

TRANSFORMED

By

HIS SPIRIT

2 Cor 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

*‘Becoming who we really are by
Beholding who He really is’.*

By Rob Bruce

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INTRODUCTION

Why write a manual on our identity in Christ?

God's highest purpose for us is that we 'be transformed into His image' – and being transformed is all about identity! Church culture has often made conversion the main focus and end, resulting in a serious image problem with the younger generation. We don't look like Jesus and they aren't fooled or interested.

Transformation goes far beyond asking 'what would Jesus do?' We are human *beings* not human 'doings'. God is love - and when I'm walking in love I'm fulfilling His purpose. I'm radiating Him. I'm real. Doing loving things becomes an overflow of His presence.

This is not another 'how to' manual for religious perfectionists but rather a relationship guide to connect you to your loving Heavenly Father. You can actually experience how loved and valuable you really are. He wants to destroy the lies in your head telling you that you're worthless.

Finally Proverbs 23: 7 says that 'as a man thinks in his heart – so is he'. In other words, *how you really see yourself affects all that you do!* Seeing yourself through God's eyes will transform your priorities! Therefore, knowing who you are in Christ is basic to your wholeness as a believer.

On a practical note, each lesson in this manual is able to stand alone, yet each one also lays a foundation for the next. So there is some overlap in order for the truths of each study to harmonize.

Each lesson includes at least one main text of scripture. (From 2Cor 3:1 to 4:13) I suggest you read slowly. Digest it. Meditate and reflect on these truths as you prayerfully apply them to your life.

You will find lasting transformation and *become who you really are by beholding who He really is.*

PREFACE

Jesus was always messing with people's heads.

On one occasion, He couldn't contain His joy at 'offering time'. It wasn't the self-centered 'sugar daddies' dumping their obscene amounts of cash in the plate that caught his attention, but rather a poor widow quietly dropping less than two pennies. He almost lost it! What's with that?

At a meeting with the local ministerial, a prostitute unashamedly interrupts them and proceeds to kiss Jesus' feet - pouring out her love and affection toward Him. And He doesn't even blink an eye! He wasn't even mildly embarrassed by her presence or behavior.

Crossing the tracks, He unapologetically invites Himself to lunch with the despised town crook and turncoat. This taxman's 'clients' were spitting bricks as the two merrily walked away together. What was this so-called 'Prophet' so happy about? They didn't get it.

Then there's His painfully imperfect disciples with no formal training and no 'credentials' - strange. And worse yet, the first person Jesus commissions with the good news of His resurrection is a woman who'd been severely demonized! His 'leadership team' would have miserably failed to qualify for many of today's churches.

Or think about Jesus washing the feet of the traitor responsible for His crucifixion. He knew what Judas was about to do. Jesus' friend broke His heart and yet He nonetheless showed him 'the depths of His love.' How does any of this make sense?

To Him it all made perfect sense. Jesus saw something in people that most of us miss. He saw behind the image that we oh so carefully reflect to others. You know the one - the mirror that hides who we really are for fear of rejection. Jesus sees *that* guy. And the guy that most people reject - THAT'S the one who Jesus and His Father get giddy over. *He values you as you are - period.*

Jesus wasn't just trying to irritate people with the company He kept. He really did love and see worth in them. Why? Because God looks at the heart (behind our mirror) while 'man looks at the outer appearance.'

Jesus was a straight shooter. He never hesitated to shatter any religious mirrors. He relentlessly goes straight for the heart- if we'll let Him. More than that - He gets IN our hearts and changes them with His love. He sees in you what most others miss. And guess what? He's crazy about what He sees. Or rather *who* He sees. But the best part is that there's nothing you can do to stop Him. He just loves you.

Rob

Table of Contents

Lesson 1 – A Revelation of the Father’s Heart.....	4
Lesson 2 – From Servants to Sons.....	9
Lesson 3 – Counterfeit Identities.....	20
Lesson 4 – Our True Identity in Christ.....	30
Lesson 5 – Demolishing Strongholds.....	40
Lesson 6 – The Key to Freedom.....	54
Lesson 7 – Transforming Our Relationships.....	69
Fill in the Blank Statements.....	74

CHAPTER OUTLINE

LESSON 1: A REVELATION OF THE FATHER'S HEART

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONCEPT OF GOD

CHRIST'S MISSION - REFLECTING THE FATHER'S COMPASSION TO US

BLOCKAGES TO SEEING THE FATHER'S HEART

BREAKING THROUGH THE DARK CLOUDS

LESSON 2: FROM SERVANTS TO SONS

SERVANT/SLAVES - (OLD COVENANT)

THE NATURAL MAN'S (RELIGIONS) POTENTIAL

ARE WE LISTENING OR LABOURING?

