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HOW ARE WE TRANSFORMED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

(Part 2---James 1:19-25)

James 1:19-25 ---- So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But 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 observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Robert Kupferschmid was an 81-year old with no flying experience. However, due to a tragic emergency, he was forced to fly an airplane. On June 17, 1998, he and his 52-year-old pilot friend, Wesley Sickle, were flying from Indianapolis to Muncie, Indiana. During the flight, the pilot slumped over and died at the controls. The Cessna 172 single-engine plane began to nose-dive and Kupferschmid grabbed the controls. He got on the radio and pleaded for help.

Nearby were two pilots who heard the call. Mount Comfort was the closest airport, and the two pilots gave Kupferschmid a steady stream of instructions of climbing, steering—and the scariest part—landing. The two experienced pilots circled the runway three times before this somewhat frantic and totally inexperienced pilot was ready to attempt the landing.

Emergency vehicles were called out and ready for what seemed like an approaching disaster. Witnesses said the plane's nose nudged the center line and bounced a few times before the tail hit the ground. The Cessna ended up in a patch of soggy grass next to the runway. Amazingly, Kupferschmid was not injured.

This story is a great illustration of what we have been preaching about concerning the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and spiritual victory. If it hadn't have been for the outside help that 81 year old Robert Kupferschmid had received, he would have probably crashed and burned.

We cannot think or behave like God wants us to apart from the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

Last Sunday, we asked, "**How** does the Spirit of God do this?" Answer? "Through the *mirror* of God's Word." We learned that when we **gaze** into the Word of God---when we make time for the Word of God to sink in and transform us---the Holy Spirit works through the Word and we see the glory of Jesus Christ. **And when we see the beauty and glory of Christ**, we are transformed into that likeness. (Slide of opposite---G.I.G.O.)

Now today, I will keep it very simple. I am going to share something that is very profound actually, and yet, it is not something that is difficult to understand. And it is definitely a truth that is critical to becoming the kind of people God wants us to be.

Title: How We Are Transformed by the Spirit of God (Part 2)

(Pray)

When I was in the sixth grade (or right around that time), I got hit with a fastball directly in my eye. As a result, I was condemned to live under a law that I didn't like one bit, which I will call "the law of astigmatism." At that time my eyes began to go bad, and today, without my contacts or glasses, everything past 6 inches is extremely blurry.

I am not free from the "law of stigmatism." I am in bondage to this law. Do I like it? No, I hate it. But it doesn't matter. That's the way it is for me.

But one day I discovered something awesome. I discovered there was a law greater than the law of astigmatism that can overcome it. It is called "the law of corrective lenses", or "the law of contacts." I discovered that when I submitted myself to the law of corrective lenses, the law of astigmatism was overcome. Did it go away? No, it is still there. But it was overpowered by a greater law, which enabled me to see.

Now here is the ironic thing. When I was in the sixth grade, contacts were pretty expensive so my mom and dad got me glasses---cheap glasses---big, thick, black glasses. I tried to convince myself that I didn't need them, so I would take them off when I got to school. But that didn't bring me the freedom I needed. It was only when I submitted to the law of glasses or contacts that I was free from the law of astigmatism.

That story will help you remember what I said last week when I spoke on 2 Cor 3:18. Just as it is impossible for someone with a bad astigmatism to see and to enjoy life without glasses or contacts... **Living a victorious Christian life is impossible apart from the Word of God.**

Or, you could put it this way, "No Word, No Victory. Know Word, Know Victory."

I think it was Wiersbe who said: "In the **Word** of God we see the **Son** of God and are transformed by the **Spirit** of God for the **glory** of God."

In the passage we read from James, we get the same message from a little bit different angle.

In verse 23, James says:

...if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer,

If anyone is learning the Word and yet not obeying it...if anyone is coming to church every Sunday and yet going home the same unspiritual person...

he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

The phrase "natural face" literally means "the face of his birth"---the face he was born with. Disobedient Christians---believers who are no different than the

society around them---are like a person who looks in a mirror and makes a big mistake:

he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Before I became a Christian, if I looked at myself in the mirror and was honest, I would have to say things like this about what I saw:

“You’re a cheat...liar...drug head...addicted to alcohol...a thief...” I could go down a long list of evils. I could not view myself as a child of God or as someone who is more than a conquerer through Christ.

But something unbelievable happened to me on the very day I got saved. On the day I was born-again---on the day I believed in Christ and in Him alone for the gift of eternal life---I got a new face. Not a face lift. A completely new face. Of course, I am speaking in a spiritual sense.

When I read the Bible before I was saved, it would give me a true reflection of who I really was---a thief---a party animal---a liar---a conniver...

But from the moment I got saved, from that moment on, when I look into the Bible, I now see a new reflection---my new “birth-face.” And what does the new reflection look like?

“Bob, you ...you are **more than a conqueror**...you were once darkness but now you are **light** in the Lord...you were once spiritually dead but now you are **alive** in Christ... you are **free** from the law of sin and death...”

I now see an entirely new reflection. On one hand, the Bible shows us the moral and spiritual glory of Jesus. But on the other hand, it shows us the face of our spiritual birth---who we are in Christ.

So what is Christian victory? What is the essence of the true Christian life? **It is the increasing expression in word and deed of what we have become by the miracle of the new birth.**

Believers who live in spiritual defeat see themselves this way: “I can’t do anything right.” Or: “My grandpa had a bad temper, and my dad had a bad temper, and so do I---and I will always be that way.”

That kind of thinking will send you to defeat every time. So what does James tell us to do? He tells us not to forget what we see in the mirror. When we look into the mirror of God’s Word, we see the face of our birth---we see our true identity in Christ.

Example. If one morning I read that I am the light of the world, **and I take that with me throughout the day**, I will live like I am the light of the world.

But if I get up and keep telling myself, “You’re a loser...you’re a sinner...you’ll never overcome this---this is just you...” ---**if you allow that kind of thinking, you will never break free and win the race for God.**

James calls the Word of God *the law of liberty*--it will set you free if you will do what it is saying here. Jesus said, “**If** [conditional!!!] you **[#1]** continue in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And **[#2]** you shall know the truth, and **[#3]** the truth shall make you free...and if the Son sets you free---**[#4]** you are free indeed!”

Do you remember the movie, *Castaway*, where Tom Hanks played a Fed-Ex worker whose plane went down, stranding him on a desert island for years? He had to scrounge around for **everything** in order to stay alive.

Well, during Superbowl XXXVII, FedEx ran a commercial that spoofed that movie.

Play clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alSQpinagp0>

Close: Like the contents in this package, the resources for victory are available for every Christian who will take advantage of them.

(Unused spiritual resources: The Word of God and prayer)

Application

The place of the Word of God in your life (regardless of how long you have been saved or spiritually mature you are)?????