

MAN IN THE MIRROR BIBLE STUDY

Series: A Mans Guide to the Bible

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Good Morning, Men!

Open to Romans 12

How is everyone today? It is going to be a great day. This is the last day in our series A man's guide to the Bible. We will begin today with a shout out to a group that John Harmon leads. John is a field trainer for Man in the Mirror in Idaho; the group he leads is called Focus Point. Welcome the Focus Point of Meridian Assembly of God Church, which has been meeting for about four years on Saturday morning in Meridian Idaho.

Steve has the Midas touch. He married his high school sweet heart. With a friend he started a very profitable real estate brokerage. He invested \$10,000 in the initial stock offering of Google and he bought Apple stock when it was at the bottom. When Steve was 10 years of age he made a profession of faith in Christ, but never did much with his faith after that; spiritually he is pretty immature. Lately Steve has been depressed. He decided after some serious thought that his problem wasn't that he didn't get what he wanted, actually he achieved all his goals but the happiness he looked for in life eluded him. He called an acquaintance of his from church named John. John suggested they go to lunch. At lunch Steve explained his situation to him and he said 'I think I need to rethink my paradigm. When I look at the trajectory of my life, 10 years from now I don't like what I see. Do you have any suggestions for me?' John, who happens to be a good disciple, said 'Steve let me ask you three questions: do you have a best friend? Are you in a small group? Are you reading the Bible on a regular basis?' Steve's face fell and he stared at the mashed potatoes on his plate. He muttered 'no I don't have any of that in my life.'

Let me ask you a question: if you were to look at the trajectory of your life and project out 10 years what do you see? Do you like what you see?

I want to talk this morning –to wrap up this series- about how you can influence or have an impact on that trajectory and what it would look like if you did it the Biblical way.

The title of today's message is Transformation: How to lead a powerful transformed life.

The first thing I want to mention is: what is transformation? Transformation is basically the life of a disciple. It is someone who has become a Biblical Christian. To be a disciple is to be and adhere to the teachings of Jesus; but we have come to say here, over the last few years, that there are three parts to being a disciple. These are good to follow because they are Biblical and they are actionable. You can build your life around these three parts of a disciple.

A Disciple is called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ and sent to live for Christ.
Called – Equipped – Sent

Calling is the born again part. Equipping is the becoming like Jesus, it is what we are doing here and when you sit under the teaching of your pastor, and what happens when you read your Bible. Then there is the sending piece; abiding in Christ, loving your neighbors, bearing fruit and showing ourselves to be disciples. Transformation is the process by which we become a disciple; it is the process by which God transforms our life.

Romans 12:2; this verse may be familiar to you because we love it here at this Bible study.
2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Anybody here want to know what God's will for your life is? This is how we do it.

Colossians 2:8; this is another fantastic scripture for those who want to see their lives transformed by the gospel. How many of you have memorized this one?
8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.
The idea here is there is opposition to this idea of renewing your mind.

What is it that hinders transformation? Here is an example, turn to Matthew 22:29. In this text Jesus is trying to answer some confused religious leaders' question.
29 Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.
What hinders transformation? You see two factors here: not knowing the scriptures, not having the right knowledge might be one thing; secondly having the power to do something about it.

Let me ask you 'how many of you already know what you need to do? Chances are all of us on some things already have the knowledge to do what needs to be done, and yet we don't do it. Well, why is that? It is because we don't have the power to do it. Paul talks about this in Romans 7, that which I don't want to do, I do and that which I want to do I don't do. Sometimes we don't know what to do though, and sometimes we do know what to do but don't have the power to do anything about it. Jesus says 'when you are confused you are in error because you don't know the scriptures and you don't know the power of God.'

I made this list up, I am not sure when, but I have had the privilege to have conversations with a lot of the most respected Christian giants of our era.
Bill Bright, R.C. Sproul, J.I. Packard, Doug Coe, Chuck Colson, Eugene Peterson, Ruth Graham Lots, Henry Lockerie, Rick Warren, Jim Dobson, Adrian Rogers, James Kennedy, Tom Skinner, Steve Brown, Ed Kohl, Tony Dungy, Norm Miller, Bruce Wilkinson, Dick Halverson.

It sounds like I am bragging, but I am blown away that this would happen. I was trying to make a note of what those men have in common. I made note of four things but I want to focus on one this morning; they got to a love relationship and communion by steeping themselves in God's holy word. Somehow these men got to a love relationship with God by steeping themselves in God's holy word – so where does transformation come from? We know where confusion comes

from: not knowing the scripture and the power of God. But transformation does come from being steeped in the scriptures.

The perspective of the day is: the Bible is the knowledge and the power of God by which I am transformed, not by over action but as the residue of communion with the living word, which brings a sinner like me into the power and presence of the almighty.

How many of you cook? Lots of you; well those of you that cook know the more complicated a recipe is, the more difficult it is to get it right. The more ingredients you add the harder it is to produce the desired dish. The big idea today, plays off the idea of simplicity and is this: transformation- you don't have to micromanage it, just be with God.

