

BECOMING LIKE JESUS

A One Week Bible Study Guide

Primary Passages:

- 2 Corinthians 3:16-18
- Philippians 2:12-13
- Colossians 3:9-14

Introduction

Following Jesus is more than believing in Him or learning what the Bible teaches. It's about becoming more like Him. But spiritual growth doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't always happen at the pace we expect. The Bible describes this ongoing process as *sanctification*, which simply means that God is working in our lives to make us more like Jesus.

Throughout this five-day study, we'll explore how the Holy Spirit transforms us, what our responsibility is in that process, and how genuine spiritual growth becomes visible in our attitudes, actions, and relationships. Most importantly, we'll take time to consider where we are in our own journey and how we can respond to what God is doing in us.

DAY ONE: THE JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

Theme: A Work in Progress

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

Key Thought: Becoming like Jesus is an ongoing process, not an instant change or a competition with other believers.

Imagine walking through a doorway into a long hallway. Behind you is the moment you placed your faith in Jesus. Ahead of you is the day when God's work in you will be complete. The hallway represents everything that happens between those two moments. That's where sanctification takes place.

When we put our faith in Jesus, we are made right with God because of what Christ has done for us, not because we've earned it. But our journey doesn't end there. God begins changing us from the inside out, shaping us to become more like His Son.

Sometimes that growth is easy to recognize. Other times, it feels like we're barely moving. We may experience seasons of significant change, followed by times when we struggle with the same old attitudes or habits.

But spiritual growth isn't about how quickly we're changing or how far we've progressed compared to someone else. The question is whether we're becoming more like Jesus.

Questions for Personal Study

1. Read 2 Corinthians 3:16-18. What does Paul say happens to believers as they behold the glory of the Lord?
2. Why is it important to understand that becoming more like Jesus is a process rather than something that happens all at once?
3. When you think about your own journey with Jesus, what seasons of growth or struggle stand out to you?
4. How does comparing your spiritual progress with someone else's affect the way you view your relationship with God?

Reflection

Take a few minutes to look back over your life. Think about who you were when you first began following Jesus and who you are today.

Perhaps there are areas where you've experienced significant change. Maybe other areas still need work.

Don't focus only on how far you have left to go. Take time to recognize how God has already been working in your life.

You're still in the hallway, and God is still working.

Daily Prayer

Father, thank You for saving me through Jesus and for continuing to work in my life. Help me recognize the ways You are changing me, even when that change seems slow. Keep me from comparing my journey with someone else's. Teach me to trust Your work in me as I continue following Jesus. Amen.

DAY TWO: THE SOURCE OF CHANGE

Theme: The Spirit Transforms Us

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

Key Thought: Genuine spiritual transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit, not something we can produce through our own effort.

Have you ever tried to change something about yourself and discovered how difficult it can be?

Maybe you decided to become more patient, control your temper, or stop responding negatively when something goes wrong. You may have succeeded for a while, only to find yourself falling into the same patterns again.

The problem is that changing our behavior doesn't necessarily mean our hearts have changed.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul explains that the Lord, who is the Spirit, makes us more and more like Jesus.

Notice that Paul doesn't say we transform ourselves.

The Holy Spirit does the work of transformation.

As we spend time with Jesus, learn to know Him, and remain connected to Him, the Holy Spirit works within us. He begins changing our attitudes, desires, priorities, and responses.

This doesn't mean that change happens automatically or that we have no responsibility. But it does remind us that the power to become like Jesus comes from God, not from our own determination.

Questions for Personal Study

1. According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, who is responsible for transforming believers into the image of Jesus?
2. What is the difference between changing your behavior because you feel pressured to do so and experiencing a genuine change in your heart?
3. Think about the way you respond to frustration, disappointment, or difficult people. What might those responses reveal about areas where the Holy Spirit is still working in your life?

4. How has spending time with Jesus influenced the way you think, what you value, or how you treat others?

Reflection

It's possible to look like a good Christian on the outside while still struggling with attitudes and desires that don't reflect Jesus.

God isn't simply interested in making us behave better. He wants to change who we are.

Consider an area of your life where you've been trying to force yourself to change. Instead of focusing only on controlling your outward behavior, ask God to begin changing the attitudes and desires behind it.

Remember that transformation begins with His work within us.

Daily Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for working in me to make me more like Jesus. Show me the difference between simply trying to behave better and allowing You to change my heart. Help me remain close to Jesus and become more sensitive to Your work in my life. Change not only what I do, but also what I desire and value. Amen.

