Transformation

April 15, 2023 Cincinnati North

As a young boy I wondered why people have bad thoughts.

Why are we prone to evil more than to good?

Why is it easier to think and do wrong than to think and do right?

I knew that about myself. I asked that in religion/catechism class conducted by our priest.

I cannot remember exactly what the answer was then, but have thought and wondered about it a lot afterwards. The priest did confirm that you had to work at and be intentional about being “good.” Righteous.

Here are a few biblical references giving us insight into the Nature of Man

Jeremiah 17:9-10 New Living Translation (NLT)

“The human heart is **the most deceitful of all things,** and **desperately wicked.** Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.”

Eph 2:1-3 Here’s another clue

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. NKJV

**SatanCon The Satanic Temple Evil is not just lurking in the background. It has come out of the closet.**

**This is a “church” and a religion. They want to do invocations.
II Tim 3:2 In the Last Days men will particularly become fierce.**

**Evil is good**

**The Christian Mission**

Rom 12:1-2

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**And, that’s what I want to talk about today. The Transformation process and what constitutes it. Dimensions of Depth and Time - steps**

* A process with steps that build upon one another
* Not something that is a one-time event

 **STEP 1**

Baby steps

1 Cor 5:1-8

* An act of immorality in the Corinthian church.
* Paul instructed that the offending parties be removed from fellowship.
* The people were tolerant of what was going on, even “glorying.”

6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** (we change from malice and wickedness to sincerity and truth)

Holy Days are about this progression and ultimately building of a new society – a transformed society from what we have now.

The end / outcome is eternal life in the Kingdom of God with salvation open / available to all.

We start with a very personal relationship with Jesus Christ through forgiveness and a commitment to obedience through the Days of Unleavened Bread as a way of life leading to CHANGE.

What is it we CHANGE??? What are some of the CHANGES?

The easiest commands and instructions to obey are the physical manifestations regarding the Days of UB.

Leaven. Make sure it’s out of the home and car and other places that are our property. We know it represents something far more profound.

Clean, sweep, vacuum etc. Feel good about doing it. Actually quite easy and straightforward.

* Remove leaven (malice and wickedness)
* Eat Unleavened bread as a reminder of sincerity and truth

The BEST KEPT COMMANDMENTS are doing physical things. We can feel smug proud and righteous in doing so.

We know **academically** what we’re doing represents.

As part of this transformation process, we start keeping the Letter of the Law. Obey the Commandments as we see and read them.

As they were given to the nation of Israel.

Basic evangelism. Relationship to God and Jesus Christ is taught through the clear teachings of the law of God and its clear application in our everyday conduct.

* Put God first!
* Idolatry, blasphemy
* Sabbath – sunset to sunset
* Honor parents. Straightforward. Still honor who may have not been the best. Without them, you wouldn’t exist.
* Don’t murder
* Don’t commit adultery
* Don’t steal – in our church culture we don’t do that.
* Don’t lie – know it’s wrong.
* Don’t covet. The only commandment without a letter of the law component.

It’s about RELARIONSHIP with God and Man

His Commands are not Grievous (I John 5:3)

In the Old Testament when they were first codified, we have no record of any promise of salvation for keeping the Law.

Neither was there anything more than the Letter of the Law revealed as we see it was Don’t kill, don’t commit adultery, don’t steal.

Harmony of the Gospels at Ambassador College – RCM We all should be able to keep the letter of the law fully.

 **Step 3**

**Spirit of the Law and Obedience from the heart / Hypocrisy/ Fake Christianity/**

Transformation becomes a bit more difficult. **RUBBER BAND = resisting human nature**

**Sermon on the Mount.**

* Most quoted
* Most popular sermon by Christ
* Most preached on
* Least practiced

Christ dealt with the hard issues of abuse, unfairness, injustice, damaged relationships, and overcame with not only His preaching

Matt 5:21-26

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' (Aramaic' **worthless' or ' empty')** shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Anger without a cause and hatred towards a brother is violating the 6th Commandment. “You shall do no murder.”

**23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

**25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.**

**[Getting along and making peace]**

 **Obeying God’s Law teaches us to Love God and to love our fellow man!**

**Christ taught keeping the Spirit of the Law – what behind it**

Matt 5:27-30

The same is true regarding adultery.

Adultery in the Heart

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Take drastic measures. Cut off sinful relationships, Internet, Change your IP, Provider. They are looking for you and will exploit your weaknesses. No more secret life.

