



The Holy Spirit

Transformation Dynamic #2 (Part 3 of 6)

This series is looking at the **five dynamics**, which move the believer in that direction. The first was the **word of God**, which alters the way we think, now that we are in Christ and fully accepted by God. The second dynamic, now, is the **Holy Spirit**, God's actual presence in those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.

The key passage from our last discussion, 2 Corinthians 3:18, also speaks to the subject here, "transformed . . . from . . . the Spirit" (NASB95). Simply put, God the Spirit must work in us the alterations we see in the mirror, as we look at the glory (person) of the Lord Jesus. **No amount of human effort can accomplish this. It must be received by faith** from the presence of God within us, the Holy Spirit. Faith is an essential part of the triangular dynamic that includes the word of God and the Spirit, and will be discussed in the next issue of

the Minutes. But as Jesus is the source of life¹, so is the Third Person of the Trinity. "It is the **Spirit who gives life**; the flesh profits nothing."²

The Spirit and the word of God are co-workers and are mentioned together many times. The most colorful reference is to the word of God as the "sword" of the Spirit,³ a metaphor refined in Hebrews 4:12, "sharper than." John, in the Olivet Discourse (John 14-17), refers to the Spirit of truth, who will come to be with us and aid us in keeping Jesus' commandments.⁴ He will also "teach you all things" and "testify about Me."⁵ Again, this collaboration of Spirit and word of God is to no avail without faith.⁶

The Spirit's presence and work in us to implement the word we hear in looking at Christ and His glory, is the contact point of actual, experiential relationship with God. His Spirit has become "one spirit"⁷

with ours and it is at this level that we have fellowship⁸ and **common existence with our Creator**. The Spirit of life gives freedom,⁹ life and peace to us as our minds are renewed and focused on God's word and His concerns.¹⁰ The power of the Spirit is necessary for all of this, since our worldly humanity struggles against the eternal relationship we now have with the Father.¹¹

The Spirit's goal in all this is to transform who we are, not just what we do. We can do things that look good but are not, because our motives are wrong or because we generate the action or behavior ourselves. The struggle described in Galatians 5:16-24 pits the flesh and its "deeds," or activities, against the "fruit" of the Spirit. This fruit is His great task under the new covenant, the ministry of righteousness,¹² and is the emphasis of the New Testament. God is after our



"they will be called oaks of righteousness" Isa. 61:3

transformed lives, our character, the fruit of the Spirit, not certain behavior or actions, however good and right. **Righteous behavior follows, it does not precede, righteousness itself.**

May we give way to the Holy Spirit as He uses the word of God to transform who we are into who Jesus Christ is, the righteousness of God.¹³

SFC

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In This Issue

The Holy Spirit	1
Rediscovering Church	1
Christian Leadership	2
Evangelism	2
Marriage and family	3
Prayer	3
Holiness and Grace	4

Rediscovering Church

The current series of lead articles have mainly to do with the dynamics of individual, personal growth. The kind of deep character growth we long for, however, must occur in an environment of mutual love and sharing. Love is to be the "goal of our instruction" (1 Tim 1:5). It is the "new commandment" (John 13:33-34; 15:12, 17; 1 John 2:8; 3:11, 23; 2 John 6), the *only* commandment of our Lord. Everything else is summed up in love (Rom 13:10; Gal 5:14), yet nothing eludes us so desperately.

God calls this necessary environ-

ment the church, the body of Christ, where we are "individually members one of another" (Rom 12:5).

Dr. David Ferguson, Executive Director of Intimate Life Ministries in Austin, Texas and author of *The Never Alone Church* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), discusses this symbiotic mutual membership, after sharing in the pain of a close friend:

"His church includes those who have been connected to the Head, Jesus Christ, by His Spirit. And **those who are connected to Christ are also through Him connected to one another**. It is this mystery of our union with Christ *and* with all believers in Christ that overwhelmed me at the conference that day. Because I am connected to Christ by His Spirit, I sensed His heart being broken over the rejection, abandonment, and aloneness experienced by Jonathan, another member of His body. Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 12:26 took on fresh meaning to me: 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.'

