
Time	448.036	1	448.036	5.106	0.036	0.050
Time * Condition	1258.036	1	1258.036	14.338	0.001	0.139
Residuals	1579.364	18	87.742			

**Table 1: Repeated Measures Mixed Design ANOVA  
Within Subjects Effects**

Cases	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$
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*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

**Table 2: Between Subjects Effects**

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	$\eta^2$
Condition	114.036	1	114.036	0.364	0.554	0.013
Residuals	5635.364	18	313.076			

*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

Not only was the training impacting the participants but the effect that the program had on participants was large. The training program contributed much to their understanding of spiritual transformation.

The descriptive statistics (See Table 3) with means and standard deviations for each group is an 18-point difference between the pre and post-test means for the experimental group favoring the post test. This suggests that the program training had an effect on the experimental group, especially EG-B (See Table 4 Assumption Checks).

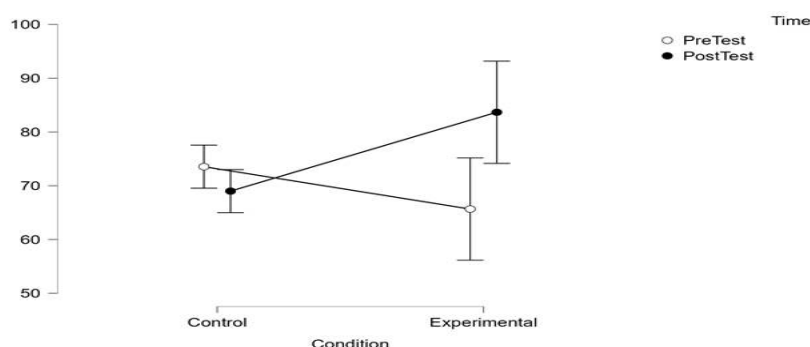
**Table 3: Descriptives**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
PreTest	Control	73.545	12.185	11
	Experimental	65.667	12.748	9
PostTest	Control	69.000	17.187	11
	Experimental	83.667	13.583	9

**Table 4: Assumption Checks****Test for Equality of Variances (Levene's)**

	<b>F</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>P</b>
PretestTot	0.248	1	18	0.625
PosttestTot	0.984	1	18	0.334

The error bar graphs (See Graph 1) give a picture of the group means and what is referred to as standard error of the mean. The clear and dark circles are the means for each group and the extending lines represent all the possible means that I would get if I were to do this study 100 times. The pre and post means for the experimental group are barely overlapping. This indicates a significant difference between the groups. The F test of ANOVA provides further input.

**Graph 1: Descriptives plots**

The post hoc (See Table 5) test was used to determine where the difference came from as revealed from the ANOVA, or that the experimental group pre and post test scores were significantly different below the .05 level (.05 level is a measuring point, and below it one can see the significant result). The experimental group is showing real differences from pre to post-test, suggesting a large difference between experimental groups A-B and the control group in the understanding of spiritual transformation and growth due to the training program. Again, the effect size is very large (Cohen's  $d = 1.271$ ).

**Table 5: Post Hoc Tests****Post Hoc Comparisons - Condition \* Time**

		Mean Difference	SE	t
Control, PreTest	Experimental, PreTest	7.879	6.363	1.238
	Control, PostTest	4.545	3.994	1.138
	Experimental, PostTest	-10.121	6.363	-1.597
<b>Experimental, PreTest</b>	Control, PostTest	-3.333	6.363	-0.524
	<b>Experimental, PostTest</b>	<b>-18.000</b>	<b>4.416</b>	<b>-4.076</b>
Control, PostTest	Experimental, PostTest	-14.667	6.363	-2.305

### Post Hoc Comparisons - Condition \* Time

	Mean Difference	SE	t
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\*\* p < .01

*Note.* P-value adjusted for comparing a family of 6

The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the tests reliability or consistency (See Tables 6 and 7), which revealed that the survey used in this study was stable and trustworthy. Therefore, being that the survey is stable and reliable one could argue that the measure was valid.

**Table 6: Cronbach Alpha Reliability For Pre Test Items**  
**Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Point estimate	0.624
95% CI lower bound	0.288
95% CI upper bound	0.821

*Note.* The following item correlated negatively with the scale: PreTest6.

**Table 7: Cronbach Alpha Reliability For Post Test Items**  
**Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Point estimate	0.847
95% CI lower bound	0.715
95% CI upper bound	0.926

*Note.* The following item correlated negatively with the scale: Post1.

To determine whether there was a significant difference between the training conditions and the pre and post tests on understanding of spiritual transformation, a repeated measures mixed design ANOVA was performed (See Table 8). Results indicated a significant interaction effect ( $F = 7.902$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $df = 2,17$ ). This finding suggests that the training program had a real effect on the participants' understanding of



spiritual transformation. The effect size as measured by Eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) was .143, which is considered large for the social sciences. One may conclude that the effect of training conditions on participants was real and it was sizeable.

**Table 8: Repeated Measures Mixed Design ANOVA**

**Within Subjects Effects**

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	$\eta^2$
Time	979.646	1	979.646	11.326	0.004	0.102
Time * Condition	1366.936	2	683.468	7.902	0.004	0.143
Residuals	1470.464	17	86.498			

The post hoc analysis using the Bonferroni statistic (See Table 9) was significant for the Experimental B (training with practice). Therefore, if one wants to see differences in understanding in spiritual transformation one needs to couple the training with practice. The effect as measured by (Cohen's  $d = 1.626$ ) is large, which suggests that the practice coupled with training makes the difference over time. Training alone does not produce the change from pre to post testing, rather training and practice do.

**Table 9: Post Hoc Tests**

**Post Hoc Comparisons - Condition \* Time**

		Mean Difference	SE	T	Cohen's d	$p_{\text{bonf}}$	$p_{\text{holm}}$
Control, PreTest	Training, PreTest	5.345	7.796	0.686	0.370	1.000	1.000
	Training, With, Practice, PreTest	11.045	8.439	1.309	0.764	1.000	1.000
	Control, PostTest	4.545	3.966	1.146	0.314	1.000	1.000

**Post Hoc Comparisons - Condition \* Time**

		Mean Difference	SE	T	Cohen's d	p <sub>bonf</sub>	p <sub>holm</sub>
Training, PreTest	Training, PostTest	-8.255	7.796	1.059 <sup>-</sup>	-0.571	1.000	1.000
	Training, With, Practice, PostTest	-12.455	8.439	1.476 <sup>-</sup>	-0.862	1.000	1.000
	Training, With, Practice, PreTest	5.700	9.696	0.588	0.394	1.000	1.000
	Control, PostTest	-0.800	7.796	0.103 <sup>-</sup>	-0.055	1.000	1.000
Training, With, Practice, PreTest	Training, PostTest	-13.600	5.882	2.312 <sup>-</sup>	-0.941	0.503	0.470
	Training, With, Practice, PostTest	-17.800	9.696	1.836 <sup>-</sup>	-1.231	1.000	0.860
	Control, PostTest	-6.500	8.439	0.770 <sup>-</sup>	-0.450	1.000	1.000
	Training, PostTest	-19.300	9.696	1.990 <sup>-</sup>	-1.335	0.862	0.711
Control, PostTest	Training, With, Practice, PostTest	-23.500	6.576	3.573 <sup>-</sup>	-1.626	0.035*	0.035*
	Training, PostTest	-12.800	7.796	1.642 <sup>-</sup>	-0.886	1.000	1.000
	Training, With, Practice, PostTest	-17.000	8.439	2.014 <sup>-</sup>	-1.176	0.821	0.711
	Training, With, Practice, PostTest	-4.200	9.696	0.433 <sup>-</sup>	-0.291	1.000	1.000

**Perceptions of Spiritual Transformation**

The spiritual transformation survey included open-ended questions as part of its evaluation of spiritual transformation. One of those questions asked teachers to define spiritual transformation (see Appendix A). The control group's responses to this question

on the pre-test survey were as such: three teachers gave no response, five teachers' definition was geared towards a change in lifestyle by the Holy Spirit, and three defined spiritual transformation based on participating in a few of the disciplines such as reading the scriptures and praying. On the post-survey by the control group only two gave no response and nine gave the following definition of spiritual transformation without receiving any training: "It's renewing of the mind through salvation." "The more you study the Word and live it, your life will change." "Knowing God and being able to understand His will for our life." "By the renewing of our mind to conform to the will of God and to become transformed." "Changing your life from your old ways to God's way." "Your life transformed by God." "Do not conform to the world but conform to the Words of the Bible." "To change our mindset from being sinner to being saved." "A change from ways of the world to the ways of God."

