

Six Steps to Transformation

Sermon Title: **Six Steps to Transformation**

Sermon Number: **6312**

Speaker: **Dr. Rodney B. Jackson**

Links to sermon—*Windows Media Version is fastest download, MP3 is best audio quality:*

Windows Media Version <http://www.theonlineword.com/s/6312.wma>

MP3 Version <http://www.theonlineword.com/mp3/6312.mp3>



AirJesus.com

and

TheOnLineWord.com

AirJesus.com

TheOnLineWord.com

Pastor Nathaniel: Dr. Rodney Jackson is here by divine appointment, and he has a word for you. Dr. Jackson has had a tremendous impact upon this ministry. As I was sitting in one of the classes that he was teaching one night and as he had finished his normal message, he began to simply talk out of the Holy Spirit. He made a statement that spoke to my spirit. He said, “The church should be emailing the world every day.” When he made that statement it hit me like a sledge hammer; and in that instant and in that moment, MountainWings.com was birthed. All of you know the story - it went on to become the largest inspirational email on the face of the planet. It was because of the seed that Dr. Rodney B. Jackson planted.

Earlier this week, I heard God speak to me just to ask Dr. Jackson to come and speak to the congregation. For some of you, he may have a word of a seed that will be just as transforming in your life as his word was in my life. It wasn't just in my life, but that word created a fruit that helped to transform numbers that I still will never know the full impact of. It was all because of being in the right place at the right time under the right man with the right word.

So I tell you that you're in the right place at the right time under the right man who will bring you the right word. So open your hearts, your minds and your spirits to receive what he has to say. He's not here by accident. Pay careful attention, hang on every word and allow him to enter into your mind and your spirit. Allow him to do what God has ordained for him to do.

Six Steps To Transformation

Introduction

Romans 12:2 is one of my favorite Scriptures. I keep coming back to it over and over again. In Romans 12:2, it reads, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” This particular passage or Scripture challenges believers all over the world to undergo a radical process of transformation by simply changing the way that you think.

I like to define transformation as the willingness and the ability to live beyond the limitations or the limits of life. Another way of thinking about transformation is a fundamental new state of being. When one has been transformed, the Bible even says, the old things have passed away and behold all things have become new. So it is a fundamental new state of being. A transformation creates or yields a change in your world view, your perception about life and what’s possible. So when people have undergone a transformation, the whole entire world view has been changed. They are looking at life a whole lot differently, and they understand that everything that God has promised them is possible for their lives.

Transformation is quite different from a change. Change is where you make small, incremental modifications or alterations, but a transformative change or transformation is a total and radical new way of being in the world, in your relationships and in your church. So when one undergoes this transformation, it’s very different from a simple change. It’s different from making alert, incremental changes but something radically new has taken place in your life.

There are six steps that I have identified in order for transformation to take place. I have applied these steps to my life, and I keep working them over and over at different life stages to make sure that I’m making transformative changes. We will talk a little bit more in depth about these six steps because I think that once you understand them then you can participate and be more intentional in your own transformations. Most psychologists will tell you that at the end of the day, all change is self change. I repeat, at the end of the day, all change is self change. In other words, my brothers and sisters, you’ve got to participate. You must have a part in this process. I have found that once you can understand the process then you are in a better position to be more intentional and pro-active in your own change.

Now, let’s look at an overview of the six steps.

The first step is *Pre-contemplation*. The second step is *Contemplation*. The third step is *Preparation*. The fourth step is *Action*. The fifth step is *Maintenance* and the sixth step is *Termination*.

Now, there are a couple of things I have to say about these steps before we really get into them; there are a couple of major points that you have to embrace. First of all, you've got to understand that while you're moving toward transformation, you're going to be in the non-action stage 80% of the time. Hear me carefully, while you're moving toward transformation, you are going to be in the non-action stages of pre-contemplation and contemplation 80% of the time. Secondly, understand that each stage of transformation that you'll go through requires different strategies. So you can't use the same strategy that you used during pre-contemplation in contemplation. Each stage requires a different strategy. Thirdly, if you try the wrong strategy in the wrong stage, you're dooming yourself to fail. So I need to make sure that you understand these points before we get started.

While you're moving toward transformation, often times it's going to look like the change has not taken place. However, it's as though you're in the cocoon stage where the transformation is taking place internally; and usually before it is seen externally, it has to take place inside.

Step One

Let's examine each step of transformation a little closer. The first step is Pre-contemplation. It is at the beginning of this step where most don't even know they have a problem. Praise the Lord for awaking us though!

You don't have any idea that you've got a problem because you're totally oblivious to your own self-defeating patterns of behavior. Now, let me just say this to you brothers and sisters, you have to come out of denial. If your mother and your father have said that you are hardheaded and always wanted to have your own way and your siblings have also joined in and said that same thing, then you probably have a problem.

So, in the pre-contemplation stage, you might not realize that YOU are the problem. You don't even have any idea that you are the problem because as far as you know, it's everybody else who has the problems. In a pre-contemplation stage you don't realize you have the problems. Usually in this stage, when someone comes and talks to us about it, we want to project out and say, "It's them and it's not me." We also become very defensive. We want to make sure that whomever we are talking to knows that it's not us with the problem. We take on this "If you fix them, my problems would go away" attitude.