"Could it be that the heart of Christ, saddened over the suffering of His beloved Jonathan, was

being experienced in my heart that day through the Spirit's grief? I was convinced of it. Soon I began wondering about the **far-reaching implications** of this truth. How would such an understanding impact my marriage, my parenting, my ministry? Could my heart become more sensitive to Christ's heart for my wife, my children, and His church just as it had for Jonathan?

"Could it be that the oneness which declared to the world that we are His disciples does not come through complete conformity of belief but through loving connection of both your heart and my heart to His (see John 17:21)? Could this be one

(Continued on page 4)

¹ 1 John 5:11 (NASB95, as all below). ² John 6:63. ³ Ephesians 6:17. ⁴ John 14:15-21 (context). ⁵ John 14:26; 15:26, respectively. ⁶ Hebrews 4:1-3. ⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:17. ⁸ 2 Corinthians 12:13. ⁹ Rom 8:2. ¹⁰ Rom 12:2; 8:4-6. ¹¹ Galatians 5:16-18. ¹² 2 Cor 3:9. ¹³ 2 Cor 5:21.

Christian Leadership

This column in the last issue discussed humility in a real leader. How does humility play out when it comes to the action or function of leading? How does a humble leader lead?

In Hebrews 13:7, we find the following admonition to the Christians the writer is addressing, “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you.” While this is not addressed to leaders it describes the early leaders of God’s people. The writer is attempting to recall the example of those more mature men who served the early church as leaders. We find the principle, then, that their example is important. Leaders should be the kind of men that can be called to mind to give guidance based on their way of life. This is further elaborated on later in the same verse. It should be noted that priority is given to the kind of men they were as their “way of life” and “their faith” are both referenced in these later portions. Also, to further identify and describe them, the writer notes, appositionally, that they were the ones “who spoke the word of

God to you.” The effect of this construction is to effectively equate their “speaking” to the kind of men they were. This was their character.

This also describes their function as leaders. It tells how they led. They led by the word of God. They did not lead by their own word but as humble men, they led by speaking the word of God to the flock they were commissioned by God to care for and serve. This function of leaders is also attested to in Acts 6 about the apostles in the early days of the church in Jerusalem. The apostles were faced with a crisis that could have distracted them. In solving this crisis they reemphasized their priorities in verse 4, “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” They were men that knew the importance of serving by speaking the word of God to the flock, the Lord’s people.

Sheep follow the voice of their shepherd (John 10:4-5). A humble and sincere leader recognizes that God’s people are just

that. They are not our own people. They must follow the voice of their true Shepherd, not the secondary shepherds who have simply been put in charge of them temporarily. The Lord’s flock follows and responds more easily to the voice of God. The wise leader will recognize this and be more effective with the word of God as his primary leadership tool, to instruct and motivate and lead others to quiet pasture and drink. He realizes that God’s word is what changes men and women into the likeness of Christ (see the lead article in the last issue of the Metamorph Minutes).

These things hold true no matter at what level you lead. As we discussed in the last article on leadership, “taking initiative where you are” defines the leader in many diverse situations. Lead with the word of God, whether at home, work, school, in the church or with friends.
SFC

Misty Retreat by Mark Keathley

“Mark is driven by his faith and a passion for life.”
www.markkeathley.com



“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit.”
John 7:38-39a

- Third, you can invest your treasure. We often think of investing money for evangelism only in terms of supporting foreign missions or organizations like Search Ministries that are involved in evangelism. While it’s important to support these kinds of ministries, we can also use our money for activities with our unbelieving friends so we might have an opportunity to share the claims of Christ with them.

Evangelism

Evangelism, as an act of obedience, is not a dead act that is an end in itself. Obedience is necessary to make progress in the Christian life. Our own **personal progress depends on it**. Paul did everything possible to win people to Christ but his purpose was to become more like Christ himself through the same gospel he preached, “so that I may become a fellow-partaker of it” (1 Cor 9:23 NASB).