The experimental A group had two "no" responses, and three gave definitions of spiritual transformation as "transforming to becoming God-like by making changes that can be seen and heard on a daily basis." Another stated, "Being changed by Christ," and one stated, "Growth through Christ." The experimental "B" group, which served as the practice group, defined spiritual transformation as follows: "Getting to know God," "To spiritually change in order to become in the spirit of Jesus," "Not conformed to the world any longer. You are changed by the renewing of your mind," and lastly, "Been changed." On the post-survey, a more precise definition of spiritual transformation was given following the spiritual transformation lessons with both experimental A/B groups. The change in definitions may be contributed to the teaching received by both groups, and the practicing received by experimental "B" group. The experimental "A" group responded

as following: “Shedding the layers one at a time to be more Christ-like,” “Having a relationship with Christ, being committed to Christ, and obedience to God in loving others,” “When your relationship with God becomes the most important in life,” “Allowing God to take over and really change your life. You have to spend time with God and allow the Holy Spirit to dwell within you,” and “Practicing spiritual disciplines daily until it becomes you.”

The experimental “B” responded as following: “Growing your relationship with God,” “Pulling off the old and putting on the new you that comes through Christ,” “Spiritual transformation is the act or process of allowing Christ to completely change me from the inside out, with a daily renewing,” “Allowing the Holy Spirit to remove my old self and replace it with the newness found in him.”

Overall, the teachers were able to give a more precise definition, which seems to indicate that they developed a better understanding of spiritual transformation from the pre-to the post surveys.

### **Evaluations of Facilitator**

Each teacher completed a teaching evaluation after each session (see Appendix B). A mean value was determined from the completed teaching evaluations for each question based on a five-point scale (see Appendix B for results). The evaluations generated quantitative data using a five-point Likert scale. The evaluations rated my performance in several areas: the training sessions, my role as facilitator, and environment. Overall, the teachers’ rating and feedback were positive in all areas. However, additional comments given by the teachers suggested more time was needed for the amount of material covered. Although questions and comments were welcomed,

the time issue seemed to limit feedback and further discussion on the material. My focus was to ensure all material was covered, instead of allowing insights and discussions from teachers to carry the lesson into the next phase of the material. These comments will assist me in future trainings to allow adequate time for participants' insights, questions, and comments. An area of concern for the EG-B group was that the daily journaling exercises was a bit much. My goal was for them to practice on a daily basis, but the teachers commented it was too much to be completed within the week.

### **Project's Strength and Weaknesses**

The main strength of this project is the awareness of the need for such project as this. The design and implementation proved the need is great and much needed. By having three groups, one receiving no training, one receiving training with no practice, and the third group receiving both training and practicing, it showed measurable differences between the three groups. At the end of the project it was clear that the experimental B group strengthen their understanding of spiritual transformation to a greater degree than the other two groups.

A weakness that I observed afterwards was the design of the pre-post survey. I should have included questions that measured spiritual transformation practices and not only its understanding. The simplicity of the questions on the Likert scale seemed to be too basic, and teachers were able to choose an appropriate answer based on information acquired from years of teaching, instead of an accurate choice as it related to a personal understanding of spiritual transformation.

Another area of weakness I observed was a lack of teaching the rationale for spiritual disciplines. Although spiritual disciplines is a way to make room for God, a redesign of the project would include a lesson on the importance of spiritual disciplines in the spiritual transformation process.

Upon further reflection after the completion of the project, another insight I noticed is that four-weeks is not enough time to teach the material, nor allowing the teachers an opportunity to dig deeper in the process. The spiritual transformation process is a lifelong daily process and four-weeks is not enough time to assess whether the process is active in their lives. Spiritual transformation takes place within the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to gauge by pre-and posts-surveys. However, an understanding of the material received from open discussions and what was written and shared through the EG-B journaling is a true testimony to what was learned.

Another issue I observed was that the EG-A group wanted to be involved in the journaling practice, even though I explained that this strategy was for gathering data for the project with the EG-B group.

I also observed that the amount of paperwork for this project seemed to be overwhelming for the teachers. Afterwards, I realized if I would have combined the facilitators evaluation to just one, that would have minimized the amount of paperwork collected. Also, color coding the various forms used would have been more beneficial than printing everything on white paper.

The spiritual transformation process assisted me personally, because it brought awareness to what was missing in my personal life. I have become more committed to spending quality time in the Word, prayer, meditating, reflecting, and journaling my findings and insights. My personal study is no longer used for only gathering information for the purpose of information, it is gaining information for transformation. As the trainer, studying, and praying for the project and being led by the Holy Spirit, I too am being transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. This project has given me a greater understanding of what it means to be an image bearer of God, through the process of becoming and possessing the character of Christ.

It was my goal and prayer that this project would bring awareness to the Sunday school teachers in a way that they would glean an understanding of the spiritual transformation process. I believe the material taught brought convictions upon the teachers and me, because each of us were open and receptive to new information. It was my hypothesis that this new learned information would advance our thinking even more.

As followers of Christ, we are aspiring to develop a life partaking in spiritual disciplines in order to engage more deeply with the Lord and become more like Him in daily life. Spiritual disciplines will make space in our souls and in our lives for God to do a deeper work inside us and through us in our relationships with others. I now understand that it is difficult to assess one's growth, however, it is imperative that we each take time for contemplation and self-evaluation in order to prepare our hearts for transformation.

My prayer was for the teachers to seek a closer relationship of love, trust, and obedience with God. I believe if the teachers develop such a relationship, this will have a

positive effect on students in their classroom, and hopefully it will reach the entire congregation and beyond.

Finally, I plan to implement additional intentional teachers' training for the purpose of gaining information for transformation through the process of continuous strengthening their understanding and using spiritual transformation exercises. It is my desire that teachers will take a leadership role in leading sessions in the process. I plan to include attending conferences and retreats, which will enhance teachers' training in the spiritual transformation process.

### **Personal and Professional Growth**

Implementing Sunday school teacher's training with the intention of strengthening an understanding and practice of spiritual transformation is essential. Teacher's meetings for the purpose of gaining information with no purpose is no longer effective for the teachers at Ellis Chapel Baptist Church. Ellis Chapel Baptist Church's Sunday school teachers had not received training that gave them an opportunity to gain information for transformation. Although we have not been able to meet on a regular basis due to COVID, the teachers now understand the importance of regular training sessions geared towards spiritual transformation goals as very much needed to grow into Christlikeness in this lifelong spiritual transformation process.

