



KHW IN HIS LIKENESS SERIES™

Reflections of His Image

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

**NANCY
MISSLER**



Reflections of His Image
God's Purpose for Your Life

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“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Foreword

“It’s the little foxes that ruin the vine.”

So wrote Solomon in one of his books contained in that ancient collection of divine wisdom that our Jewish friends call the *Tanakh* and that we Christians call the Old Testament. I was reminded of the enduring value of this wise King’s counsel as I read Nancy Missler’s delightful new book *Reflections of His Image*. That’s because *Reflections* reminds me that there is no shortcut to maturity.

As I read and re-read *Reflections*, I’m reminded that, in a similar vein, what matters along the journey is not the vision, dream or other Christian experience that predicts or describes the journey. Rather, *what matters is the perseverance that leads to the development of a truly eternal character*. In and of itself, no vision, dream or other experience can bring about that precious commodity within the life of any man or woman. *Christ-likeness is the only commodity that any mortal man or woman can carry of out this world into eternity*.

Reflections reminded me over and over again of the limited value Christians should place on looking to the future. *Now* is the season to see God work maturity

into our character. We must be in love with the One who shows Himself powerful enough to save and to deliver—and to forge our souls into mettle worthy of His service.

If you have lost your way on the journey of life for a season, ***Reflections of His Image: God's Purpose for Your Life*** may be just the thing to set you back on that sure and certain, straight and narrow road, headed to the place to which you were destined from the creation of the world.

William Welty

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Translators of the Holy Bible: International Standard Version®

Preface

“Only One Turned Back”

“And it came to pass, as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him *ten* men that were lepers, which stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. ***And [only] one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God. And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks...*** And Jesus answering said, were there not ten cleansed? *But where are the nine?* There are not found that returned to give glory to God, except this stranger.” (Luke 17:11-18)

Jesus is saying here that of the ten healed only *one* turned back, gave thanks and glorified the Lord. Why? Where were the other nine?

To me, this is shocking!

But we must ask ourselves the very same question. How many of us who have been made whole by Christ

have turned back, given thanks and are now glorifying Him in all we do? As Christians, we want to be personally energized by the Lord and have our prayers answered. But, many of us are not interested in humbling ourselves, sacrificing our wills and lives and showing forth His glory to others.

Yesterday Chuck and I received word about a dear Christian brother of ours (a childhood friend), who has been stricken with a brain hemorrhage. His wife told us that the prognosis is very bleak. This incident hits close to home because it makes us realize how very short life is here on earth. As young Christians, we don't think much about death or dying—it's a far off reality that we're not really interested in spending too much time contemplating. But as we grow older and we see those we love, and grew up with, fall sick and eventually die, it forces us to consider our own mortality. When all is said and done and we stand at eternity's threshold, how many of us will have the confidence that we—just like that one Samaritan man who fell down on his face and with a loud voice glorified God—have done our best to glorify God and show forth His image to the world? How many of us, at that point, will fall on our faces and give thanks for the life He gave us? Yes, and even thanks for the tragedies, the hard times and tears, because those were the times that made us more like Him.

I, personally, want to be like the *one* leper who turned back, fell on his face and with a loud voice thanked and glorified God. And the only way I know how to do that is to continue to live all He has taught me over the past 50 years that I have walked with Him. A dear prisoner recently wrote me and called my writings “*the knowledge of experience.*” I loved that and I think I understand exactly what he meant. When you’ve experienced the hard times, the testings and the pruning, you gain knowledge from them that many others may not have. Thus, you can authentically write about them—*from “the knowledge of experience.”*

With that in mind, the following book is humbly written as a personal thank-you to my precious Lord and to glorify Him who has given me the “knowledge of life,” and that very abundantly. (John 10:10b)

“I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy Name for evermore.” (Psalm 86:12)

Introduction

What is God's Purpose for our Lives?

2 Corinthians 3:18 is a Scripture that perfectly describes God's purpose for us as Christians: "We all... are [being] changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Let me tell you one of my favorite stories and see if it doesn't bring this Scripture to life. This is a true incident that happened years ago between a dear Christian friend of mine named Melody and her mom, Florence (who was not a believer).

Florence had gone to the same hairdresser for years. Every time she came back from her appointment, she would tell her daughter, "Honey, you have to meet Susie my hairdresser. *You both look exactly alike.*" Finally, Melody was home for a long enough visit that she consented to making an appointment with Susie. Needless to say, she was very anxious to meet this woman who supposedly "looked exactly like her."

