GOD TRANSFORMS
Chapter 8

From last week's chapter and our reading of the Gospel of John, we see a God whose love is so great He gives Himself completely for us. Through Jesus' life, His service, and ultimately His sacrifice on the cross, we begin to understand the depth of God's self-sacrificing love. But Jesus wants more than for us simply to know about that love; He invites us into relationship with Him—a union with God that changes the way we live. In John 15:1-5, Jesus gives us the beautiful picture of the vine and the branches. He tells us to abide in Him, because a branch cannot bear fruit on its own. It must remain connected to the vine. This is at the heart of Chapter 8, God Transforms. Transformation isn't something we accomplish by trying harder or making ourselves better. It grows out of our closeness to God. As we remain in Christ, receiving His love and allowing His life to flow into ours, we gradually become more like Him. **God's desire is not simply to change what we do, but to transform who we are through our union with Him.**

Please read Chapter 8 because it invites us to reconsider what it really means to grow spiritually. Are we simply trying to live a Christian life, or are we allowing the life of Christ to live and grow in us? I think there are some ideas in the chapter worth noticing:

1. God wants more than behavior change
2. Transformation begins with union with God
3. God transforms the way we think
4. Transformation is a process, not an instant achievement
5. We must make room for God (Time and Attention)

Have you ever noticed that when you spend time with someone you love and admire, you sometimes begin to pick up their expressions, their attitudes, or even the way they see things? Could something similar happen as we spend time with Jesus?

Making room for God can be practiced in the Soul Training exercise on Solitude on pages 166-169. Jesus often withdrew to quiet places to pray. When was the last time you were quietly alone with God? Solitude is choosing to step away from the noise, activity, responsibilities, and other people's needs long enough to become attentive to God's presence. What might we discover about God, and about ourselves, if we learned NOT to fill every quiet moment. We cannot become more like Christ simply by doing more for Him. We must also learn to be with Him.

May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you inwardly as you quiet yourself and give Him time and attention each day. May His light grow ever brighter within you so that you may carry His presence into the noise, activity, and responsibilities of everyday life.