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**If there was any sin or character flaw that Christ called out, it was hypocrisy.**

**Hypocrisy. Subset Commandment 9** Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness!

Especially of the religious leaders: they projected a righteousness, but it was an image, show. FAKE

Jeremiah = Human heart is **deceitful** above all things and **desperately wicked**

**Rubber band tightens**

Mark 7:1-23

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you **hypocrites**, as it is written: (Is 29:13-19)

**'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'**

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." [this was an end in itself]

 Cf. Matt 23:23-39 Tithing

9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" — ' (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. 16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" [Christ really gets into the innards of this point!]

17 When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18 So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" [the food is no longer causing the non-hygienic effect]

**20 And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, [Jeremiah] lewdness [indecent, offensive, licentious conduct], an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man."** NKJV

**Cover this at baptismal counselling – repent of not only what you do, but what you are**

Vanity, jealousy, lust and greed????

The rubber band tightens -- if it’s limp, you’re not doing very much!

Hypocrisy is a stumbling block.

Have you heard anyone speak, but you know better about their character? What planet is he from?

Biggest stumbling block for children is when they see their parents speaking evil of people at home and then pretending to be righteous in front of others.

So many FAKES Fake news, fake people,
Photos can be created that give one impression but cleverly change the original.

So, can Christians can be fake

**Luke 18:9-14 OPTIONAL Pharisee and Publican**

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

David was not a hypocrite. You can tell that in his psalms

* Ps 39:6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: KJV
* Psalm 51. Restore a Clean heart in me.
* I Sam 13:14 Acts 13:22 A man after God’s own heart!

One injunction to all of us is to recognize and get rid of deceit. Recognize it. Are you Genuine? In which ways are we fake?

[1 Peter 2:1](https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/2-1.html)

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. [This involves what comes OUT OF YOU]

[1 Peter 3:10](https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/3-10.html)

10 For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. [I love you, hugs, but seething hatred]

[Jeremiah 9:6](https://www.biblestudytools.com/jeremiah/9-6.html)

6 You live in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me,” declares the LORD.

[Psalms 5:6](https://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/5-6.html)

6 you destroy those who tell lies. The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, LORD, detest.

Many many more. Go online and in the address bar type in scripture about deceit

Matt 12:34

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

The danger of hypocrisy is that you start fooling yourself. You believe your own lies. You sin against the Spirit of God that is to keep you on the straight and narrow.

You believe in the fake person you are.

Social media

I’m not done with this subject yet. As we become transformed we move on to even to higher challenge of transformation.

**STEP 4**

**Advanced Transformation. Caution. Here we get into the hard sayings of Christ. Hard for us at any stage of our life.**

**The Spirit of the law and learning to love your fellow human being.**

**For advanced users; it gets harder; the rubber band tightens.**

Get the right tools.

**Sermon on the Mount.**

* Most quoted
* Most popular sermon by Christ
* Most preached on
* Least practiced

Christ dealt with the hard issues of abuse, unfairness, injustice, damaged relationships, and overcame with not only His preaching but His example.

We are to be like Him! Christ-like

Let’s go to the sermon on the Mount – I’ve already read from here about the spirit of murder and adultery.

Matt 5:11-12 starts right with the beatitudes

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Peter 2:18-25

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ESV

Matt 5:38-42 Hard sayings! STOP!! Here’s where we can lose people.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist [not pacifism] an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. NKJV

Matt 5:43-48

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. NKJV

Matt 6:1-4 motive not trumpeting, but explaining what we are doing.

6 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. NKJV [focus on outcome, not the donor]

Matt 6:12-15 Model prayer

12 and **forgive** us our debts, as we also have **forgiven** our debtors. [Not a benign statement]
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
14 For if you **forgive** others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you, 15 but if you do not **forgive** others their trespasses, neither will your Father **forgive** your trespasses. ESV

**FORGIVE THEM, THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!**

 **Grudges and payback**

**Resentment**

**Hatred**

**UKRAINE**

**[Handout from University of New Hampshire]**

Matt 7:1-5

7 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 **Hypocrite!** First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. NKJV

Matt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [these are the hypocrites!] NKJV

Matt 7:28-29

8 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes

**Summary**

We are to be transformed

At baptism you make a commitment to Christ, but what does that mean?

Repent and Be Baptized and become TRANSFORMED!

1. Put out the leaven – JUST THE START
2. Obey the letter of the law
3. Be a Genuine Christian. Not FAKE. Spirit of the Law. Obey from the heart. Not a Hypocrite
4. Apply and practice the hard sayings of Christ

Go back to the beginning

Why do we lean towards evil?

1. Made that way
2. Spirit of the Devil
3. We must be transformed

Gal 2:20-3:1

20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.