

Walking With Jesus

A Simple Path to Spiritual Transformation

By Bob Pardue

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INTRODUCTION

Why Becoming Like Christ Still Feels Impossible—and Why It Isn’t

Most Christians, if asked what the highest aim of life is, would answer without hesitation: *to become more like Jesus Christ.*

That answer sounds right. It feels right. It even feels spiritual.

And yet, for many believers, it remains mostly theoretical.

We admire Christlikeness the way we admire a distant mountain—beautiful, inspiring, but far removed from daily life. We speak of it with reverence, but not always with expectation. Deep down, many assume that becoming truly like Christ is reserved for a different kind of person—someone with fewer distractions, stronger discipline, or a more spiritual temperament.

This book exists to challenge that assumption.

Scripture never presents Christlikeness as optional, exceptional, or unattainable. It presents it as **normal Christian growth**. More than that, it presents a way of transformation that is far simpler—and far more hopeful—than most of us have imagined.

The problem is not that we want too much.

The problem is that we often try to change in the wrong way.

What follows is not a method of self-improvement. It is not a spiritual formula. It is an invitation to rediscover a biblical pattern—one that has quietly shaped saints, ordinary believers, and faithful Christians across centuries.

- A pattern rooted not in effort, but in **attention**.
- Not in striving, but in **relationship**.
- Not in perfectionism, but in **love**.

CHAPTER 1

The Goal We All Agree On—but Rarely Pursue



There are very few people who would openly deny that the greatest achievement a human life can reach is likeness to Jesus Christ.

Even those outside the Christian faith often admire His character. They speak of His compassion, His moral clarity, His courage, and His self-giving love. Within the Church, that admiration goes deeper. We recognize Christ not only as a moral example, but as the revelation of God Himself.

And yet, admiration is not the same as transformation.

Many Christians hold Christlikeness as an abstract ideal rather than a lived pursuit. We nod in agreement when it is preached, but quietly excuse ourselves from expecting it to happen in our own lives.

We tell ourselves it is unrealistic.

We live in a demanding world. We carry responsibilities, pressures, temptations, and disappointments. We know our own weaknesses too well. Surely holiness of that depth is for a different kind of person—someone with fewer struggles and more spiritual strength.

But the apostle Paul dismantles that idea completely.

**“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.”**
— 2 Corinthians 3:18

Paul does not say *some*.

He does not say *the spiritually gifted*.

He says **we all**.

Christlikeness is not a bonus feature of the Christian life. It is its direction.

The tragedy is not that we fail to become perfect. The tragedy is that we often fail to expect real change at all.

Reflection Questions

1. When you hear the phrase “*becoming like Christ*,” what assumptions come to mind?
2. Do you believe deep transformation is possible for you personally? Why or why not?
3. How might low expectations hinder spiritual growth?

CHAPTER 2

What We Carry Beyond This Life



When life draws to a close, very little of what we spend time chasing remains.

Possessions are left behind.

Achievements lose their urgency.

Status and reputation fade quickly.

Scripture consistently points to one enduring reality: **who we have become**.

Character is not something we pick up at the end of life. It is something formed slowly, day by day, through what we love, what we pursue, and what we respond to.

Jesus Himself warned that gaining the world while losing the soul is a tragic exchange. The soul is shaped not by isolated decisions, but by repeated patterns of attention and desire.

This is why the New Testament speaks so often about *walking*, *abiding*, and *being formed*. These words describe a process, not a moment.

Christlikeness is not an accessory added to life. It is the very thing life is shaping.

Reflection Questions

1. What aspects of your life currently shape your character most?
2. How does viewing life as formation change your priorities?
3. In what ways do you see character forming—positively or negatively—over time?

CHAPTER 3

The Image God Always Intended



From the beginning, humanity was created with a purpose that goes far beyond survival or productivity.

Scripture tells us that human beings were made in the image of God. Sin distorted that image, but it did not erase God's intention. Redemption is not merely forgiveness—it is restoration.

