

WEEK 7

BE TRANSFORMED

*If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

I'm a woman who was wrecked by the love of Jesus, and I didn't even see it coming.

I was once a woman who could tell you easily what was wrong, and it always had something to do with someone else: *If only [insert name] would [insert action] then I could [insert desired feeling, thought, or action].* I had built my life on the philosophy of me. I was stuck on me. And I was sick of me. Sin kept me from realizing that life is about making God the point of everything I do. And here's the crazy part: Once I made God the point of my life, He seemed to say, "Hey, everyone, this is My daughter; listen to her! She spends time with Me, so she knows some of My secrets—the ones you are running around like crazy trying to figure out."

God is using me in some of the same ways He used Jesus. And He wants to do the same with you.

To this day, when I am feeling stuck and lacking hope, faith, or the ability to love, I am pretty quick to realize that I am the problem because I have made myself the point. My love for God continues to tear down any monuments I build in honor of myself so that God can continue to build His temple in me.

I am not the woman I used to be.

My poor husband. Simon had no idea what he was getting when he married me. Six months after I gave my heart back to the Lord, I was noticeably changing. I stopped trying to make my husband my savior. Jesus had that position now. I remember a moment when I was getting ready to leave our house for church. Simon got right in front of me, put his hands firmly on my shoulders, looked me in the eyes, and said, "Now, you're not going to become some sort of Jesus freak, are you?" With great conviction and assurance, I smirked and said, "No way!"

At the time I didn't really understand that Jesus came not simply to save us, keep us safe, and get us home, but to return us to wholeness. God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to save us from ourselves and to make us more and more like Him. God's love redeems and restores us to our original design. Through

the frustrations of daily life and the pain of challenging circumstances, He transforms us into greater Christlikeness.

Friends, may I confess that my name is Alisa Keeton and today I am a bona fide Jesus freak. It's nice to meet you. I invite you to let God—not your spouse, your kids, your job, your body, your age, your ability, your talent, your gifting, or anything else—be your Savior. Let God love you and tell you who He created you to be. Then by the power of His love, He will enable you to become that person. You will lose your little old life in exchange for a new, exciting, not-dependent-upon-any-person-or-circumstance life!

If I'd been paying attention to the apostle Paul when Simon stopped me in our hallway, I might have seen it coming: "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

Back then I wasn't looking to die or to be baptized into death. I thought I could keep the love of God under control, but little did I know. I have been transformed by His love, and God wants to change you in the same way. Will you let Him?

One of my favorite parables is the one Jesus told about the man who finds a treasure hidden in a field. He is so excited that he hides it again and then goes and sells everything he has to buy that plot of land. Unfortunately, I think God gives the treasure of salvation—a free and forgiven life—to many Christians who bury their treasure but never buy the field. The whole point of buying the field is for us to take ownership of the land that comes with the treasure. If we just stick the treasure in our pockets like a rabbit's foot we covertly stroke three times for luck, we will miss out on being the people we could have become,

Remember to use your Moving Forward Journal this week to track your food and water intake, as well as to remain focused on this week's Scripture verse. You can download a copy at www.revelationwellness.org/book/workout or photocopy the template on page 239.

and we will shortchange everyone who could have benefited from us buying the field and going all in with our faith. Many believers may go to church, tithe, hang Scripture plaques in their homes, and enjoy a Bible study or memorize a key verse now and then. But inwardly they haven't given up everything to gain the treasure that is theirs in Christ. They are stuck in what I call a "salvation slump"—they know about God's love and power but continually try living from their own power and ability.

Why be a renter of God's goodness when you can be an owner of His amazing grace? Why stop short when you are asked to go all the way? Buy the field!

You will know you have encountered the living and loving God (and bought the field) when your ordinary life is wrecked and you have a craving for the extraordinary things that are hidden in the heart of God for you to uncover.

Emmanuel, God with us, changed everything. Jesus made His mark wherever He went, touching people with words and deeds that brought heaven crashing down to earth. He continues to move, and He wants to move and transform you too. We live in a time when people continually chase after the shiny and new and are quick to dispose of anything old. But I propose that the majesty of God is found in old things *becoming* new, not in the old being thrown away for the new.

