

March 2, 2014

BEING, GROWING AND ENJOYING YOUR CHRIST-LIKENESS

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:3-8

In the past weeks we have been talking about LOVE. Although it is enough to just know and understand what love is. WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. But are we doing something about it? We cannot profess to love God and love people, if we are not willing to do something about it. Our love has to be translated into action. Our salvation should be expressed in action and not remain as lip service. We have to start putting our faith into action. It has to start with us. It has to start today.

We are all works in progress that is true, but the question is: Is our progress really progressing or have we plateaued? Our prayers then should be "Lord help us see where we are and help us see what we are missing". Let us not be content to stay where we are, content to be stagnant in our spiritual growth, and become complacent in what we call "a work in progress". Let us strive to see progress in the work being made in us. Let our love for God translate into obedience to His word, so that His work in us may become evident in our lives.

So how do we DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

Philippians 2:14-15 says Do all things without grumbling or disputing, so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world"

DO, is an action word. It encourages us into action. This verse reminds us that if refrain from grumbling and disputing then we will become blameless and innocent, then other people will see our light. People will see the difference in us and then we can become like magnets attracting people to God. And if we can live out our faith, if our salvation becomes evident in our life then people will know that we are disciples of the Lord Jesus (John 13:35) because of our love for one another. It is when the transformation is applied into our lives, then God is honored and He is pleased.

The sad truth is many are lost and are still looking for answers to life's questions... they live their lives in quiet desperation because they have not found love. They have not found God's love. The irony of this is that they present a façade of being unloving when in fact, they are screaming for love. Our normal response is to despise them and turn away from them, but the love of God compels us to do otherwise. The love of God compels us to love not only the lovable but the unlovable as well. We have been commanded to love others as we love ourselves.

Often times we are content to stand in the sidelines because we say we don't know how do anything about it. But actually the answer is simple — Be Discipled. Become Accountable. And do this INTENTIONALLY. We should continue to the process of being, the process of growing, and enjoying Christ-likeness.



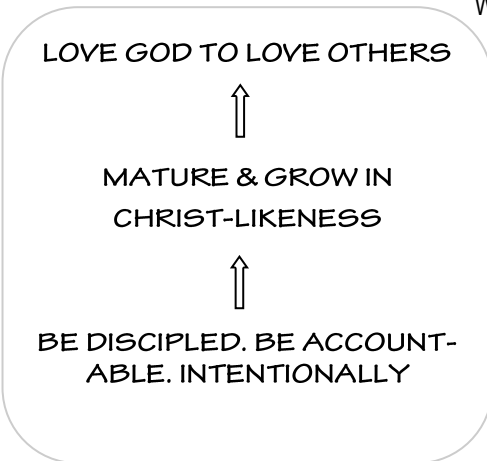
380 S. Rosemead Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91107
www.ccfla.com

A **disciple** is a believer of Jesus Christ who is in a lifelong process of being **built up in the faith towards Christ-likeness** for the purpose of spiritual multiplication resulting in the glory of God.

Romans 8:28-29 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom he foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

This is God's ultimate purpose for us. That we become conformed into the image and likeness of His Son. If this is so, then the process starts with Intentional Discipleship and Accountability. This then will be followed by growth and maturity as we become more Christ-like. The result of this is that we will be able to love God in the way that He has commanded — with all our heart, our minds, our souls and our strength . . . And we will be able to love others. This is when we can be witnesses to the good that God can do in our lives.

We have been designed, created and saved for this. . . CHRIST-LIKENESS. We should not be ignorant of this purpose. We should not be blind to this purpose.



Unfortunately when we are not aware of this purpose, we begin to pursue other purposes. Then our everything in our life will be leading to a wrong purpose. What then will happen if we use our lives for other purposes other than what we were created for? We will malfunction and eventually we will get destroyed. We may also cause other complications and even collateral damages.

The question then is:

Are you willing? Will you become intentional in discipleship and accountability?

As CCFLA disciples our life resolution should be: *to grow in Christ-likeness year after year so that we will eventually have disciples who will do the same.* It is only when we begin to appreciate and enjoy our becoming Christ-like that we can also begin to see the changes and transformation in our lives. When we can enjoy the process of discipleship and accountability in the same way we enjoy the things we say we “love” doing, then it no longer becomes a burden but rather it becomes something we look forward to and even crave.

What then is Christ-likeness? This is an important question we should ask. We cannot grow into Christ-likeness if we do not know and understand what it is. *Philippians 2:1-8 Imitate Christ. Be like Christ. Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus: Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings. When he found himself in the form of a human, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

This is Christ-likeness: **Selfless. Humility.**

Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth. And because of this we see in verses 6-8 When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions. I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord.

Moses was the only one who could see God. . . Because of his humility. Imagine if we become more and more like Christ. If we become more and more selfless and humble. . . Then we will be able to enjoy the presence of God in our lives. He will be able to reveal Himself to us and make all things work for our good.

What is the enjoyable benefit of Christ-likeness? Harmony. Peace. Joy. And we begin to sin less and less.

Christ-likeness is enjoyable and a life full of C.H.R.I.S.T. is a satisfying life.

The result of Christ-likeness is God's blessings.

There are no shortcuts in the process. There is no easy road. We have to be willing to be subjected to molding and transforming in the Potter's hand. We have to be intentionally working to be accountable and to be continually disciplined by godly people.

And this process begins with accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. It cannot begin if you are not born again. . . if your heart does not belong to Jesus. . . If you are not truly a child of God.

Remember it is a process. A continual process of accountability and discipleship. It may not be an easy process but the results are incomparable. This is God's ultimate purpose for us — to be conformed to His Son, Jesus. If we allow ourselves to be transformed into His image, we will bring honor to God and He will be pleased with us. And when He is pleased with us then He will be with us and we will feel His unmistakable presence in our lives.

But to live a life away from God's purpose. . . Is to live a life of desolation and despair.

Today, as we continue to understand God's design for our lives, let us pray that He will give us the grace, the courage and the determination to allow ourselves to enter into a discipleship and accountability relationship.

C—Conquest over sin & trials
H—Hope not despair
R—Rejoicing not defeated and depressed
I—Inspiration not discouragement
S—Success not wasted life
T—Thankfulness, not grumbling

Works: Journaling task

Heart Check:

Now that I understand God's purpose and design for me:

1. How is my spiritual walk?
2. Am I intentionally allowing myself to be disciplined? Am I intentional about my accountability?
3. Where am I in my journey into Christ-likeness?
4. What are my stumbling blocks and hindrances? Is there something that is holding me back?
5. How can I become more active in my participation in my discipleship and accountability?
6. Are there any noticeable changes in me, in my lifestyle, in my actions, in my words since the day I professed to be born again?