

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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AND
CONFORMATION
BY THE
GRAFTED LIFE

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Living Stream Ministry

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A GRAFTED LIFE

If we would understand the significance of transformation and conformation, we need to realize that the book of Romans speaks of a particular kind of life—a grafted life. A grafted life is a mingled life, a life which is the product of the mingling together of two lives. In [11:24](#) Paul speaks of the grafting of two olive trees, not of two entirely different kinds of trees. Hence, the grafting in Romans is that between two trees of the same family. The difference is that one is a cultivated olive tree and that the other is a wild olive tree.

A grafted life is a mingled life. This grafting can be effective only if the lives to be grafted are similar. That there is a similarity between the human life and the divine life is proved by the fact that God created man in His image and according to His likeness ([Gen. 1:26](#)). He did this purposely so that the human life would be very much

like the divine life. We may use a glove as an illustration. In form, in likeness, and in function the glove is the same as the hand. Otherwise, the hand could not fit into the glove. We are all gloves made according to the likeness of the divine hand. How we need to worship God for making us in His image and according to His likeness. Praise Him for making us vessels to contain Him! God created us in this way intentionally so that He could put His Son into us.

Because the human life and the divine life are similar, it is possible for them to be put together. This means that the divine life and the human life can be “married.” On the day we were saved we were married to Christ ([Rom. 7:4](#)). Hence, to be a Christian is not only a matter of salvation or regeneration, but also of being married to Christ. The life in [Romans 8](#) is a grafted life, a mingling of two different yet similar lives. Transformation and conformation are by such a grafted life.

QUALIFIED TO COME INTO US

From the time God created us in His image and according to His likeness, we were ready to receive Him into us as life. We had a spirit to receive Him and a soul to express Him. Although

we were ready, God was not yet ready. He was not yet qualified to come into man. In order to become qualified for this, He had to put on humanity; that is, He had to be incarnated. In Old Testament times, God could come upon the prophets, but He could not come into them. Many Christians today only know how God comes upon people, not how He enters into them. In a very real sense, they are Old Testament believers.

The New Testament reveals that through the incarnation of Christ, God came into humanity. He entered into mankind through a narrow gate, having been born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem. For thirty years He lived in the home of a carpenter. One day He came forth to begin His ministry. No one could recognize that this man was God Himself. Contacting some young fishermen in Galilee, He said, "Follow Me," and they followed Him, although He seemingly had nothing. He had such drawing power that His followers were beside themselves with love for Him. They were drawn to Him because there was something magnetic about Him. They had a marvelous time the three and a half years they were with Him. However, one day He suddenly told His disciples that He was going to leave

them by being crucified. This word deeply troubled them, especially Peter. Then the Lord told them that it was profitable for them that He go away. Otherwise, the Spirit of reality could not come to be in them ([John 16:7](#)). Up until that time, the Lord had only been among them; He had not yet come into them. After His resurrection, He could be in them, and they could be in Him ([John 14:20](#)).

Do you prefer to have the Lord among you physically or in you as the Spirit? If Christ were still just among us, His life could not be grafted together with ours, because He would not be in us. He could perform miracles among us, but we would remain the same, without change or transformation. We could embrace Him, but we could not be grafted into Him. Therefore, in order that we may be mingled with Him, Christ prefers to be in us. He wants us to abide in Him so that He may abide in us ([John 15:4](#)). This is the mingling that produces the grafted life. It is this life that transforms us and conforms us to the image of Christ.

In order to be qualified to enter into us, Christ had to pass through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Furthermore, as the Spirit, He had to descend

upon us. Then the only thing remaining is for us to call upon Him in faith. When we say, “O Lord Jesus, I believe in You,” His qualified life enters into our prepared life, and the two lives are joined. In this way our life is grafted into His.

TWO COMPLICATED LIVES

Perhaps you have been a Christian for many years without realizing that the Christian life is a grafted life, a mingling of the divine life with the human life. Both the divine life and the human life are complicated. The divine life is actually Christ Himself. As God, Christ is the Creator of all things. One day, He was incarnated and took on human nature. What a mystery that divinity and humanity could mingle together as one unit! Following incarnation, Christ passed through human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. All these elements are now included in the divine life. This life has power to kill all negative things; it also has the resurrection power to generate, germinate, transform, and conform. This complicated and qualified life is the very life we received when we believed in the Lord Jesus.

