

**WHO ARE YOU BECOMING?**

Someone remembers "ten things my mother taught me," which may echo your upbringing: My mother taught me RELIGION: when I spilled grape juice on the carpet "you better pray that stain will come out." She taught me FORESIGHT: "make sure you wear clean underwear in case you're in an accident." She taught IRONY: "keep laughing and I'll give you something to cry about." STAMINA: "you'll sit there until all that spinach is finished." WEATHER: "it looks like a tornado swept through your room."

She taught the CIRCLE OF LIFE: "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out." BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION: "stop acting like your father." ENVY: "there are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have a wonderful mother like you do." COMMON SENSE: "keep your mouth shut and your legs crossed" and "don't ever do anything you don't want me to do." She taught LOGIC with her decisive words: "because I said so, that's why." Did any of those life lessons stick with you?

**1- CAN YOU CHANGE?** - The mother of our two sons says, "you don't have to want to, you just have to." A comedian noted, "after I had kids, I finally understood God, and what it's like to bring someone into the world in your own image only to have them defy and disobey you." Another said, "the older I get, the fairy tale comes true: mirror, mirror on the wall, I am my mother after all." God has a great sense of humor. And in His divine providence, His plan for parents, who represent Him, is to help you become like Him.

John 1:12 says that to all who received Jesus, who believed in His name, who were born again from above by the Holy Spirit, God made them children of God. Becoming a believer begins a lifelong process of growing in Christ. Theologians call this "progressive sanctification" as disciples follow Christ to become like Him, as they trust and obey, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Not doing good works to get saved, but because you've been saved, are being saved, and will be saved, all by grace through faith in Christ.

The way out of a meaningless treadmill life is putting all your trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Submitting to Him instead of trying to run your own life. God gives what's missing. He gives spiritual life in Christ, and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to empower your life for Him. Many people miss this part of the gospel. It's not just forgiveness of sins and heaven, but a transformed life beginning now. Are you more like Christ today than last year? Last month? How does it happen? We've spent several weeks looking at how to understand the Bible to transform your life. Let's put it to work. David Powlison has a great resource entitled "*How Does Sanctification Work?*" He lists five principles of being a disciple:

**2- GOD HIMSELF CHANGES YOU!** - God is more faithful than anyone, even a model mother. Isaiah 46 says, "*Listen to Me, O house of Israel, who have been borne by Me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you; I have made and I will bear; I will carry and I will save.*" God is no mere idol, He is creator, sustainer, savior. Only He is able, and only He promises, to carry His people from womb to tomb. Put all your trust in Him!

God says, "*To whom will you liken Me and compare Me? For I am God and there is no other, declaring, I will accomplish all My purpose. Listen to Me, you stubborn of heart, who are far from righteousness; I bring near My righteousness, My salvation will not delay.*" Jesus Christ is His salvation, the Son of God come in the flesh. And commitment to Him is no mere fire insurance to save you from hell. New eternal spiritual life begins the moment you trust in Christ. Once you are born again, you must grow up into Him.

Ephesians 4:22 says, "*put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*" That's the purpose of the Christian life, to be united to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, re-created by the Holy Spirit, and renewed, no longer slaves to sin but alive to God, to live out His righteousness by the Holy Spirit within.

**3- YOU CHANGE THROUGH GOD'S WORD!** - James 1:22 says, "*be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*" God says, walk the talk.

Obey the Bible, don't just listen to it. The Bible is not just knowledge for knowledge's sake, truth for truth's sake. It's not how much you know, it's how much you grow. So get growing! Doers, not hearers only. Galatians 5:25 "*because you live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*" That's being a disciple: "The Spirit of God works the Word of God so the people of God become like the Son of God."

That's the process and power of transformation, by God's truth and grace. 2 Thessalonians 1 says, "*to this end we always pray for you, that God may make you worthy of His calling, and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Godspeed as you go with God, as you trust and obey! □