Imagine driving down the road when suddenly you see a car with a shape, style, and sound that resemble something from a 1950s James Dean movie. It's a sleek, bubble-shaped car with a perfect hard-shelled, candy-apple-red body and a clean white racing stripe down the center. Don't you find it virtually impossible *not* to take a second look? An old car restored to mint condition commands our attention. It most definitely draws more interest than a car of the same model lying in a salvage yard somewhere, broken, busted, and discarded.

God wants to restore us. He wants to take us from the junkyard of an unrenewed life and, by His love, restore us back to our original unique,

eye-catching, and commanding design. Meanwhile, He continually transforms the inner workings of our hearts, minds, and souls by the power of His amazing grace.

Long before He laid the foundations of the world, God had you in mind. Long before you had a heartbeat, He knew everything about you—the sound of your voice, your gifts and talents, and what would uniquely motivate your heart. God knew the specific time and place you would arrive to add value to the world. From the shape of your thighs to the dreams in your heart, you were intentionally molded by the hands of God. And the enemy does everything in his power to steal, kill, and destroy your beautiful design and the image of the holy God in you.

GOD'S RENOVATION PROJECT

I have personally experienced Satan's thievery, specifically when it comes to my body. After a few years of passionate involvement in the fitness industry, I was doing everything I could to be a model of health and fitness so others might invest in my passion. Yet I became sensitive to the fact that I was lacking something—breasts! Although God had blessed me with an athletic build to go with my passion and call, no matter how hard I trained, I was never going to be able to increase my breast size. As a matter of fact, since breast tissue is primarily made up of fat, the more I trained, the more that goal seemed out of reach. Every time I looked in the mirror (something we fitness trainers do a lot), the internal accusation *You look like a boy!* became louder and louder and my discontent grew stronger and stronger. During the late nineties, breast augmentation surgery was becoming more common, especially among female fitness pros who justified the surgery as no different from any other investment a professional would make in her personal growth and development.

All temptations are rooted in lies. Any temptation that goes unchecked and isn't exposed as a lie will grow into a desire. Desire, given enough time and brain space, eventually becomes an action.

With my unrenewed mind, I fell into Satan's trap, and he convinced me to hijack my original physical design.

In 1999, I went under the knife and woke up from anesthesia transformed from a double A to a C cup. It might surprise you to know that I remember instantly feeling different—not different in a “This is awesome!” kind of way but in a “This is weird” way.

I spent the next fifteen years looking more like a woman than I ever had, filling out my dresses a little more, and having the more “perfect” body, and yet . . . getting implants did not fill the ache in my soul or help the sadness and anger in my heart. Only the love of Jesus did that. And the more I fell in love with God, the more I began to realize those plastic orbs inside me weren't me. They hadn't been given by God. The deceiver had offered them to me, and I had believed his twisted tale that I was not enough without them.

In 2015, after eighteen years of growing up in my true identity as a child of God and fifteen years of carrying around what felt like two lies inside my chest, I sensed God, my good, good Father, inviting me to bravely return to my original design and come back to my whole self by removing my breast implants. He was inviting me to take back what the enemy had stolen, to be restored in my body as well as my soul. It's important that I make clear that God was not saying He would love me more for taking them out or love me any less for keeping them in. We cannot barter for God's love.

Because I feared losing part of my femininity and wondered what other people would think, it was a death-defyingly scary road to travel with God. At the same time, I found it exhilaratingly freeing. In May 2015, I said yes to that invitation, and those two deflated silicone water balloons lie somewhere in a landfill. And let me tell you, now that I am on the other side of the hardest part—my yes—I wouldn't want it any other way. In John 10:10, Jesus was not merely entertaining humanity with a pithy statement when He said He came to give us a full and abundant life—far better than the one plastic surgery or a plastic credit card can provide.