Jesus Christ is the clearest expression of what humanity was always meant to be.

Paul describes Christ not only as Savior, but as the **true image** toward which believers are being shaped.

This means Christlikeness is not artificial. It is not imposed from the outside. It is the fulfillment of God's original design for human life.

When we move toward Christ, we are not becoming less ourselves—we are becoming more truly human.

Reflection Questions

1. How does seeing Christ as the “true image” reshape your understanding of growth?
2. What fears arise when you think about being changed?
3. How might Christlikeness actually restore rather than erase your identity?

CHAPTER 4

Moses, the Veil, and a Forgotten Pattern



To understand Paul's teaching on transformation, we need to step back into a scene many believers know—but rarely connect to daily Christian life.

The story is found in Exodus. Moses has been on Mount Sinai, speaking with God. When he comes down to the people, something startling happens.

**“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai...
the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.”**
— Exodus 34:29

The radiance on Moses' face was unmistakable. Those who saw him immediately recognized it as the reflection of God's presence. Yet instead of celebrating it, they were afraid. The brightness was overwhelming.

Moses responded by placing a veil over his face.

At first glance, this detail can seem minor. But Paul saw in it a profound spiritual pattern.

The glory on Moses' face was real—but it was not permanent. It was not intrinsic. It was reflected. And Moses knew it would fade once he stepped away from God's presence.

So he covered his face—not to hide God's glory, but to prevent the people from watching it diminish.

Yet every time Moses returned to God's presence, the veil came off. Fresh glory replaced fading brightness. Over time, Moses moved **from glory to glory**, not by effort, but by repeated exposure.

This rhythm—**presence, reflection, fading, return**—is central to Paul's teaching on Christian transformation.

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think the people feared reflected glory?
2. What does Moses' repeated return to God suggest about spiritual renewal?
3. How often do you return intentionally to God's presence?

CHAPTER 5

From Glory to Glory: Paul's Great Insight



When Paul refers to Moses, he is not retelling history for curiosity's sake. He is revealing a principle that governs Christian growth.

**“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.”**
— 2 Corinthians 3:18

Paul tells us three crucial things in this single verse.

First, transformation is **ongoing**.

Second, it is **relational**.

Third, it is **spiritual**, not superficial.

Unlike Moses, believers do not reflect Christ merely outwardly. The glory we reflect is not on our faces—it is within our character.

Christ's glory is His nature: His humility, His purity, His love, His obedience, His compassion. When we behold Him—not casually, but attentively—our inner life begins to echo what we see.

And this change does not happen in leaps. It happens gradually.

Paul uses the phrase *“from glory to glory”* intentionally. Growth is progressive. It deepens over time. Each encounter with Christ leaves a trace.

Importantly, this transformation is not self-produced.

“The Lord is the Spirit.”

— 2 Corinthians 3:17

It is Christ's Spirit working upon our spirit. Our role is not to manufacture change, but to remain present, receptive, and honest before Him.

Reflection Questions

1. How does gradual transformation encourage patience with yourself?
2. What expectations do you have about the speed of spiritual growth?
3. How does knowing the Spirit does the work affect your approach?

CHAPTER 6

Why Change Happens Slowly—and Surely



Many believers become discouraged because transformation feels slow.

They expect dramatic change, instant victory, or permanent spiritual highs. When these do not come, they assume something is wrong—either with them or with God's promises.

But Scripture presents growth as organic, not mechanical.

Consider how growth happens in nature. Seeds do not become trees overnight. Muscles strengthen through repeated use. Relationships deepen through sustained presence.

Spiritual transformation follows the same pattern.

Each time we return to Christ—each moment of prayer, remembrance, obedience, or repentance—we reflect Him a little more clearly. Over time, these reflections accumulate.

Slow growth is not failed growth.

In fact, slow growth is often the deepest growth, because it reshapes not just behavior, but desire.

