

## **Spiritual Transformation (Maturity)**

### **Third Order Change**

#### **Five through Nine Characteristics of Spiritual Growth**

##### ***5. Joy in the midst of intense spiritual battles.***

As we mature in our faith, spiritual warfare will become more intense. This means that our problems may seem bigger and our temptations more inviting. However, as we trust in the Holy Spirit, we can still rejoice, because we know that God is in the process of developing us into mature believers. Every time He brings us through a battle, we are left with the assurance that there is nothing beyond His power to overcome.

##### ***6. Understanding trials and temptations as opportunities for growth.***

When do you think Christians grow more- during times of hardship or times of success? The truth is that we generally learn the most about the Lord during those periods when everything seems hopeless. Even though the situation is painful, mature believers recognize the potential for God to reveal Himself in a mighty way. When our backs are against the wall and we have no choice but to trust the Lord's power to see us through the trial, we discover things about His character that could not have been revealed otherwise. In that, we find that the benefits far outweigh the losses in our struggles (2 Cor. 4:17).

##### ***7. Viewing service to God as an honor, not a burden.***

If we are growing in the Lord, we will want to serve Him. You have most likely heard the old adage, "Love is spelled T-I-M-E." My friend, if you love the Lord, you will want to show that by giving Him your time. What's more, the motivation for your service will be *love*, not responsibility or obligation. No one will force you to serve God. However, if you are maturing in the Lord, you will truly enjoy the time you spend in service to Him. This doesn't mean you must keep your life filled with "busy work." Remember that even though we're called to serve, we are also called to observe a day or season of rest. God wants us at our best, but that cannot happen if we take no breaks and work ourselves to exhaustion.

##### ***8. Viewing everything- both positive and negative- as coming from the Lord.***

Too often when tragedy occurs, we try to *protect* the Lord by saying, "Well, surely God had nothing to do with that." My friend, God does not need our protection, nor does He need us to make excuses for Him! If we are to be mature believers, then we must understand the Father's complete and total sovereignty. In other words, everything that

happens- whether positive or negative- is under His control. At times we may not understand the Lord's purposes for certain things; nevertheless, we are to trust that His will is perfect and he is able to bring good out of any situation. It is important that His children believe what He says in Romans 8:28- that God can and does work all things together for good to those who love and serve Him. (Spiritually)

### ***9. Faith to ask God for things (prayer)***

As we mature in Christ, so does our faith and confidence that God will answer our prayers. The Lord wants us to pray; there is nothing we can ask that will be too much for Him to accomplish. Of course, His answer may be "No," or "wait" but God is honored by our requests. Mature believers show confidence in God by asking for things while allowing the Holy Spirit to guide their requests.