When We Spend Time with the Lord

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

11-22-2026

Intro: 2 Cor. 4:16 - *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet* ***<u>the inward man is renewed day by day</u>***.

> *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)*

****Amazing changes occur in our lives when we spend time in God's Presence!***

I. When We Spend Time with God, <u>We See Him as He is</u> (v.18a)

II. When We Spend Time with God, We Experience <u>Life Transformation</u> (v.18b)

A. This Transformation is a <u>Continual</u> Process

B. This Transformation is a <u>Passive</u> Process

III. When We Spend Time with God, <u>We Become Like Him</u> (v.18c)

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I. When We Spend Time with God, _____(v.18a)

II. When We Spend Time with God, We Experience _____18b)

A. This Transformation is a _____ Process

B. This Transformation is a _____ Process

III. When We Spend Time with God, _____ (v.18c)

When We Spend Time with the Lord

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Introduction: Resolutions for the new year & improvements over last year occupy the attention of many people as a new year is begun.

Today, many have resolved to become more physically fit (diets, gym, giving up some vise or harmful habit); Nothing is wrong with bodily exercise. It's good when kept in a right perspective. For God said:

1Tim. 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

The profit of exercise does profit. But it only profits "little." It profits little in reference to time and priority. It will aid us while we are on earth, but is not as valuable as Godliness which has a temporal & eternal value.

We are prone to make upgrades to or diet, health, home, car, computer, financial situation but would we be interested in upgrading our spiritual lives?

As you look back over last year, can you say that you (by God's grace and power) ...

- have made strides forward?
- have grown in maturity?
- have impacted others? (among your family, friends, and the lost & dying world)

Nothing was so feared by seamen in the days when ocean vessels were driven by wind and sail as the doldrums. Occurring usually in the part of the ocean near the equator, the doldrums abound in calms, squalls, and light, baffling winds. There, the weather is hot and extremely irritating. The old sailing ships, when caught in the doldrums, would lie helpless for days and weeks, waiting for the wind to blow again.

Have you been caught in spiritual doldrums? Has your Christian life become stagnant? Nothing happening; nothing changing; nothing improving?

Before we put our head on our pillow at night, we need to ask ourselves these questions?

- Am I a better person today than yesterday? (Did I allow God to improve my character? Am I more like Christ?)
- Is the world an improved place because of my life and testimony today?
- Did I make any eternal impact on my friends, neighbors & associates?

Every believer is on one of three tiers:

3. Saved & Growing and Helping Others to become Saved & Growing

2. Saved & Growing

1. Saved

God's will for us is growth; full maturity; perfection or completeness

- *Heb 6:1 - "Let us go on unto perfection (maturity)"*
- *Mt 5:48 - Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*
- *Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*
- *2Th 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*
- *1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*
- *2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

2 Cor. 4:16

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

"For which cause" - For the cause of the Gospel and N.T. Ministry, Paul never lost heart or became discouraged in ministry.

So that others might have grace and end up glorifying God, Paul did not **"faint"** (**"we faint not"** – a phrase repeated in 4:1).

"Our outward man perish" - The physical body experiences gradual destruction (in Paul's case, some of this physical affliction came at the hands of his persecutors (4:8-10); he would be "troubled. . . distressed. . . perplexed. . . and persecuted." (v. 8-9).

Paul's stoning, beatings, and other stresses would take their toll on his body; his outward man would "take a beating."

Despite our efforts to sustain health, the fact remains—due to sin—that our bodies do begin to wear out.

Stresses, illnesses, aches and pains, etc., are part of mortal life. The outward "you" will with time, age, and circumstance perish.

However, the good news is that the inward "you" can be renewed (refreshed and made new again) day by day.

The Word "Renewed" is passive, indicating that the renewal is not self-induced.

> Just as you have no control over you speed and rate of growth physically (you simply eat, sleep, and exercise, and somehow the growth process occurs irrespective of your desire to grow [Mt. 6:27]), so, if you consume God's Word, the Word will cause you to grow.
>
> You cannot independently manufacture your own spiritual growth. God causes you to grow as you receive the needed nutrients of His Word and strength He has to offer.

Peter exhorted Christian women to pay attention to the inner spiritual you.

1 Peter 3:3-4
Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

"The hidden man of the heart" = the inner, unseen person of the heart.

****Every day, our spiritual lives (our inward man) should be getting better & better***

How do we daily renew the inward man?

> *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)*

Renewing the inward man takes place when we...
Spend Time in God's Glorious Presence (2 Cor. 3:18)

****Amazing changes occur in our lives when we spend time in God's Presence!***

I. When We Spend Time with God, We See Him as He is (v.18a)

The prior context described how when Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai in God's presence, He beheld God's glory (Moses said, "Show me Your glory"). When Moses came down from the Mount, his face radiated with God's glory.

Moses having spent time in God's presence on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34:29-30), had a glow about him which required him to wear a veil over his face when in the presence of the people of Israel. They could not see him because of the brilliant glory which eminated from his face. There was a glory they could not see.

In similar fashion, when the people of Israel read the books of Moses (the Torah or Pentateuch), a veil remained on their hearts (which prevented them from seeing the glory of Christ through his writings).

However, when a people's heart turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. They can now see the glory of the Lord Jesus.