God is not interested in short-term conformity. He is forming an eternal character.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you tend to become impatient with spiritual growth?
2. How does viewing transformation as organic change your expectations?
3. What small, faithful practices help you return to Christ regularly?

CHAPTER 7

Christianity Is Relational, Not Mechanical



When people ask how to become holy, they are often given a list.

- Read more.
- **Pray longer.**
- Try harder.
- **Do better.**

While spiritual disciplines matter, Paul reminds us that Christianity is not a system to be mastered—it is a relationship to be lived.

Jesus did not retreat from life to become holy. He lived fully among people. He walked through temptation, fatigue, conflict, and sorrow—yet remained aligned with the Father.

The power of transformation does not lie in techniques. It lies in **nearness**.

When Christ occupies our attention, His presence quietly reshapes us.

This is why attempts at self-reform so often fail. We try to sculpt ourselves rather than reflect Christ.

- Rules can restrain behavior.
- Only relationships reshape the heart.

Christianity does not begin with "*Do this.*" It begins with "*Come and see.*"

Reflection Questions

1. Have you relied more on rules than relationships in your faith?
2. How does Christ's way of living challenge your assumptions?
3. What practices help you stay relational rather than mechanical?

CHAPTER 8

We Become What We Behold



Human beings are shaped less by what they claim to believe and more by what they regularly attend to.

This is not a spiritual concept alone—it is a human one. Our thoughts, habits, and character are formed by what captures our attention over time. What we admire, what we fear, what we desire, and what we dwell on slowly works its way into who we are.

Scripture affirms this reality.

**“Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,
but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”**

— Romans 8:5

Paul is describing more than conscious choices. He is describing orientation—where the mind naturally turns.

This is why transformation cannot happen without attention. We cannot become like Christ if He occupies only the margins of our awareness.

Beholding Christ does not mean withdrawing from life. It means learning to carry His presence into the center of it. As we think about Him, respond to Him, and love Him, His character gradually shapes ours.

This process often goes unnoticed—until others see the change before we do.

Reflection Questions

1. What most consistently captures your attention during the day?
2. How do your thoughts influence your attitudes and reactions?
3. What might change if Christ held more of your mental focus?

CHAPTER 9

Why Rules Alone Never Transform



Rules have their place. They can restrain behavior and provide structure. But rules alone cannot change the heart.

Many believers begin their spiritual journey believing that holiness is achieved primarily through discipline. When progress stalls, frustration sets in. Guilt increases. Motivation fades.

This is not because discipline is useless, but because discipline without relationship is incomplete.

Paul understood this well. He had lived under a system of religious law that demanded obedience but lacked the power to transform desire.

“The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

— 2 Corinthians 3:6

Rules can tell us what is wrong. Only a relationship shows us what is better.

When Christ becomes the object of our love, obedience follows naturally. What once felt like restraint begins to feel like freedom.

This does not remove struggle—but it changes its nature. Growth becomes cooperation rather than conflict.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have rules helped you—and where have they failed?
2. How does love motivate obedience differently than fear?
3. In what ways could a relationship with Christ reshape your discipline?

CHAPTER 10

Carrying Christ Into Ordinary Life



One of the greatest misunderstandings of spiritual growth is the belief that it requires ideal conditions.

We imagine quiet mornings, uninterrupted prayer, and controlled environments. But most lives do not look like that.

Work demands attention. Responsibilities press in. Temptations arise unexpectedly.

Paul's vision of transformation is realistic because it does not require retreat—it requires **remembrance**.

Carrying Christ into ordinary life means learning to return to Him again and again throughout the day.

- A brief prayer.
- A remembered word of Scripture.
- the pause before reacting.
- An acknowledgment of His presence.

These moments matter more than we realize.

“Pray without ceasing.”

— 1 Thessalonians 5:17

This does not mean constant words—it means constant awareness.