The following section (part 3 of 3) is from “Common Ground,” a monthly bulletin insert published by Search Ministries, www.searchmin.org:

We Need to Invest in our Network. To invest simply means that we commit our present resources for a future benefit. The future benefit that God wants us to passionately desire is that our non-Christian friends would come to know Jesus Christ in a life-changing way. Here are a few ways we can invest in the lives of unbelievers.

- First, you can **invest** your time. Relationships must have time to grow and develop. Time may be our most difficult resource to invest, but remember it’s worth the investment because we are trusting God for an eternal return.
- Second, you can **invest** your talents. Identify what you love to do and do it with unbelievers with the desire that God use you to model the love of Christ. When you do what you like and invest it in the lives of unbelievers, you are making a wise investment.

August 2001. Used by permission.

Marriage and Family

The Ministry of Marriage

Marriage is one of God's greatest tools for ministry.

Because marriage is under siege, it's natural for us to forget **that strong families grow from strong marriages** and to make building strong families the end-all goal. That's like building a beautiful home on a bed of quicksand. Marriage is the foundation of family life, and marriage is one of God's greatest tools for ministry. Let me say that again . . . marriage is one of God's greatest tools for ministry. Our goal isn't to build stronger marriages. **It's to build stronger marriages for a purpose – ministry.**

One of my favorite couples in all of Scripture is found in Acts 18. This chapter is filled with the extraordinary actions of an ordinary couple. Let me just highlight two. They gave up a room for 18 months, and they invited a roaming preacher to dinner. Doesn't sound too difficult, does it?

Somewhere in the streets of Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila stumbled across a man down on his luck. Paul, destitute, homeless, and fresh off a demoralizing trip in Athens, needed a place to stay. They cleared out a room. Not for one night, not for one week, but until Paul was called to move on.

Then an up-and-coming young evangelist breezed into town. After his eloquent sermon, Priscilla and Aquila invited him

over for dinner. Acts 18:24-25 states Apollos was gifted and passionate. Though he was accurate in his teaching, he was incomplete in his theology. This couple corrected him of his doctrine without quelling his desire.

Two tent makers. A blue-collar family with an extra room and a devotion to applying Scripture correctly. They hadn't been to seminary. They weren't vocational pastors. They simply opened up a room for Paul and a seat at the table for Apollos. Through their hospitality and instruction, they impacted two of the greatest early church leaders. What about us? Who could we impact that may in turn impact the world?

Do you want to have a happy and fulfilled marriage? **Spend as much time reaching out as reaching in.** Now don't get me wrong . . . serving others is not a quick fix to every marital difficulty. Solid marriages depend on honesty, communication, and sacrifice. Time spent reaching in is essential, and you should strive to meet your spouse's needs before meeting the needs of others. You want to develop a strong marriage and build into your marriage a purpose – ministry. Is it risky? Yes.



Is it uncomfortable? At times. Is it rewarding? Absolutely. There's nothing better. So what does it take?

I'm gonna get really gutsy here. Find an individual in need. Just look around. How about a struggling single parent? How about an unwed mother? How about an emotionally hurting friend? Now, they may mess up your life a little. They may get your carpet dirty, but you'll turn their life around. And if you're not careful, it may just **revolutionize your marriage** and strengthen the very foundation of your family.

CRS

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Prayer

The Infinite Fatherliness of God



"Ask, and it will be given to you . . . If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

Matthew 7:7a, 11 NASB95

The power of the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you," ¹ lies in the loving relationship between us as children and the Father in heaven; when we live and walk in that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be the natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the school of prayer is this: **Live as a child of God, then you will be able to pray as a child**, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard.

And what is the true child-life? Scripture says, "As many as are *led* ² by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God:" ³ the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives himself to be led by the Spirit in his life, will be led by Him in his prayers too. And he will find that **Father-like giving is the Divine response to childlike living.** ⁴

AM

Oh God, You are a good Father. Give us the grace and strength to live like good children. Amen

The Spirit and the Mind

Romans 8:3-6 NASB

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.

¹ Matthew 7:7 KJV. ² Author's emphasis. ³ Romans 8:14 KJV. ⁴ Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1953), p. 37.

Reader's Forum

This column is reserved for you, the reader, and the content you contribute. Submit anything you think will benefit others (email, articles, graphics, poetry).