When Melody walked into the hair salon and was introduced to Susie, she was startled to see no physical resemblance between them at all. Melody was very short, with a dark complexion and dark hair. She was very

pretty with rounded features. Susie, on the other hand, was very tall, blonde, skinny and had angular features. There were absolutely no physical similarities between them at all.

Of course, the mom was very excited to introduce them to each other. All three talked for a few minutes and then the mom made her apologies and left. Melody stood there awkwardly for a moment, and then hesitatingly asked Susie if her mom had also told her that they looked alike. “Of course,” Susie said, “for years she has told me that I look exactly like you. I am shocked and surprised to meet you.” “Me too,” said Melody.

While Melody was getting her hair cut, shampooed and set, she and Susie had a chance to share some details about their lives. It turned out they were both Christians and both were truly committed to living for the Lord. Melody’s mom, however, was not a believer. After thinking about it for a while, it dawned on them that the reason Melody’s unsaved mom thought they looked alike was probably because *she saw Jesus’ image in both of them*. It was *His* character, *His* Life and *His* Image that the mom evidently saw. Physically, Melody and Susie didn’t resemble each other in the least, but spiritually, they had the very same image.

I love this story because it shows the power we carry around with us when we allow Christ to live His Life out through us. Scripture tells us Christ is to be magnified

(reflected, glorified and shine forth) in our bodies and that whatever we do; we are to do for *His* glory.¹ 1 Peter 4: 11 summarizes it by saying, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if anyone minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.” Why? So “*that God in all things may be glorified.*”²

This is God’s purpose for our lives.

Transformed into His Likeness

We were created for God and His purposes, thus, our fulfillment will only come when we align ourselves with His design and His intentions.

Most of you who have picked up this book, I am assuming, are Christians. If you are, then ask yourself these questions. (Try to be honest with yourself!) ***When people look at you, do they see the characteristics of Christ?*** Like Melody’s mom, do they see His image? Is your life a reflection of His Love, joy and peace?

In one of his recent *Times Square Pulpit Series* articles, David Wilkerson said: “If I am not Christ-like at heart—if I’m not becoming noticeably more like Him—then I have totally missed God’s purpose for my life. It doesn’t matter what I accomplish for His kingdom. If I miss this one purpose, I have lived, preached and yes, striven in vain.”

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:20

² Psalm 115:1; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 15:6

And he continues, “Now, I help pastor what would be called a mega-church. I conduct minister’s conferences around the world, preaching to thousands at a time. I founded Teen Challenge, a Christian rehabilitation ministry for alcoholics and drug addicts, which now has 500 centers worldwide. I’ve written some twenty books, helped establish a Bible school, set up a home for abandoned mothers and their children. I’ve had honors heaped on me. *But if this isn’t my wife’s testimony—if she has a secret pain in her heart, thinking, ‘My husband isn’t the man of God he pretends to be’—then everything in my life is vain.* All my works—the preaching, the accomplishments, the charitable giving, the many travels—amount to nothing. I am a withering, useless branch that doesn’t bear the ‘fruit of Christ-likeness.’ Jesus will cause others to see the death in me, and I’ll be worth little to His kingdom.”

He finishes by saying: “God’s purpose is fulfilled in me only by what I am becoming in Him. Christ-likeness isn’t about what I *do* for the Lord, but about *how I’m being transformed into His likeness.*”³

The Holy Spirit Transforms Us

Christ gave us His Holy Spirit in order to help with this transformation. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and He is our comforter, counselor, helper, supporter, advisor, advocate and ally.^{4,5} When we became

³ David Wilkerson’s April ‘05 *Times Square Church Pulpit Series*

⁴ Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, pages 44, 56

⁵ Ephesians 1:3-13; 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14

believers, God's Spirit came to indwell us as a pledge, a seal or a mark of ownership, indicating that we now belong to God.⁶

This Spirit then, is the One that sets about conforming us into Christ's image. (2 Corinthians 3:18) His job is to make Christ's presence known to us first and, then through us, to others.

J. I. Packer in his wonderful book *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, says, "On the night of His betrayal Jesus said of the Spirit: 'He will glorify Me...' (John 16:14) That is, He shall make Me glorious in people's eyes by making them aware of the Father's glory in Me. That basic definition of what the Spirit was sent to do gives us a comprehensive directional frame of reference within which the whole of the Spirit's new covenant ministry should be seen, and apart from which no feature of that ministry can be adequately understood."

An Example: A Withering Useless Branch

The Bible tells us that no matter what difficulties we face, we are to bear Christ's likeness in all circumstances. We are to edify and encourage one another just as Jesus did, not tear each other down. God doesn't want us to just **have a revelation** of Christ, He wants us **to be a reproduction** of Christ.