The Big Idea: You don't have to micromanage transformation, just be with God. Those men I mentioned were so transparent to me that they didn't have some recipe or list of what they had to do to be spiritual, they just enjoyed being with God; principally through his word, and prayer, but just the idea of being with God.

Let's look at the two issues that Jesus spoke about, the problem of knowledge and the problem of power. Is there anybody here who doesn't know what they need to do today? Let me give you an example on how steeping yourself in the word of God can make a difference.

I John 3:1

I How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! God has lavished on us his great love. We know from I John 4 that we love him because he first loved us and gave his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. We know from Romans 5 that God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Turn to John 15:9

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

I mentioned a few weeks ago that Jesus has loved us in the same way that the father has loved him. Imagine how the father has loved him. Jesus has been loved by the father and that is the maximum amount of love available in the cosmos. There is no greater love!

John 15:15

15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, (zero in on this part) for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Jesus hasn't held anything back from us. Everything that was revealed to Jesus, in his human state, from the Father he has told us.

John 14:26, so the father has loved Jesus and Jesus has loved us the same way that the father loved him and not only that but he has made known to us everything that the father has shown him.

26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

So how great is the love that God has lavished on me that I might be called a child of God, not because I loved him but because he loved me and sent Jesus as atonement for my sins. Pouring out the love of the father into my heart by the Holy Spirit and Jesus loving me in the same way that the father has loved me and has told me everything that the father has told him and then he sent the Holy Spirit to remind me of all that he said and to teach me all things.

Want to know what you need to do? You don't have to micromanage transformation, just be with God.

In Romans 8:26, 27

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Did you know that? Did you know that whatever your situation, the Holy Spirit lives to intercede for us. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

If you don't know what to do, he will tell you what to do. That is what transformation is: being with God and letting him do what he does. That is the problem of knowledge.

Now let's talk about the problem of power.

If you are having some kind of problem related to work raise your hand. Look around at how many hands are raised. How many of you are having a problem related to your health or the health of someone in your family? Look around and take that in. How many of you are having some kind of money problem? Look around. How many of you are having a problem with some relationship? Look around. Raise your hand if you are not having any problems. Look around. Of those that just raised your hand, if you were lying raise your hand.

So is there anyone here that would like more power in their lives? Of course you would. By the way even though we have these problems Christianity is not a promise that God will change our circumstances but even though we have to contend with the same problems that unbelievers do we have a far better life. The fruit of the Spirit is far different and better than the fruit of the flesh. When you become a Christian and stop participating in high risk behavior, the quality of your life is exponentially better than that of an unbeliever. But that doesn't mean we are immune to the affects of the fall.

Philippians 2:12; the question is how do we get more power?

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

We have a part in this, and that is to continue to work out our salvation (calling) with fear and trembling by becoming equipped and sent and living the life of a disciple.

Paul said I press on toward the goal.

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

The two words here to will means the desire. It is God that works in you to will. It is God who works in us and gives us the desire to do his will.

I heard about a person this week that has been crying himself to sleep because their back hurts so much and they have exercises to do but won't do them. We know what we need to do but don't have the desire to do it. What is up with that? We don't have the power to do it.

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Our part is to continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; most easily obtained in the presence of the almighty God. Then this part is that it is God who works in you to give you the desire and the power to do his will. That is why the big idea today is that you don't have to micromanage transformation, just be with God.

This is a study on the Bible so I want to emphasize that one of the best ways to be with God is to be in his word. That is his voice.

I asked at the beginning if you looked at the trajectory of your life, out 10 years, where will you be. Is that where you would want to be? Every time you expose yourself to the word of God you are with God and he is doing something in you. He is giving you the desire and the power to do his will. He is changing you and you are different. You don't need to sit around and fret about your trajectory and where you will be 10 years from now. You don't have to micromanage this, just be with God.

John Wooden, who recently passed away at the age of 99, one of the first things he did as a coach was to teach his players how to lace up their shoes. He was a very fundamental basic guy. He once said, 'the athlete that says that something cannot be done should never interrupt the athlete who is doing it.'

Lots of people say this can't be done, but lots are doing it! You may not be satisfied with your progress but I will guarantee you that your wife is. If you are doing this thing and bringing yourself into the presence of God and you are seeking him, you are changing and you will be different. And 10 years from now you will be very delighted at how God has transformed your life. I can't wait to see what is going to happen in your lives over the next 10 years. It has been a fantastic ride for me to watch God change your lives.

For those of you that I have had the privilege of getting to know personally it is amazing to me how different we all are, including me.

Big idea: you don't have to micromanage transformation, just be with God.

Let's Pray:

Our dearest father, it is a joy and privilege to experience the knowledge and power of God. To have the desire and the power to do your will. Simply because we have continued to work out our salvation, to not be conformed but to renew our minds and not let our selves be taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy. How great is this love that you have lavished upon us. The love, Jesus, which you have for us; as the father loves you. Teaching us everything that the father has shown you and sending us the Holy Spirit to teach us all things and remind us of what you have said. We have the knowledge and the power we just have to be with God. Amen.

