

## Who are you becoming? - Peter Burton

John 15v1-11 Part of Jesus' farewell discourse.

Author David Brooks distinguishes between "resumé virtues" and "eulogy virtues". Resumé being the things you've done (skills, achievements, etc.) and Eulogy being things for which you'll be remembered. Nothing wrong with success, fame, money but they are secondary to who we are becoming. We are formed by our hobbies, habits, thought-life, work, family of origin, worldview, ideas of self and others. These shape us.  
*How conscious are we of what shapes our lives? Our thoughts, attitudes, worldview, etc?*

Rom 12v2 Do not **conform** to the pattern of this world but be **transformed** by the renewal of your mind. (Both highlighted words in Greek are in the present passive continuous tense - a command to keep doing what's already happening). We conform or transform. There is no neutral third option. As disciples of Jesus we partner with God and are formed by his Spirit to become a people of Agape Love.

Dr R Mulholland defines spiritual formation as "*A process of being formed into the image of Christ for the sake of others.*" **What do we think of this definition?**

Can we change? Yes we can. D Willard says "*Christlikeness is possible.*" Note, "an undirected mind tends towards chaos." JM Comer: "*There are no accidental saints.*" We need to work at our spiritual formation. Isn't this a work of Grace? Grace is not opposed to effort but is opposed to earning.

Matt 7v24 Hear Jesus' words and *put them into practice.* Jn 15 *Abide\** in Jesus. \*Dwell in, make home in...

### How can we "abide"?

Learn to develop "Discipleship Habits." Quaker T Kelly says that for prayer without ceasing "*mental habits of inward orientation must be established.*" Modern Behavioural Science supports creating habits to change lifestyle. And D Willard says we "*must keep God before our minds... new grace-filled habit(s) will replace former ones... Soon our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north... God will become the polestar of our inward being.*"

Two examples of those trying to establish constant attention toward God are:

1. Brother Lawrence (Practicing the Presence of God) a C17th Carmelite Friar who worked in the kitchen but sought to constantly be in the presence of God.
2. Frank C Laubach (Letters by a Modern Mystic) a missionary who encouraged Christians to consider God for one second in every minute.

### A Strategy

- Find a motif for each day and constantly return to it. Maybe from your morning Bible reading.
- Commit it to memory in the morning; write it out; put it somewhere easy - phone wallpaper?
- Return to it again and again. Ask that the Spirit would keep it in your mind.
- Turn it into a prayer, and try *doing* what it says!

Peter used the above strategy with an example: *It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20v35) asking himself: How can I "give" in a conversation? How can I stop "taking"?

### Who are you becoming?

The Spiritual Health Reflection produced by JM Comer helps you to thoughtfully examine this question in your own life and identify next steps in your apprenticeship with Jesus.

<http://practicingtheway.org/reflection>

- **What strategies for spiritual growth can Collective members suggest to the group? How can these be adapted for those who have little time available?**
- **How can we encourage spiritual growth within the Collective?**

**Maybe, share Peter's closing prayer together as part of your commitment to our apprenticeship to Jesus Lord, do not let me rest content with an ideal of humanity that is less than what was shown to us in Jesus. Give me the mind of Christ. May I not rest until I am like him in all his fulness. May I listen to his words and let them abide in me. As I do so, my faith, hope and love be more and more formed within me, until all I do and say brings honour to Jesus and his Gospel. Amen**

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