I am an amateur astronomer and owned a small Newtonian telescope at one time. If I pointed it at a galaxy, I could make out a small smudge in the eyepiece. This was quite exciting to me, mainly because I knew what the "smudge" was! However, utilizing more sophisticated equipment and photographic techniques reveal beautiful stunning detail in the same "smudge". This corresponds to how many of us see God. He is a "smudge" that we can identify. However, we are called for much more. We are called to His holiness and grace, in sanctification, and to see Him in magnificent detail. Holiness is our goal and grace is our path.

Holiness, which means closeness or nearness to God, or being pleasing to God, is what

all true believers deeply want. At the center of holiness is the idea of separation. That is, first that God is separate from man and also that Christians are separated to God. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him." (Eph 1:4 NASB)

Grace is the path to God.

The key is to know God's grace and understand that He meets us where we are. The second we turn to Him, He is there. He has made us as holy and pure as His Son through the atonement. "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace..." (Heb 4:16) and "we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus..." (Heb 10:19) These ideas absolutely knock my socks off. They are unfathomable.

Yet, it amazes me how little we really go to God. In our fast paced, materialistic, externally oriented world, though, it is not

Holiness and Grace

surprising. Those who break the mold, spending the time and energy necessary to be actively in God's presence, stand in stark contrast. They may even appear a little odd, or abnormal. But those of us who neglect our spiritual lives are truly the abnormal ones in God's mind. Hectic schedules, fast-paced lifestyles, and material orientation are the antithesis to knowing God's presence.

This is not a 5-step plan, but a relationship. It is turning our mind to God. Start doing this. Spend time with Him in the word and prayer. I am not simply encouraging more effort at Bible study or establishing a more consistent devotional time. I am encouraging and **strongly recommending a different way of thinking about God.** Do not think of Him mechanically, as an activity, but as a grace-filled Person. We want to know Him and we desire holiness in our lives. We want to see Him but

only make out a "smudge." To see His beautiful stunning detail, we must see His grace, His attitude toward us. His grace is, then, connected to His holiness. We will not see one without the other. Go to God this way, right now. See what He does and how He leads. The results could be revolutionary. JA

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Notes

We'd like to increase **bulk church circulation**. Extra copies of the Minutes may be obtained for **free** to give to friends, family members and church leaders.

Help needed: printing, mailing, technical/web site assistance, funding coordinator.

"that the life of Jesus also may be manifested" 2 Corinthians 4:10-11

Metamorphosis Ministries

(Continued from page 1) Rediscovering Church

of the significant dynamics of the mystery of the first-century church?

"Acts 2:42 reports that the early believers devoted themselves not only to the apostles' teaching but to fellowship. This devotion to fellowship kept them focused on the essential of trusting faith that leads to partaking of the divine nature, separating true believers from the world's immorality. But how subtly we as believers, parents, and church leaders can be "led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3), **making complex what He has made lovingly simple.**

"May His Spirit enlighten the twenty-first century church to the secrets of connection, oneness, and fellowship."¹

DF

Above taken from Great Commandment Living Conference General Session Presentation by Dr. David Ferguson. For more information about Intimate Life Ministries, visit: www.GreatCommandment.net.



**If they won't listen,
light a fire under them!**

More About Metamorphosis

This ministry letter is a project of Metamorphosis Ministries, formed to promote deep character growth in God's people. Future projects are being planned. If "the kingdom of God" consists in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17 NASB), then there is nothing of the kingdom that is not touched by the experience of producing Christ-likeness in the individual believer. All that we do and say is given substance as we exhibit the "divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4 NASB).

"that the life of Jesus also may be manifested" 2 Corinthians 4:10-11

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Mediflection

To meditate, or reflect on this, read 5 times, slowly, and listen for God to speak to you.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing."

John 6:63 NASB

Let's Pray Together

Father, we thank You for the gift and presence of the Trinity within us, the Holy Spirit, through Whom You and Your Son touch us. Teach us to follow His lead and allow for His work. Thank you for the cross, by which we have access to You in the Spirit. Let your peace overtake and overwhelm us. Amen.