DAY THREE: OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Theme: Listen, Surrender, and Obey

Scripture: Philippians 2:12-13

Key Thought: God works within us to bring about transformation, and we respond by listening, surrendering, and obeying.

If the Holy Spirit is responsible for changing us, does that mean we can simply sit back and wait for change to happen?

Paul gives us an important answer in Philippians 2:12-13.

He tells believers to work out their salvation while reminding them that God is the One working within them, giving them both the desire and the ability to do what pleases Him.

Paul isn't saying we must work *for* our salvation. Salvation is received through faith in Jesus, not earned through good behavior.

Instead, he's describing how we actively live out the salvation we've already received.

God works in us, and we respond to His work.

Sometimes that response begins with obedience even when our feelings haven't caught up.

Consider forgiveness. Someone may have hurt you, and everything inside you says they don't deserve your forgiveness. Yet you know what Jesus taught, so you choose to obey Him.

As the Holy Spirit continues working in you, something deeper may begin to change. Instead of forgiving only because you're supposed to, you begin to genuinely desire freedom from bitterness and want to respond more like Jesus.

That's more than behavior modification. That's transformation.

Our response to the Holy Spirit can be described in three simple words:

Listen. Pay attention when God reveals something in your life that doesn't reflect Jesus.

Surrender. Stop fighting to maintain control over the attitudes, habits, or desires God is asking you to release.

Obey. Take the next step, even when it's uncomfortable or you don't know exactly where it will lead.

Questions for Personal Study

1. Read Philippians 2:12-13. How does Paul describe the relationship between God's work within us and our responsibility to obey?
2. Why is it important to understand the difference between working *for* salvation and working *out* the salvation we've already received?
3. Of the three responses, listening, surrendering, and obeying, which is most challenging for you right now? Why?
4. Is there an attitude, habit, grudge, or area of disobedience that you believe God has been asking you to surrender? What has made that difficult?

Reflection

Sometimes we know what God wants us to do, but we delay because we're waiting until we feel ready.

We may be waiting for the desire to forgive, the courage to change, or the confidence that everything will work out.

But obedience doesn't always begin with the right feelings. Sometimes the feelings change as we continue responding to God.

Think about one area where you've been resisting or delaying obedience.

What would it look like to take one step today?

You don't have to solve everything at once. Listen to what God is showing you. Surrender what you've been holding onto. Then respond in obedience.

Daily Prayer

Father, thank You for working within me and giving me both the desire and the ability to do what pleases You. Help me recognize Your voice and respond when You reveal something that needs to change. Give me the willingness to surrender what I've been holding onto and the courage to obey, even when the next step is uncomfortable. Amen.

DAY FOUR: A NEW WAY TO LIVE

Theme: Putting On Christlike Character

Scripture: Colossians 3:9-14

Key Thought: As the Holy Spirit transforms us, the change should become visible in the way we see and treat other people.

Imagine getting dressed in the morning. Before putting on clean clothes, you take off what you were wearing before.

Paul uses a similar illustration in Colossians 3.

He describes believers as having taken off the old nature and its practices and put on the new nature, which is being renewed as we become more like our Creator.

Then Paul describes what this new life should look like.

Compassion. Kindness. Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Forgiveness. Love.

These aren't simply religious behaviors we're supposed to imitate. They're qualities that should increasingly become part of who we are as the Holy Spirit changes us.

And Paul makes another important point.

In verse 11, he describes groups of people who were separated by differences in ethnicity, culture, religion, and social standing. He reminds believers that those differences do not determine their value or standing in Christ.

We still divide people into categories today.

We notice differences in backgrounds, occupations, denominations, political opinions, and personal beliefs.

But becoming like Jesus should change the way we see people who are different from us.

It should change how we respond when someone frustrates us, disagrees with us, or hurts us.

The question isn't whether we've become perfectly patient, loving, or forgiving.

It's whether we're becoming more patient, more loving, and more forgiving as the Holy Spirit continues His work in us.

Questions for Personal Study

1. Read Colossians 3:9-14. What does Paul say believers have taken off, and what are they being called to put on?
2. How does verse 11 challenge the way we sometimes judge or categorize people who are different from us?
3. Look at the qualities listed in verses 12-14. Which do you recognize growing in your life, and which still presents a struggle?
4. Think about someone who regularly frustrates you or someone you've had difficulty forgiving. What would it look like to respond to that person in a way that reflects the character of Jesus?