4 KEYS TO HEARING HIS VOICE

ESTABLISHING OUR IDENTITY

LESSON 3: COUNTERFEIT IDENTITIES

SELF- WORTH THROUGH OUR OBJECTS OF WORSHIP

BEHOLDING AND BECOMING

MINISTRY CENTERED

WORK CENTERED

MONEY AND POSSESSION CENTERED

SPOUSE CENTERED

FAMILY CENTERED

LESSON 4: OUR TRUE IDENTITY IN CHRIST

IDENTITY AND DESTINY

WHO ARE YOU?

DISTORTED MIRRORS

MATURING AS SONS

PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE

SMASHING YOUR MIRRORS (LIES)

ROOTING OUT THE SHAME – BASED IDENTITY

LESSON 5: DEMOLISHING STRONGHOLDS

BECOMING WHAT WE BEHOLD

PUT ON YOUR NEW IDENTITY

PREPARING OUR HEART

DECLARING OUR IDENTITY

MEDITATION

LESSON 6: THE KEY TO FREEDOM

THE FLESH (SELF-LIFE) - IT'S POTENTIAL

RESULTS OF EXCHANGED LIFE

THE RESULT OF BEING IN ADAM

WHAT WE NOW HAVE IN CHRIST

THE GOOD NEWS - THE FINISHED WORK

SIX STEPS FROM ROMANS SIX TO OVERCOMING SLAVERY TO SEX
ADDICTION

LESSON 7: TRANSFORMING OUR RELATIONSHIP'S

HOW SHOULD I TREAT THOSE WHO MISTREAT ME?

THE LAW OF GRACE

THE LAW OF JUDGING

THE LAW OF INCREASE

THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

FOUR STEPS TO FREEDOM FROM THE LOVE OF LAW

FILL IN THE BLANK STATEMENTS

LESSON 1: A REVELATION OF THE FATHER'S HEART

Learning Objective:

To understand that our Father's true nature is to reveal His goodness compassion to His children. //

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONCEPT OF GOD

False Assumptions

More than anything else, the view we have of God the Father directly impacts our lives. It is vital that we carefully reflect on our assumptions about God's nature and willingness to reveal His goodness to us.

For example, if we assumed that God is detached and reluctant to reveal Himself to us, how would that affect us personally?

When we suffer emotional, relational and physical distress we will probably run in desperation to someone who **will** help us. This, of course, in itself is not wrong. But, when Father God seems distant – when he seems absent when needed and irrelevant to our current emotional pain – our need for relief drives us to other sources for answers. We find ourselves running from God emotionally and severely disabled by spiritual blindness.

CHRIST'S MISSION - REFLECTING THE FATHER'S COMPASSION TO US

God's True Nature – Light ¹

'While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' (Jn 9:7)

Light by its very nature demands expression. It cannot do anything **but** emanate warmth and goodness. As long as there are no blockages, light will dispel darkness every time. Light cannot hide itself; if it did it would cease to be light.

God is light. As such He reveals Himself to us individually and personally. ²

God's nature is to reveal Himself. Since creation began, He has desired to walk individually with man in the cool of the day. He has longed to have close fellowship with us and reveal His will to us. His plans have not deviated from this original purpose.

¹See (John 9: 1-41) ²(1 Jn 1:5)

Jesus also demonstrated that God is not the author of sickness and evil. Those works belong to the dark domain of Satan.

Jesus Christ appeared to “destroy the devil’s work”¹. He also revealed that the Father is not the ‘Angry Almighty’ we presume Him to be. Father God fully revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

Q.How does Father FEEL about you? What IS in His heart?

‘the Father loves you directly’(Jn16:27)

‘Phileo’ gk- experience of love; tender affection.’

