



Created to Be Like Christ

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Chapters 24 & 25

Notes: This Bible Study is intended to be a companion to “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

Chapter 24: Transformed by Truth

What does John 17:17 have to say about how we may be more like Christ?

John 17:17 - Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Spiritual growth is the process of sanctification, replacing lies with truth. Sanctification requires revelation from God:

2 Timothy 3:17 - that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Besides the Bible, what sources for truth do people use to help them make decisions?

- Culture – it must be right because every one does it
- Tradition – it must be right, we have always done it
- Reason – it must be right because it seems right
- Emotion – it must be right because it feels right

What is the problem with non-biblical sources of authority?

Non-biblical sources of authority are all flawed because they have been effected by man’s sinful nature.

How is the world’s sources of truth contrasted with God’s Word?

God’s Word is flawless...

Proverbs 30:5 - Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

God’s Word is useful for teaching us to be more like Christ:

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

The Bible was written by men so how can it be flawless?

While the Bible was written by men, it was inspired by Almighty God... God is almighty enough to accurately bring us His Word even using His flawed creation.

There are so many Bible translations, how can we know which one really is true to God’s Word?

A careful study of different translations would show that the differences are minor, the meaning of the different

translations is the same. There are many ways to express the same truth.

To become more like Christ, is it enough to just believe the Bible?

To become like Christ, we must do more than just believe the Bible, we must fill our minds with God’s Word so that the Holy Spirit can transform us with the truth.

How can we fill our minds with God’s Word?

Rick Warren summarizes five techniques: (1) receive it, (2) read it, (3) research it, (4) remember it, (5) reflect on it.

To properly receive God’s Word, what state of mind do we need to have?

To receive God’s Word, we must be open to it and have a receptive attitude toward it. The Parable of the Sower describes how our receptiveness describes how our receptiveness determines whether or not God’s Word will take root bear fruit in our lives. Jesus identified three unreceptive attitudes: a closed mind (the hard soil), a superficial mind (shallow soil), and a distracted mind (soil with weeds); then He said, “*take heed how you hear*” (Luke 8:18).

What is the great privilege we have with the Bible today that has not been the case for most of church history?

Today, we may read the Bible. For most of church history only the clergy has the privilege of reading God’s Word but this is not the case today. The tragedy is that many who have claim to believe the whole Bible have not read the whole Bible.

How can people make time to read the Bible?

I do not believe that anyone would be successful at reading the Bible unless they make a plan to read it. Time to read the Bible must be part of our schedules or it just will not happen. A daily pattern of reading the Bible needs to be established or other things will just crowd our time in God’s Word.

How can we dig deeper into God’s Word than just reading it?

You begin to understand more of God’s Word when you research it or study it...

James 1:25 - But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Rightly understanding the deeper things of God requires work. Time spent in figuring out why apparent contradictions are really gaps in our understanding. And becoming so familiar with the Word of God that you can be better at discerning what is from Him and what is not...

2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

How should we go about studying Scripture?

The best way to study Scripture is to ask ourselves questions of the text and record our answers. We should seek to put ourselves in the shoes of the original intended readers to better understand the intent behind the passage.

What kind of questions should we ask about a passage of Scripture to better understand it?

The typical question we might ask begin with: who, what, when, where, how, why...

Why is it important to remember God's Word?

Remembering God's Word will help us resist temptation, make wise decisions, reduce stress, build confidence, give good advice, and share our faith with others...

Colossians 3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

How can we improve our ability to remember God's Word?

We can improve our ability to remember God's Word by practicing it. Our memory is like a muscle, the more we exercise it, the stronger it will grow.

What is the fifth way to abide in God's Word that Rick Warren gave us?

We should reflect on God's Word, the Bible calls this meditate on it.

How is the Bible's reference to meditation different from what most people think of meditation?

The Bible's form of meditation is focused thinking, new age meditation is emptying your mind of any thoughts. God wants us to use the minds He gave us...

Isaiah 1:18 - "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

What is the most important part of abiding in God's Word?

We can receive it, read it, research it, remember it, and reflect on it; but God's Word is not fully internalized in us until we have applied it to our lives...

James 1:22 - But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Why is it so hard to apply God's Word to our lives?

It is hard to apply God's Word to our lives because of Spiritual Warfare... Satan fights our application of God's Word. The enemy of God does not mind you doing all kinds of Bible study so long as you don't do anything with what you learn. As soon as you become a doer, the forces of darkness will rise up to oppose you.

John 13:17 - If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Why is it so difficult or even painful to apply God's Word?

God's Word exposes our motives, points out our faults, rebukes our sin, and expects us to take action to change. People don't like to change themselves, they'd rather change their circumstances which only treat their problems superficially, it does not get at the root of the problem (themselves).

How does being a part of a Bible study discussion group help us apply God's Word?

Being a part of a Bible study discussion group gives us an opportunity to discuss our applications with others. When you express these applications with others, they become more refined in our minds. We also get to learn things from each other that we would not find out on our own.

What else can we do to better apply what we learn from the Bible?

We can write out an action step making the application more personal, practical, and provable... it should involve something we do ourselves that has a deadline.

What has God told you to do that you have not started doing yet?

I need to work more Scripture into my next Toastmaster's speech and be more creative in finding ways to memorize Scripture.

Chapter 25: Transformed by Trouble

What does God use more than His Word to make us more like Christ?

God uses circumstances more than the Bible to develop our characters because we face diverse circumstances continually, every day. Problems in this world are normal...