But what about the human life with which such a marvelous divine life is mingled? Our created life has become fallen, corrupted, darkened,

worldly, and satanic. It is thus filled with evil, negative, demonic elements. [John 3:16](#) tells us that God loved the world. For years I could not understand why the Bible does not say that God loved mankind. In the eyes of God, fallen man has become the world. This means that the fallen, corrupted, worldly, and satanic mankind is the system of Satan. Before we were saved, we were part of this system. As evil as this system is, the Bible still declares that God loved the world. The reason God loves the world is that in it there is the life which He created in His image and according to His likeness to contain Himself as life.

Both the divine life and the human life are complicated. The divine life is complicated in a positive sense, whereas the human life is complicated in a negative sense. According to His economy, God desires to graft this human life that is complicated in a negative sense into His life that is complicated in a positive sense. When we believed into the Son of God and called on the name of the Lord, the life that is complicated positively entered into us, and our life that is complicated negatively was grafted into it.

Our crucifixion with Christ, accomplished more than nineteen hundred years ago, is realized

and experienced today through the divine life within us. The same is true of resurrection. Both the effectiveness of crucifixion and the power of resurrection are included in the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. From the time we believed in the Lord Jesus and were grafted into His all-inclusive life, the various ingredients of this life have been working within us. The more we tell the Lord Jesus that we love Him, the more we offer ourselves to Him to contain Him, and the more time we spend with Him in the Word and in fellowship, the more the ingredients of the divine life work to terminate us and to resurrect us. This causes our mind to become sober, our emotion to become warm, and our will to become strong. The corrupted element of our human life is crucified and buried, but the positive element is uplifted in resurrection. Hence, it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us ([Gal. 2:20](#)). Here we see the function of the grafted life. The function of this life is to bring about the transformation which results in conformation to Christ. As we inwardly experience crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, we are transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. Transformation and conformation are the results of the inward working of the grafted life.

THE PROCESS AND THE GOAL

Transformation and conformation are two very significant words. They are windows through which we can see into the depths of the revelation implied in the book of Romans. Transformation is related to the life process, and conformation is related to the life goal. It is crucial that we all have a full understanding of this process and this goal.

In the life-giving Spirit there are many elements, many ingredients. In [Exodus 30](#) we have the compound ointment, an ointment composed of olive oil, which signifies the Holy Spirit, compounded with four spices. These spices mainly signify Christ's humanity, death, and resurrection. In Old Testament times, before the Spirit was compounded, the Spirit was merely the Spirit of God, signified by the oil. The Spirit had not yet become the ointment, the compound Spirit produced through the addition of the spices. But through the process of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, Christ's humanity, death, and resurrection have all been compounded with the Spirit of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit today is the compound Spirit, the

compound ointment with the elements of humanity, death, and resurrection.

Suppose you have a glass of plain water. Then a number of nourishing ingredients are added to the water to form a delicious drink. Thereafter, it is impossible to take in the water without drinking these ingredients.

Today the life-giving Spirit is an all-inclusive dose full of ingredients. This dose is actually the processed Triune God Himself as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. In this Spirit are divinity, humanity, and Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Therefore, when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, this all-inclusive Spirit with all these marvelous ingredients comes into us.

GROWING TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Now we come to a crucial point. In [6:5](#) Paul says, "For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." As believers in Christ, we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death. The likeness of Christ's death refers to baptism. Furthermore, we shall also be in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. This also implies the matter of growing together

with Christ, as understood from the first part of this verse. Therefore, Paul is saying that if we have grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death, we shall also be growing together in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, in the newness of life mentioned in the previous verse.

[Romans 6:5](#) includes two steps of our growth in Christ. The first step has already taken place, whereas the second is progressive. On the one hand, we have grown together with Christ, but, on the other hand, we shall be growing in the likeness of His resurrection. We have grown in baptism, and we shall be growing in the newness of life.