As Christ becomes a familiar presence rather than a distant figure, daily life itself becomes the context for transformation.

Reflection Questions

1. In which daily situations do you most forget Christ’s presence?
2. What simple practices could help you return to Him during the day?
3. How might ordinary moments become places of growth?

CHAPTER 11

Setting Yourself Squarely Before Christ



A mirror can only reflect clearly when it is properly aligned.

If it is tilted or turned at an angle, the reflection becomes distorted—or disappears altogether. The same principle applies to spiritual life.

Many believers give Christ attention, but not alignment. They admire Him, respect Him, and even consult Him—but they do not fully face Him. As a result, the reflection of His character in their lives remains faint or inconsistent.

Paul's language is deliberate when he speaks of *unveiled faces*. Nothing is hidden. Nothing is turned away.

This is where spiritual growth becomes uncomfortable—not because Christ demands too much, but because alignment exposes divided loyalties.

“No one can serve two masters.”

— Matthew 6:24

Alignment means honesty. It means allowing Christ access to areas we would rather manage ourselves. We may fear that full surrender will shrink our lives, restrict our joy, or limit our freedom.

In reality, the opposite is true.

When we stand squarely before Christ, we stop wasting energy on inner conflict. Growth becomes clearer. Direction becomes steadier. Freedom becomes deeper.

Reflection Questions

1. In what areas of life do you most resist full alignment with Christ?
2. What fears surface when you consider wholehearted surrender?
3. How might alignment bring clarity rather than restriction?

CHAPTER 12

Love, Attention, and Spiritual Awareness



Attention follows love.

We naturally think about what matters most to us. When love deepens, awareness increases. This is why Christlikeness cannot be separated from affection for Christ.

Obedience that is not rooted in love becomes strained. Awareness that is not fueled by love fades quickly.

Jesus Himself made this connection clear.

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

— John 14:15

Love sustains attention. Attention fuels transformation.

As love for Christ grows, His presence becomes easier to notice—not because life becomes quieter, but because awareness becomes sharper.

Spiritual awareness is not mystical. It is relational. It develops the same way awareness of a loved one does—through familiarity, trust, and shared presence.

Reflection Questions

1. How does love shape your attention in everyday life?
2. What competes most for your affection?
3. How might growing love for Christ deepen spiritual awareness?

CHAPTER 13

What Dulls Our Reflection of Christ



Even the clearest mirror can lose its ability to reflect if it becomes coated with dust.

In spiritual life, the problem is rarely a lack of exposure to Christ. It is the accumulation of distractions, compromises, and divided desires.

Worldliness does not always appear as open rebellion. More often, it appears as gradual dullness—a slow fading of sensitivity.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world.”

— 1 John 2:15

This does not mean rejecting ordinary life. It means resisting anything that claims the devotion meant for Christ.

Sin, unconfessed and unmanaged, also clouds reflection. It does not always destroy faith—but it weakens clarity and joy.

The solution is not despair. It is cleansing.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

— 1 John 1:9

Cleansing restores reflection. Openness renews sensitivity. Christ does not turn away from clouded mirrors—He invites us closer.

Reflection Questions

1. What distractions most dull your awareness of Christ?
2. How do you usually respond to conviction—defensiveness or openness?
3. What practices help keep your heart clear and responsive?

CHAPTER 14

Cleansing the Heart Without Despair



For many believers, the word *cleansing* carries emotional weight.

It can stir memories of shame, repeated failure, or the exhausting feeling of starting over again and again. Some quietly fear that honest self-examination will only reveal how far they still fall short.

Yet Scripture never presents cleansing as punishment. It presents it as **restoration**.

God does not invite us to examine our hearts so that we will despair—but so that we may be healed.

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my thoughts.”**

— Psalm 139:23

The psalmist does not hide from God's gaze. He welcomes it. Why? Because he trusts God's intention.

Cleansing begins when we stop defending ourselves and start trusting Christ with the truth about us. This honesty creates space for grace to work deeply rather than superficially.

