



FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS

Foundation 5: Transformation

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The Heart

Our soul is comprised of our mind, will, and emotions. Scripturally, “the heart” is the combination of soul and spirit. As stated in the previous chapter, you can determine if “heart” refers to soul or spirit by the Word of God. One example would be “*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...” (Jn 7:38-39a). This is an example of the Word of God interpreting itself (heart = Spirit, in this case). A counter example would be: “*And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man’*” (Mark 7:20-23). In this case, “the heart” clearly does not represent the spirit of a born-again believer (the Spirit of Jesus, Himself). . . it represents the soul needing transformation. In this case, Jesus is teaching how an un-renewed soul will produce all sorts of sin, just like a poorly tended-to garden will produce all sorts of weeds.

Our heart determines what will be produced in our lives. The heart of man is like the film in a camera. When

you release the shutter of a camera, what is in front of that camera gets exposed onto the film within that camera. Subsequently, that image, which is now on the film, gets developed into a physical picture. Likewise, what is in the heart of person is what gets produced in that person's life.

*"My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
For they are life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.
Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life."
(Prov. 4:20-23)*

Responsibility for Keeping your Heart

Notice the profound language of this section of Proverbs: "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of *zoe* (eternal life)." The heart is where life happens! It's the spring head of either blessing or cursing in your life. Take note also of some of the other very specific language in Proverbs 4: it mentions words, ears, and eyes, which are the three gateways of our heart. If you want to tend to your heart carefully, take heed of what you hear, take heed of what you see, and take heed of the words that come out of your mouth!

Everything that is in your life develops as a result of the

image you have of yourself on the inside and the words that come out of your mouth. Our life is the sum total of choices we have made. While we live in what is generally a “take-no-responsibility” culture, the truth is that every aspect of our lives is a result of choices we have made. While some are turned off by that level of responsibility for their actions, that weighty responsibility is actually quite liberating. Realizing that our choices have consequences for which we are responsible actually brings a freedom along with it. The freedom comes from knowing that we can make different choices to get more favorable results! How wonderful! How we think (deep down) determines our actions and our actions set the course of our lives. Our heart produces the fruit of our lives. “Guard you heart with all diligence!”

Transformation

Not only can you guard your heart, but you can literally renew your heart so that it produces wonderfully improved fruit in and through your life! Romans 12:2 says it perfectly: *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* A transformation is: “a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance” (Oxford University, 2005). While we had a complete spirit-exchange when we received Jesus, our friends and family may or may not have been able to see that change in practical terms as of yet. But God wants the change in us to be clearly visible, like a city set on a hill or a lamp set on

a stand! Christ in us should be glorious! That is exactly why Romans 12:2 says “be transformed” right after it says “don’t be conformed to this world!” Too often, believers, because of a lack of understanding about who they are in Christ, are more or less “conformed to this world.” They look like the world, they think like the world, they act like the world. But we are supposed to be salt and light! Salt is noticeable when it is added to a dish! Light is obvious when it is shown in a dark room! Our friend Mark Crawford says “we’re called to be thermostats, not thermometers!” Don’t just take the temperature; set the temperature!

Romans 8:19 says *“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”* The whole earth is waiting for believers to realize who they are and act like believers! But as Mark Crawford also says, “we are human beings before we are human doings.” We will always act like we think, so we must change how we think in order to change how we act. We already have the Spirit of Christ on the inside of us, but we can restrict His movement through us by our thinking. We need to be transformed!

But how can we be transformed? Look back to Romans 12:2! It shows us that we are transformed by the *“renewing of our minds.”* Remember, a transformation is a “noticeable change.” A caterpillar changing into a butterfly is a great visual of a transformation. As we decide to not be conformed to old ways of thinking, but instead to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, the change that occurs in our life will be noticeable to others! Romans 12:2 says that a

renewed mind will produce a transformed believer and that a transformed believer's life will *"prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* When you are transformed by renewing your mind according to God's Word, your life and the fruit of your life begin to look like God's will: good, acceptable, and perfect! God's will for your life is GOOD things, ACCEPTABLE things, and PERFECT things! He has placed the Spirit of His Son in us. He is hoping for us to live gloriously, and Christ is in us for that purpose, but we have to take responsibility for how we think. For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7). If we will do the diligent work required to renew our minds to God's ways, we will see His Will come to pass in our lives! Others will benefit from seeing how good, acceptable, and perfect His Will is!

Our Mind: The Interface Between Heaven and Earth

Every home with a phone line has a box that takes the signals from the wires outside the home and allows them to successfully pass through to the rest of the home (and vice versa). That box is an interface. An interface is "a point where two systems, subjects, organizations, etc., meet and interact" (Oxford University, 2005).

Now, watch this: our mind is the interface between heaven and earth! If we want to tap into all that heaven has for us, we have to renew our minds. The powerful Christian life God has planned for each of us can be short-circuited right between our ears. Christ lives in us. All the power of

God that raised Jesus from the dead is resident in our born-again spirit. Our mind is the only thing that stands in the way of heaven being released to earth through us!

If the telephone was not working in a home and the local phone company was called out to that home on a service call, they may find that the box that connects the external lines to the internal phone lines was not working correctly. If that were the case, they would fix that interface and power would flow between the external phone system and the internal phone system again.

That said, before the service man arrived, the home owner may likely have been thinking “that phone company... why doesn’t their stuff ever work!?” Often, the end user blames the origination service for interruptions in power. In this case, however, the phone company’s lines were sending a good signal; the power flow from the phone company was intact and uninterrupted. The issue that caused the phones to stop working was the interface box on the side of the house. That interface was actually keeping that good signal from being able to enter the house. The practical result? No working phones... and not because the phone company was out of commission!