Reflection

Our spiritual growth should affect more than what we believe or how much we know about the Bible.

It should affect our relationships.

Think about how you respond when someone disappoints you, disagrees with you, or treats you unfairly.

Are your responses becoming more like Jesus?

Perhaps you're more patient than you used to be. Perhaps you're learning to forgive more quickly. Or perhaps you've noticed attitudes of pride, resentment, or judgment that still need to change.

Don't turn Paul's list into another checklist of religious expectations.

Instead, allow it to help you recognize where the Holy Spirit is working and where you need to continue surrendering to Him.

Daily Prayer

Lord Jesus, I want my life to reflect Your character. Help me grow in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. Show me where pride, resentment, or judgment affects the way I treat others. Teach me to see people as You see them and to respond in ways that reflect Your love. Amen.

DAY FIVE: EVIDENCE OF GROWTH

Theme: Fruit That Keeps Growing

Scriptures: Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:10-14

Key Thought: Spiritual growth isn't measured by perfection, but by the increasing evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

Imagine walking up to a dead tree and attaching apples to its branches with duct tape.

From a distance, it might look like an apple tree. But the apples aren't growing from the tree. They've simply been attached to the outside.

The same can happen in our spiritual lives.

We can learn Christian behaviors, use the right words, and follow certain religious expectations without experiencing genuine change within.

But that's not the kind of transformation Scripture describes.

In Galatians 5, Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit. These qualities develop in our lives as the Holy Spirit works within us.

Just as a branch must remain connected to the vine to produce fruit, we must continue abiding in Jesus.

Fruit grows because the branch is connected to its source of life.

And spiritual fruit grows because the Holy Spirit is working within us.

That growth may not always be dramatic or easy to recognize.

Sometimes we take significant steps forward. Sometimes we struggle. Sometimes we may even feel like we've taken a few steps backward.

But when we look back over time, there should be evidence that something is changing.

Maybe you don't get angry as quickly as you once did. Maybe you're learning to forgive someone you would have previously held a grudge against. Maybe you're beginning to care about things that never mattered to you before.

These changes don't mean you've reached perfection.

They mean God is still working.

Questions for Personal Study

1. Read Galatians 5:22-23. What qualities does Paul identify as the fruit of the Spirit?
2. How does the illustration of fruit growing on a tree help explain the difference between genuine transformation and simply trying to act like a Christian?
3. When you look back over the past six months, year, or even five years, where can you recognize evidence that the Holy Spirit has been changing you?
4. As you consider everything you've studied this week, what is one area where you believe God is calling you to take another step toward becoming more like Jesus?

Reflection

We've spent this week talking about the long hallway of sanctification.

At one end is justification, when we are made right with God through faith in Jesus. At the other end is glorification, when God's work in us will be complete.

And here we are, somewhere in the hallway.

None of us has reached the end yet.

Maybe you've made significant progress. Maybe you've been moving slowly. Maybe you've been standing still in an area where you know God has been calling you to change.

Wherever you are, consider this question:

Am I becoming more like Jesus?

Not, "Am I better than someone else?"

Not, "Have I finally become perfect?"

But, "Is there evidence that the Holy Spirit is changing who I am?"

Take a moment to recognize the progress God has already made in your life. Then consider what He may be asking of you now.

Remember the three responses we've discussed:

Listen. Surrender. Obey.

You don't have to fix everything today. But you can respond to what God is showing you.

Your Next Step

Before finishing today's study, write down one specific step you can take this week in response to what God has been revealing.

What is God asking you to surrender, change, or obey?

How will you take that step?

And how might that step help you become more like Jesus?

Daily Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the work You have already done in my life and for the work You are continuing to do. Forgive me for the times I've resisted Your leading or become discouraged by my lack of progress. Help me recognize the fruit of Your Spirit growing in my life and show me where I still need to change. Give me the desire to become more like Jesus and the willingness to take the next step in obedience. Help me keep following You, even when the journey is difficult or progress seems slow. Amen.

A FINAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Becoming like Jesus is not about achieving perfection through our own strength. It's about allowing the Holy Spirit to continue the work God has already begun within us.

Some days we may feel like we're making significant progress. Other days we may struggle to take even one step.

But the question remains the same:

Am I becoming more like Jesus?

Keep looking to Him.

Keep listening.

Keep surrendering.

Keep obeying.

And keep walking down the hallway.