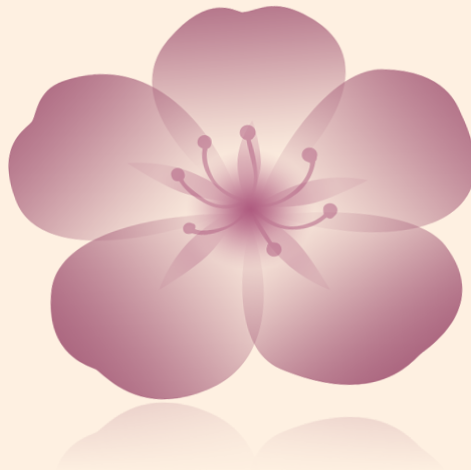


TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDIES: WHAT DOES BEING SAVED LOOK LIKE?



WOMEN OF WORSHIP WOMEN OF WITNESS
(WoW²)

(SEPTEMBER 2014)

Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the New King James Version, copyright © 1962 Thomas Nelson Inc. All Greek definitions are taken from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, © 1986. All English definitions are taken from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, © 2014.



INTRODUCTION

Women of Worship Women of Witness (WoW²) is a small group Bible study that meets weekly for a bible-based, practical application journey through the Word of God. Ultimately, we strive to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Along our journey, some studies have had a more profound impact on us than others. We call these Transformational Studies.

In 2009 we studied what does it mean to be saved. During our discussion, we identified six Biblical principles we believe indicate how we, as born-again believers, can work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2::12): repentance, forgiveness, confession, belief, transformation, and acts (works). The rationale for each of these components is provided in the following pages. While these components are listed in a specific order, beyond repentance and a transformed heart that results in new works, do not consider this order engraved in stone. For we have found that once we truly repent, the Holy Spirit will guide the rest of the process according to God's plan and purposes in our lives. Therefore, may each soul be submitted to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

However, before we look at each component, let us begin by discussing the Biblical definition of salvation.

SALVATION

Romans 10:9 tells us, “⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be **saved**.” This Scripture is typically considered part of the prayer of salvation. Since the Bible was not originally written in English, it seems wise to seek out the definition of the original word translated “saved.” According to Strong’s Concordance, the Greek word *sozo* (translated “saved”) means, “to save, that is *deliver or protect* (literally or figuratively):-heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.” Thus, in addition to the promise of eternal life, being healed (whole) in our spirit, soul, AND body are all aspects of salvation.

However, those of us participating in this study were not walking in the fulness of what *sozo* promises. Many of us were hurting and broken in our spirit and soul, and at least one of us was struggling with a recurring health issue. Yet, 2 Corinthians 1:20 tells us, “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” If that’s the case, why were we all struggling? How was God being glorified?

We believe the answer is found in understanding each of the following components, because we have learned, when each of these six components is working in our lives, transformation occurs. As we discussed in one of our meetings, our transformation is the evidence of our salvation. In other words, we look at where we were and where we are now, and we know Jesus has really come into our hearts. But, we also realized what salvation looks like here on earth is a continuing process, and that process begins with **repentance**. As we have since learned, repentance always precedes change!

REPENTANCE

When John the Baptist was preparing the way for Jesus, he said, “**Repent** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2). Likewise, when beginning His earthly ministry, Jesus said, “**Repent** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17). Moreover, the verse that started our saved study tells us “leaving the discussions of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works ...” (Hebrews 6:1). But, what does repent mean? Again, looking to Strong’s Concordance, repent comes from the Greek word *metanoeo* meaning, “to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):--repent.”

In other words, in response to our repentance, we seek to renew our mind (Romans 12:1), so we can think new thoughts. For, we have surely learned, until we are willing to acknowledge how we are thinking and behaving in a situation is wrong, repent for our thoughts and behavior, and then ask God to help us change, we will continue to struggle in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. For more information on how to renew your mind, see the *Transformational Study: Renewing the Mind*.ⁱ

Simply put, the saying if you want to get something different, you have to do something different really does apply. That’s where repentance comes in. We acknowledge what we are currently doing does not please God, we ask God to **forgive** us for what we’ve been doing, and we decide to have a change of mind and a change of heart. Thus, it cannot be stressed enough ... repentance ALWAYS proceeds change! No repentance, no lasting change! Period!

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is actually two-fold: The forgiveness we receive from the Father and the forgiveness we extend to others. Let's begin with **forgiveness from the Father**. 1 John 1:8-9 teaches us, “⁸If we say that we have no sin [bonds, chains],ⁱⁱ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” However, what does “forgive” mean? Forgive comes from the Greek word *aphiemi*, which means “to send forth,” “to lay aside...” Therefore, the bottom line is, once we truly repent, God does not hold our offense against us!