So it is with our minds: we have the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead living on the inside of us, but we often don’t experience that power in measurable ways. From God’s end the power is completely on. But we limit the flow of that power (or even block it all together) with our thinking. The issue is not the power generation service. The

issue is our interface--our mind.

Lining up with The Word

If you meditate in the Word day and night, you will be totally transformed in your way of thinking and you will find tremendous success in every area of your life. Your marriage will be blessed. Your parenting will be blessed. Your business dealings will be blessed. Your thinking, creativity, and ingenuity will all be blessed. You will pray for the sick and see them healed, and the dead and see them raised.

Psalms 19:7 says that the Word of God is “*perfect, converting the soul!*” When you meditate in the Word of God, it will convert your soul to line it up with your spirit! The Word of God is Jesus and you have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) on the inside of you. When you meditate on The Word you are literally catching glimpses (as in a mirror) of what your born-again spirit actually looks like. And it is this meditation process that transforms our minds to the reality of Christ in us, the hope of glory!

Philemon 1:6 captures a prayer of Paul and Timothy for their brother in the Lord, Philemon: “*that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*” This verse is effectively saying “It is our prayer that you would fully realize that you literally have the Spirit of Christ living in you and all that comes with that, because when you realize what is already in you, your faith will be expressed powerfully!”

Look how Paul is praying for Philemon, because he would have prayed the same way for you . . . he did not pray for increased faith for Philemon. He did not pray for Philemon to get something he did not have. He prayed that Philemon would REALIZE what was ALREADY in him! And Paul knew that it was in “*realizing what was already in him*” that Philemon’s faith would be effectually (powerfully) released.

So often that’s not how we think! But that is what The Word of God says; the sharing of our faith will become powerful (effectual) by means of acknowledging (realizing) all the good that is in us! Remember Romans 12:2? It said, we will be noticeably changed (transformed) by renewing our minds to *not* match the world, but God’s Word. When our mind thinks like God’s Word, it thinks like Jesus. When our mind thinks like Jesus, it thinks like the Holy Spirit. When our mind thinks like the Holy Spirit, the interface between heaven and earth has come into alignment and heaven WILL be released into earth through us! Amen!

Faith

Romans 10:17 shows us that faith comes from being aligned in our thinking to God’s Word! “*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.*” If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move a mountain. If we have not been able to move mountains yet, it is because of unbelief, plain and simple. The issue is the interface (our thinking), not the power generation company.

You have all the faith you need to do what Jesus did. In fact, the Bible says you have THE faith of Christ in you (Gal. 2:20); the issue is our unbelief. Our brains are better at thwarting the Kingdom of God than the enemy could ever be. When you get unbelief out of the way, faith can and will flow. It is so simple. Not easy ... simple. It's actually challenging to walk in the Spirit, simply because we live in a world that speaks perfectly contrary to The Word. If you are going to endeavor to walk according to the Word, you have to realize that everything is going to be pushing the other way; you will be swimming upstream. You also have to realize that abiding in (living in) God's Word is essential since being in the world is giving your heart input that's contrary to His Word! In the next chapter I will share more on the power of being in His Word.

Willpower

Too often, the Christian life is reduced to a willpowered life, but the Christian life is supposed to be a faith-powered life! In fact, referring to born-again believers, the Bible says "*the righteous shall live by faith*" (Heb. 10:38). Faith is THE way of life for believers. Physical strength is body power. Willpower is soul power. Faith is spirit power. You don't want to be operating in willpower when you have faith available to you! The world was created by faith! Willpower cannot come close to accomplishing what faith can. To only use willpower and not operate in faith would be like fighting an invading army on your own, with your bare hands. While

the character that is associated with that brave act would be admirable, failing to radio in all the available supporting troops and heavy artillery would be complete foolishness! Likewise, willpower is great, and helps you follow through even when the going gets tough. But faith is Heaven's power tool! Faith has been given to us to get work done and we have been commissioned to release our faith to make earth look more and more like heaven! (see Matt. 6:10).

How Faith Works

So why don't more believers live a faith-filled life? Simple. They don't know how. A lack of knowledge will slow down even the most dedicated! Unlike willpower, faith actually supersedes our understanding:

“And He (Jesus) said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” (Mark 4:26-29)

Notice that Jesus is saying that if you get The Word of God in your heart, it will actually grow into the fruit that it promises without you really even needing to know how. While you won't quite know how it happened, you will know it worked when your harvest has come! Sowing the

Word of God into your heart is the best investment in the universe! God's Word never returns to Him void. It always accomplishes the purpose for which He sent it (see Isa 55)! If you meditate in the Word, if you let the Word take root in your heart, it will bear fruit according to its kind. Tomato seeds always bring forth tomatoes, not weeds. God's Word always brings forth blessings. Sow His Word into your heart and the power of God will be released in your life!

The Holy Spirit lives in you and wants to transform your life and the lives of those around you. Your mind can short-circuit His power in your life. Change your mind according to the Word and He will change your world according to His Word!

Scriptures

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive... (Jn 7:38-39a)

And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:20-23)

My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the

issues of life. (Prov. 4:20-23)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19)

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7)

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Rom. 8:11)

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; (Ps. 19:7)

I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers... that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. (Philemon 1:4,6)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20, KJV)

The just shall live by faith. (Rom 1:17b)

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

And He (Jesus) said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head,

after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”
(Mark 4:26-29)

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” (Isa 55:10-13)

Reference

Oxford University. (2005). New Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd edition. NY: Oxford U. Press.