

16. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S SON?

INTRODUCTION

Romans 8

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. **Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

14 For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.** cf. John 6:53, 63

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Christ conformed to the image of His Father and in the beginning they created man in their **image** and after their **likeness** (Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:13-18; cf. Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Matt. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:16). When man sinned, he lost that image and likeness. But Christ came to save man from His sins and to encourage man to again be conformed to the Divine image:

Colossians 3

10 ...put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him... cf. Col. 1:13-18

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S SON?

1. **Conformed to the image of God's Son** is embodied in Rom. 8:9 which declares: "**If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His**". And "**the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**" (Gal. 5:22-23) and "**goodness, righteousness and truth**" (Eph. 5:9).

2. **If we are to conform to the image of God's Son, we must be born again, born of water and the Spirit** (John 3:3, 5) in which one takes upon himself the image and nature of the One who has begotten him (cf. John 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; James 1:18; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).

3. **If we are to conform to the image of God's Son, it must be reflected in the new life that follows baptism:**

Romans 6

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

4. **If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must reflect what it means to be in Christ:**

2 Corinthians 5

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

5. **If followers of Christ conform to the image of God's Son, there will be striking family resemblances:**

Matthew 12

49 And He [*Christ*] stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"

50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

6. **If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must abstain from sinful worldly ways:**

John 17

15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." –*Christ* cf. James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17

Romans 13

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

7. **If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must acquire the mind of Christ:**

Philippians 2

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...

Colossians 3

10 ...put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

12 Therefore... put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

1 John 2

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

8. If we conform to the image of God's Son, then we must live a life that is holy, righteous and undefiled before God:

Hebrews 7

26 For such a High Priest [Christ] was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...

1 Corinthians 3

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Ephesians 1

4 God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love

Ephesians 4

22 ...you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

1 Peter 1

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...

9. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must humble ourselves before God:

Philippians 2

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He [Christ] humbled Himself... cf. Matt. 11:29; 26:39; 2 Cor. 10:1; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12

10. If we conform to the image of God's Son,

then we must love as He loved:

John 13

34 [Christ said:] "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Ephesians 5

2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us... cf. 1 John 3:10 - 5:3

11. If we conform to the image of God's Son, will we not reflect joy and pleasure in doing the will of the Heavenly Father?

John 15

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

And the writer of Hebrews exhorted:

Hebrews 12

1 ...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame...

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

12. One cannot conform to the image of God's Son without having a love for souls and an intense desire to bring about the salvation of others. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). The Messiah's name was to be called "Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). He came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32) and to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:9-11). And Christ has asked His followers to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I [Christ] have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20; cf.

Mark 16:15-16; Acts 5:42; 8:4; 19:9-10; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23; 2 Tim. 2:1-2).

13. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must follow after things which make for peace. Jesus is the **Prince of Peace** (Isa. 9:6). He has shown mankind the way of peace (Isa. 11:1-10). He died to make it possible for penitent sinners to be at peace with God. He died to bring about peace between Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:11-16). We have been called by His gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15; 2 Thess. 2:14) to live in peace with God and with one another.

Hebrews 12

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord...

Romans 12

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Romans 14

19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. cf. Eph. 4:3; James 3:17-18

14. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we will spend much of our time in prayer.

Hebrews 5

7 ...in the days of His flesh...He... offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear...

Philippians 4

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Colossians 3

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1 Thessalonians 5

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks...

15. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must live lives that are righteous and godly:

1 John 2

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is

born of Him.

1 John 3

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Titus 2

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...

Acts 10

34 ...“God shows no partiality.

35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”

16. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we must be willing to deny self in order to submit to our Lord's will for our lives:

Luke 9

23 Then *Jesus* said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

Romans 15

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

3 For even Christ did not please Himself...

1 John 3

16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17. If we conform to the image of God's Son, we will become servants:

Matthew 20

28 “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Philippians 2

7 *Christ* made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant...

Jesus demonstrated the importance of this to His apostles when they quarreled about who would be the greatest (Luke 22:24-27). He later took a towel and basin of water, washed their feet and said to them: “**If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to**

you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:14-17).

18. If we conform to the image of God’s Son, we must strive for maturity and sinless perfection:

1 Peter 2

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; cf. 1Pet. 1:19; 1 John 3:5

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously...

Matthew 5

48 “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” –*Jesus Christ*

1 John 3

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. cf. Matt. 5:48

1 John 5

18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

Revelation 3

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

19. If we conform to the image of God’s Son, we must be submissive and obedient to the Heavenly Father:

John 5

30 “...I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” –*Jesus Christ*

Luke 22

42 “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” –*Jesus Christ*

Philippians 2

8 And being found in appearance as a man, *Jesus* humbled Himself and became obedient to

the point of death, even the death of the cross.

20. If we conform to the image of God’s Son, we must follow His example (1 Pet. 2:21) and in turn reflect an accurate translation of His image in our lives. Expressed another way, Christ is the light of the world (John 1:4-9; 8:12) and Christians are to reflect that light in a manner that will cause others to glorify God (Matt. 5:14-16).

21. If we conform to the image of Christ then we must forgive as He forgave.

Luke 23

34 [*On the cross:*] Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

Colossians 3

12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

22. If we conform to the image of Jesus Christ, then we must take a profound interest in the church He promised to build (Matthew 16:18), **purchased with His own blood** (Acts 20:28) **and loved enough to die for** (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:22-32). Note: lessons that follow in this series will explore this farther.

23. And if we conform to the image of Jesus Christ, we will do our part in contributing to the unity of His followers for which He prayed:

John 17

20 “I do not pray for these (*apostles*) alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

CONCLUSION:

Our conforming to the image of God's Son in this life is preparatory for the image that God's people will have in the heavenly kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15

49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Philippians 3

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

1 John 3

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

--David W. Echols Sr.