"Beholding as in a glass" – We don't see the Lord's glory face to face (as Moses did – Exod. 34:29-35), but we see a reflection of His glory (looking as it were in a mirror – cp. 1 Cor. 13:12). Every time we look into God's Word and see God's glory, we are changed by the glory we see.

2 Cor. 4:6 – For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

When you read your Bible, go looking to find God's glory.

A serious study of God (theology) and His attributes is the best study we can give ourselves to. To study His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnisapience (all wisdom), love, grace, mercy, holiness, righteousness, justice, patience and faithfulness is the greatest study of all.

II. When We Spend Time with God, We Experience Life Transformation (v.18b)

As you see His splendor, His radiant glow, His weighty glory, you will be like what you behold.

"But we all (Jew and Gentile believers), with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"But we all" – This life transformation is available to everyone of God's children (none excluded).

"Are changed" - Transformed

Illustration: Photosynthesis (how flowers and foliage receive sunlight and grow and are transformed by it). Just as exposure to the "SUN" produces life and growth so exposure to the "SON" produces life and growth (spiritually).

A. This transformation is a continual process (not all at once – overnight – but a progressive sanctification)

B. This transformation is a passive process (we don't produce it, but God does, as we simply see His glory in His Word)

"are changed" - Transformed – passive verb; God does the work! We simply put ourselves in a position to succeed. We put in the effort of spending time with God, and the change occurs (by the supernatural working of God).

III. When We Spend Time with God, <u>We Become Like Him</u> (v.18c)

--This transformation is a change into <u>God-likeness</u>.

"Same image" - The image of Christ in His character and conduct.

You become like Him to the degree that you spend time beholding Him.

You become like the one's you spend time with. In like manner, when you spend time with God, you become more like Him in your character and conduct.

You will look like that which you look at. (This is true of watching TV – the more we view the world (with it's philosophies, world-views, lusts and behavioral patterns), the more we will resemble the world.

By contrast, what the Lord is teaching us here is that we spend time viewing the Lord in all His glory, the more we will resemble Him! This is the transformation we all need. As Romans 12:2 teaches "be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds."

--This transformation is a <u>progressive daily improvement</u>.

"From glory to glory" - From one level of glory to another. From a lower level of glory into a higher level of glory.

The image of God in man that was marred by the Fall is renewed as we see His glory.

"even as by the Spirit of the Lord"

--This transformation is <u>accomplished by God's Holy Spirit</u>.

Just as the new birth was the Spirit's sovereign work in our hearts, so is His life transformation.

Col. 3:16 says, however, that you should *"let the word of Christ dwell in you <u>richly</u> in all wisdom"*

How strong is your appetite for God's Word? You answer is "an index of your Christian health" (Hiebert, p. 124).

Do you want to know why you feel "weak" spiritually? Why you have no power over your fleshly impulses? Why you struggle to do what is right? etc. The reason is because you have neglected your "daily bread" (Mt.4:4)!

Conclusion: There exist so many distractions to keep us from attaining Christ-likeness.

Now, more than any time in human history, there are more distractions to capture the attention of God's people so as to divert them and render them unfruitful for God.

Since the industrial revolution and picking up steam every day, today there exist more

- gadgets,
- consumer products (computers, electronic gismos for all ages)
- entertainments, amusements, & sports
- communication devises, such as smart phones, email, texting, instant messaging, facebook and other social media outlets.
- technology toys for all ages, (we have had ipods, ipads, ibooks, iphone, iwatches, virtual reality games etc.)
- recreational opportunities,
- motion pictures (movies, videos, DVD's),
- audio devises (radios, CD players),
- printed materials (newspapers, magazines, & books),
- mind altering substances (drugs & various forms of alcohol),
- various mediums for pornography,
- hobbies galore
- Transportation devises (the time spent on the Car)
- Home improvement resources
- Financial opportunities (more places to earn it, spend it, invest it etc.)

(not all of which are necessarily sinful, but can be weights

Today there is more to catch the eye
more to pull on the heart
more to tease the lust
more to take up our brief time on earth
than ever before in human history

Basically the pursuit of other things, pleasures, & relationships take the heart away from God; Not to mention the maintenance of the "stuff"

We are BUSY, BUSY, BUSY with no time for God!

No wonder John the Baptist chose a simple life (both in clothing & dining)
No wonder Jesus traveled light (without even a pillow to lay his head)
No wonder Paul said it is advantageous to remain single (if one was so gifted)
No wonder the Monks chose the secluded monasteries
No wonder the Amish chose the isolated lifestyle (though they often lack the true knowledge of God, Grace and basically have zero impact on the World at large)

Who got distracted in the Bible?

- Samson with his lust for pleasure & women
- David with his spare time (leading to an adulterous affair)
- Solomon with his multiple marriages
- Judas with his lust for money
- Peter (momentarily) with his return to his former Career (Fishing)
- Demas with his appetite for the world
- Martha with her business with good things

In God's presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).

Spending time with Christ and abiding in Him and in His Word is the surest way to have victory over sin.

Daily improvement is God's will for His children.

At the conclusion of each day, we should ask ourselves:

--Did I become more like my Lord today? (did I place myself in the circumstances where such could take place?)

--Did my character improve today?

--Did I grow in love?

--Did I grow in grace?

--Did I grow in patience?

--Did I grow in service?