

How to Partner With God for Your Spirit-Led Transformation

God is after your complete transformation. He desires to apply the redemption Jesus paid for on the cross to every area of your being—physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. You're saved! But not every believer experiences awesome lasting transformation. Why not? How can you partner *with* God for your transformation?

Instead of a beam-me-up instantaneous change, God almost always takes you through a process. Salvation is a moment; you move from death to life. (1 John 3:14) When I became born again I was acutely aware that something in me became alive that was not alive before. But just like restoring a classic car or becoming an Olympic athlete, growing up to become who God intends you to be takes effort, time and more (Eph. 4:13).

God won't force your transformation. And you can't make transformation happen simply by trying harder. So how do you cooperate with God in the process?

No one becomes an Olympic champion without a coach. But even the best elite coach can't make you into a winner without your 100 percent engagement. Paul likens our spiritual walk to that same process (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27). How does an athlete partner with a coach? That's similar in many ways to how you partner with God for your transformation.

God is much more than a coach! But here are some important steps that allow you to partner with God for your transformation.

Listen

If your basketball coach tells you to run wind sprints, you do it. Your running coach will tell you how long and hard to push for today's workout. The coach knows what kind of weight training, nutrition, sleep regimen and specific skills you will need in order to win. You won't win if you only listen now and then; you've got to commit to the program the coach puts you on.

It can be tempting to think we know the program God should have us on. *Why does it hurt this much? Why is it taking so long? Shouldn't this be what God is doing?* Learn to trust that He knows the process. Know that He doesn't enjoy your muscle aches any more than you do, but He can grow you through them.

For the believer this means starting each and every day listening for His voice; "What do You have for me to do today?" If you don't know how to hear God's voice, spend time learning that. You won't hear perfectly every time, especially early on; learn from the experience to hear Him better.

Then when He tells you something, believe it. When He asks you to do something, do it. Some years ago, I gave God explicit permission to be in charge of my "continuing education," and that has nothing to do with academics. I continue to give Him that permission daily. He will teach you (see Isa. 30:21). Remember that He may use any number of means to do that.

Risk Everything

Athletes won't win if they only show up for some of the workouts or refuse to change other parts of their lifestyle to what the coach recommends. You'll have to go all-in too. If you feel stuck, do a heart check to see if there's anything the Holy Spirit has asked of you that you're resisting.

When He first asks you to do something, it may seem impossible. You won't feel like forgiving. Your unhealthy

lifestyle habits seem too hard to change. Your mind will keep trying to return to confused or fearful thoughts. You can't possibly let go of your spouse or kids. People might think you're crazy if you attempt that project.

Once you've taken the time to hear God's voice, it's time to act—thoughtfully and prayerfully. Too many people look for an excuse: "I'm just waiting for God to direct me." Spend the time listening for His voice, but then move. Keep doing with all your might the last thing He told you until He gives you new directions.

Practice. Practice. And practice some more.

You won't do it perfectly. Mistakes are guaranteed; welcome to the human race! An elite athlete doesn't do the jump correctly the first time he tries. A runner's lungs and legs won't go the distance at the winning pace without training. Practicing develops capacity in the areas where God is working your transformation also.

You didn't gain an extra 50 pounds in a week; you won't lose it in a week either. You spent years carrying bitterness and unforgiveness; it's unlikely you will successfully lay it down in a moment. Your hurtful words come out without thinking; new words seem hard to come by. Wherever God is stretching you right now in your transformation process will feel uncomfortable. That's normal.

The important thing is to not give up. Get divinely angry at the brokenness and then get to work. Get up again. Ask for forgiveness if you need to, and move forward. This process takes grit. God's given you what you need to do this. Keep at it.

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Your transformation process itself will be invaluable, but there is a goal at the end. You will win the same way Jesus

endured, by keeping His eyes on the prize; “Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

God said He wants you to become like Jesus, so you can (see Rom. 8:29) He asks you to become spiritually mature, so you can (see Eph. 4:13). You will “a sweet fragrance of Christ among those who are saved and among those who perish” (2 Cor. 2:15b). Your transformation will become an advertisement for the kingdom of God that draws others to Him.

And in the end, with Paul, you’ll be able to say, “From now on a crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

Millions around the world were deeply moved over the last couple weeks in honoring the life of Billy Graham. He finished well. May the same be said of you and me!

If you’re serious, partner with God for your transformation. Listen, and then do what He tells you. It’s worth it! {eo}

Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is both a board-certified OB-GYN physician and an ordained doctor of ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the Fully Alive kind of life that Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at .

This article originally appeared at .