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2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14

This hits close to home because I just heard about an incident that recently happened to a very dear Christian friend of mine. For the last several years, my friend has had serious life threatening heart problems. A few months ago, she was again confined to the hospital with heart pains. One of the pastors at her church heard about her illness and came to the hospital to see her with the pretext of ministering to her. However, his real motive for coming was to confront her over some issues at church. The stress of this encounter precipitated a mild heart attack three days later.

Where is the fruit of Christ-likeness here? Where is the compassion, the edification and the encouragement that Jesus would have ministered?

If for some reason a confrontation is needed, then we not only must be sensitive to the Lord's timing in which to do it, but also the Christ-like character that it is given in. No matter what the circumstances were, I know Jesus would *never* have confronted and argued with someone who was recovering from a recent heart attack. Another time and place could easily have been set up to discuss whatever issues remained.

Unfortunately, this story is all too common among Christians these days. The hurt, devastation and feeling of betrayal left after an incident like this is crippling. What's going on here? Aren't we supposed to be lifting each other up? Aren't we supposed to be praying for one

another and sharing one another's burdens? That's what Jesus would do. Scripture tells us that we are to reflect *Him* in all circumstances, no matter what the difficulties are.

As Wilkerson said, *if we are not Christ-like at heart (and I will include in all our actions), then we have totally missed God's purpose for our lives.*

Our Purpose as Christians

The Bible tells us that our purpose is to be conformed into the image of Christ so that we can glorify Him in all we do. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of His Son.*" (Romans 8:29)

We are to comfort, encourage, edify and strengthen one another, as Jesus would do. Yes, there will be times when we must confront one another in love and stand strong, but certainly not be so insensitive as to pick a fight in a hospital room! 1 John 4: 17 confirms: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because *as He is, so are we in this world.*"

Being conformed into Christ's image is the *goal* of the Christian life. In other words, simply being *born in the spirit* at our new birth is **not** enough. We need to learn how to *walk in the Spirit*, how to *show forth His Love* and

how to *live His Life*. We need to put in our actions, what we already possess in our heart. This is the purpose of our existence as Christians. We are to be changed from the “inside out” and begin to reflect His likeness and His image.⁷ We are to love with *His Love*;⁸ share from *His* wisdom; walk in *His* power; extend *His* peace, patience and joy; and be *His* arms and legs to one another. In the above hospital example and the thousands of other ungodly incidents I hear about, where is God’s Love? Where is His wisdom? Where is His compassion?

Again, we are made for God and our fulfillment in this life lies only in allowing Him to mold and sculpt us into His image. “Glorifying God” simply means reflecting His likeness in all we do. It means unlearning all our old ways of thinking and doing, and allowing Him to show forth, manifest and express His characteristics through us. It means removing every hindrance, every obstacle and every blockage in our life that quenches His Spirit, so that He may be clearly seen through us, just as the Father was perfectly seen through Jesus. As Hebrews 1:3 says, “Jesus, who was “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.”

Jesus even goes further and says in John 5:31, “If I bear witness of Myself, my witness is not true.” Wow! If Jesus says this of Himself, oh my goodness, how much more it must be true for us! We are to bear witness of God’s image, not our own.

⁷ Galatians 4:19; Romans 8:29

⁸ If you have read any of my other books on love, particularly *The Way of Agape*, you’ll remember that God’s Love has two sides to it: one side is a longsuffering and patient Love; the other side is a tough Love. Both sides make up God’s unconditional Love. And, it’s His wisdom that will tell us which type of Love to use for our individual circumstances.

The Key to Revival

I am totally convinced that genuinely reflecting the Lord in all that we think, say and do is the key to revival. Seeing “living examples” of Christ is what will bring our sons and daughters, our friends and acquaintances to the Lord. When they see Christ’s real Love, hear His supernatural wisdom and experience His power through us, they’ll know that *yes, Jesus is real. He is alive. And He cares!* Nothing will bring others to saving knowledge of Christ faster than seeing genuine living examples. And nothing will turn them away quicker than phoniness and hypocrisy. Therefore, glorifying, manifesting and reflecting Christ in everything is our highest attainment in this life. It’s the reason we were called, the purpose of our lives and what will bring others to Christ.

In order to evaluate your own progress towards this end, ask yourself these three simple questions: Does being a Christian make a difference in my life? Does Christ’s character flow forth from me? Do others see the Love of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit in me?

Again, God doesn’t just want us to have a revelation of Christ, He wants us to be a reflection of Him.

The question is: How do we become a reproduction of Christ? How are we conformed into His image? What must we do? What are the steps?

That's what this book is all about...