This four-week project trained Sunday school teachers in a spiritual transformation process in order for them to strengthen their understanding, gave them examples of how to put the material learned into daily situations in their lives. The



trainings made a difference through open and honest discussions, provided AHA moments concerning recognized weaknesses in their relationship with Christ, and made them aware that transformation is not something they can accomplish on their own. It comes through their participation with Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The theological and biblical information awakened the teachers to new profound insights that allowed them to glean an understanding that they are God's image bearers. A metamorphic change is only obtained through the power of the Holy Spirit, realizing that loving God equates to loving others, and that they can live in hope because of what God did for them through Jesus Christ. Participating in the spiritual transformation exercises allowed teachers to become aware of the importance of spending quality time with God through prayer and digging deeper into his Word in order to make space for Him in their lives. Everything that was experienced within this project not only brought awareness, but it has provided guidance towards spiritual growth for the teachers, and for me. Teachers have commented verbally as well as those who participated in journaling how this project's training placed them on a lifelong journey of desiring to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

The project aimed to strengthen an understanding and practice of the spiritual transformation process. I believe that the understanding of both EG-A and EG-B groups was strengthened through the biblical material taught and practiced. This belief is based on what the EG-B group reflected in their journals, comments from text messages I received, and the teachers' anecdotal comments within the class setting. I am now observing teachers who are more interested in living the lessons than teaching them for informational purposes only.

From now on, I plan to make an effort to observe Sunday school classrooms on the Sundays I am not teaching my class. I have already observed teachers in the teenagers' class, and I noticed that the two teachers were engaging students to unpack how the information from the lesson could be visible in daily living. One teacher was transparent about a situation that had occurred during the week and how the transfer of the lesson's information happened in that situation.

Furthermore, from my observations thus far, teachers who participated in this project are more motivated and eager to go beyond conveying lessons at the information stage. They seemed to demonstrate a readiness to allow the Holy Spirit to use the information from the lesson for their heart change and practice it so that Christ's character may develop within them. It appears they are seeking a relationship of love, trust, and obedience beginning in their lives, which has the potential to transfer to the lives of their students, hopefully, ECBC's congregation, Patterson Springs community, and abroad.

### **Future Project Plans**

I pray and hope that once I complete the Doctor of Ministry degree, this training project will be implemented as continuous training for the teachers at Ellis Chapel and the entire congregation. I hope that the experimental groups will share and live every lesson they teach from henceforth. Our congregation, communities, and world will be transformed if this happens. If teachers move beyond teaching for information and focus on teaching and living for transformation, then this project will be successful beyond the lives of our Sunday school teachers.

Although I have stated this multiple times, the application of the concepts and material learned through this project is to allow the lessons taught to be witnessed in the lives of the teacher who exemplifies what the lesson looks like lived out. The training initiated by this project will take the place of traditional Sunday school meetings and will be implemented as a continuous growing curriculum that can be facilitated beyond the walls of Ellis Chapel.

### **Developing a Training Program for Spiritual Transformation**

Consequently, the planning and implementation of this spiritual transformation project led me to reevaluate weekly teacher meetings. Implementing a training program that trains in the spiritual transformation process for Sunday school teachers at Ellis Chapel Baptist Church and beyond was essential. The feedback from the EG-B group's journal session (see Appendix G) brought awareness of the need for more structured ways such as this project to strengthen an understanding and practice for spiritual

transformation. This kind of teaching-learning opportunity is imperative for believers to embrace a lifelong journey of growing in a relationship of love, trust, and obedience to Christ.

For Ellis Chapel Baptist Church, this project brought awareness of the importance of training teachers to become doers of God's Word, not just hearers. Teachers realized lessons must be geared beyond the information stage and move towards forming persons into being God's image-bearers, transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Connection with Life-Long Learning Goals**

As I embarked upon obtaining a Doctor of Ministry degree, I set life-long learning goals to expand my thinking theologically, practice solitude and silence, and focus on being transformed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. I wanted to rid myself of assumptions and convictions to be open and receptive to new information.

Researching for this project helped deepen my understanding of Scripture, expanding my thinking theologically. I spent time understanding the truth of Scripture by allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal its truth. Continuing the practice of solitude and silence has helped me understand Soren Kierkegaard's quote, "To pray is not to hear oneself speak, but it is to be silent and to remain silent, to wait, until the man who prays hears God."<sup>169</sup>

Through this project, I understand better that it is not about teaching but the living. The information acquired from Scripture is to be transformed. I read the Bible to

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<sup>169</sup> Steven D. Olsen, "Silence: Forming and Transforming Ministry." *Currents In Theology and Mission* 10, no. 1 (1983):14.

learn the content in the past, but not necessarily how to apply biblical truths to my life.

Because of this project, I am learning more about God and what He communicates to me through His Word to transform my heart. I understand that spiritual transformation is a life-long process, and after an understanding of what the text means, I am learning to conform to God's Word by believing what it says and allowing the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit to change my life in a way that it will impact not only my life but others with whom I come in contact.

## APPENDIX A

### Pre-Post Survey

Please circle the appropriate choice.

20's    30's    40's    50's    60's    70's    Male                  Female

1. Maturing in faith is a difficult journey.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

2. I can explain how spiritual transformation is designed to assist me in becoming Christlike.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

3. Spiritual transformation helps me to understand my identity as an image-bearer of God.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

4. Engagement through spiritual practices is important to my ongoing relationship with Jesus.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

5. Spiritual transformation comes through my cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

6. Spiritual transformation does not involve my relationship with others.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

7. I can identify and explain at least three disciplines.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
----------------	--	--	--	--	---------------------------	--	--	--	--	-------------------

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

8. Disciplines are valuable simply because they allow us to do what we cannot do by willpower alone.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

9. Spiritual disciplines “make room” for God in my life.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

10. Jesus demonstrates what it means to practice spiritual disciplines.

Strongly Agree					Neither Agree or Disagree					Strongly Disagree
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

11. Please define “spiritual transformation” as you understand it.



12. Please explain how the butterfly's life cycle relates to the believers' spiritual transformation process.
13. Please explain the importance of practicing spiritual disciplines daily.
14. Explain the purpose of training through spiritual disciplines daily.

## APPENDIX B

### Evaluation Workshops

Week 1: Workshop: Understanding Spiritual Transformation/God's Image Bearer

Week 2: Workshop: The Shema

Week 3: Workshop: Jesus and the *Shema* and the Parable of the Good

Samaritan

Week 4: The Three Stages of Spiritual Transformation

Please answer the following questions.

Age: _____	Gender:	Male		Female
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly
Disagree				Agree

Evaluation of the Learning Sessions

\_\_\_ I had difficulty understanding the subject matter.

\_\_\_ I desired to learn more about spiritual transformation.

\_\_\_ The information was relevant to helping me to grow in my relationship with Christ.

\_\_\_ Understanding who I am in Christ was enhanced by participating in this project.

\_\_\_ The learning sessions were positive.

\_\_\_ Discussions were relevant to my understanding of the concepts.

Evaluation of Facilitator

\_\_\_ The facilitator was knowledgeable of the lesson material.

\_\_\_ The facilitator was well organized and prepared for class.

\_\_\_ The facilitator's presentation of the material was clear and precise.

\_\_\_The facilitator maintained a steady flow in presenting the material.

#### Evaluation of the Environment

\_\_\_The atmosphere was conducive to learning.

\_\_\_I was comfortable sharing my thoughts and insights.

