

The Theology of Spiritual Formation in Christ – Part 1

Renovaré Institute Series Session 1

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This teaching series is from the Renovare' Institute. Renovare' means renewal – the renewal of the human self in strength and joy and love and goodness from God Himself.

1. About Knowledge of the Spiritual Life

Dallas begins with a look at the Apostle Paul's theology of transformation in 2 Corinthians 4. Paul is talking about the human condition as he lived it. He had a tough life and a triumphant and powerful life. He knew where his sources were.

2 Corinthians 4:6... *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give **the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

We have to have knowledge of the _____ life and how to _____ in it.

Faith is not enough. You have to have knowledge as the _____ of your _____.

Paul is clear: Knowledge is what we're after.

- Knowledge of how life works.
- Knowledge of who we are.
- Knowledge of why God created us.
- Knowledge of how we interact with Him.

This is about knowledge of the spiritual life. It is _____ knowledge. It is about how to live.

It answers the basic questions and needs of human existence.

The human quest is for knowledge on which to base life. That's secular as well as sacred because there is, before God, _____ between the secular and the sacred. It's all _____ for him.

God brings the knowledge we need to live an eternal kind of life...eternal living.

2. Importance of Knowledge of the Spiritual Life

a. Knowledge of God leads us to a glorious life

"...the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God..." [not just God, but the **glory** of God]

Glory is the effulgence of _____ and _____ and _____.

Your life is full of glory, but it's _____, like God's glory.



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Colossians 3:1-3...*your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

We lead a hidden life. There's coming a time when that hiddenness will go away.

Colossians 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him glorious.*

Matthew 13:43 *Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

b. Knowledge of God is treasure within us

2 Corinthians 4:7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us*

This verse gives us the contrast that is between the vessel and the treasure.

We all have the vessel. The vessel is the _____. We have to have a container. Our containers sometimes cause us a lot of trouble because we pay all the attention to the vessel and not enough to the _____.

The treasure is the _____ of God in us. It's _____ living in us. It's the life of Christ.

The contrast is:

ourselves
our abilities
our natural connections
the outward things that make up our lives
our body
our history
our family
our domination



Vessel

The power of God
that comes from Jesus Christ
as we receive Him into our lives
and let him live in us.



Treasure



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3. Knowledge is interactive relationship with Christ which leads to transformation into Christ-likeness

a. We are afflicted in every way

2 Corinthians 4:8...*we are afflicted in every way...*

You might think that Christ in us would solve our problems and, in a sense, it does, but the next words in this passage are “*we are afflicted in every way.*” That goes with the vessel and the response of those around us to the treasure that we carry.

2 Corinthians 4:11 *For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh.*

Contrast: We are _____ of the life of Jesus (treasure). It is what we have in our _____ (vessel).

The death we carry with us allows the life that is in us to _____ and that is the _____ that is in us.

The knowledge of the glory of God is something we live _____ with – knowledge, from a biblical perspective, is always _____.

Amos 3:2 *You only have I known of all the nations of the earth....* God knew other nations, but He was in a living, covenantal, interactive relationship with Israel and with no one else. That relationship is knowledge.

Here, again, is the contrast: Our earthly existence (our natural powers; good things; God made) and then the power of God – the vessel and the treasure.

Paul then describes the things that he lived through and it has worn him down.

The greater the weight of glory you carry, it seems the great the burdens that come. Reality seems to respond to abilities and _____ them. The outward vessel does get worn out by the treasure within.

2 Corinthians 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer man is decaying...*

It’s all downhill with the vessel. _____ is natural to the vessel, to the human condition.

Paul also suffered because of being the vessel and the treasure that he carried. The vessel gets worn out by the treasure. It is important to understand the need to take time to restore the vessel (rest, solitude, etc.).



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b. We are renewed day by day

2 Corinthians 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart, but **though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.***

Paul was a person who brought answers to the questions that philosophers in Greece had been struggling with for centuries. Plato, Aristotle, and others had tried to solve the problem of how people manage to live together. Paul solved that problem by bringing Christ and his gospel into the Roman world. The key to understanding human life is human _____. Paul brought into the world a new vision of how people live together and that came from Jesus. The vision is LOVE!

Love in relationship to the basic nature of reality is what Jesus brings into the world. **There is no other solution to human problems than learning to live with a God of love, in love with God, and, out of that, to learn how to love other people.**

4. Knowledge of God brings hope through eternal living

2 Corinthians 4:17 *Our momentary light afflictions work producing for us an eternal weight of glory...*

What would be an eternal weight of glory? It happens on the treasure side when decay is happening on the vessel side -- provided that life is lived in _____ with _____. It is *far beyond comparison* (v. 17).

All of our troubles are nothing when looked at in terms of the _____ that is setting us forward. There's a great future for the person who lives in grace and interactive relationship with _____ - not just a future after death, but a glorious future now. That is a major part of what we have to restore when we think about spiritual transformation into Christ-likeness.

This is how we do it:

2 Corinthians 4:18... *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The unseen is the key to understanding our lives.

We are "amphibious" creatures. We are living in the domain of the seen and the unseen. When I do the things I do, I am watching for the unseen. To do that well, I have to know that I am unseen; I am a spiritual being. **Understanding what that means [that I am fundamentally an unseen spiritual being] and setting it in the context of our activities is the path of spiritual formation in Christ-likeness.**

