



Part 4: The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation

Luke 6:39-40

To become like Jesus, we need the Holy Spirit to guide and empower our spiritual training.

I. Jesus: A Man Like No Other

God's Word teaches us that God wants to make us like Jesus – that spiritual transformation is possible for us to become like Jesus.

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

II. Spiritual Training not Trying

“He also told them a parable: ‘Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.’” Luke 6:39-40

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; we do it to get a crown that will last forever.” 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” 1 Timothy 4:8

III. The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation (see diagram)



A. The Holy Spirit is God's empowering presence.

The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus, and He is the way we are now with Jesus and the Father. He is our guide into truth, and He is the source of God's life and power to live in the kingdom of God as disciples of Jesus (John 14:15-21; 15:1-4; 16:1-15; Galatians 5:16-25).

B. God's word is truth.

Scripture is God's word to us, and the Holy Spirit uses God's word to teach us about reality (John 3:34; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Left to ourselves, we all believe lies (1 John 5:19). Becoming more like Jesus starts with having our minds renewed to think more like Jesus (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:11-16).

C. Healing and Wholeness

The Holy Spirit leads us deeper into God's healing and wholeness so we can experience God's love and live in His love (Isaiah 61:1-4; Matthew 8:14-17; Romans 5:5; 8:14-17; Ephesians 3:14-19; 1 John 4:7-21).

D. Practices of Jesus

Jesus told us that we must practice what we learn from him for it to become more of our experienced reality (Matthew 5:19; 7:24-27; John 8:31-32).

We learn practices from Jesus through observing his lifestyle and rhythms; his teachings; and his ministry and mission.

"The Jesus way wedded to the Jesus truth brings about the Jesus life." – Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*

E. *Hesed* Community

We are called by Jesus into the covenant community His disciples, who love one another with God's love (1 John 4:7-21). This is God's sacrificial, selfless *agape* love that embodies God's covenantal faithfulness (*hesed*). This is the kind of love that forms deep attachments to one another that are able to overcome our sin against one another through forgiveness. Without this kind of love, none of us changes very much.

F. Suffering

God has chosen to use suffering of all kinds to form us into the likeness of Jesus (Romans 5:1-4; James 1:2-3; Hebrews 2:10-18).

IV. The Great Invitation & Miracle of Transformation

"We are invited to make a pilgrimage – into the heart and life of God...God's desire for us is that we should live in Him. He sends us the Way to Himself...God makes Himself and His kingdom available to us...Jesus offers himself as God's doorway into the life that is truly life. Confidence in him leads us today, as in other times, to become his apprentices in eternal living." – Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

Discussion Questions:

1. What have you been taught about the way we are formed into the likeness of Jesus?
2. Look at the following Scriptures: Luke 6:39-40; 1 Corinthians 9:24-25; 1 Timothy 4:8. What is the difference between training and trying?
3. Consider the diagram and the various dynamics of spiritual formation. Consider these as necessary aspects of your spiritual training. Which ones do you embrace the most? Which ones are new to you?
4. In this series, have you discerned the Holy Spirit saying anything to you? If so, what could be your next steps?