

Behold, and Be Transformed



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BY STEVE KING, CHERRYDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

His stinging words pushed me off the cliff of frustration and into the pit of despair. He said, “King, you are the most miserable guy in this house. I hope you find what you have been looking for.” My intoxicated fraternity brother delivered those words to me at 2 a.m. one party weekend.

At the time, I was near the end of my second year of college, sincerely loved Christ and wanted to please Him. My understanding of Christianity was that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead so I could have eternal life. This was true, but what I believed about how this works out in daily life became a trap. I believed coming to Christ was like buying fire insurance and signing up for a self-improvement program. I thought my job was to repeatedly rededicate myself to trying harder and doing all I could to earn God’s approval. In this context, my attempts at sharing Christ with my fraternity brothers were greeted with a polite, “No, thank you,” or, “Forget about it.”

My fraternity brother’s 2 a.m. assessment of my life turned out to be a gift. To this day, his words remind me that Christianity seen only as fire insurance and a self-improvement program leaves one miserable and hopeful for something more.

That summer I discovered truth that set me free. Through my brother, some men in my church and Campus Crusade for Christ, I

learned from Scripture that there are only two ways to live the Christian life. One way leads to renewal, while the other leads to regression. One way results in ongoing transformation, and the other results in repeated frustration. One way Jesus taught and modeled; the other is preferred and promoted by Satan. The *biblical* way is to become a *beholder* of Christ; the *false* way is to be a *performer* for God. Beholders of Christ can count on God’s transformation. Performers can count on nothing more than a spotlight.

Second Corinthians 3:18 (NAS) lays out the path to transformation in just 34 words. “But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

The first half of the passage makes clear the believer’s responsibility: to behold the glory of the Lord, which is Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6, NAS). The second half of the passage proclaims God’s responsibility: to transform the believer into the image of Christ. Reversing these roles ourselves results in God’s resistance and our frustration.

God alone can transform us; but we alone can behold Christ. God will not do that for us.

We begin our Christian life by believing in Jesus Christ and allowing Him to forgive us, make us righteous in the sight of God (through the imputed righteousness of Christ), and to

empower us with new life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the essence of beholding Christ: to know and rely upon Christ—and Christ alone—for salvation and life. It is impossible to live the Christian life in our own strength. The only One who ever lived it perfectly was Jesus Christ, and He did so by complete dependence on the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is how Jesus is our example. We are to live in total dependence on the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is only when we repeatedly depend on Him to live through us that we are transformed.

Over 30 years ago my fraternity brother gave me a gift, which God used to get my attention and change my life. I went from being a frustrated performer for God to a satisfied beholder of Christ. God changed me and over 20 of my fraternity brothers. I am still in touch with several of them, and beholding Christ is what we live for. Behold Him, and He will transform you.



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