\_\_\_I felt uncomfortable sharing my thoughts and insights.

\_\_\_Other participants caused me to become distracted during the training sessions.

\_\_\_Overall, the environment was conducive to my learning.

The mean value are as follows: (1) 1.61; (2) 4.52; (3) 4.47; (4) 4.82 (5) 4.77; (6) 4.63; (7) 4.86; (8) 4.86; (9) 4.77; (10) 4.88; (11) 4.75; (12) 4.72; (13) 1.88; (14) 1.41; (15) 4.58.

Additional Comments:

## APPENDIX C

### Letter of Welcome

Greetings!

I am excited that you have volunteered your time to participate in my doctoral project. Although this is an academic approach, please know this is God's work, and I pray that you will take the assignments seriously and work through each one carefully and precisely. Please allow whatever time is necessary to engage in each activity. Before the Holy Spirit can do his work in us, we have to be willing to admit we need His help in every area of our lives.

These four weeks will require your time and honesty. I know honesty is difficult when we are assessing ourselves. However, remember that God already knows, so we might as well be honest with Him upfront.

Although I will read through your journal entries to assess your understanding of the information and possible spiritual growth, I have no way of knowing your identity. So, please approach this study and your answers honestly and with the assurance that no one will ever know who you are. After the teaching sessions, we will meet as a group of four to allow time for you to discuss your learnings, insights, and concerns. You will have an opportunity to share to glean insight from others.

For the following four weeks set aside time each day to unplug from television, cellphone, social media, and other outside voices in order to make space for God. Engage in the formation exercises assigned each day. Journal your thoughts, reflections, and findings in the spiritual formation process.

Once you have finished your reflective journaling, please take the time to fill out each evaluative assessment.

Blessings,

Mrs. Linda W. Lockhart

## APPENDIX D

### Journal Exercises

#### **Journal Week One: Introduction to Spiritual Transformation**

##### **Day 1**

Read and reflect on Genesis 1:26.

In the space below, draw YOUR image of God and list words and phrases that describe God according to you.

<b>GOD</b>	<b>ALIKE</b>	<b>DIFFERENT</b>	<b>CHANGES NEEDED</b>


In the space below, draw a silhouette that represents you. Around your silhouette, list words and phrases that describe you.

The chart below lists words and phrases you used to describe God. Place a check in the appropriate box detailing whether you are alike or different from God. Based on your differences, what changes are needed for you to become more like God.

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and do the necessary work to change you to become a better image bearer of him.

## Day 2

Read and reflect on Rom. 12:1-2, and Paul teaches that change can happen. He wants us to reflect on him. In fact, God wants to change our thoughts, actions, attitudes, and so forth, which causes us to act in ways that distort his image.

In the space below, answer the following questions.

- (1) What do you think it means to be conformed to this world and give personal examples of how you are conformed to the world versus being transformed by the Holy Spirit?
- (2) List ways your life needs to change from living and acting like those in the world into one who is bearing the image of Christ.

(3) How often do you renew your mind and list ways in which you can continue your mind?

(4) In the space below, examine your thoughts, actions, and attitude. How does each of these reflect/distort the image of God?

As you go through the day, focus on God, be aware that he is present with you, and be grateful for his presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in renewing your mind, and ask him to guide you in conforming to his will and not the world.

(5) List things in your life now that God has changed. Did the change cause you to conform to God's will versus the world's will? Explain your answer.

(6) Make a list of what needs to change in your life. How do these things cause you to conform to the world versus God's will?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and to change those things that hinder you from being an effective image-bearer of him.

### **Day 3**

The next three days will focus on the Lifecycle of the butterfly and how it relates to spiritual transformation in the believer's life.

#### **Stage 1: The Egg Stage**

Once the butterfly lays the egg, it is the beginning of its life cycle of the butterfly. Once the spiritual birth takes place, a new identity is formed. This stage is the consumption task of eating as much food as the caterpillar can hold. This is considered the growth stage.

(1) Read and reflect on Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:24-25; 2:2.

(2) What kind of appetite have you developed for God's Word? Are you willing to make the Word of God your consuming desire?

(3) Highlight why daily reading, studying, and reflecting on the Word of God is important in the spiritual formation process.

(4) Based on your consumption of God's Word, do you crave His Word like a newborn child?



Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to increase your appetite for God's Word.

## **Day 4**

### **Stage 2: The Chrysalis and Pupa Stage**

This stage is where the caterpillar digest all the food consumed in the caterpillar stage, and transformation takes place inside.

Read, examine and reflect on Galatians 2:20

In the space below, examine your spiritual life and answer the following questions honestly.

- (1) Would you say that more or less of the old you, your old self, your old sinful nature, has been crucified, or it is still alive and well right now? Explain your answer.
- (2) Is your identity in Christ the most important thing about you? If not, why?
- (3) Are you willing to die to any identity you have that is independent of Christ? Explain.

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to be a visible and verbal follower of Christ in all you do.

## **Day 5**

### **Stage 3: The Adult Butterfly**

During this stage, the butterfly will become completely free of the old cuticle, and internal changes occur in the pupa as the transformation occurs from the caterpillar to the adult butterfly. The goal of the newly formed butterfly is to reproduce other butterflies.

**Read and reflect on Ephesians 4:21-24**

Do a self-reflection of your life. In the space below, journal whether your life is more reflective of your former way of life or more reflective of your new life in Christ. Are you willing to be renewed in the spirit of your mind and clothe yourself with the new self-created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness? If not, what is hindering you?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in pulling off and putting on the new life in Him.

Reflective Thoughts: Based upon your understanding from this week's lesson, have you discovered areas in your life that need changing, and are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to change you? What have you learned about yourself, and what have you learned about God?

## **Journal Week Two: Spiritual Transformation in the Old Testament**

### **Day 1 Is God your only God?**

#### **Read and Reflect on Deuteronomy 6:4**

This passage of Scripture is known as the *Shema*, which means to hear. This is not just a call to the act of hearing but a call for undivided loyalty to God.

Think about your daily routines and activities. On the back of this page, write out your DAILY routines and activities beginning when you rise until you go to bed. Answer the following questions with complete honesty.

1. Based on your daily routines and activities, are your loyalties divided or undivided to God?
2. Who or what are your loyalties divided with? In other words, who or what occupies the majority of your time and attention?
3. Would God be depicted as the one and only God in your life? Explain
4. What changes are needed for God to be the one and only God in your life?

5. Are you willing to make those changes? Why or Why not?

**Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to become number one in your life.**

**Day 2 Love God with ALL your heart, soul, and strength.**

**Read and reflect on Deuteronomy 6:5**

1. Who in your life is God's rival for your total and unconditional love?
2. What does it mean to love someone with "ALL" your heart? Based on your answer, would you say you love God with "ALL" your heart? If not, what needs to change for you to love Him with "ALL" your heart?
3. To love the LORD with all your soul means to love Him in the way we live, the way we act, the choices we make, and the lifestyle we adopt. In your life, are you loving God with "ALL" your soul? If not, what changes need to happen for you to love HIM with "ALL" your soul?

**Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you love Him more than anyone or anything.**

**Day 3 Internalize God's Word**

**Read and reflect on Deuteronomy 6:5**

1. Describe in your own words what it means to you to “keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart?”
2. Are you more committed to storing God’s Word to memory for information purposes only, or have you committed to holding God’s Word in your heart to live in obedience to His Word? Explain your answer
3. In the space below, explain how you can accomplish internalizing God’s Word daily.

**Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you internalize the Word daily.**

#### **Day 4 Teach the Word**

#### **Read and reflect on Deuteronomy 6:7**

1. Before you can live God’s Word, you must first have a clear understanding of the Word.  
When you study God’s Word, are you able to get a clear understanding from your study?  
If not, what do you think is the reason?
2. Your love for God will outflow to those around you. Do you love God so that your children, family, co-workers, etc., can visibly notice your love for God?
3. Are you the teacher of God’s Word to your immediate family and friends, or are you leaving that up to the pastor or Sunday school teacher?
4. Are you more apt to talk about a television show, sporting events, or entertainment than you are to talk about the Word of God?

5. Which are you more comfortable discussing, God's Word or other subjects as you go about your day?
6. When you rise and lie down, do you meditate on God's Word, or do you allow something on the television or social media to be the first and last thing on your mind?

**Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you share His Word with others.**

### **Day 5 Inward change for an outward show**

#### **Read and reflect on Deuteronomy 8-9**

1. Would people be surprised that you are a follower of Christ because of an outer emblem that says so? A hat, t-shirt, car tag, etc.
2. Would your daily conversation depict your love for God? Explain
3. Do the things of God consume your life so much that those you interact with daily are also being impacted?
4. Are there visible reminders to you of God's Word? Such as Bible verses as your screen saver on your computer and phone, Bible apps, music, and television? Do these things honor and glorify God?

**Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to be more visible in your life than anyone or anything else.**

### **Day 6**

Reflective Thoughts: Based upon your understanding from this week's lesson, have you discovered areas in your life that need changing, and are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to change you? What have you learned about yourself, and what have you learned about God?

**Pray and ask God to transform your life in areas that need changing.**

## **Journal Week 4: Paul's Metamorphic Change**

### **Day 1**

#### **Read and reflect on 2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

1. How much of your life is a testimony to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit?
2. Could you say like Paul, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ?"

### **Day 2**

#### **Read and reflect on 2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

1. Is there evidence of internal change that merits external evidence in your life? If so, explain.
2. Are you willing to give the Holy Spirit complete control of your life to reflect the image of Christ?

### **Day 3**

#### **Read and reflect on Galatians 5:22-23**

1. In the space below, list the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.



2. Based on the above list, which fruit of the Spirit is evident in your life? Explain how it is evident in your life.
3. Which fruit of the Spirit is lacking in your life, and what needs to change for the fruit to become evident in your life?

#### **Day 4**

Based on your readings and understandings from this week's lesson, what have you learned about yourself and God as it relates to being transformed into the image of Christ.

## APPENDIX E

### Spiritual Formation Exercises Assessment Week 1: Introduction to Spiritual Transformation

*Please circle the appropriate choice.*

1. I understand what it means to be created in God's image

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. I have an intimate relationship with God.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. I am exhibiting God's image by dying to my self-centered nature.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

4.I am allowing the Holy Spirit to fill me with the fruit of his Spirit.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I believe that I am worthy of God's love.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. I struggle with my identity in Christ.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. My heart is conformed more to God's will than the world.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

1. I am becoming more like God and less like my old self.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I create space and time daily for the Holy Spirit to do inner transformation in my heart.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

10. I depend upon the Holy Spirit to transform my image to reflect Christ's image.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

**Spiritual Formation Exercise Assessment Week 2: Spiritual Transformation in the Old  
Testament**

**Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each question, indicate the number that represents your answer.**

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

\_\_\_1. My supervisor has given me an opportunity to work overtime on either Saturday or Sunday.  
My child or grandchild has his/her first T-Ball game on Saturday. I will attend their T-Ball game because my Sunday school class can attend another class or take Sunday off.

\_\_\_2. When I have an issue or concern, I seek advice from someone else in addition to God.

- \_\_\_3. While dining in a restaurant, one of my Sunday school students was the server. Once I received my bill, I noticed I was only charged for an appetizer and not the entrée, drink, and dessert. When I pointed it out to my server, she told me this was a blessing from God. I thanked the student and paid the incorrect bill.
- \_\_\_4. For me, this saying is true, "Family Over Everything."
5. I obey God's commandments because I love him.
- \_\_\_I desire to spend more time with God than anyone or anything else.
- \_\_\_I invest more time and energy with others than I do with God.
- \_\_\_I never use the Lord's name in a joking manner; it is always with respect and reverence in awe of his sovereignty.
- \_\_\_Every Sabbath day, I keep it holy by worshiping, reflecting on who God is and his blessings in my life, and I take time to rest and be refreshed for the start of another week.
- \_\_\_I honor my parents by spending quality time with them, and I also honor my spiritual leaders and others who ever guided my life in any Godly way by praying for them or sharing a love offering with them occasionally.
- \_\_\_Although I have never physically taken anyone's life, I have committed murder by killing others' character with words.
- \_\_\_I do not commit adultery physically or mentally.
- \_\_\_I steal from my workplace by staying over on my breaks or using the company's material without permission.
- \_\_\_I lie by repeating gossip I hear without knowing whether it is true or not.
- \_\_\_I become envious when others receive a blessing that I have been praying for to receive myself.
- \_\_\_6. My love for God is visible even when he takes something or someone from me or when he allows me to suffer.
- \_\_\_7. I demonstrate my relationship of love, trust, and obedience to God by doing whatever he

asks me to do or tells me to refrain from, whether I understand or agree with what he is telling me.

\_\_\_ 8. I never miss a day reading, reflecting, and responding to God's Word.

\_\_\_ 9. I witnessed two Christian friends gossiping about another friend. I immediately said, "The Bible says if we have a problem with someone, we go to the person."

\_\_\_ 10. I am intentional in ensuring that my children spend time reading God's Word daily.

**Spiritual Formation Exercise Assessment Week 3: Spiritual Transformation in the New  
Testament**

**Choose the answer that reflects your position, or write your own response.**

1. I pass by a woman with a young child standing on the side of the road holding a sign with the words, “Hungry, and we need food, if not for me, please feed my child.” I would do the following:
  - 1) Turn my head and think this is all scam.
  - 2) Go to the nearest restaurant and purchase food for them both.
  - 3) I would: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Someone makes a derogatory comment to you that hurts your feelings, and you would respond by:
  - 1) Retaliating with hurtful words toward him/her.
  - 2) Making him/her aware that his/her words were hurtful, offering forgiveness in a loving manner.
  - 3) I would: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. You are standing in an extremely long line in Wal-Mart. When it comes to your turn to checkout, the cashier closes her register and tells you to go to another extremely long line. You would do which of the following:
  - 1) Go ballistic on the cashier, causing a loud shouting confrontation.
  - 2) Ask what is the reason for having to move to another line, and move without a confrontation.
  - 3) I would: \_\_\_\_\_

4. At work, you and a group of co-workers discuss religion. Several in the group referred to God as the “Big Guy,” “My homeboy,” I would:
  - 1) Explain to the group that God is not some common or ordinary person, and he is the Creator, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He is God.
  - 2) Laugh and dismiss disrespect used towards God.
  - 3) I would: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. It is my belief my transformation is more about my deeds than a heart change because
  - 1) I give to people, and I attend church on a regular; I pay my tithes.
  - 2) I have experienced an extra sense of joy and peace.
  - 3) I \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. I love people with unconditional love by:
  - 1) Doing for strangers as if they were family.
  - 2) Only showing unconditional love to my immediate family.
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. My love for people is more about being a neighbor than having a neighbor. An elderly person who recently became handicapped needs around-the-clock care. There is no family, and she cannot afford care. I would:
  - 1) Not respond.
  - 2) I would volunteer to help in any way needed.
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. The women’s group at church is disjointed; voted in as chairperson, I would:
  - 1) Leave group as is.



