

40 Weeks of Purpose

Week 22

Created to Become Like Christ

POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT FROM LAST WEEK:

It is MY responsibility to protect the Unity of the Ecclesia

Unity is very important, and it's YOUR job to protect it.

The six steps to protecting Unity were:

- 1) **Focus on what you have in common, not on your differences**
- 2) **Be realistic in your expectations**
- 3) **Choose to encourage rather than criticize**
- 4) **Refuse to listen to Gossip**
- 5) **Practice Matthew 18**
- 6) **Support your Arranging Brethren**

VERSE TO MEMORIZE FROM LAST WEEK:

- Romans 14:19 (MESSAGE)

19) *So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words;*

Put your energy to good use, not destructive purposes

QUESTION TO CONSIDER FROM LAST WEEK:

What am I doing to protect the Unity of our Ecclesia?

- You were created to become like Christ
- From the very beginning, God's plan has been to create Humans who would be TRANSFORMED to become like His Son
- This process of Transformation is called DISCIPLESHIP
- Discipleship is God's THIRD Purpose for you
- God created us in His Image and Likeness

- But that image has been damaged and distorted by sin
- So, God sent His son to restore the full image of what we lost
- When we see Jesus, we see a perfect representation of what God is and what God wants us to be
- Colossians 1:15 (MESSAGE)
 - 15) We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created.
- God specifically chose YOU for that purpose
- Romans 8:29 (NLT)
 - 29) For God knew his people in advance, and **He chose them** to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters.
- God wants you to become like Christ, and ultimately like God himself
 - God wants you to become Godly
 - Taking on God's values, attitudes and character
- Ephesians 4:22 (MESSAGE)
 - 22) Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life - a God-fashioned life,
- God's ultimate goal for your life on this earth is not comfort, but character development
- He wants you to GROW UP
 - He wants you to become like Christ
- Becoming like Christ is all about transforming your character
- Whenever you forget that God's Goal is to develop your character, and not make your life pleasant, you may become frustrated by your circumstances
- You may wonder, "Why me? Why am I having such a difficult time?"
- Remember, this isn't the Kingdom! Life is supposed to be difficult!
 - That is how God transforms us and changes us

- Never forget that life is not about you
 - You exist for God's purposes, not vice-versa
- How does God work in our lives to produce Christlike Character
 - The Bible tells us that that is the role of God's Holy Spirit...
- 2nd Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)
 - 18) And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.
- Mention the power of the Holy Spirit, and many people start thinking of speaking in tongues and healing...
- But, in reality it doesn't mean that in our lives
- The Holy Spirit works in your life in a very quiet, unassuming way
 - Most people aren't even aware of it, nor can they even feel it
- We all agree (on an academic level) that God is at work in our lives...
 - No one would disagree with that simple fact
- Philippians 2:12-13 NIV
 - 12) Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,
 - 13) for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act according to his **good purpose**
- It is through His Holy Spirit power that God accomplishes the work of changing our characters and developing us into Christ-like people
- There is a principle that proves itself true over and over throughout the Bible
 - The power of God is released, the MOMENT you take a step of faith
 - Let Go and Let God
- Obedience unlocks God's power
 - God waits for you to act first

- Don't wait to feel powerful or confident – Move forward in your weakness – doing the right thing in spite of your fears and feelings
- Your own personal effort has nothing to do with your salvation, but it has everything to do with your spiritual growth
- Paul describes this process in Ephesians 4:22-24
- First, you have to let go of everything in your life from your old way of thinking...
- Ephesians 4:22 (MESSAGE)

22) Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life,

- Secondly, you have to change the way you think
- Ephesians 4:23 (NLT)

23) Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.

- Third, you have to “put on” the character of Christ by developing new, Godly habits
- Ephesians 4:24 (NIV)

24) and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

- There are Five Ways that God TRANSFORMS us:

1) We are Transformed by The **TRUTH**

- The single greatest influence that God has on our lives is through His word
- Our time spent reading God's word is unlike anything else we do
 - God's Word is unlike anything else

- Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

12) For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- It's the only book that is alive
 - It pierces, cuts, divides and discerns

2) We are Transformed by **TROUBLE**

- Fire burns away all types of junk, but it hardens Steel
 - God wants to stretch us beyond our normal limits
 - God wants us push us outside of our Comfort Zone
 - Not because He is mean and sadistic, but because he has a higher goal for us
- 2nd Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)
 - 17) For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

3) We are Transformed by **TEMPTATION**

- Believe it or not, our Temptations are a major source of our growth and change
 - Temptations are not just invitations to do evil
 - Temptations are also opportunities to do good
 - You could probably argue that this is the method of transforming us that God uses MOST, because I'm sure that more of us are tempted more often than anything else in our lives
 - We should therefore be happy that God is working that often with us to improve our characters and develop us into Godly people
- James 1:12 (AMP)
 - 12) Happy, is the man who is patient under trial *and* stands up under temptation, for when he has stood the test *and* been approved, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him.

4) We are Transformed by The **ECCLESIA**

- God has purposely designed us to stay together in groups
 - He could have established a different pattern if He chose, but He didn't
- God wants us to be members of an Ecclesia, because it is through the Ecclesia that He is able to change us and grow our characters

• 1st Corinthians 12:25-26 (MESSAGE)

- 25) The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't,
26) the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

- We are encouraged, uplifted and motivated by our relationships with our Brothers and Sisters
- We are also stretched, pushed, pulled, beaten, burned and tested...

5) We are Transformed by **TIME**

- A major ingredient in any recipe, formula or process is time...
- The simple matters of waiting, and patience, and continuance and consistency are integral to the process of Discipleship

• Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

- 6) And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.
- It takes a lifetime, but God is prepared to invest that much time in you

POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT THIS WEEK:

I was created to become like Christ

VERSE TO MEMORIZE THIS WEEK:

• 2nd Corinthians 3:18 (LB)

18) *As the spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him*

QUESTION TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK:

How have I seen God working in my life recently?