

God's Chosen Method for Conforming You to Christ's Character

There's a reason companies spend millions of dollars on advertising that lasts mere seconds.

It may seem irrational, but they know the truth of a simple principle. When something beautiful is placed before our eyes, our hearts become connected to what we see and desire begins to grow.

It's normal—just look at that apple and Adam and Eve—and is an innate, natural outworking of how we've been designed.

Seeing leads to desire.

One clear expression of this principle is found in Psalms.

"One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I will seek after—for me to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to see the beauty of the lord, and to inquire in His temple" (Ps. 27:4).

And God has designed us so that our longing doesn't stop with desire, but actually produces action.

After some time, we don't just see and simply desire, but we begin to put forth the effort to obtain our desire until we possess it.

Then something amazing begins to happen. In our enjoyment of what our hearts have connected to, we begin to tell others about the great things we've seen, heard or experienced. Whether it's a good deal, a great product or a helpful service, we tend to share what we enjoy.

This tendency takes on even greater dimensions in the aspect of relationships. Because when we find out appreciation in our relationships is not just one-sided, but we are in fact liked, loved and fully enjoyed in return, our reality changes.

“I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will declare all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High” (Ps. 9:1-2).

When enjoyment turns into love, we are often eager to return again to enjoy our loved one’s presence and be loved in turn. We are naturally drawn into the place of prayer, conversing with the one our hearts adore.

“And you shall be called by a new name ... you shall be called My Delight Is In Her ... your God shall rejoice over you ... I have set watchmen [intercessors] on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night ... until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a glory in the earth” (Is. 62:2-7).

As we behold the beauty of God—His ways, His character, His consistently loving nature—our hearts are drawn toward Him, and our desire to love Him more grows.

While it’s easy to see beauty with a single glance, those who spend time studying and experiencing beautiful things are often better able to not only appreciate beauty, but they’re also able to judge the authenticity of the original and quickly detect an imposter—a knock-off.

Through times of studying the Word, revelation is given by the Spirit of God, ushering us into greater understanding of our God and His character, causing us to love Him more. When we see Him deal with widows, we come to understand His gentleness. Our hope is fueled to believe that He will also be

gentle with us in our time of need and weakness.

As we read about Him rescuing Israel and setting them free from bondage, our faith is strengthened to believe that He can easily deliver us from every challenging situation we've created and every pit we've stumbled into blindly, even if we've been stuck in the same situation for years.

And when we see the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever heal those who have been cast aside by others, our minds are renewed to the truth that our Lord not only has the power to heal, but the great desire to restore and make all things new.

Once again, our hearts are drawn to the God who freely says, "I will. Be clean" (Matt. 8:3).

As we study the Bible, we fall in love with this God who sacrificed His greatest possessions to pay the debt of those who owed much but didn't value the payment He was making. We find the words of Isaiah being fulfilled in our own hearts.

"Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Is. 33:17).

Although studying the Bible can often seem daunting, taking the approach of a teenager falling in love can help us in the process. The act of studying a person feels almost effortless when linked to the desire of loving someone more fully. Studying passages of Scripture fuels our love for God, allowing us to speak about our experience firsthand. We're able to gain a greater understanding of who God is and what He desires and values.

In this hour of history, this factor is particularly vital because of the world we live in and what's to come.

"Then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another ... Because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ... And this gospel of the kingdom will be

preached throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:10-14).

As many people find themselves in the midst of the changing tides of cultures and morals, followers of Jesus can rest assured that the Lord has prepared us in advance for this era of history. Thankfully we are not tasked with convincing others of truth—that's the Spirit's job—instead we are called to proclaim the truth of the King and His forthcoming kingdom, not out of compulsion, but simply out of love.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor; He sent Me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives ... Instead of your shame you shall have double honor ... the Lord God will cause righteousness ... to spring forth before all the nations." (Is. 61:1-11).

God can declare truth of His soon coming kingdom in any way He desires, but He has chosen to anoint regular believers, to proclaim truth and declare the beauty of Jesus, to speak of Whom they have encountered.

This is not something we are called to in order to fulfill a task list, but something that is a natural outworking of what we have experienced. When we encounter truth, we have a desire for others to know truth so they don't miss out on all the benefits available to them.

From a place of seeing the beauty of the God who has called us, loves us and empowers us to love Him more, we are able to share with others the real love we've encountered that continues to change, transform and renew us from the inside out. We can speak of the God who loves us in our weakness, who is able to enjoy His relationship with us while we are in the process of maturing.

Although we are far from perfect, we are the individuals God has chosen to be part of His family, and the ones He has anointed to share the gospel as an antidote to sin, wickedness, apathy, and immorality in this age. In the midst of everyday encounters, God releases His power on the words we speak. Our role is to feast on His truth and speak about it.

The study of the Scripture is one of the primary ways we behold the character of Christ. {eoa}

At the International House of Prayer University (IHOPU), people from around the world come to learn about God and meet with Him in an environment of 24/7 prayer and worship. As students are submerged in this non-stop prayer meeting that has been going for the past 17 years, they get to interact with the living God and not just historical references. Discover how IHOPU can help stoke your fire of love for the Lord »

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