Now, Michael Jackson is one of my all-time favorite performers, and he had one song that I particularly loved and that's "Man in the Mirror". In one line it said something very clear - that if you want to make a change in the world, take a look at yourself and make a change in yourself. If you want to make a change in your relationships or you want to make a change on your job, you first need to look at yourself and take ownership of the pattern of behavior that's causing you to get the results that you're getting.

In this particular stage, the strategy to use here is to align yourself with somebody who can help you face the truth about yourself. I have come to recognize that – Who I say I am and Who I really am are often times two worlds apart. Now I used myself but I'm really talking about you. And that's the way that we are, you know; there's a public persona and there's a private one. Every time we go to church, we usually have that public persona on glass. We walk down the aisle looking like we have it all together, but all of us know that there are some things in our lives that we wish we had better control of. The pre-contemplation step is where you should align yourself in a relationship where you give people the freedom to tell you the truth about you.

We need to build relationships. You have people who are whole enough and healthy enough to tell you the truth about you. You can't get to the next step, contemplation, unless you deal with pre-contemplation first. I must recognize what the issues are and what the challenges are that I'm bringing with me into every relationship that I'm becoming a part of. So your problem had a history long before you got here.

So in this particular strategy there should be an awareness rising. How do I raise your conscience? How do I begin to recognize that I'm playing a part in this and that I've got to take responsibility for the part that I'm playing?

Step Two

The next step is Contemplation. This is where you start thinking about taking some action. I realize I have the problem. I realize, it's not everybody else; and I realize I have to participate in this change process by thinking about taking some action to deal with this challenge. Now, you begin to change how you feel about yourself. You begin to recognize that – I can get over this; I can break through this, and I can change this. You start making a change about how you feel about it. You are no longer focusing on the problem. Now you're becoming purpose-focused, that this time next year I'm going to lose this weight. This time next year, I'm going to stop smoking. This time next year, I'm going to stop drinking. You get the point! So now, you're getting a purpose for your life, and you are beginning to look at it and say, "Now, I can take some steps that can help me get out of this." However, you're just in the contemplation stages. You're thinking about it. You haven't made a

decision yet, but you're thinking about it. And that's one of the reasons you come to church because the Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by what – the Word of God.

So the more you hear the Word of God, the more it challenges you that you can live at a higher level. Now, in this stage, the contemplation stage, psychologists have found out that most people who are trying to stop smoking usually stay in this stage for two years. So in other words, I want to let you know that it's not an overnight process. It's not just coming in here and just doing one thing and then thinking you're done with it. You're going to be there for a while. So if a person who's trying to stop smoking, stays in this stage on the average – two years, how much more do you need to be in the Word every day? You might want to consider every Bible study, every revival and every Sunday school class because some of the stuff that's been with you for your entire life is not just going to go away with one exciting sermon.

So in this particular stage, you have to realize that you might be here a while. I think that's the same scenario with the children of Israel in the Old Testament when they were in the wilderness. They had to wander out there for 40 years. You have to be aware of the fact that you are going to be there for a while. This is not just going to be an overnight process. So the strategy here is emotional arousal. Now you start looking at – and thinking about what you are feeling, what you are experiencing, and what is leading you to act like this. Do you start eating when you get stressed? Do you snap when there is too much pressure? What are the feelings that are driving you and your emotions?

After the emotional arousal, we'll start doing 'self evaluations'. You will start analyzing your thoughts about yourself. You have to start analyzing in order to really know what you're thinking about the situation. So this is where you start doing a 'self evaluation'. You have moved through pre-contemplation. You're not blaming everybody else. You're finally accepting responsibility because you're re-evaluating yourself, and you know that you're playing a part in this. It can't just be that every time you move to a different station in your life that you're hearing the same things that your mother and father said about you. Now, everybody can't be lying about you! There are some people who don't even know your parents, and they are saying the same thing about you on the job. So there must be some truth! Just consider for a moment that there might be some truth to what they are saying about you.

Step Three

The third step is Preparation. At this stage, you're planning. You're ready to get an action plan together. You're now saying, "I realize I have to make some changes. I want to transform and to change. So I have to put a plan together." I have come to

realize that having a plan and writing it down holds you accountable. So you are formulating a plan, but you're somewhat conflicted because you want to make the commitment and you're ready, but you don't want to start again because you might fail.

You know how it feels to say, "You know, I would do this, but I know I'm going to go back to doing that..." You're really worried about how you are going to maintain something. Even though, you're somewhat conflicted, you must make a plan. The Bible even states to write the vision and make it plain. And see one thing about sitting down and writing the vision is that every day that you read it, it holds you accountable. Even though you're not doing anything, it puts a demand on what you should be doing.

The strategy here is that you must understand that you've got the commitment and you've got to believe in your ability that you can do this. And this is what Paul was saying in Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ" who does what – "strengthens me." So you've got to believe and tell yourself that you can do this. Say to yourself, "I can get up and get out there and do this and make this change. I'm not worried about the fact that I'm not fully committed, but I know can do this. I'm making a plan that I'm going to get up at 6 a.m. to pray. This is going to be my alone time."