- 2) Plan Women's workshops teaching the importance of living in a community with one another.

3) \_\_\_\_\_

9. I have the compassion to help those whom I know need help. Driving down I-85 I noticed a man covered with tattoos, long hair, and a beard, walking and holding hands with a young child. I noticed a stranded truck on the side of the road covered with racial graffiti.

I would:

- 1) Move over to the next lane and continue on my way.
- 2) Stop and ask what the problem is, take them to the nearest mechanic shop to seek help, return to their stranded truck, stay with them until the mechanic solves the problem, and offer to pay for the work.

3) \_\_\_\_\_

10. I use God's Word to evaluate my heart and attitude by:

- 1) Reflecting and putting the lesson to practice in my daily life.
- 2) Taking notes to be read later.

3) \_\_\_\_\_

### Spiritual Formation Exercise Assessment Week 4: Paul's Metamorphic Change

Please circle the appropriate choice.

1. My life is a testimony to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. My internal change reflects the character of Christ.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

3. Others are noticing my heart change.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

4. I give God the credit for changing my heart.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

5. I am confident in the work the Holy Spirit is doing in my heart.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

6. Understanding God's Word is leading me to obey his Word.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

7. I have hope in God fulfilling his promises in the New Testament.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

8. I am aware that the transforming work that God accomplished through Christ is intended for me.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

9. I am experiencing God's glory through the Holy Spirit.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree

5	4	3	2	1
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10. I am will to participate in a lifelong journey in the spiritual transformation journey.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	StronglyDisagree
5	4	3	2	1

## APPENDIX F

### Data Evaluation

#### Alpha Reliability For Entire Survey

##### Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics

Estimate	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Point estimate	0.809
95% CI lower bound	0.652
95% CI upper bound	0.905

*Note.* The following items correlated negatively with the scale: Pretest1, PreTest5, Post1.

## Repeated Measures Mixed Design ANOVA

### Descriptives

### Assumption Checks

#### Test for Equality of Variances (Levene's)

	F	df1	df2	p
PretestTot	0.248	1	18	0.625
PosttestTot	0.984	1	18	0.334

### Post Hoc Tests

## Cronbach Alpha Reliability For Entire Survey

**Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
Point estimate	0.809
95% CI lower bound	0.652
95% CI upper bound	0.905

*Note.* The following items correlated negatively with the scale: Pretest1, PreTest5, Post1.

## APPENDIX G

### TRAINING SESSIONS

#### **Week One Training Session: An Introduction to Spiritual Transformation**

**(February 27, 2022)**

While the control was receiving a to-go lunch, the experimental B group took the pre-lesson survey (See Appendix A). The first teaching session of the project began by discussing an introduction to Spiritual Transformation. I began by showing a PowerPoint slide with varied images that led to a discussion that “Image is Everything.” Teachers were asked to define “images.” One teacher defined images as, “Like seeing is believing,” another stated, “A visual representation.” I gave the dictionary definition of image as “A visual representation of something. The general impression that a person, organization, or product presents to the public.” Beth F. Jones says, “For all the way that images help to shape our understanding of the self and the world in which we live, images often lead us astray and distort our relationships.”<sup>170</sup>

The purpose of this discussion was to introduce a perfect image created by God (Genesis 1:26) and how this perfect image became distorted (Genesis 3). The hope was to guide a discussion in order to shift the class’ focus to being image-bearers of God, which led to defining spiritual transformation by Jay Johnston and Ronald K. Brown, who says,

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<sup>170</sup> Beth F. Jones, and Jeffrey W. Barbeau eds, *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 21.

“God’s work of changing a believer into the likeness of Jesus by creating a new identity in Christ and by empowering a lifelong relationship of love, trust, and obedience to glorify God.” I asked the teachers what distorted the perfect image God created? They all answered sin. I said to the teachers since you know you are God’s image-bearer, how well are you bearing God’s image? The teachers’ responses varied.

- (1) One teacher said it depended on the situation.
- (2) One teacher said that she is not a good image-bearer of God on most days.
- (3) One teacher said he tries but fails most of the time.
- (4) One teacher acknowledged that she never realized she was responsible for being an image bearer for God.

The video “Life Cycle of a Butterfly” was shown, and afterward, each stage of the process was discussed. I asked the teachers, based on the information from each stage in the life cycle of a butterfly, as it relates to spiritual transformation, which stage are they in right now? All teachers responded, saying that based on the information, they believe they are still in the egg stage in the spiritual transformation process. These responses led to the most profound example of spiritual transformation found in the process known as the metamorphosis of caterpillar to butterfly.

We explored quotes by James B. Smith, John Wesley, and John Calvin that described the importance of the spiritual transformation process for the believer.

We did an exploration of 1 Peter 2:3 and Ephesians 4:21-24. The purpose behind these passages was to emphasize to the teachers the process for continued growth for those who have faith and hope in God, and outward evidence of the inner spiritual transformation is to love God and love others. The lesson ended with the focus on the



Holy Spirit, the Transformer, detailing that the believer cannot experience spiritual transformation on their own. The character of Christ can only be obtained through the working of the Holy Spirit, with the participation of the believer. After the lesson, teachers were asked to define spiritual transformation based on the content of the lesson.

Following the lesson, the teachers in both groups were directed to complete the class evaluation survey (see Appendix B). The EGB group remained a few minutes afterward for further instructions, expectations for journal work, and a post-lesson survey to be completed at home and returned the following week. After returning their forms to the recording secretary, they all received a to-go lunch.

## **Week Two Training Session: Spiritual Transformation in the Old Testament:**

### **Loving God Totally**

**(March 6, 2022)**

On Sunday, March 6, as the control received a to-go lunch, the experimental B group completed the pre-lesson survey. Afterward, the class focus was Spiritual Transformation in the Old Testament based on Deuteronomy 6:4-9. To introduce the lesson, I asked each teacher to write down the various gods in their lives. Most responses were the same: *family, children, sports, social media, television, cellphones, and online shopping* were the top answers. The activity was a good lead-in to the question, “What is the theme throughout Deuteronomy? A teacher answered, “Obedience.” I gave background information on Deuteronomy 6 by unpacking the meaning of the *Shema*, which means to hear, but not just a call to the act of hearing but a call for Israel’s undivided loyalty to YHWH.<sup>171</sup> I displayed and discussed the following quotes:

The first commandment is not a call to believe in the existence of only one God; it is a command to obey only one God as the God of gods, and it does not demand belief in one God; it demands *loyalty* to one God above all others.<sup>172</sup> Thomas W. Mann

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<sup>171</sup> John H. Tullock, “Deuteronomy” in Mercer Commentary on the Bible, ed. Watson E. Willis and Richard F. Wilson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995), 206.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas W. Mann, “Deuteronomy” in *Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 55.

In the spiritual transformation process, there must be a relationship with God, and this confession acknowledges first that God is God and that he is God alone. The *Shema* lays claim to total devotion and obedience.<sup>173</sup>

Mark E. Biddle

To say YAHWEH is one is to affirm unchangeableness and consistency.<sup>174</sup> Christopher Wright

The above quotes led to an exploration of Deuteronomy 6:5, and I made a point to the teachers who just said, “I love God,” does not mean you are in love with God. God demands that we love him with our total being. To love him with our heart (*lebab*) signifies not only the physical organ but also the inner core of personality, and to love him with our soul (*nephesh*) means to place our feelings and desires at God’s service and conform them to God’s will, and to love him with our might (*me’od*) “muchness” “exceedingness” “intensity” is a single-minded, love inspired zeal and determination to realize the whole will of God.<sup>175</sup> I showed three short videos from the Bible Project on YouTube: *Heart, Soul, and Strength*. Afterward, I asked the teachers if they love God based on the explanation given, and they all agreed that they do not love God with their total being. I proceeded to tell them to love God is an attitude synonymous with obedience.