‘Demonstrated natural affection’

‘For the Father loves the Son’ (John 5:20)

*‘And a voice came from heaven: “You are **my Son, whom I love**; with you I am well pleased.”(Mk 1:11)*

*“I have **made you known to them**, and will continue to **make you known** in order that **the love you have for me may be in them** and that I myself may be in them.”
(John 17:26)*

Our Father feels deep affection for us, the exact same that He feels for Jesus! But we often don’t enjoy it because spiritual walls separate us from Him.

This breaks His heart just as it does any human father whose kids believe that he doesn’t love them. They believe a lie.

1(1 Jn 3:8)

James 1:16,17

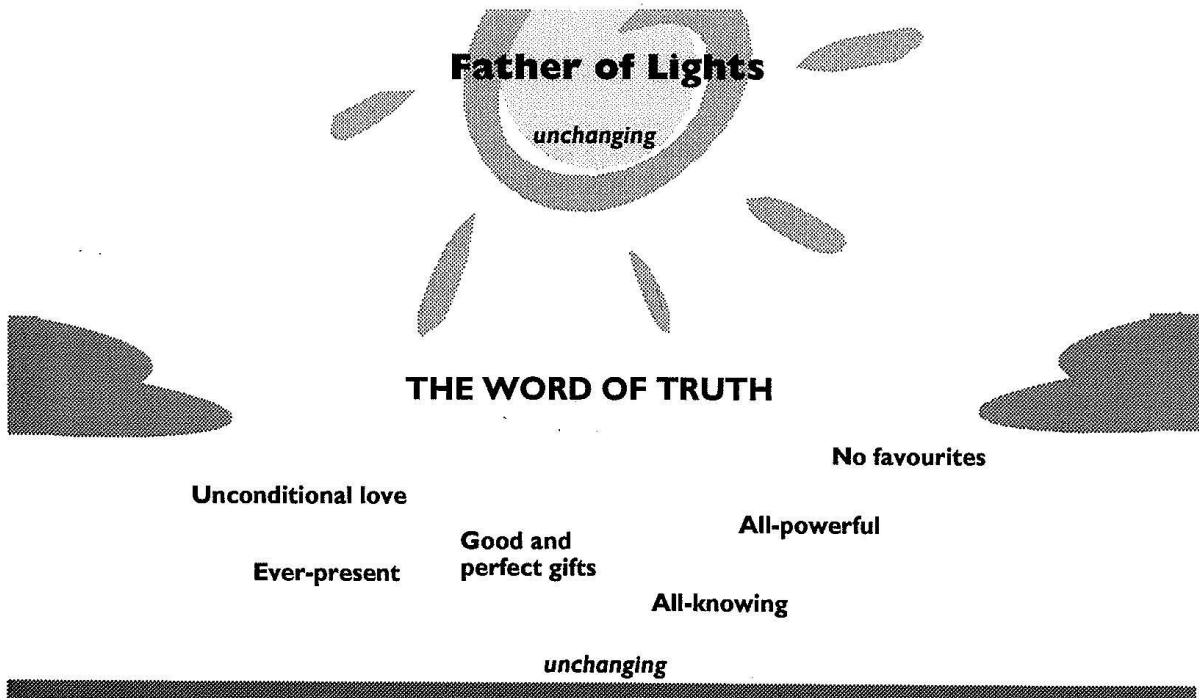
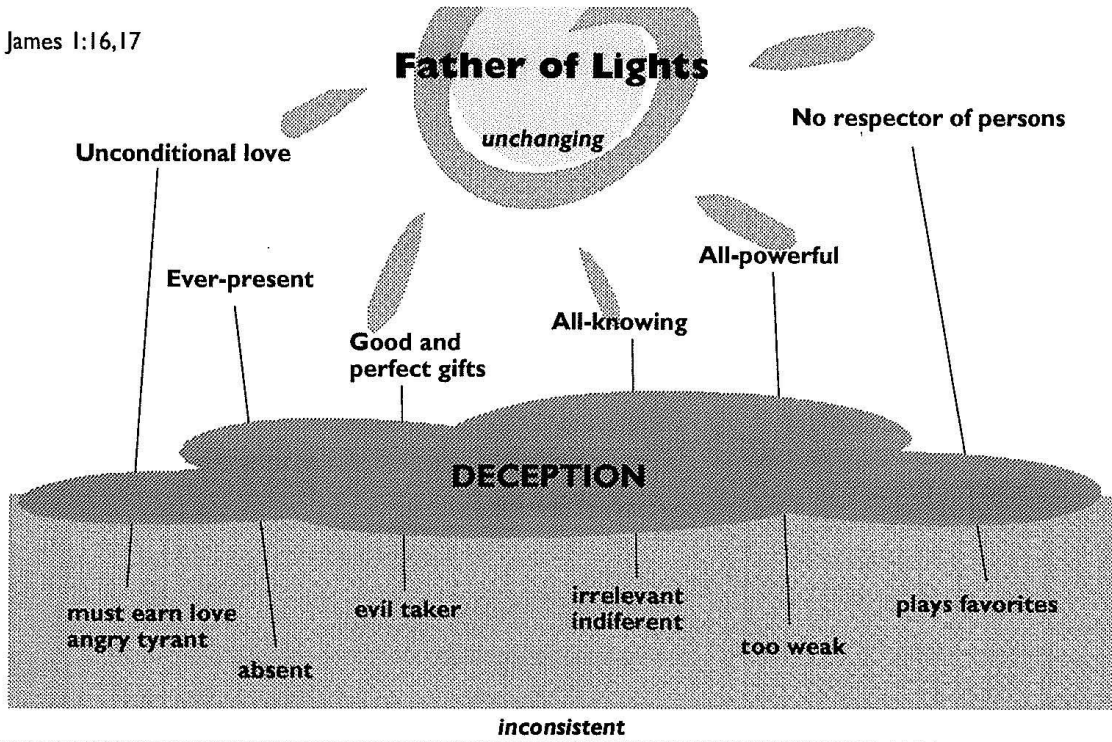