The goal is not perfection—it is clarity.

As Christ's purity presses gently against our hearts, misplaced desires begin to lose their power. Not always quickly. Not always dramatically. But truly.

- Shame says, "***Hide.***"
- Grace says, "***Come closer.***"

And when we do, reflection becomes clearer once again.

Reflection Questions

1. What emotions arise when you think about spiritual cleansing?
2. How does God's invitation differ from shame-based self-criticism?
3. What would it look like to trust Christ fully with the truth about your heart?

CHAPTER 15

Freedom, Not Fear, as the Mark of Growth



One of the clearest signs of genuine spiritual growth is not strictness—but freedom.

This may surprise some. Many assume that maturity looks like increased rigidity or constant self-monitoring. But Scripture points in another direction.

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”
— 2 Corinthians 3:17

Freedom does not mean the absence of discipline. It means the absence of fear.

As Christ’s character takes root, obedience becomes less about avoiding punishment and more about preserving a relationship. We begin to choose differently—not because we must, but because we want to.

- Fear shrinks the soul.
- Love enlarges it.

A growing Christian is not one who never struggles—but one who is increasingly unafraid to bring struggles into Christ's presence.

This is the freedom of sons and daughters, not servants trembling under demand.

Reflection Questions

1. How do fear and love differently motivate behavior in your life?
2. Where has fear limited your spiritual freedom?
3. What would growth look like if love led more consistently than fear?

CHAPTER 16

Why This Process Never Truly Ends



Spiritual growth does not reach a plateau.

There is no point at which Christ draws a line and says, “*That’s far enough.*” The reason is simple: **He Himself is the standard.**

As long as Christ remains our vision, growth remains possible.

Paul understood this deeply.

**“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect,
but I press on to make it my own.”**

— Philippians 3:12

The Christian conscience is stirred not by how much we resemble Christ—but by where we still differ. This is not discouragement; it is invitation.

Each new awareness of difference draws us closer rather than pushing us away.

This lifelong process is not a burden. It is a gift. Christ's character is not temporary or situational—it is eternal. What He forms in us now is what we will live with forever.

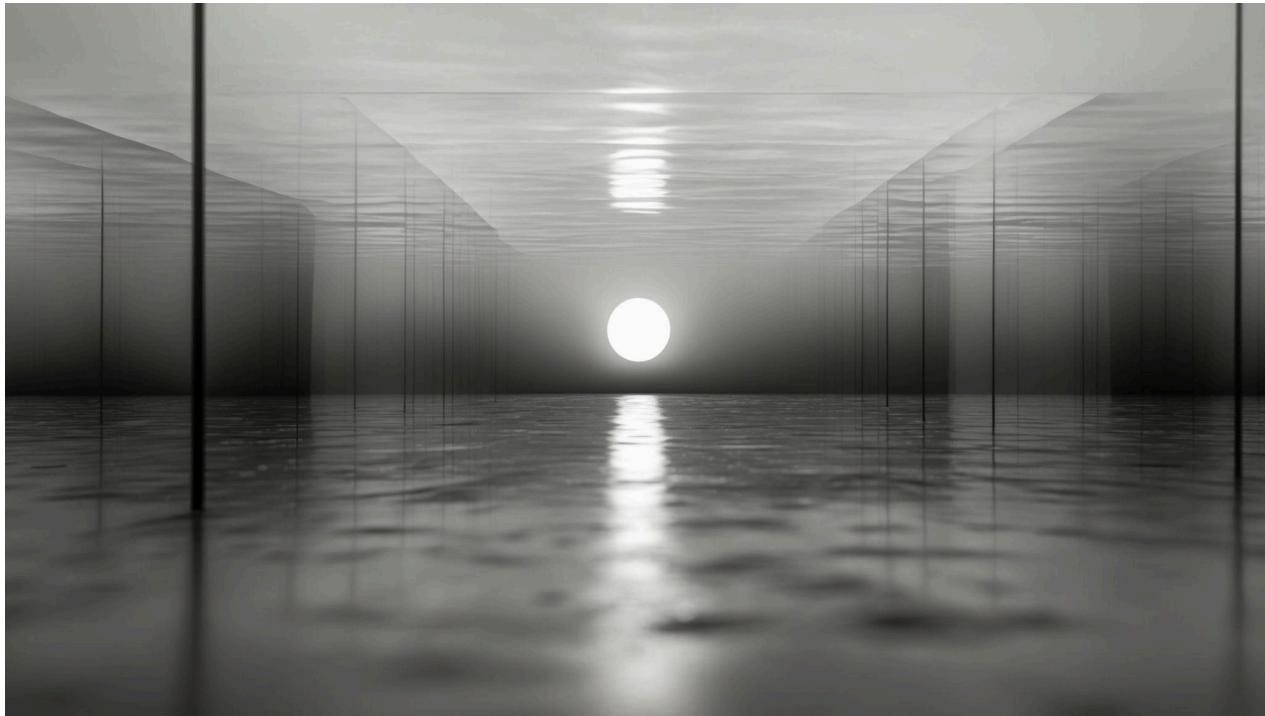
No effort invested in becoming like Him is ever wasted.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you respond to the idea that growth never truly ends?
2. Where do you see progress when you look back over your life?
3. How does eternal perspective reshape your view of daily faithfulness?