This forgiveness is not related to the forgiveness we gain when we first confess Jesus as Lord, thus it is not carte blanche, but circumstantial. In other words, we cannot continue to do the things we did outside God's will before we came to Christ, never change those things, and expect God to forgive them. As Hebrews 10:26-27 teaches, “²⁶For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for our sins, ²⁷but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” The Amplified Version actually clarifies that when we sin willfully, we put ourselves in opposition to God!

Simply put, when we continue to sin (do things our way) after we have learned the truth of God's Word, we place ourselves in opposition to God! However, repentance places us in agreement with God and His Word, releasing His forgiveness in our lives. Our agreement with God, or lack thereof, determines what we **confess**.

However, before we change topics, let's look at **forgiving others**. Because God forgives us our sins, He requires us to forgive others theirs (Luke 11:4; Ephesians 4:32. Luke 17:3-4), EVEN when this person does not repent for what they did. While Jesus provided an excellent example of **forgiveness** in Luke 23:34, Stephen provided an example, we can identify with, for forgiving a non-repentant person when he said, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (Acts 7:60). Surely, if Stephen **forgave** those who stoned him to death, we can forgive others that hurt us!

More importantly, Luke 6:37 tells us, "...**Forgive**, and you will be forgiven." In this verse, forgive comes from the Greek Word *apoluo*. Overall, this word means "to free fully." In other words, we release the person of any debt we feel they owe us, including an apology, an explanation, or anything else that allows our unforgiveness to hold this person and ourselves hostage! Some might say, "You don't understand how much they hurt me." Or, "How can I forgive them when they are STILL doing the same thing, and they NEVER change?" The list goes on. However, forgiveness is not for them, but for us, lest a root of bitterness spring up in our heart (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness not only affects us, but our resulting behavior can impact others. We learned this the hard way!

In summing up forgiveness, it works vertically and horizontally. *Vertically*, whenever we think or behave in a way contrary to God's Word, we must repent to Him and confess our sins to receive forgiveness. *Horizontally*, we must forgive others when they hurt, offend, or otherwise cause us grief, EVEN if they have not repented. If we have problems asking for, receiving, or giving forgiveness, we should examine what we are **confessing**!

CONFESSION

If we return to Romans 10:9 (discussed under salvation), we find “⁹that if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Confess is the Greek Word *homologeo*, which means “to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge.” In the definition, there is a link between what we confess with our mouth and what we believe, because according to Merriam Webster online, “to assent” to something means we agree with it.

We’ll look at the agreement between confession and belief in a moment, but for now, it seems prudent to understand what we confess with our mouth is directly linked to the Lordship of Jesus in our lives! For example, when we understand the principle in Proverbs 18:21, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit,” we become more mindful of the things we confess. After all, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Therefore, what we confess is a reflection of where we have placed our faith. If we want to have the kind of faith that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6), it is in our best interest to confess God’s Word over our circumstances rather than to exalt our circumstances over God’s Word.

However, we have also learned, it truly is not enough to just confess God’s Word. As mentioned earlier, there has to be agreement between what we confess with our mouth and what we **believe** in our heart; otherwise, our confession and our belief will cancel each other out, and we will continue to be tossed to and fro in a whirlwind of confusion! For more on our confessions, see our newsletter, “Power of the Tongue.”ⁱⁱⁱ

BELIEF

One of the ladies in group has a saying, “You say what you know, but you do what you believe.” This saying truly sums up the two aspects of Romans 10:9: what we confess with our mouth and what we **believe** in our heart. The word believe comes from the Greek Word *pisteuo*, which means “to have faith,” “commit (to trust)…” Interestingly enough, the same Greek word, *pisteuo* is found in James 2:19, “You **believe** that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” Understanding even the demons believe was a major point of discussion for us, because we needed to know how to distinguish our belief from that of the demons.

Without getting too complicated, the simple answer is, as born-again believers in Christ, we have confessed Jesus as **Lord**. Lord is the key word in our confession, and it comes from the Greek word *kurios* which means “supreme in authority.” Thus, while the demons operate in rebellion towards God, thereby denying His Lordship over them, we, as believers, are to operate in submission to God, granting Him authority to reign in every area of our lives! Thus, Lordship is the distinguishing factor between the believer’s belief and that of a demon!

As a result, we came to understand there is a difference for the believer in knowing Jesus as Savior and knowing Jesus as Lord. When we know Jesus as Savior, we believe He has forgiven us our sins, but we do not grant Him authority to **transform** our lives. Instead, we still want to do things our way. However, when we know Jesus as Lord, it is no longer our will, but His that matters! Or, as Jesus said, “....not my will, but Yours [Father] be done” (Luke 22:42).

TRANSFORMATION

Romans 12-2 tells us, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” According to Strong’s Concordance, transformation comes from the Greek word *metamorphoo*. If you’ve ever heard the word metamorphosis, know how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, or know anything about the *Transformer* movies, you’ll understand the kind of transformation that should happen in our lives. After our transformation, we should be different!