According to [6:5](#), Paul regarded baptism as a step in our growth in life. According to the Greek word used here, we have “co-grown” with Him. This means that as we were being baptized, we were growing together with Christ. In order to understand transformation by the grafted life, it is vital that we grasp this point. After our baptism had been completed, we had grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death.

When we repented, called on the name of the Lord Jesus, and believed in Him, the divine life that is complicated in a positive sense came into us, and there was a marriage, a grafting, of the

human life with the divine life. Immediately, this grafted life began to grow. This means that we began to grow in our Christian life together with Christ. Furthermore, as we were baptized in water, we continued to grow together with Him. Baptism is the best soil for spiritual growth. When we were placed in the water, we were like a seed planted in soil. Then we came forth in resurrection, having grown together with Christ in baptism. Such a baptism is certainly not a mere ritual or formality.

As a believer experiences a proper baptism, the divine Spirit within him puts to death the old man with his worldly, sinful elements. Then he rises out of the water a new person. In this way he takes a major step in the growth in life. From that time onward, the believer continues to grow in Christ in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, he walks day by day in newness of life. This is real growth, not mere outward activity. The more a believer grows, the more the divine life works within him to crucify him and to resurrect him. Through such growth we experience the application of our crucifixion with Christ, which was accomplished more than nineteen hundred years ago. No longer is our crucifixion with Christ a mere theory, doctrine, or

belief that has no practical effect on our living. On the contrary, it is applied to us in a full way. Day by day we grow in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, and we walk in newness of life.

A LIFE OF BAPTISM

The Christian life is a life of baptism. On the one hand, baptism has been accomplished. But on the other hand, baptism continues until we are fully transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. Hence, until this goal has been attained, we continue to live a life of baptism. This means that we are daily under the application of the death of Christ as we experience the effectiveness of Christ's death, which is now one of the ingredients, the elements, in the all-inclusive Spirit. If our husband or wife gives us a difficult time, we can experience at that very moment the application of Christ's death. Instead of exchanging words, we can experience the putting to death of the negative element within us. This takes place not by doctrine or by a particular practice, but by the killing element in the death of Christ included in the all-inclusive, divine life.

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

The process of transformation is both organic

and metabolic. It is organic because it is related to life, and it is metabolic because it is related to a process in which old elements are discharged and new elements are added. To change someone's complexion by makeup is neither organic nor metabolic. But a change in complexion that comes through eating nourishing food is both organic and metabolic. Such a change may be considered a physical transformation.

If we would be transformed, we must constantly look to the Lord, pray, read the Word, and call on the name of the Lord. In this way we eat, drink, and breathe the rich supply of Christ into us. This supply will produce a metabolic change in which the old, negative elements are discharged and replaced by new, positive elements. This metabolic change is transformation.

In [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) Paul speaks of beholding and reflecting with an unveiled face the glory of the Lord and of being transformed into His image by the Lord Spirit. As we gaze upon Christ and reflect Him, we are transformed into His image from glory to glory, that is, from one degree of glory to another. This is from the Lord Spirit, the very life-giving Spirit mentioned in [verse 6](#). [Verse 17](#) clearly says that the Lord is the Spirit. Hence, the Lord is the Spirit who gives life. As

we behold and reflect the glory of the Lord, we are transformed by this Spirit. The more we behold Him, the more we receive His supply and are transformed metabolically.

GROWTH AND SANCTIFICATION

Transformation includes growth and sanctification. As we are transformed, we grow and are sanctified. Eventually, transformation will issue in conformation. The more we are transformed, the more we are conformed to the image of Christ. Through this process of transformation and conformation, we are brought fully into the divine sonship to be members of the Body of Christ. To gain such a Body to express Christ is the goal of God's eternal purpose.

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE

Every kind of life has four basic features: the life-essence, the life-power, the life-law, and the life-shape. Every life has its own essence. Although the essence of a certain life may be abstract and mysterious, the life itself is powerful in a very substantial way. Consider a carnation seed. After a carnation seed has been sown into the soil and grows, it eventually breaks through the surface of the ground and begins to

grow visibly. Every life has also its law, the principle that governs its function and development.

Because of the life-law that controls its growth, a carnation plant will not produce roses, but carnations. There is no need for us to pray about it; the law of life in the carnation plant functions automatically to direct its development. Furthermore, every life has its particular life-shape. Farmers need not teach apple trees to produce fruit with a certain shape. The life in the apples automatically forms them. This is true of every kind of life.