1 Peter 4:12-13 - Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when

His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

What does Psalm 34:18 have to say about God's purpose for the problems we face?

Psalm 34:18 - The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. God uses problems in our lives to draw us closer to Himself. It is during suffering that we get serious about prayer.

What does 2 Corinthians 1:9 have to say about God's purpose for the problems we face?

2 Corinthians 1:9 - Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. Problems force us to look to God for help rather than trust in our own resources. As Rick Warren said, "you'll never know that God is all you need until God is all you've got."

How should we view our problems in light of Psalm 139:16?

Psalms 139:16 - Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. Because God is sovereignly in control, accidents are just incidents in God's plan for us.

Does everything that happens to us have spiritual significance?

Yes, God uses everything that happens to us for our benefit: Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose

Does Romans 8:28 imply that nothing bad will ever happen to God's children?

No, it says all things that happen to us will be used by God to bring about a good result. Bad things are going to happen because we live in a fallen world.

What is the significance of the words, "we know..."?

We can know that all things will work together for good for those who love God because this truth is based on God being in control of the universe along with the truth that He loves us. This hope is not wishful thinking, it is a certainty because it is based on the nature and character of God.

What is the significance of the words, "all things..."?

God's plan for each of us includes everything that happens to us, He is concerned about the details.

What is the significance of the words, "work together..."?

Nothing that happens to us is isolated from the rest, God uses every part of our circumstances as part of His plan for us to mold us into the person He wants us to be.

What is the significance of the words, "for good..."?

God's purpose for us is for our benefit. As bad as our circumstances seem to be, God causes the ultimate outcome to be better than the sum of its parts.

How is it that bad things can work together for good?

- By themselves, bad things are just bad but taken together as part of a whole life's experience, they can contribute to a good result. It is certainly true that a whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Rick Warren uses a good analogy that some of the ingredients to a cake do not taste too good by themselves but they do as part of the completed cake.

How do we know that the promise in Romans 8:28 is not for everyone?

The passage says, "*to those who love God, to those who are the called.*" This means it only applies to Christians. All things work together for good for those who remain in their rebellion against God by rejecting God's way of salvation.

What is the purpose to which we are called in Romans 8:28?

See verse 9, we are "*predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...*" we are called to become like Christ.

Romans 8:29 - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

What does Romans 5:3-4 have to say about what our attitude should be when we face troubles in our lives?

Romans 5:3-4 - And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

It says we should glory in them – see them the way God sees them – as an opportunity to develop our character.

Why is character such a good thing?

Our character gives us more confidence in our hope for eternal life and it is one thing that we can take with us into eternity.

1 Peter 1:7 - that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ

What does James 1:2-4 have to say about why we should have a joyful attitude about our troubles in life?

James 1:2-4 - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

We should know that enduring troubles in this world will give us patience that makes us more perfect and complete, it contributes to making us more like Christ. Our passing our tests of troubles results in our becoming the type of people the Lord wants us to be.

Do problems always produce Christ-like character in Christians?

No, character-building experiences are merely opportunities to build character. To grow, we need to respond as Christ Himself would. Those who do not respond as Christ tend to become bitter rather than better.

To respond as Christ would requires that we have the mind of Christ. How does the Lord regard the troubles He allows into our lives?

God loves us and has our best interests in mind. He will not allow anything to happen to us that He can not use to make us more like Him and increase our hope...

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Joseph understood this when he had the opportunity to exercise revenge on his brothers who sold him into slavery:

Genesis 50:20 - But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

How does Hebrews 12:2 help us see how we may us endure our own troubles from the example Jesus made for us?

Hebrews 12:2 - looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus was willing to endure a shameful death because of the joy He knew He would have afterward. The cliché, “no pain, no gain” is biblical! Jesus focused on the goal, not what He was enduring. Likewise, we should focus on God: His character, His plan, and His purpose for us to help us endure our circumstances.

What help does 2 Corinthians 4:17 give us for enduring difficulties?

2 Corinthians 4:17 - For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

In the context of eternity, what ever we go through in this life is but for a short time. Our pain is temporary but or

reward for successfully enduring our difficulties is eternal. Paul put this same thought in other word in Romans 8:18...

Romans 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

How is it possible to give thanks “in everything” as it says we should do in 1 Thessalonians 5:18?

1Thessalonians 5:18 - in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

This verse does not say we should give thanks “for everything,” it says we should give thanks “in everything.” God does not expect us to be thankful for sin, evil and suffering. Instead, we should be thankful that God will use our difficulties to fulfill His purposes. The Bible says, “rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4), it does not say, “rejoice about your tribulations.” No matter what happens to you, you can rejoice in the character and plan of God.

How long should we expect to need character-building?

We should expect to need character-building until we die or are caught-up in the rapture. Don’t give-up, stick it out...

Hebrews 10:36 - For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise

With all this in mind, what should we ask when bad things happen to us?

Don’t ask, “why me?” Instead ask, “what do you want me to learn?”

What problem in your life has resulted in the greatest growth?

In my case, I can’t think of one outstanding thing but there are a number of contributing cases for example:

- When my Bible study at work lost critical mass, it got me doing other things that were more of an outreach.
- I lost ownership documents for a trailer that I needed to get tags for it after being short with some foreign co-workers. The Lord produced the documents for me in the parking lot the next morning after I had recognized my need to be more patient with people who could not speak English very well.
- My Leisure Learning Unlimited class on Bible Prophecy did not have sufficient interest to sustain it but this taught me to be more open to God working in different ways.