Though I had set myself up for disappointment by thinking I'd find satisfaction and meaning in a larger cup size, I now realize I was acting out of a universal need. The eternal God, who can make all things new, has planted the desire for transformation in all our hearts.

That might be one reason why the reality television genre has been such a hit. Those shows allow us to become voyeurs of people's lives behind closed doors. We enjoy watching an average-looking person become gorgeous by the power of a makeover. Several years ago, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* gained a massive audience by showcasing the renovation of run-down, beaten-up, mangy homes into beautiful dwelling places for families who really needed them. To me, the concept of dramatic home rehab projects is a great picture of who we are before we put our faith in Christ and who we become as we begin to open our lives to Him. Our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies have been kicked around by a fallen world, and we are like homes in need of major repairs. We all need love makeovers.

Without Christ, the homes of our inner lives—our hearts, minds, and souls—are dilapidated and in ruins. On the outside, we may look good, but inside, we're a stressed-out mess. On the days when we're anxious and afraid, our inner lives may feel more like bomb shelters than sanctuaries. On the days when we want to impress others with who we are and what we have, our inner lives may feel more like museums than cozy retreats. Meanwhile, the foundations of our homes are sinking, our wood frames are rotting, termites have infiltrated the walls, the plumbing is shot, and mold is growing behind the wallpaper. It is worse than we are willing to acknowledge; we see the evidence of ruin everywhere our spiritual eyes look.

To avoid facing our mess, we may transfer the blame onto others. Or we might focus on cleaning up just one part of ourselves—the part that everyone else can see. We are like the home owner who shoves all the junk into closets and shuts the door to every room but the living room when guests come over on short notice.

I know something of what that looks like. When I was growing up, my parents treated our house's front room like a museum for visitors. One of my mom's prized possessions was the rich avocado-green velvet couch with embellished stitching and a plastic covering (yes . . . a plastic covering) that friends noticed first when they walked into the house. Although Mom ran a tight ship and kept the house tidy, the front room was pretty much off-limits in all ways, always. I can't remember using that room as anything other than a mausoleum-like passageway for company as they journeyed to the back of our home, particularly the den, where my brother and I lay on the green shag carpet, six inches from the television, eating potato chips.

We all have a "front room" in our inner lives as well. This is the side of ourselves we manage to keep clean and presentable. It's possible we keep the outside of our houses, our bodies, looking great too. We may convince ourselves that our homes are good enough because we get to live as we wish, even though we privately long for so much more. In the quiet of our hearts, in the stillness of the night, we sense a pull toward something greater. For a time, we may convince ourselves that, given enough resources, we could make our lives so much more on our own.

But one day we realize that, like an old, neglected building that is eventually condemned, this remodel job is too big for us to do on our own. We hit a crisis or sense a yawning emptiness, and it feels as if the bank of the world has slapped yellow tape around our hearts and sent us the foreclosure notice. When we look around in desperation, we will find Jesus. He shows up and writes the check, paying our debt and redeeming our homes (our lives) so we are free and clear. But there is one string attached: Our homes no longer belong to us. They belong to God, and He has some great plans to implement in our lives.

He is not seeking to strip us of our personalities, but He is inviting us to join with Him in this grand restoration project. Jesus told His disciples, "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me" (John 15:4, MSG).

Once the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us, He begins turning our bodies into the home, the resting place, of God. We make our home in Him, and He makes His home in us. It's mutual and reciprocal. And even if in a time of unbelief we pack our bags and leave the sanctuary He is creating, He has no plans of moving out. He won't change His mind. Christ signed the deed to our houses, our lives, in His blood. He has no plans to void that contract and leave us bankrupt and on the streets.

When you become uncomfortable with the spotlight God shines into your corners, remember that He has great plans for this place, far greater than anything you could imagine or design. After all, He created the original blueprints, and because He loves you so much, He paid a high price for you. In His grace, God wants to take you from salvation (God saving you from you) to restoration (giving you back the true you) and then move you toward transformation (turning you into the Christlike new you, built on the solid foundation of the real and restored you).