And even though you might have some setbacks, you've still got a plan. Having a plan is one of the keys to success. Not having a plan is one of the keys to failure. So, you've got the commitment; you've got a plan.

Step Four

The next step is Action. Notice, up until this point you still hadn't done anything – yet. You simply moved through the pre-contemplation stage to the in contemplation stage where you're thinking about it. You also just wrote down a plan, but you still haven't done anything. So now, you're ready for action. Now, you begin to start engaging the pattern of behavior that you want to embrace. You start looking at where you are and where you are going to be, and you start practicing the behavior.

You are getting up in the morning. You are showing up to get out there on the track to workout. You are getting up; you are meeting the point of time for prayer even though you are still sleepy while doing it. But at least you're what – showing up. So you've got to actually show up. Now you start embracing the pattern of behavior that you want to become a part of your life. And this is where you use your church family. You start telling healthy people who are on the front row of your life that this is what you're trying to accomplish.

And the reason I say, “healthy people” is because healthy people can support you. Unhealthy people don’t want you to change. Amen. They don’t want you to change because your changing is going to upset the balance in their lives. So you tell healthy people. Seek out some healthy people in your church family, in your circle of influence who can handle the change that you are getting ready to make. Find these healthy people and tell them, ‘Look, I’m getting ready to take this step and I need your support. I’m getting ready to take this step to be more faithful in church. So, I am giving you permission that if I don’t show up at the church that you can get the police and come over to my house and find out what’s going on in my life.’ That’s the type of commitment and support you’re going to need to push you along.

So you’re now taking the action steps. You realize the change that you want to make and even before you get to this point, change has already begun to start taking place because you’re thinking differently about your life. Now, the strategy here is that you’ve got to set up some kind of reward system. Every time you accomplish something, you have to reward yourself. You must reward yourself. Every time you accomplish something, you’ve got to set up moments where you can celebrate your victory. This is only going to give you momentum.

So you’ve got to reward yourself and then you’ve got to counter behavior. Every time you get rid of a negative behavior, you have to replace it with something positive. Every time there’s a void in your life, if you don’t replace it, it will automatically fill itself with something else. So you got to counter behavior by replacing the negative behaviors with positive ones.

You must also have “Environmental Control.” You’ve got to change your environment. Some people whom you thought were friends might have to get a letter of termination stating that you have fired them from this position in your life. Amen. Praise the Lord.

You’ve got to change your environment. You have to make sure you have the right people who can help support the change that you are getting ready to make. So, for everybody who is in your life right now, you need to begin an interviewing process. Ask them, ‘Can you handle the demands and the requirements that I’m going to be looking for from you for this change that I’m getting ready to make?’ So you have to change the environment. You have to control the environment rather than getting into an environment where you know they are only going to bring up what you used to do and cause you to have a setback. You want to make sure that whatever environment you are in, that it is supporting this transformation that you’re going through.

You have to build healthy relationships. You must have some people or relationships that can enlighten you and that can inspire you. And that’s the reason you have your pastors and your church mothers. You’ve got people who have gone

the way that you're attempting to go and you need them too, so that they can share their insights and give you wisdom. Someone could just say one thing, you know, that can just totally revolutionize your world. So you have to build and look for healthy relationships with individuals who are in the same journey that you are, who believe like you believe and who can encourage you when you get a little weak.

You know, when it comes to working out, I work out better in a group because when you are out by yourself, you can cheat. Praise the Lord. Yes, you can cheat! You don't have to do those sit-ups, and you find yourself doing what – cutting the workout short. I know you've been guilty of this when nobody was watching you. But when you're in a group, it's just the energy of the group that catches you and carries you on.

Step Five

The fifth step is Maintenance. This is the step where you put the energy into guarding against a relapse. Praise the Lord. This is where you've got to fight. the good fight of faith because you can relapse if you're not diligent and on the task. If you don't guard against it, you can find yourself taking a step back. So you have to protect against relapse and this is the reason healthy relationships can help you protect against relapse. And once you get through the maintenance stage, now, you're ready for termination.

Step Six

By the time you get to this step, you have embraced the new life style, and you no longer have to be coerced into going to work out or whatever it is. You have embraced it as a lifestyle. Praise the Lord. Not only have you embraced it as a lifestyle, now you have embraced the practice that it's going to take to maintain this lifestyle. So our behavior is no longer temptation. You have lost all desire for the negative patterns.

This is a spiral process and not a linear process. What do I mean by a spiral process? You will have some starts where you find yourself back at pre-contemplation. You are going to have some stars when you get back on it again and you're at pre-contemplation and that's where you are. And then you are going to move to preparation and then you'll find yourself going back and rethinking. But the thing that I want to leave you with is 'Don't stop the journey.' Praise the Lord. Whatever you do, just don't stop the journey. So when you understand the process, now you can begin to recognize – I've got to be more proactive and intentional in the change process that I want to take place in my life. I am going to integrate the Word by reflecting upon it and making it a part of my life.

God bless you.