

SEEING THE GOLDSMITH'S FACE

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2Co. 3:18 NIV).

How are we transformed into the image of Jesus? Is there anything we should do in this process?



- The goal:**
 - ➔ Reflecting the image of God
 - ➔ Being like gold
- The result:**
 - ➔ Developing our character
 - ➔ Victory in conflict
- Our support:**
 - ➔ Community

REFLECTING THE IMAGE OF GOD

"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)

In the beginning, God created humankind in His image (Gn. 1:27). However, sin has been disfiguring that image in humans for centuries.

One of the goals of the Gospel is to restore God's image in us. To be made "to the image of His Son" (Ro. 8:29).



We live amidst a cosmic conflict. The whole universe and all heavenly beings are looking. They should see the reflection of the character of Jesus in us (1Co. 4:9; Eph. 3:10).



BEING LIKE GOLD

"But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10)

God affirmed that Job was a "blameless and upright" man (Job 1:1). Then the enemy sowed doubts by questioning Job's motivation (Job 1:9-11).



Job was on the brink of desperation. He couldn't understand why all those tragedies were happening, but he understood he was being tested. He was sure that process would make him shine like gold eventually, that he would be perfected.

Our true character is shown in the most difficult trials, and it's refined by them. In those critical moments, God improves aspects of our character that wouldn't be visible otherwise.



DEVELOPING OUR CHARACTER

"But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'" (Matthew 25:9)



The difference between the two groups of virgins was the supply of oil (Mt. 25:1-4). The first meaning of the oil is the Holy Spirit, but it could also be interpreted as the character.

"In the parable, the foolish virgins are represented as begging for oil, and failing to receive it at their request. This is symbolic of those who have not prepared themselves by developing a character to stand in a time of crisis." (EGW, The Youth's Instructor, 1896-06-16)

We will be victorious in conflict if we develop our character through a close relationship with Jesus.

Jesus affirmed that our character is shown in the way we treat others (Mt. 25:34-36).



“The conflicts of earth, in the providence of God, furnish the very training necessary to develop characters fit for the courts of heaven. We are to become members of the royal family, the sons of God, and ‘all things work together for good’ to those who love God, and submit themselves to His will.”

E. G. W. (Our High Calling, November 6)

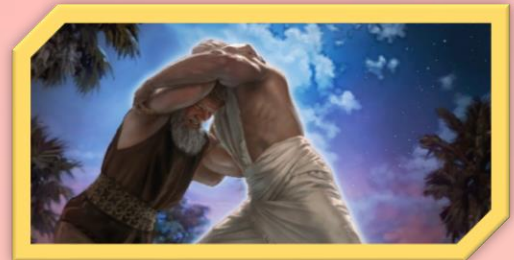
VICTORY IN CONFLICT

“Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” (Daniel 12:10)

In Daniel and Revelation, we see that humankind will be divided into two groups in the End Time: the pure and the wicked, those who understand and those who don't (Dn. 12:10; Rev. 22:11).



According to Jeremiah, that time will be “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Once the time of grace ends, the redeemed will have reached final victory and will be refined and purified. Meanwhile, the wicked will persist in their rebellion against God.



COMMUNITY

“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” (Ephesians 4:13)



Obviously, developing our character is an individual work. However, what about the character of the community? Can the Church develop and perfect its character?

The character of the Church is the sum and collaboration of every member’s character.



This character is refined when we work together to help others. This is also a powerful testimony for all heavenly beings.

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 3:10 NIV).



“When trials come to us, let us not dwell upon the greatness of the difficulties and feel that we cannot have joy in the Lord. It is true we will have changes of feelings. There will come to us times of discouragement and depression. But shall we live by feeling or by faith? When our brethren and friends speak unadvisedly, and cause us grief, let us not be cast down. Let us remember that we are in a world of trial and grief, of sorrow and disappointment. When these experiences come to us, they should drive us to Christ. If they do not, we meet with loss.”