

LOVE FROM ABOVE

(The Biblical Way to Fullness of Joy in Christ)

Studies in 1 John

The New 'You' Coming

If you had the power, what 2 or 3 things about yourself would you change? Would you alter your appearance or your intelligence? Do you think your choices match with what God would like to see changed about you? Christians look forward to a coming day when Christ descends from heaven to the clouds above the earth and calls all Church Age believers up to meet Him in the air (*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, Colossians 3:4*). At this forever family reunion above we will be fixing things up for the rest of the trip home to heaven (*John 14:1-3*). Relationships that were damaged and left broken will be confronted and repaired; sinfulness that wasn't repented of and confessed will be dealt with and failure to serve the Lord in this life will be addressed (*2 Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:19-23, Luke 19:15-19, etc.*).

These sorts of things are what the Lord would like to see changed here and now rather than then. But there will also be physical changes as well as relational and spiritual (*Romans 8:23-25, 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 2:28-3:3*). God the Son's powers that created all things in the beginning will give us the ultimate make-over inside and out, just before He does the same thing to the earth and heavens around it (*Acts 3:19-21, 17:30-31; Romans 8:19-22, 2 Peter 3:10-13*). So, even if you don't get everything in perfect working order in this life, rejoice in the fact that the day is coming when you will get a supernatural makeover that lasts for eternity, when He comes.

But the spiritual part of the makeover begins in this life immediately upon the moment we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (*2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17; Ephesians 4:11-16, Titus 2:11-14, 2 Peter 1:5-9*). The Holy Spirit within the believer is renovating us from the inside out by transforming our minds and hearts through obedience to Scripture and submission to the promptings of the Spirit of the Lord. ***"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day"*** (*2 Corinthians 5:16*). Depending upon how cooperative we are with the Holy Spirit, we can achieve near perfection in the moral and spiritual parts of our character and lifestyle (*1 John 2:5, 4:7-8*). Just as someone having any kind of surgery being done to correct, replace or enhance some physical flaw, believers need to submit and surrender to God in the areas that they and their Lord knows can be improved (*Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Colossians 3:12-17*). Though many astounding outward physical changes must wait until resurrection day, it is possible for most of the mental, spiritual, moral characteristics of our inner person to become almost perfectly like Christ this side of glory for submissive disciples of Jesus (*1 Peter 1: 13-15*).

According to God's Word, this knowledge of the coming transformation should have a tremendous influence on our lives, conduct, and choices in daily life. What to do with our time, money, and physical bodies should be heavily influenced by what we will be like spiritually, mentally, and physically in heaven someday. What we do now is part of that process that is merely finalized when we arrive in His presence. This life and the decisions we make now aren't to be disconnected from what we are destined to be when the transformation process is completed in heaven. We are to be people who have already started to live on earth now like we will in heaven someday. Should we do this or that – dress like this or that – go here or go there – tattoo your skin or not – our future bodies and coming lifestyle in heaven should have a profound, practical impact on God's people here and now (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1: 20, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 1 John 4:17*).

What influences a bride-to-be's decisions and actions in the engagement period? Everything she does is affected by her understandable preoccupation with her husband-to-be and the home they will have together. This analogy directly relates to the Christian's decisions and choices here and now as 'the bride of Christ' while we await our Groom, the Lord Jesus, coming for us to continue our relationship in heaven forever (*Revelation 19:6-9*). The coming wedding date we have with Jesus is tremendous and exciting! The awesome change coming for all creation and for us 'His new creation' is exhilarating! But the thrill of that coming 'new you' has already begun within the heart, mind, and physical being of all who truly know Him and are yielding themselves to His Spirit on a daily basis 'til He comes (*Revelation 22:12-14*).

"...as He is, so are we in this world...we love Him because He first loved us." 1 John 4:17-19

Abiding, Anointing & Appearing

(The Triune Way to Fullness of Joy)

1 John 2:24-3:3

'Our Abiding'

(Our permanent allegiance the Father)

*"Therefore let that **abide in you** which you heard from the beginning. **If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.** And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life."
(*'abide'* also in verses 27 & 28) 2:24-25*

Things to Think About:

Remaining faithful (abiding) to beliefs and commitments that began a relationship proves you still love that person. Steadfastness or sticking with someone who has been faithful to you reveals what about a relationship? Why is John stressing this to believers near the end of the apostolic age? What does it take to 'abide' in the Lord for a lifetime? What will be the characteristics of a relationship that 'abides' over time?

'The Anointing'

(The Spirit's presence within believers)

*"These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But **the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you** and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as **the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie,** and just as it has taught you, **you will abide in Him.**" 2:26-27*

Things to Think About:

The 'anointing' believers receive at the moment of salvation is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon and into a new Christian's heart and mind. Although Bible teaching is helpful in developing spiritual growth, the Holy Spirit guides, warns and alerts true believers when lies and heresies are being presented. Can you describe personal experiences where the Holy Spirit did this within your mind and heart? Do you think this spiritual sensitivity can be enhanced or diminished by factors that affect one's discernment abilities?

'HIS Appearing'

(The Son's promise of HIS coming)

*"And now, little children, **abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!** Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **Beloved, now we are children of God;** and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be but **we know** that when He is revealed **we shall be like Him** for we shall see Him as He is. **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**" 2:28-3:3*

Things to Think About:

What are the future benefits of 'abiding' (adherence and faithfulness to God and His Word)?

What implication does the text make about who we keep fellowship with in daily life?

What impact does Christ's coming and our coming change have on daily living now?