Figure 1a

BLOCKAGES TO SEEING THE FATHER'S HEART

Q. Why is our understanding of our Father's heart and mission so often distorted and dark?

The Veil ¹

Spiritually - Satan has blinded the minds of those (us!) who don't believe God is who he says he is.

Relationally -Unhealthy interpersonal relationships during early developmental years may distort our concept of God (e.g., parents).

Volitionally - We choose sinful responses and destructive emotional reactions which reinforce misconceptions and feelings about God.²

Light (truth) is the key determining factor in developing a clear image of God ³

Critical Choice:

When we face difficulties in our lives, we may be tempted to blame God. We have a choice to make. Will we accuse and reject Father. "You are NOT GOOD Father! Look at my problems! You DON'T care!" Or will I remain open and **accept the TRUTH**, saying, "Lord, I do not understand what is going on, but I do know that You are good. Your word is true."

**ACCEPTING TRUTH = SPIRITUAL LIGHT
ACCEPTING LIES = SPIRITUAL DARKNESS**

Accepting the truth of God's unfailing love for us means we reject the lie that he is not perfect and holy. If I have accused God, I admit I was wrong and accept my Father's forgiveness.

He already knows our thoughts and inner turmoil and yet He invites us to honestly share our pain and confusion with Him. Self-justification, pride and selfishness keep me in spiritual darkness, unable to receive the light of our Father's mercy.

It is a sobering fact to think that *by rejecting the light I am choosing spiritual darkness*. By shutting Him out, I am only hurting myself by cutting off God's fathomless compassion and divine wisdom which is now extended to me.⁴

¹See (2 Cor 3:9-11) ²(See John 3: 19, 20) ³(John 9: 14-25) ⁴(Jn 9:26-34)

BREAKING THROUGH THE DARK CLOUDS

Q. How did a hardhearted religious man become transformed into a tenderhearted father of the faith?

*10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the **fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him** in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Phil 3:10-11)*

*7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body **the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus** may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we **who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.** 12 So then, **death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.** (2 Cor 4:7-12)*

I consider that our present **sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory** that will be revealed in us. Rom 8:18

As we suffer pain inflicted by the hands of man, we turn to God and the revelation of His love moves from our heads to our hearts. Just as a child reaches out to his or her daddy for tenderness when hurt, we experience God's comfort and love when as we reach out to Him.

Our suffering breaks our hearts open to God so He can pour His love into us. We become like Him as we let His love and compassion heal and fill us. That is a love that no man can destroy!

So is God the source of suffering? No. But He uses it for good because He is good and it's His nature to do good. Much of Paul's suffering was done in God's name by men. God was in none of it, but He used it to form Paul's character and revealed His glory in him.

Good as Gold!

6 So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. 7 These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold-- and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:6-7) NLT

1 (Heb 2:10-18)