

# Core Beliefs

## The Transformed Life



You probably know people from high school who are totally different as adults. The transformation, either for the worse or for the better in some people may even be shocking—like you hardly recognize them any more. God promises that he can transform us for the better, into new and glorious people if we will become disciples of his son.

To talk about the amazing changes God can bring about in our lives, it's important to review how we came to need such transformation. According to our core beliefs, God is holy and good and we were created in his image—to thrive by being like him. But our sinful thoughts and actions have brought about three results that we are powerless of dealing with

### Where We Are and How We Got Here

First, we are incapable of removing the shame when we feel shame for our worst decisions in life. Most everyone's first response to their own cruelty or selfishness is to feel shame. While we try to make amends for the wrong we do, it's not uncommon to still feel guilty about something you did or said decades later. That's because no amount of good works can erase what we have done or said.

Second, we are incapable of escaping the punishment we deserve for those sinful choices. Paul says that *"death is what we earn when we sin"* (Romans 2:23). We see that played out in the story of Adam and Eve—two people who disobeyed God and were suddenly expelled from his good garden and kept from the source of life. Death comes to all of us because of our propensity to sin.

Finally, we are living in direct rebellion to our creator. Instead of having God as our friend, our disobedience has made us his enemy. Ever since the garden, people have felt distanced from God and are fearful of his anger because they have not chosen to serve him. Our own sinfulness makes God seem far away from us.

This is our current status. God created us to be holy like him but we chose a different course. Because of that choice we experience shame and death and a sense of abandonment that we are incapable of removing.

### God's Transforming Power

So it's eye-opening when Scripture talks about the transformation available to us as disciples of Jesus. Here's a few ways in which God changes us from the inside out when we follow his Son.

1. **We are changed from guilty sinners to redeemed saints.** Scripture tell us that because Jesus died for us, we can experience true and total forgiveness for our sinful thoughts and actions. Paul wrote that people who do sinful things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. That includes people who are sexually immoral, thieves, greedy or drunkards (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Then he makes this amazing statement. *“That’s what you WERE like. But NOW you are washed, sanctified, justified”* (1 Corinthians 6:11). All three of those terms (washed, sanctified, justified) have important meanings worth further study, but Paul says through Jesus, you’ve been transformed from a guilty person to a forgiven one.
2. **We are transformed from dying people to those who possess eternal life.** We all will face physical death, but Jesus came to give life that can never been taken from us. Mary and Martha mourned at the death of their brother, but Jesus said *“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die”* (John 11:25-26). And he proved his power to do that by bringing Lazarus back to life again. It showed that the physical death of believers will not be the end of their existence. Through Jesus, we are transformed into eternal beings who are clothed in immortality and who affirm the promise, *“Death has been swallowed up in victory”* (1 Corinthians 15:50-55).
3. **We are altered from being enemies of God to becoming his cherished children.** Living in disobedience with God puts us at odds with him. But God reveals that his desire is to restore us to a right relationship with him. The story of the prodigal son describes that transformation in very emotional detail. The son rebels against his father, takes his inheritance and abandons the family. But later, when he comes to his senses, he decides to come back, not as a son, but as a hired worker. But when the father sees him approaching, he runs to him, embraces him with love and accepts him as a son again. Paul would echo that when he tells the Colossians that, although they once were God’s enemies, He has reconciled them or restored them to friendship through Jesus (Colossians 1:21-22).

## Echoed in Baptism

Baptism is a beautiful reenactment of the transformation God has promised. We are dipped in water, symbolizing Jesus death, as well as our own death to our former lifestyle. Paul would say that, *“Our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with”* (Romans 6:6). And when we are brought up out of the water, it is symbolic of Jesus’ resurrection that brings about our own new birth.

God’s good news for humanity is that through Jesus we can experience forgiveness, receive eternal life and be restored to friendship with God. Millions of people across the centuries have discovered that hopeful message and have turned their lives over to Jesus. The first time people heard that news, three thousand people became followers of Jesus. If you want to know more about how you can experience that transformation, read the article below.

[How Do I Become A Christian?](#)