

## It's "Morphing" Time

**Week 1 Reading:** Chapters 1, 2, & 3 in "The Life You've Always Wanted"

\*Books are available at the church office or can be delivered to you. Contact Sarah if you would like us to deliver a book to you.

**Week 1 Practice Exercise** - This week, we'll focus on reading meditation, by reading the first 3 chapters of John Ortberg's book, *The Life You've Always Wanted*. While reading, underline and annotate things that stand out to you. Spend time pondering new insights.

### **Day 1 – Questions to Ponder:**

- 1.) To be transformed means to be changed. What examples of transformation can you think of in nature? In movies or books?
- 2.) What is the greatest transformation you've ever seen in a person?
- 3.) What does *spiritual transformation* mean to you?

### **Personal Study Day 2 – Behavior Modification vs. Spiritual Transformation**

When our lives are not marked by genuine, God-directed spiritual transformation, we tend to look for substitute ways to distinguish ourselves from those we deem "less spiritual." We substituted behavior modification for heart metamorphosis. When doing so, we adopt boundary markers – highly visible, relatively superficial practices intended to quickly separate "insiders/good people/real Christians" from "outsiders/bad people/fake Christians". These boundary markers might be specified forms of dress and speech, adherence to certain rules of behavior, participation in prescribed activities, and so on. We do so because they provide a false sense of security and superiority.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day tended to focus on these outward behaviors, while Jesus focused on what was happening in a person's heart. His concern was whether people were being transformed and growing in their love of God and love of people.

Let's take a look at these different approaches to morality vs. spirituality.

- 1.) Read Matthew 23:1-28. What were the religious leaders focused on and how did Jesus feel about their focus?
- 2.) In verses 1-4, what is the chief indication that this kind of religiosity is only skin deep?
- 3.) Where are you prone to "not practice what you preach" (vs. 3) or demand more of others than you're willing to carry with them (vs. 4)?
- 4.) What is the goal of all religiosity in verses 5-8 and 25-28?
- 5.) When in your life have you "kept up appearances" even though you were indulging in secret sin?
- 6.) What is the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law in verse 16-24?

7.) When have you obeyed the letter but missed the spirit?

### **Personal Study Day 3 – Transformed into what?**

The New Testament uses the Greek work, *morpho*, to describe the Spiritual transformation of Christ's disciples. It means "the inward and real formation of the essential nature of a person." The kind of spiritual transformation God wants each of us to experience is a complete "remaking" of our nature – in short, Christ did not come to make you better, he came to make you NEW; not improvement but rebirth. God wants us to see, feel, think, and do what Jesus would if he were living our life.

- 1.) Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 and 2 Cor 3:18. What does God promise all those in Christ Jesus?
- 2.) What is the future hope of the Christ follower's spiritual life?
- 3.) What does it mean to be "transformed into [the Lord Jesus's] image?"
- 4.) How does this happen according to 2 Cor 3:18?

### **Personal Study Day 4 – Training not Trying**

John Ortberg says, "Learning to think, feel, and act like Jesus is at least as demanding as learning to run a marathon or play the piano We can't succeed simply by trying hard. We can't succeed on willpower alone...we need to train wisely."

- 1.) Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What do we know about sports that we forget about spirituality?
- 2.) How do professional athletes construct their lives to gain wealth and fame?
- 3.) What "prize" is offered to spiritual athletes? What is "spiritual training" and how is it different than "trying harder"?
- 4.) Read Phil 4:13 – who trains you and strengthens you to do this training?

### **Personal Study Day 5 – Training for Godliness**

- 1.) Read 1 Timothy 4:1-10 focusing especially on verses 7-8. What are the people in verses 1-3 focused on? What does Paul want Timothy to focus on in verses 7-8?
- 2.) What does it mean to "train yourself to be godly" (vs 7)?
- 3.) Why do we train (vs 10)? Is it to earn God's salvation or to enjoy it? What's the difference?