Jesus doesn't always get right to work on us with a wrecking ball—although sometimes He finds it necessary. He is patient and begins to spend time with us so He can hear our desires too. He wants to build a reconstructed relationship on vision, love, and an ultimate trust that God will give us nothing short of His best, which is far better than our idea of what's best. He created us with our own unique gifts and talents, and He doesn't want to change or remove those; that would be crazy! It would destroy His original design and work of art. He does, however, desire to strengthen those foundational traits and restore them to their natural luster and shine. Initially, all this sounds great. We are so grateful to have been saved from condemnation that we are willing partners in God's work. For the first time, we have real rest in our homes. We begin to trust that someone else sees value in this old house and will help us restore it.

Then what happens? In a hard moment or circumstance, unbelief rears its ugly head. It's as if He asked if we smelled something rotten coming from our back bedrooms and then had the nerve to offer to take a look. *Jesus is getting a*

little too close for comfort, we think, and I don't seem to be getting what I once did. He has been getting kind of pushy—and now He's just rude. How dare He! Why doesn't He just fix things and leave me alone?

In our fear of Him uncovering any other bad smells, we may get to work around our houses. It buys us some time. Or we may throw our hands up in the air and think, *Who cares! I don't care if this house ever changes. I am totally comfortable with the way things are!*

But that odor just won't go away; in fact, it seems to be coming from several sources. Because Jesus wants to tend to that stink in our homes, He asks to see one room, then another room, and another room. Finally, He asks to see all the rooms in our homes. He is going to see the evidence of what once went on in those rooms. He is going to ask some questions, not because He doesn't know the answers but because He wants us to know, and truthfully, we are scared.

It's not just the shame of feeling "found out" if we allow God full access to the homes of our hearts; we fear we may lose the right to go back into those dark rooms to do as we wish. We may be aware that there is nothing in our hearts that God doesn't already know, but we struggle with our desire to control the process. We may give Him free access to one room but then quickly run to close off another room. His work is delayed by our diversionary tactics. We are in a salvation slump, circling the drain of our stinking thinking while trying to keep God in a box. Yet He is patient. He waits and waits, watching us busy ourselves with fluffing the pillows and tidying up around the junk and the stink in our homes, while the stench of death fills the air.

Heart disease, whether it be physical or spiritual, is killing the body of Christ. Many nominal Christians run around closing the doors in the homes of their hearts. Anger, bitterness, disappointment, and unbelief sabotage the abundant life God wants to give us. We kind of stink and we know it. And God smells it too. God sees the hurt we drag around every day, all because we refuse to stop fighting the wrong battles and join Him in the one we were made for: the battle for freedom in us and faith on the earth.

If you are struggling with your weight or obsessing over your body, most likely you have been closing doors because you get to do what you like behind closed doors. Pride, which prevents you from looking at the ruins and smelling the stink, is thwarting your transformation. This part of your sinful nature keeps you from depending on God.

A prideful person says, “I have it all under control. I have the answers. If I don’t have the answers, I will figure out the answers. I will pay someone to get me the answers. I can fix this.” In pride the “I, I, I” and the “me, me, me” is all we “see, see, see.”

The frightening reality is that some will never even take the first step toward Christ because of their pride. Sure, their homes may look perfect and they may be living large, but because of their pride, they will never see the Lord’s glory or enter into salvation. Others may be saved and invite Jesus into their homes, but they will continue to stumble around in their salvation slump.

Ultimately, we have three choices whenever God seeks to save or restore us: We can ask God to leave, we can continue stalling, or we can open the doors to our secret rooms. God will not force His way in, but He longs to lead us to a better way. In Isaiah 43:18-19, God tells the Israelites, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” He wants to do the same for us. Will we continue living in the wasteland, or will we make way for His streams to flow through the dry and arid places of our hearts?

Every day and through every circumstance, God is hammering in new framing, getting rid of the termites, reinstalling drywall to get rid of the mold, adding adequate lighting where there was once darkness, and applying fresh, clean-smelling paint. Before we know it, He will restore our homes to what He always intended them to be.