According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Well, if all things have become new, why were so many of us struggling when we did this study? Why are there times we continue to struggle? The answer is we fail to renew our minds! Of utmost importance in the salvation process is to know that even though Jesus said, “It is finished,” (John 19:30), we **STILL** have to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). This working out process is what is known as putting off the old man and putting on the new (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10, 12).

Therefore, in the here and now, our salvation should be a continuing growth process where “...we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). The result of this transformation is new **acts**, also known as works for James 2:20 says, “But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without **works** is dead?”

ACTS (WORKS)

According to Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good **works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The word works comes from the Greek word *ergon*, meaning, “...(to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication, an act:--deed, doing, labour, work.” *Ergon* is also the same word used in James 2:20, where we are told faith without **works** is dead. In other words, it is not just enough to say we have faith and that we believe. As we learned, even the demons believe and tremble. Instead, as James points out, we should be able to show others our faith BY our works (2:18). This goes back to our saying, “We say what we know, but we do what we believe.”

Consequently, whatever we truly believe in our heart is what we will walk out in our lives. Therefore, if we have truly given Jesus Lordship over our lives, our acts (works), otherwise known as our behavior, should reflect that Lordship. As we renew our mind with God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will bring conviction, and we will no longer do the things we used to do that we KNOW are not pleasing to God. However, we have to remember, putting off the old man and putting on the new is a continual process. Therefore, as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Word, our behavior should reflect that knowledge and understanding. In other words, just as a child grows and matures from a babe to an adult, we in the body of Christ should mature from being babes to mature Christians. Our continual maturation in how we reflect the Lordship of Jesus in our lives is what being saved looks like!

CONCLUSION

Now that you have made it this far, we would like to close out this teaching with some words of encouragement. We recognize how challenging some of these concepts can be; however, we want to encourage you to not give up! If you experience any of what we did, there could be some anger, frustration, and even remnants of guilt and condemnation trying to creep in. Believe us, we understand, because as we have learned, when the Word comes two things happen: the devil comes to steal it (Luke 8:11) and the flesh rebels against it. Either or both of those circumstances can and will create a host of emotions within us! The important thing is to not get stuck in the emotion, but to process our way through them. How you say? By agreeing with the truth of God's Word and allowing it to renew our mind and create a clean heart within us!

Therefore, for those things you find challenging, we hope that rather than giving up on this teaching you will ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Some things may come at once. Others may come more slowly. And some may not come at all. But, the most important thing is that you receive the truth that pricks your heart so you can work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For as John 8:32 says, "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (NKJV).

Father, may every soul that embarks upon this journey find all they need in You to be doers of the Word and not hearers only! In Jesus' name. Amen.

ABOUT US

In 2005, the Lord provided the vision to start a small group for women to come together in an atmosphere of intimacy, transparency, and accountability, as a way for us to grow in His Word.

On October 4, 2005, Women of Worship Women of Witness (WoW²) was launched. God quickly blessed us with a beautiful sister who designed our logo and created bookmarks for us to share.

In January 2006, God again blessed us by providing the opportunity to hit the worldwide web. Between 2006 and 2011, we used the website to distribute newsletters to keep track of what we were learning in our meetings! We also used other types of newsletters to share additional insights and documents to bless our sisters in Christ. Unfortunately, life happened, including losing our original website after the software became obsolete. Sadly, these events created a gap in our meeting history.

However, in June 2013, God again proved Himself faithful, and we returned to the web with a renewed commitment and a new web site host. While we have recaptured some newsletters from the previous site, we began anew with our Meeting Notes.

Therefore, if this Transformational Study has blessed you, we encourage you to visit our website (www.wow2women.com) to explore as you feel led, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart.

We pray God's blessings over all those who read this Transformational Study. As is our motto: may we be doers of the Word and not hearers only.



REFERENCE BOOKS

James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D., *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Iowa Falls, World Bible Publishers, 1986).

New King James Version, (Thomas Nelson Inc. Publishers, 1982).

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary copyright © 2014 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

ENDNOTES

ⁱThe “Transformational Study: Renewing the Mind” can be found on the Documents page of the website: <http://www.wow2women.com/documents.html>.

ⁱⁱ The original Greek word defined “sin” is *hamartia* (G266). When traced back to its root word (G254), it means “a fetter or manacle:--bonds, chains.” Thus, this verse is saying if we do not have any “bondage” or “chains” in our lives, we deceive ourselves. It is this sin that we must confess to receive God’s forgiveness, so He can cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

ⁱⁱⁱ The newsletter, “Power of the Tongue,” dated Jan 25, 2010, can be found on the Reflections page of the website: <http://www.wow2women.com/reflections.html>.