

Growing God's Way Death Therapy

(Clip ... "What about Bob?")

"Truly one of the most ground-breaking movies ever made..."

Two exciting concepts are introduced: '*Baby Steps & Death Therapy*'
Does it work? Just ask Dr. Marvin... "Every time."

In today's Scripture Paul gives two steps for spiritual growth:
Worship and Transformation.

Paul writes,

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of **worship**. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Healthy spiritual growth is not a product of passivity.
It is the result of diligent and disciplined involvement in the things of God.

We note the two major topics covered here:

Worship and Transformation.

Serving Self or serving God.

Being conformed to this world, or being transformed into God's character.

Spurgeon wrote of the work of God in every believer:

Remember that there are two kinds of perfection that the Christian needs—the perfection of justification in the person of Jesus, and the perfection of sanctification accomplished in him by the Holy Spirit. At present, corruption still remains even in the hearts of the regenerate—experience soon teaches us this. Within us there still are lusts and evil imaginations. But I rejoice to know that the day is coming when God shall finish the work that He has begun; and He will present my soul not only perfect in Christ, but perfect through the Spirit, without spot or blemish or any such thing.

Step #1: Realizing what Christ has done for us.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by [in view of] the mercies of God

Phillips: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God...”

Perspective:

1. We begin in sin. Every person born as a descendant of Adam is a sinner.

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” (Eph. 2:1-3)

“...both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.’”
(Rom. 3:9-12)

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Rom. 3:23).

Not only is sin universal but all of it’s consequences – bondage to sin, Satan, further disobedience and corruption, and death.

By nature, all people will do evil, because it is natural; all people are ... by nature children of wrath...

I was intending to recharge a dead battery. After a few days on the charger I had hoped to resuscitate it but realized that it was not mostly dead, but totally dead.

So nothing we could do would bring us back to life, being dead in our sins.

2. God’s answer: Christ was sent to die so that we could live.

God made Him who knew no sin to become sin [a sin offering] for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God [imputed: declared righteous] in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

Jesus’ death on the cross was the offering that paid for our sins.

When He willingly offered His body it saved us out of sin and darkness, and restored us into relationship with God.

He made us alive and gave us righteousness.

This is where Paul makes his appeal:

He urges us to offer our bodies to God.

Because of God's mercies extended to us, now offer true worship to Him.

Step Two: Worship - Offering our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Our response to God's amazing goodness and mercy: a worship offering.

...to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,

What does it mean to offer our bodies to God?

It is described as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

Worship – latreuo – refers to service of any kind

Throughout the Old Testament there are countless offerings that are made. Each one is prescribed for a particular situation and specific holiday or celebration.

This would be called latreuo.

Another word for worship is *proskanao*, which speaks of being prostrate or bowing down – on your face in the presence of God.

Giving our bodies to God is the spiritual service of worship that pleases God.

Not a dead offering but a living offering.

When someone becomes a believer he is joined spiritually with Jesus: In Christ. Our union with Christ is simply referred to as being "in Christ".

Paul connects our being dead in sin with our being joined with Christ:

“...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show us the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

(Eph. 2:5-7).

We were dead in sin.

Christ died for our sins.

We were joined to Christ in His death and resurrection
 We were made alive with Christ when He rose from the dead.
 Paul writes,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”
 (Gal. 2:20).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote,

“...our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...” (Rom. 6:6-8).

Our conversion connection - *in Christ* - has freed us from sin.

A great exchange has taken place: our sins for His righteousness.
 Is it too much for God to ask that we offer our bodies as worship?

In Romans 12:1 we are urged to willingly offer our bodies as living sacrifices based on God’s mercy which He displayed in Christ’s offering of His body on the cross.

This begins by voluntarily dying to self, and then being disciplined,
 so as to repeat the process on a daily basis.

Paul wrote, “...I die daily.” (1 Cor. 15:31).

Notice that acceptable worship to God begins with us offering ourselves wholly and continually to the Lord as living sacrifices.

The second aspect of this verse emphasizes

living as Christians in a non-Christian world by renewing our minds.

Step Three: Transformation

And do not be conformed to this world,
 but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**,
 so that you may prove what the will of God is,
 that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

(Rom. 12:2)

Kenneth Wuest paraphrased this clause,

“Stop assuming an outward expression which is patterned after this world, an expression which does not come from, nor is representative of what you are in your inner being as a regenerated child of God”¹

Do not be Conformed –suschematizo

- an outward expression that does not reflect what is within.
 - Masquerading, or putting on an act
 - following a pattern or scheme (root - schema).
- The idea of being transitory, impermanent, and unstable.*

--The negative (***me***) makes the verb prohibitive.

‘Don’t let it happen to you!’

Being conformed will passively happen to you if you allow it.

[Any dead fish can float downstream...]

Be Transformed – passive imperative – metamorphoo

- changed in the outward appearance.
- We are commanded to allow ourselves to be changed outwardly into conformity with our redeemed inner natures.

{How?}

By the renewing of your mind... - let God remold your minds from within...

The outward transformation is effected by an inner change in the mind and the Spirit’s means of transforming our minds is the Word.

- our new nature and our old humanness are intermixed.

The mind is where we make choices to express our new nature in holiness or allow our fleshly humanness to act in unholiness.

This pattern continues throughout our lives conforming us to Christ’s image.

“...for when you received the word of God which you heard from us you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs it work in you who believe.”

(1 Thess. 2:13)

¹ Kenneth Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 1:206-7.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

(Col. 3:16)

The Word should be so rich in us that we sing continually from its truth within.

“In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the **old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be **renewed** in the spirit of your mind, and put on the **new self**, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Eph. 4:22-24)

The nature you live in is determined proportionately
by how much of the word of God we put in us.

What if you say,

“I don’t like to read my bible; I’m not really that interested in spiritual things.”

The real problem is willfulness.

Will you submit your will to God and **die daily** to yourself?

The Holy Spirit will provide you with grace to do what He wants.

Grace is the power and desire to do the will of
God.

Paul wrote to the Philippians,

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed,
not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out
your salvation with fear and trembling;

for it is God who is at work in you,
both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13).

The ultimate cure to this world is death. Yesterday, I attended the memorial service of John Sullivan, who was an extremely gifted man, who dedicated himself to benefiting others with all that God had given him. He especially loved pastors, those who gave themselves to bringing the word of God to people. God had blessed him incredibly as a result. Are there any who would pick up the slack left by John to care for God’s people? Who could He trust with great riches and gifts?

To Quote Dr. Leo Marvin, "Death Therapy, Bob ...It works every time!"