Once we are restored, we feel comfortable, and our anxiety dissipates. From an engineering perspective, the blueprints have been fulfilled, the house looks

solid and complete, and God is pleased with the progress. At this point, it is tempting to call the work finished. We tell Jesus, “It’s good enough. Look how far we have come. Let’s just slow down and enjoy the fruits of our labor.” Our fears, our need for comfort and control, and our selfishness prevent God from moving ahead with His transformational work and conforming us to Christ.

When it comes to our health, of course, we all desire transformation. A driving force behind our desire to move more and eat less is the hope that “in just a few short weeks you, too, can have the body you’ve always dreamed of!” We have all heard that promise, and if we have disconnected God from our health, we fall for it hook, line, and sinker. In our halfhearted living, we would rather paint the house and plant some flowers out front than rebuild the house from the ground up.

God has better plans for us than just giving us comfort. He wants us to have *shalom*, which is a Hebrew word that means “completeness, soundness, welfare, peace.”¹⁷ Although God is happy to see us living in a place of safety and comfort, He wants to give us more. The apostle Paul notes that “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). He knows the plans He has for us, which include “hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). He wants to do for us abundantly and immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine (see Ephesians 3:20).

But even as you seek to improve your health and well-being, you must give priority to your inner life, the place where you and God meet. You will reap lasting change when you allow God full access to all the rooms of your heart’s home. Why should you deny access to the One who has known you since before He formed you in the womb (see Jeremiah 1:5)? He wants to finish what He started.

Our transformation is possible only because of Jesus, which explains why the Greek word for *transform* occurs only in the New Testament. He alone can give us the ability to experience and reflect the fullness of God in our earthly lives. We are given the right to be transformed to resemble



**EVEN AS YOU SEEK TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING,
YOU MUST GIVE PRIORITY TO YOUR INNER LIFE,
THE PLACE WHERE YOU AND GOD MEET.**

Jesus—God incarnate—God in the flesh. We have the right to look in the mirror and see someone who is perfect in Christ and being made perfect in a messy world, holy and whole.

When we open ourselves to God’s work in our lives, not only does He restore our true identities—as His children designed to walk with Him in the cool of the day (see Genesis 3:8)—He gives us authority over all creation until His goodness, reign, and rule reach all corners of the earth.

In other words, as we are restored, Jesus invites us to look outward. Just before His crucifixion, He left this final instruction with His disciples: “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). He wants us to become His hands and feet. He wants our love to overflow from the intimate relationship between Him and us so that others may be able to walk in “newness of life” too (Romans 6:4, esv). As we live out the greatest commandment to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, we are changed from the inside out. When we live as personally and uniquely favored ones who are loved by God and have access to the resources of heaven, we are changed. We live as sons and daughters rather than as slaves, freely giving away what we have. As we obey the second commandment to love others, the beautiful process of salvation, restoration, and transformation can begin again in those around us.

Transformation takes God’s salvation plan for the world to its final destination. God wants to see faith increase on the earth, and He plans to use people

to make it happen. Willing people. People who are no longer satisfied to splash around in the shallow end of the salvation pool, content knowing that God has saved them from sin. Rather than spending time wishing for smaller thighs and flatter stomachs, these people care about the people drowning in the kiddie pool. They tell others that God wants to redeem and restore them too.

Your testimony may give others a vision for how God can also make their lives new. His hope is that others might see you and ask, “What happened to you?” and that your reply might be “I met Jesus and gave Him my heart and my body too!”

Because the goal of transformation is to make us like Christ, we must remember that our internal remodeling project won’t be complete until we leave this earth. When we see God starting over in an area we thought we had finished fixing up, we must exhale and trust Him. God is not like a difficult, scheming contractor. He’s actually fun to work with. Join in and whistle while He works. When you trust Him to remake every room, He will turn your heart into a masterpiece of His glory.

