

## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



# Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

*Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.*

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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# Spiritual Formation

## The Theology of Transformation: How God Actually Changes a Person

### Introduction

Transformation is one of the most desired yet misunderstood aspects of the Christian life. Many believers long for change, yet often approach it through effort, emotion, or self-improvement. Scripture presents something far deeper: transformation as a theological reality rooted in God's work, not human striving. This handout will guide you through how God actually changes a person—structurally, spiritually, and practically.

### 1. The Order of Salvation (Ordo Salutis)

Transformation does not exist in isolation; it is part of God's complete work of salvation. Theologically, this is known as the Ordo Salutis—the order of salvation. This includes calling, regeneration, justification, union with Christ, sanctification, and glorification. Many believers only focus on being saved and going to heaven, but transformation occurs in the process between. If you misunderstand this process, you will misinterpret your progress.

### 2. Union with Christ

At the center of transformation is union with Christ. This is not metaphorical but a real spiritual union accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Scripture repeatedly uses the language "in Christ" to describe the believer's position. You are united with Christ in His death, resurrection, and life. Transformation does not come through imitation alone, but

participation. You are not trying to become like Christ—you are becoming who you already are in Him.

### **3. Sanctification: Already and Ongoing**

Sanctification has two dimensions: definitive and progressive. Definitive sanctification means you have already been set apart for God (1 Corinthians 6:11). Progressive sanctification means you are continually being transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18). The tension is critical: you are already set apart, yet still being transformed. If you ignore one side, you either fall into striving or passivity. True growth happens when you live from identity while engaging the process.

### **4. The Role of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the active agent of transformation. He applies the work of Christ to your life, illuminates truth, convicts of sin, reshapes desires, and empowers obedience. Transformation is not self-powered, nor is it passive. It is Spirit-empowered participation. As Philippians 2:12–13 reveals, you work because God is working in you. The Spirit does not bypass your will—He transforms it.

### **5. The Means of Grace**

God has appointed ordinary means through which transformation takes place: the Word, prayer, community, and obedience. These are not the source of power, but the places where God meets you. Transformation is not random—it occurs as you consistently engage these means. You do not drift into transformation; you are formed into it. Neglecting them leads to stagnation; misusing them leads to legalism. Properly understood, they position you for God's ongoing work.

## **Conclusion**

Transformation is not uncertain. It is the inevitable result of being united with Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and formed through the means of grace. You are not trying to

become something new through effort; you are learning to live from what God has already accomplished. The question is not whether God is working—but whether you are **aligning your life with His work.**