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Conformed To His Image
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We are living in a time when we should be hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. The Holy Spirit wants to deliver us from calamity; we find that in the 91st Psalm, deliverance and protection are proclaimed to us. If there is a check in your spirit maybe the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you something, we must pay attention to him.

Prior to teaching from Ephesians chapter 4, there are things that will be pointed out in order for us to receive the whole picture of what Jesus has done for us. Learning what is required of us, we learn that the cleaning or growing process does not happen immediately, but is a process which takes a lifetime, we are continually changing if we are to be conformed to His image.

Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 3 that in our new birth we have liberty not being under the law anymore. And that he would continue to pray for them in order for them to not use this liberty to satisfy their flesh.

Gal 4:19 *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,"*
KJV

Rom 6:4 *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* KJV

1 Cor 3:1-3 *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* KJV

1 Cor 3:3 *"For you are still [unspiritual, having the nature] of the flesh [under the control of ordinary impulses]. For as long as [there are] envying and jealousy and wrangling and factions among you, are you not unspiritual and of the flesh, behaving yourselves after a human standard and like mere (unchanged) men?"* AMP

Rom 8:29 *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."* KJV

Being conformed to His image is our ultimate goal.

We are going to now see this new found life, we will be able to identify with it, the character that we have now in the light, compared to the old way we had in darkness.

Eph 4: 11-31 *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,¹⁸ Having the understanding darkened, being*

alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice “KJV

This chapter 4 in Ephesians tells us what it means to be born again. Jesus taught on the Sermon on the Mount about being a doer of the Word. Many people go through their adult life as a Christian and never allow Jesus to be the Lord of their life because they are not a doer of the Word.

Col 3:14 *"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."* KJV

Whatever you do, put on the walk of love.

Phil 2:12-13 *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* New English

Religion has a tendency to make people think that they have to become good enough and then they can come to church and be saved, but this is error. The truth is that God loves us and accepts us just like we are. Because of His divine love He wants to change us into His image by the renewing of the mind and that we are no longer conformed to the ways of the world, but become transformed and are known by the ways of God in order for others to see the character of God in us.

Paul taught that we would be known by the fruit of the Spirit in contrast to the works of the flesh. The epistles were written to the church, those born-again people, most of whom were spirit filled. The religious world does not know that they are guidelines in order for the church to learn how to walk by the Spirit and to take on the image of Jesus.

Gal 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* KJV

Eph 4:11-16 *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the*

fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." KJV

The five-fold ministry was given in order that we should grow, not having to stay as babes in the Lord. It is a challenge in order for us to grow spiritually, but if we will consistently be in the Word, attending services and having a devotional time we will start growing though it will take time. Many do not stay in long enough to help, they are continually in and out. Mark 4 tells about those who never develop their lives in order to build up the body.

Building up the body of Christ requires all of us. We don't want to be children tossed to and fro, but we need to grow up, the truth being spoken in love. Part of the five-fold ministry is to speak the truth but to bath it in love.

Eph 4:17-30 *"And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion. 20-24 But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you. 25 What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. 26 Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life. 28 Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work. 29 Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. 30 Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted." Message*

We have all brought excess baggage with us into the Kingdom of God and it must be removed from our lives. Spiritually speaking radical surgery or change will be required in order for us to be set free. Radical surgery healing takes time.

Eph 4:17-30 *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off*

concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption " KJV

Lasciviousness means an excess in a shameful way, they have no conscious, they give themselves to their feelings only. No right or wrong.

Eph 4:31 " *31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: " KJV*

"Put away" means a decisive act, this does not require prayer or counseling. "PUT IT AWAY", deal with it. You may need to pray and ask God to help you with it.

Eph 4:17-30 " *And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion. 20-24 But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you. 25 What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. 26 Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life. 28 Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work. 29 Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. 30 Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted." Message*

Challenge given to the body of believers regarding their actions toward new believers, or visitors or criticism. It is our responsibility to do our part. We have to get over being luke-warm, our priorities must be Him first. There is a price to pay for the good things of God. There is fruit in Bible study, prayer and staying in the Word. Any kind of change in our lives makes us unsure sometimes.

Phil 2:12-13 " *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only,*

but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." KJV

Don't hang onto things that don't show the character of Jesus. We all make mistakes and must learn to overcome as we continue to grow in Him. Change is painfully slow even for the "older" believer.

Watch the words that we are saying to other people, encouraging and helping them, especially those new believers or those who have dealing with problem areas in their lives.

Gal 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." KJV

Let the Holy Spirit have His way in our lives, being lead by Him in all areas. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Give the Holy Spirit free reign in our lives. His "brand or seal" is upon us. Our behaviour should reflect this to others.

Eph 4:29-31 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:" KJV

Bitterness brings some ugly "step children", forgiveness is the highest form of love there is, we are the most Christ like when we forgive. Unforgiveness is a cancer that eats away on the inside of us. Bitterness is a result of not forgiving, it is something that is harbored on the inside. Bitterness is like stage 4 cancer, everything looks different when not dealt with, don't brood over it, don't keep it alive. Don't let Satan take advantage of you.

2 Cor 2:11 "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." KJV

Heb 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" KJV

Bitterness will cut us off from experiencing God's grace, the power of God working in us what we are unable to do for ourselves, then we are limited to our flesh. Bitterness cannot be hidden, pushed down and not dealt with. It is part of the baggage that we are carrying around. The fruit of bitterness can be seen, however, the fruit of the root of bitterness may not be seen, it is hidden or pushed down.

The fruit from the root of bitterness is:

- 1) wrath - explosive outward, blazes up then subsides, everything normal, really hurts those who were on the receiving end
- 2) anger - inside, can be seen on the outside, they hold in emotions, lasting resentment, holds offenses for extended periods of time,
- 3) malice -revenge, a subtle plan to remove someone permanently, a determination to hurt others,

laying awake trying to figure out a plan,

4) clamor - uncontrolled shouting and arguing, outward manifestation of anger, beat up others verbally, hollering, yelling

5) evil speaking - hurtful things said, dishonoring those called to the ministry, show respect

6) slanderous - sharp tongues with the view of hurting people, quit repeating what others are saying

Paul tells us that these roots must be dealt with us in our walk with the Lord if we are to be conformed to His image. We don't want to be hurt so we put walls up, those walls must come down and we have to deal with these things. It is for the purpose of growth. We must not be judging others, repeating what others are saying is a form of judging.

Rom 14:4 *"Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand."* KJV

Eph 4:32 *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* KJV

We must learn to forgive remembering what Jesus did for us. Being kind is something we become, being useful and helpful. We learn to do this; it is the character of Jesus. It is His nature. We are the bestower of forgiveness, we are not the victim.