Whenever you open your heart to God, He works in you to bring about the changes you cannot make on your own to get you to your promised land. The transformation journey is an adventure. Keep your adventuresome spirit alive! Travel with God from one season of life into another. Some seasons will be intense, filled with resistance. Engage your core (both the center of your physical self and the values you hold), keep your eyes on Christ, and lean into the struggle. The storm will not last forever, and you will find yourself on the other side of that tempest in a more spacious land. Keep moving to keep growing. Keep growing into that royal robe of righteousness in which God draped you when you first professed Jesus as your King. You live a life of nobility, and favor follows you wherever you go.

Some days you may feel as if all you are doing is sitting on the ground banging nails into a two-by-four while He operates the heavy machinery. Remember that He lovingly looks at you and cheers, “Good job, My child! I love what you are doing! Keep going. You’re getting it!”

RESPOND

With All Your Heart

You're doing a great job working your way through the Wellness Revelation Workout Calendar (see page 240). Keep going! You're changing on the inside now. When you feel like you don't have the energy, ask God for the grace to help you in your time of weakness.

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Since you've made it to week 7, I can say with confidence that you are not the same person who began this journey. If you can't see it right now, it's probably because you forgot to put on your gospel goggles this morning. Go ahead and put them on so you can prepare your heart and mind to respond to the following training assignment.

Take a moment to be still and breathe. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Then, on the left side of the next page, write down all the things the old you believed about living a healthy and whole life. On the right side of the page, write down everything the new you believes about what it means to live healthy, whole, and *free*!

Old

Example: *I'm so tired tonight that I think I'll skip working out and just watch the TV pilot I read about on Facebook.*

New

Example: *I know I won't want to head to the gym after work tomorrow if I go home first, so I'll pack my gear tonight and take it with me in the morning.*

RENEW

With All Your Soul

We cannot forget that God's desire has always been for an intimate and loving relationship with us. His plan has always been to win us back by the greatness of His love. Wherever He dwells, His presence and holiness reside. He says, "I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45).

Why did God rescue the Israelites from bondage and slavery? Because He loved them. Why did He want them to be holy? Because wherever God takes up residence, things must be right, true, and glorious, for He is worthy. In this week's Bible study, let's look at what Scripture has to say about transformation and about becoming new creations in Christ, so that *His* holiness and glory may reign and *our* joy may be made complete.

1. In God's quest to restore us to right relationship with Him, He offers us a three-step makeover. It begins with salvation (saving you from you), is followed by restoration (giving you back the true you), and finally moves into transformation (making you more Christlike). Would you say He is nudging you toward one of these steps, or are you and God actively participating together in one of these stages? Explain.
2. Read Ephesians 5:1-2. How does the apostle Paul describe how God the Father perceived Christ's sacrifice on our behalf? How does that change the way we "smell"?

3. Please read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17. With a humble heart, remember the “stink” inside us that we discussed in this week’s reading. Take some time to meditate and reflect on anything putrid in your own heart. What stink in your life do you think God wants to remove?
 4. Verses 15 and 16 tell us that we are the aroma of God. Who likes the way we smell and who does not? Why?
 5. In verse 14, Paul talks about Christ’s “triumphal procession.” He is drawing on imagery from a Roman ceremony called the Triumph, in which a victorious general was honored with a festive, ceremonial parade through the streets of Rome. The parade would feature incense-burning censers, and flower petals would be strewn and then crushed under the horses’ feet, giving off a powerful aroma that filled the city. John MacArthur said, “By analogy, every believer is *transformed* and called by the Lord to be an influence for His gospel throughout the world” (emphasis mine).¹⁸ Name one way in which you can be a sweet-smelling fragrance that draws people to Christ this week.

6. Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6. In verses 1 through 3, Paul compares believers not to a fragrance but to a letter that testifies to Christ's work in their lives. If your life were a letter testifying to the Spirit's work in your life, what would it say?
7. Weight-loss and other health and fitness trends can lead to very selfish attitudes. We are quick to become self-confident once we start seeing results or have reached our goals. This is why it is essential for us to stay confident in only *one* thing: the power of God to change what needs to be changed in our lives—*His* power in *our* dwelling space.