CHAPTER 17

The Quiet Influence That Changes Others



Many Christians long to be useful.

They want their lives to matter—to contribute something meaningful to God's work in the world. Yet not everyone is placed in visible roles or given public gifts.

The good news is this: **the most powerful influence is often the quietest.**

When a person consistently reflects Christ, others notice—even if they cannot immediately explain why.

“Let your light shine before others.”

— Matthew 5:16

Reflection draws attention beyond itself. Just as a mirror causes us to look at what it reflects, a Christlike life causes others to look toward Christ.

This is how faith spreads most naturally—through proximity, authenticity, and visible transformation.

You may never know how many lives are shaped simply by watching yours.

Reflection Questions

1. Who might be influenced by your life without your realizing it?
2. How does quiet faithfulness compare to visible ministry?
3. What encourages you about God using ordinary lives for lasting impact?

CONCLUSION

From Glory to Glory



Walking in the footsteps of Jesus is not about striving harder.
It is about staying nearer.

Transformation does not come from self-correction alone, but from sustained attention to Christ. As we behold Him, love Him, and return to Him again and again, we are changed—slowly, surely, and deeply.

**“We all... are being transformed into the same image
from glory to glory.”**

This is not a burden meant to exhaust us. It is a promise meant to encourage us.

- Stand before Him with an unveiled face.
- Return when reflection fades.
- Trust the process.

And little by little, you will find that Christ is shaping you into the person you were always meant to be.

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A Final Word to the Reader

Thank you for taking the time to read this book.

If there is one thing I hope you carry with you, it is this: following Christ is not about pressure—it is about presence. Growth does not come from trying to impress God, but from learning to stay near Him.

No matter where you are in your faith journey, Christ invites you to come closer. And every honest step toward Him matters more than you may realize.

About the Author

I am not a pastor—just a person living on this earth, much like you.

Even so, I believe we share a common desire: to see our world become a better place, and for the people living here—if only for a short time—to experience real inner peace.

My hope for you is simple. I want you to come away from this book with a clearer understanding of who Jesus is, and perhaps with a few answers that help with everyday living.

I accepted Christ as my Savior, and since then I've felt called to share that hope with others—just as Christians before me once shared it with me.

I wish you the very best in life. If you found this book encouraging or helpful, I would truly appreciate a short review. Your words help others discover the message as well.

Thank you very much for reading,
and may you have a blessed day.

— Bob Pardue

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