SHAPED INTO THE PATTERN

Conformation denotes the shaping of life. As the divine life grows within us and transforms us, it spontaneously shapes us into the pattern, the image, of the firstborn Son of God. Many Christians, blind to this reality, try to shape themselves into the likeness of Christ. Such self-effort never works. Concerning this, only one thing is prevailing—the divine life that grows in us, sanctifies us, transforms us, and shapes us. There is no need for us to shape ourselves, to perform, or to strive to improve our behavior. What we need is a fuller experience of the

grafted life. The divine life has its essence, power, law, and shape. As those who are undergoing the process of transformation, we are being shaped gradually into the image of the Son of God by the function of the all-inclusive, divine life that has been mingled with our human life. Therefore, we can be at peace.

As the divine life works within us to transform and conform us, it discharges the negative element within us. For this reason, we do not need anyone to adjust us. The divine life works in us to gradually eliminate whatever is negative or natural.

RESURRECTING GOD'S CREATION

Secondly, the divine life resurrects us. No matter how fallen we are, we are still God's creation. Whatever God creates is good. Instead of giving up His creation, God will reclaim it and restore it by the resurrection power of the divine life. As the divine life discharges the negative things, it works to resurrect God's original creation. God created us with a mind, emotion, will, soul, heart, and spirit, and He intends to bring all these aspects of our being into resurrection. Before we were saved, we may have been dull in the mind, unbalanced in the emotion, improper in the will.

But the more we contact the Lord and experience Him, the more our mind becomes clear and sober, the more our emotion becomes properly balanced, and the more our will becomes adjusted. This is not our natural character, but a resurrected character. Praise the Lord that the divine life within us resurrects all the parts of our being created by God.

UPLIFTING OUR FACULTIES

As the divine life resurrects our faculties, it uplifts them to the highest level. This will produce in us a highly developed character. Christians should not be of low character. Wherever we may be, we should display the highest character, because our natural faculties have been uplifted by the divine life. In order to experience this in a full way, we need to be faithful to contact the divine life within us. If we are faithful to do this, our character will be uplifted.

SUPPLYING THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Furthermore, as the divine life discharges, resurrects, and uplifts, it supplies the riches of Christ to our inward parts. For this reason, many who love the Lord become very keen in their

mentality. Although certain brothers and sisters may give themselves to attend all the meetings of the church, they are still outstanding students in school because their resurrected and uplifted faculties are supplied with the riches of Christ.

SATURATING OUR BEING

Finally, the divine life will saturate our whole being. Eventually, our entire being will be soaked with the divine life. This brings about transformation. The riches of Christ saturate our being and cause a genuine metabolic change. By this saturation of the divine life we are conformed to the image of Christ.

The divine life is prepared and able to do such a work within us. But we need to exercise ourselves concerning what the Lord has shown us. We need to be faithful to contact Him, to pray to Him, to read the Word, and to breathe Him in. To do these things is to set our mind on the spirit (8:6). When our mind is set on the spirit, no part of our inward being will be separated from the spirit. This will give the divine life a free way to discharge the negative element, to resurrect, uplift, and supply our faculties, and to saturate every part of our being. Concerning this, we need to pray for ourselves, for others, and for all

the local churches. May we be faithful to live and walk according to what we have seen.

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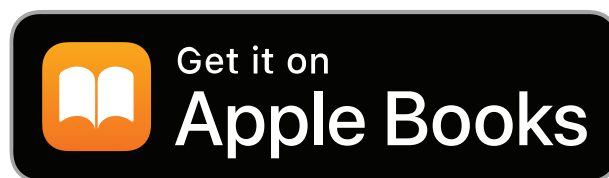
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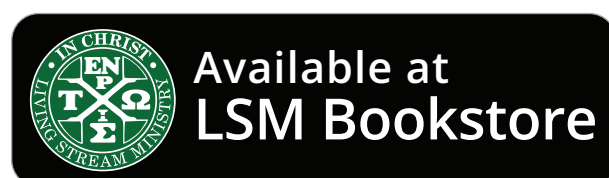
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