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<sup>173</sup> Mark E. Biddle, “Deuteronomy” in *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2003), 124.

<sup>174</sup> Christopher Wright, “Deuteronomy” in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 95.

<sup>175</sup> A.D.H. Mayes, “Deuteronomy” in *New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers, 1981), 176.

The discussion continued with the importance of internalizing the Word in the spiritual transformation process outlined in Deuteronomy 6:6; the point was made that God's Word must be part of the total daily activity because once the Word is internalized, love, trust, and obedience are inevitable. I asked the question, "How can we internalize God's Word?" One teacher answered, "Apply it." Another said, "Read and study." Another said, "We must prepare our hearts to receive the Word." I explained that the Word is internalized once we can live the Word out in our daily lives as situations occur, and this led to an engaging discussion of Eugene Merrill's insight by unpacking, "To recite these instructions, one would be like an engraver of a monument who hammered and chiseled a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. Although the work is laborious, once the message is engraved, it is there to stay."<sup>176</sup> The above quote ensued an acknowledgment by one of the teachers that the problem is the message is not only there to stay but to be lived and shared with others. As a lead into Deuteronomy 6:7, I asked the teachers who is responsible for teaching God's Word to children? Is it their responsibility as teachers to teach children who come to ECBC? They all agreed that the first responsibility is that of the parent(s).

I then asked, "Those of you who are parents, did they or are they teaching their children God's Word? They each answered, "No." I then asked, "Why not?" They agreed that because of work, children sporting events, and other pressing matters, they failed to set time aside to teach their children God's Word, leaving it up to the Sunday school

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<sup>176</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, "Deuteronomy" in *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture NIV Text* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 167.

teacher or the pastor to teach them. One teacher stated, “It takes too much time and energy to teach my children God’s Word.” I stated, “Israel was to model who God was to the surrounding nations. Today, we are responsible for modeling to our children and the world who God is.” I then asked a follow-up question, “Are you more apt to talk about a television show, sporting event, or entertainment than you are to talk about God’s Word?” Each teacher agreed they are more apt and feel more comfortable talking about the above list of things than they are about God’s Word.

The discussion explored Deuteronomy 6:8-9 with me asking, “Would people be surprised that you are a follower of Christ because of an outer emblem that says so (i.e., t-shirt, hat, car tag, etc.)?” I also ask the teachers, based on their selection of television shows, what they view or post on social media, and the music in their playlist, would God be glorified? Several teachers said they do not have social media accounts, but what they watch on television does not always glorify God. I explained that spiritual transformation starts from the inside and is evident on the outside. It is not about the teaching, and it’s about the living. Since we are image-bearers of God, every area of our lives must show others who God is.

The teachers were asked to write what needs to change in their lives to have undivided loyalty to God and what it will take for them to love God with their total being.

Following the lesson, the teachers in the EGA group were asked to complete the class evaluation survey (see Appendix B). Once the evaluation surveys were completed, they were placed in their folder and returned to the secretary for recording the data and received a to-go lunch. They returned their information to the recording secretary and received a to-go lunch. The EGB completed the class evaluation and remained for

instructions for next week's journaling and lesson post-test to be completed during the week (see Appendix C).

## **Week Three Training Session: Spiritual Transformation in the New Testament:**

### **Loving God, Loving Others**

**(March 13, 2022)**

As the control group received their to-go lunch, the EGB group completed the pre-lesson survey for the teaching content for this week. Today's lesson focused on "Loving God by Loving Others: Spiritual Transformation in the New Testament" I began the lesson by asking the teachers to define neighbor. They all answered, "Anyone you come in contact with." The point of asking the question was to show the difference between having a neighbor and being a neighbor, according to the parable of the *Good Samaritan*. I asked for a volunteer to read aloud Luke 10: 25-37. As a way to visualize the lesson, I showed a video from the Bible Project titled: *The Good Samaritan*. After the video, I asked the teachers, "When it comes to showing love to others, which best represents you, the Levite, Priest, or the Samaritan?" All the teachers' answered they were the Levites because they equated the Priest as the preacher, and since they were all teachers, they identified themselves as the Levites. I then said, "So you know and teach the lesson, but you don't live it out when you have an opportunity to show love to others?"

- (1) One teacher responded, I try, but most days I don't live what I teach.
- (2) One teacher said it depends on who it is and what is needed.
- (3) One teacher said, when a situation occurs, I don't always reach out and help even if I can.
- (4) The others agreed because they also had opportunities to help others and did not.

I led a discussion on the content of the lawyer asking Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” In other words, he was asking, “What thing must I do?” I said, “Notice the questions Jesus asked the lawyer?” Jesus knew the answer, and so did the lawyer, but his answers revealed he clearly did not understand his answers. What about us as teachers? Do we have the right answers but the wrong understanding? Here Jesus uses the parable to explain the unlimited nature of love. Our neighbor is not just someone within our community. Our neighbor is anyone in need of love and mercy. Instead of asking who deserves our love as a neighbor, this parable teaches us to love beyond the confines of our community or religion and treat everyone as we would like to be treated.

I explained from my research the definition of neighbor, the lawyer defined “neighbor” as someone Jewish, and he knew a Samaritan was a non-Israelite, an outsider, and an alien. The lawyer understood ‘neighbor’ as a noun acting as an object to whom one owes duties-burdensome duties that the lawyer desired to avoid. Jesus defined ‘neighbor’ as a verb, a way of behaving toward people in need that gives life to both giver and receiver. Jesus uncovered in this story that one does not have a neighbor; one is a neighbor, or better, becomes a neighbor. It is not about doing but more about being. We don’t do, and we are to do.

I asked the teachers, “As teachers, are we more like the lawyer than Jesus?” The lawyer, an expert in the Law, had the right information but had no idea what it meant. He did not have a relationship that exemplified loving God and neighbor. The lawyer’s reaction showed that his words had not impacted his heart. Jesus used this parable to lead the lawyer to evaluate his own heart and attitude. Jesus used the questions and answers session as a teachable moment to go beyond behavior modification; his goal was to get to



the root of the lawyer's character of his inner life. Jesus shared the parable to transform his old habitual patterns of feeling and action into automatic responses in real-life situations. The parable demonstrated what loving God by loving others looks like. I concluded this explanation by saying, "When we love God with all of our being, heart, soul, and mind, we will then be transforming into the image of God and will be like what God intended for us to be like."

I asked, "What do you do when you see someone that needs help that is different from you? Are you willing to help, or do you pass by on the other side? One teacher responded, "What if someone has a Rebel flag tattoo? We know what that means." Another responded and said, "I would not feel comfortable helping that person because they are publicly showing they agree with what the flag stands for? Another participant asked, "If we wear BLM apparel are we displaying the same message? Others responded by saying "no." Another teacher responded, "It doesn't matter what they stand for. We should not offer help based on a person's appearance. It could be they like how the garment looks." After this discussion, I asked each teacher to share a time when they helped someone in need and a time when they passed by on the other side. Each teacher gave an example of both, and afterward, we discussed why we must not move to the other side as followers.