Read verses 4-6. Note that Paul places no confidence in himself; his confidence comes only from God. Describe a time when you put too much confidence in yourself.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 3:11-16. What is the purpose of the veil mentioned in verse 13? Why did God have Moses wear it whenever Moses had been in His presence?
9. According to verses 14 and 15, who wears the veil today? What two parts of their bodies is it covering? According to verse 16, what happens when someone turns to the Lord?

10. Read 2 Corinthians 3:17-18. Once the veil is lifted, we are empowered by the Spirit. According to these verses, what always accompanies Him? How does Paul describe the Spirit's work in our lives?

Dear Jesus,

I want You to change me, but first I must let go of the fear that tells me it is too scary, that I cannot trust You, that I will fail, and that I know better than You. Please help me to trust You, to trust Your plans for my life, and to trust that You want to make me holy and whole. I desire transformation and for the stink in my heart to be removed. Speak to me each day, letting me know when I am getting in the way of Your love makeover for my life.

✚ Amen.

RELATE

With All Your Mind and Strength

The following questions are designed to help you apply all you've learned this week to your fitness journey. Get with your accountability partner or small group and work honestly through these questions. Consider journaling your answers with God before sharing with your partner or group.

1. What stinking thinking tends to push you into a salvation slump? What is God teaching you to help you move past these holding patterns in your life?
2. What areas of your life and personal character is God renovating? How would you describe the ways He's restoring His original design for you?
3. How is God transforming you into greater Christlikeness?

4. Picture your life as a house where God dwells. What kinds of things would people notice if they walked into your home today? What is the vision for your home in the future?

5. How do you see food and exercise fitting into God's plan for your personal transformation? What is He teaching you about them?

RECIPROCAT E

A Divine Appointment

by Breanne Morrow,
Revelation Wellness Ambassador

When I was nineteen, I began working as a dancer in a strip club. For five years, my life was filled with reckless sex, drug use, and partying. After leaving an abusive relationship, I met the man of my dreams, who was a devoted Christian. I walked away from the dancer life because I wanted a real chance with this “good guy.” We’ve since married and have two young children.

I recommitted my life to Christ and was baptized in 2012. That same year, my church introduced me to the Divine ministry, an outreach to women in the sex industry, and I became a volunteer. Every other month we visit the fourteen strip clubs in Orange County, California, where we distribute gifts for the dancers, as well as the phone number for our hotline.

As I reached out to women in the two strip clubs where I once worked, God began to open my eyes to the lies I believed. I thought that I’d been created to be used by men and that love came from their acceptance. I also believed that by using my body, I could stay in control and get love when I needed it. I thought I was different from the other dancers because I wasn’t as visibly “messed up” as they were. Through the Divine ministry, God showed me I was just like them in my brokenness. I needed to allow Jesus to penetrate my heart even more so I could truly love these women.

I now understand that true love comes from the Lord. I cannot love others without first receiving His love myself. The women I meet through Divine will continue in their lifestyle until they know their value and worth as God’s precious daughters as well.

In June 2014, we received a late-night call from Nicole, a woman who had gotten our number the previous week in one of our gift bags. She had only begun dancing about two months before. She had taken pole dancing fitness classes and thought it'd be fun to do and a good way to make some extra money.

Nicole was also the single mom of a little girl, and she felt alone and wanted to talk with someone. We spoke for about forty-five minutes. Then I offered to pray with her, and she accepted. I told her she could call or text me anytime.

A few weeks later Nicole called again. She was worried because a customer had offered her two thousand dollars if she would meet him outside the club for coffee. She thought perhaps he planned to kidnap her and asked what I thought she should do. I recommended she stop all contact with him immediately.

She began to cry and said she didn't want to dance anymore. In fact, since that conversation, Nicole never went back to dancing. Instead, she rededicated her life to Christ, was baptized (by me!), and continues to grow in the Word and her relationship with our Lord and Savior. I am so grateful for the opportunity to tell women like Nicole about the redeeming love of Christ.