I displayed a quote by Richard Burrige, "Luke portrays Jesus as someone who teaches not just by word but also by action, earthing what he says in what he does."<sup>177</sup> I used the quote to focus the teachers on the lesson Jesus taught the lawyer in the parable,

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<sup>177</sup> Richard Burrige, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 108.

“If you love God, you will love others.” I proceeded by explaining to the teachers as Jesus’ disciples, and we are required to be different because righteousness operates from the inside out, not from the outside in. Obedience and righteousness must exceed lip service, and it requires a heart change that takes place within. I displayed Dallas Willard’s quote, “Spiritual transformation into Christlikeness is the process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it takes on the character of the inner being of Jesus himself. The result is that the “outer” life of the individual increasingly becomes a natural expression of the inner reality of Jesus and his teachings.” And the example of taking on the character of Jesus in the spiritual transformation process is Jesus’ message and example of loving God and neighbor. For Jesus, being a neighbor is more important than having a neighbor. I explained that as followers of Christ, we could not continue to pass by on the other side because loving God is loving others.

I asked teachers to write the difference between having a neighbor and being a neighbor, which Jesus requires of us, and are you willing to become a neighbor?

## **Week Four Training Session: A Metamorphic Change**

**(March 20, 2022)**

While the control group received their to-go lunch, the EGB group completed the pre-lesson survey for this week's lesson content. Today's lesson focused on Paul's teaching of a "Metamorphic Change" based on 2 Corinthians 3:12-18. I began the lesson with an overview of Paul's life being a great witness of assisting in the strengthening and practicing of God's transforming power by quoting 1 Corinthians 11:1, which states, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." The quote led the discussion of asking teachers, "Are you an imitator of Christ?"

I said to the teachers that when hearts change, others will notice. One teacher said she didn't feel that anyone was an imitator of Christ. Another one agreed. One asked, "Why aren't we imitators of Christ?" Another answered that we are, but not all the time. These responses led to unpacking internal change brings external evidence by focusing on 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 as an account of the spiritual transformation of an internal change that reflects the character of Christ that merits external evidence. The Corinthians were the proof of God's transforming power because their proof "was written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but tablets of human hearts (2 Cor. 3:3).

My question to the teachers is, "Are others noticing your change, or is it just a moral change, or is there a change from within that can only come through the power of the Holy Spirit?" One teacher responded, "My change is from the Holy Spirit because

things I used to do, I don't do those things any longer, and places I used to go I don't go anymore?" So, I asked a follow-up question: "Could it be possible that you no longer desire to do those things because you have gotten older and age is now hindering you from doing them, and the places you once frequent are now closed?" I heard responses to my questions such as: "Oh, wow!" "I never thought about it like that." "Ouch!" One teacher responded, "You know, I think that is the case for me. It's not that Christ has made a difference in me; it is because of aging and ailments that hinder me from doing those I once enjoyed doing?"

This discussion caused complete silence for a few seconds. Afterward, these questions and statements caused self-reflections among us all. One teacher responded, "I believe I am just a good and moral person because I don't drink, sleep around, or do drugs. But when I look deep within, I will talk about others, and I will lie, I still curse, when I get angry, I will say whatever comes up." Once she began pointing these things out about herself, others chimed in about themselves. I believe a lightbulb came on at this moment and caused the teachers to examine their inner beings. They realized that they needed the Holy Spirit to do a transforming work within.

After spending time with Father Elias, I realized something was missing in my life. I proceeded with my personal testimony that I, too, though because I was morally good, that I was mature in Christ. It was then that I embarked upon unplugging and making space for the Holy Spirit, that He began to teach me through His Word whose side I was really on, and it was not His. That is when the Holy Spirit began transforming my heart.

Once the lesson shifted to the Old Covenant found in Exodus 34: 29-35, I told the teachers I had good and bad news. I explained that the bad news was based on Paul's explanation of the Old Covenant. Paul referred to the Old Covenant as the "ministry of death." The Old Covenant was a way to mirror one's sin. The bad news was that with this covenant, no one could break themselves from the penalty of sin, which led to a discussion on the shining face of Moses and led us to the focal passage for today's teaching 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

When Moses spent time in God's presence, God's glory shone upon his face to the point that others noticed the glow from God's glory. If we spend uninterrupted quality time with God, we too will be transformed, and others will notice.

I proceeded with the good news for us, and there is hope. According to Paul, that hope is found in Jesus. Paul reminds the Corinthians that the old covenant, written on stone, brought death, yet glory was upon Moses' face; the new covenant will bring much more glory because it is written upon the believer's heart. And with that hope comes boldness. As followers of Christ, we are no longer separated from God. Through Christ, we are reconciled back to God because, through Christ, the veil (which represented sin) is taken away.

Because this new covenant was made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ, we can be transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:17-18). Moses' glory faded, but our glory, which comes from within, will reflect believers being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

### **Journaling Discussion (March 26, 2022)**

In addition to the four-week spiritual transformation training, the experimental B group received another level of understanding of spiritual transformation. They engaged in the practice level through spending time journaling daily based on the content learned from the four training sessions. The journaling exercises were designed intentionally to create a habit of spending time daily with God, to make space for him in their lives, and to bring them to the awareness that this new understanding of spiritual transformation will lead to a life of forming into the character of Christ. By engaging in the practice stage, the experimental B group could dig deeper into the material and experience a greater awareness of the spiritual transformation process.

The initial intention was for the experimental B group to remain after each training session to discuss the previous week's journaling. The group consented to not meet after each session on Sundays and agreed to meet on an additional day to discuss their journaling experience without being rushed.

So, on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, the experimental B group met and discussed their journaling experience. Each teacher discussed what they experienced from their daily journaling. The following are sentiments given by each teacher from their journaling experience.

The information learned from the training and journals has given me a newfound perspective on the importance of participating in this lifelong process. One teacher said that the experience had challenged them to set aside time daily to spend with God. The teacher is now intentional in making space for Him daily; daily practice is needed. The

teacher also concluded that they have never been challenged this way and are grateful for being chosen to participate in the project.

Another teacher humbly shared how embarrassed she was going through the journaling process. The process made the teacher realize how immature they are in Christ. Because the teacher has been teaching Sunday school for many years, the teacher thought they were more mature in Christ. The training and journaling revealed to the teacher that they are still in the “egg” stage of the process. The teacher is now committed to allowing the Spirit to do inner work to become more like Christ.

Another teacher was honest about the journaling experience. The teacher shared that they were too embarrassed to continue after the first week. The teacher skipped several days, but the Holy Spirit brought conviction, and the teacher had to complete the assignments. Once the teacher continued journaling, the teacher realized why they were still in the “egg” stage of the process. The teacher conformed to the world’s view more than God’s. The teacher shared that what is more important is others’ perception versus being an image-bearer of God. The teacher is now committed to renewing the mind daily for the Holy Spirit to transform them to conform more to him and less to the world.

The last teacher shared an incident with one of the neighbors after the training on Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan. The teacher explained their initial attitude was not to help the neighbor, but because of the lesson on the good Samaritan, their attitude changed, and the teacher used what was learned from the training and journaling to help the neighbor who had ill intentions toward the teacher. The teacher also shared the incident in front of their son, and the teacher had to explain to the son the importance of being a neighbor.

The journaling exercises were open-ended questions, and the teachers' responses to the questions were used for the project's qualitative data. This data was then measured deviations of change between the pre-and post-surveys taken after each training session's completion and explained why this group's measurements increased compared to the other two groups.



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